NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL www.nelincs.gov.uk	**DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT** **APPEALS LIST - 16TH NOVEMBER 2026**

APPLICATION NUMBER & SITE ADDRESS	**APPEAL REFERENCE & STATUS**	**OFFICER & PROCEDURE**
DM/0854/25/CEA 4 Westhill Road Grimsby North East Lincolnshire DN34 4SF	AP/004/26 INPROG	Abigail Hattersley Written Representation
EN/0454/25 Stallingborough Road Immingham North East Lincolnshire	AP/013/26 INPROG	Martin Ambler Written Representation

Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 September 2026

by Mick Boddy *F Arbor A FICFor CEnv*

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 November 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/TPO/B2002/11230
32 Meadbowbank, Great Coates, Grimsby DN37 9PG

- The appeal is made under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 against a refusal to grant consent to undertake work to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- The appeal is made by Mr John Rhea against the decision of North East Lincolnshire Council.
- The application Number: DM/0189/26/TPO, dated 17 March 2026, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2026.
- The work proposed is: T1 – Sycamore. Pollard to leave a height of 8m. The tree is causing light issues to the solar panels on the roof of the house and not letting them work to the full potential. The client would actually like the tree to be removed completely but would settle for the next most serve *(sic)* thing.
- The relevant TPO is The County of Lincoln, Parts of Lindsey Tree Preservation (Great Coates) Order 1966, which was confirmed on or sometime before 9 September 1966.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed in relation to both the alternative proposals to either remove or pollard the sycamore.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application form is undated; I have therefore taken the date of the application in the third bullet in the banner heading from the decision notice.

3. The questionnaire submitted by the Council indicates that the sycamore is situated within the Great Coates Conservation Area, whereas the appellant states that this is not the case and that the tree sits just outside the boundary. Given that the rear gardens of the properties on the south-eastern side of Meadowbank have been extended, the Conservation Area boundary does not coincide with the property boundaries and I cannot determine with any degree of certainty from the plan provided whether the sycamore is just within or just outside the Conservation Area. However, given that a proportion of the garden is clearly within the Conservation Area, I take the view that the potential impact of the proposed works on its character and appearance is a material consideration.

4. Comments in support of the application were submitted by the resident of No 33 Meadowbank, the neighboring property to the north-east, and I have taken account of these in my deliberations.

5. In accordance with current Planning Practice Guidance, cases under the chosen appeal process are dealt with on the basis of the original application and its supporting documentation; the decision of the Local Planning Authority and the reasons they gave when making that decision, and any further information requested by the Inspector. I am therefore unable to give consideration to the additional issues raised by the appellant in the appeal submission.

Main Issues

6. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed works on the character and appearance of the Great Coates Conservation Area and wider landscape; and whether sufficient justification has been demonstrated for either the removal or pollarding of the sycamore tree.

Reasons

7. The appellant's property is a detached, two-storey dwelling situated on the south-eastern side of Meadowbank. The sycamore is a healthy mature specimen growing within the back garden, at a distance of 13 metres or so from the rear corner of the house, close to the party boundary with No 33. It has a well-shaped crown that has previously been lifted, providing a reasonable degree of canopy clearance.

8. The sycamore is scheduled as a constituent of group G13 of the TPO, which predates the Meadowbank development, and it appears that it would have originally been situated on or close to the property boundary prior to the back garden being extended. The group has been depleted by the loss of the elm component, possibly due to infection with Dutch elm disease, elevating the prominence and significance of the sycamore.

9. Whilst the majority of the tree's crown is visible from Meadowbank to the north-west through the gap between Nos 32 and 33, its significance in the local landscape is greater when viewed from Cromwell Road to the east and from the grounds of the neighbouring Great Coates Primary School and the John Whitgift Academy to the south and south-east.

10. In relation to this first issue, I found the sycamore to be a healthy and reasonably attractive specimen, which affords a significant degree of public amenity. I therefore take the view that its removal or heavy pruning would result in appreciable harm to the character and appearance of both the adjacent Conservation Area and the wider landscape. The reasons given to justify the work must therefore be both compelling and sufficient to outweigh that harm. It is to those reasons, the second main issue, to which I now turn.

11. Whilst the proposed pruning is described as pollarding, the level and manner of the reduction would be more akin to the damaging practice of topping rather than true pollarding, which is a process initially carried out on trees that have not yet reached maturity, the form of which is then maintained by cyclical cutting.

12. The annotated image submitted indicates that the principal branches would be truncated, removing the majority of the upper section of the crown and a substantial proportion of the foliage-bearing growth. This would dramatically alter the tree's appearance, diminishing its stature and creating significant wounds from which decay could develop over time.

13. Such pruning would be contrary to the recommendations contained in the British Standard for Tree Work, BS3998:2010, Clause C.4.1 - Extreme crown reduction, topping and coppicing. This states: '...*severe crown reduction, which at its most extreme equates to topping, should be used only as a last resort for retaining a valuable tree which would otherwise pose an unacceptable risk to people or property, or would be susceptible to loss due to structural collapse*.' This is not the case in this instance.

14. No evidence was submitted in support of the application to demonstrate the extent to which the sycamore is reducing the efficiency of the solar panels on the roofs of the appellant's property and that of No 33, and thus what improvement would be derived from either the removal or extensive pruning of the tree. I can therefore attach limited weight to this issue, the primary reason for seeking consent for the works.

15. The tree officer's report indicates that the Council would be supportive of a lesser and more sensitive canopy reduction, suggesting this should improve the effectiveness of the solar panels whilst maintaining the tree's existing historical and visual amenity and not stimulating excessive new growth. Such pruning could also go some way towards addressing the issue of the obstruction of sunlight to the rear rooms of No 33 raised by the neighbour. If a mutually acceptable specification could be agreed with the Council, this could form the basis of a further consent application.

16. I acknowledge the willingness of the appellant to plant a further Acer but this would take many years to mature and attain the same stature as the appeal sycamore, thus reinstating a similar level of visual amenity. Accordingly, I take the view that the planting of a new tree would be insufficient to mitigate the impact of either the loss or 'pollarding' of the sycamore in this instance.

17. With any application to undertake work to a protected tree, a balancing exercise needs to be undertaken, with the essential need for the work applied for being weighed against any resultant harm to the amenity of the area. In this case, I find the removal or 'pollarding' of the sycamore would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of both the adjacent Great Coates Conservation Area and the wider landscape. Having carefully considered the reasons put forward, I find these are insufficiently compelling, either individually or collectively, to outweigh this harm and justify the proposed work. Accordingly, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Mick Boddy
INSPECTOR