



Mr Neil Wilson
Beechwood Tree Care Ltd
2 Playhatch Farm Cottages
Playhatch
Reading
RG4 9QX

Emma Gee
Interim Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services

Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 9373787

Our Ref: 230994/TPO
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 372440
sarah.hanson@reading.gov.uk

21 August 2023

Your contact is: Sarah Hanson, Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

Dear Mr Wilson

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES AT AND ADJACENT TO THE GLEN, BOUNDARY LANE, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 98/05.

Thank you for your application of 17 July 2023, regarding the above, with supporting report from Certhia Consulting Ltd dated 28 June 2023.

Further to my visit on 3 August 2023, I have the following comments:

Your application seeks consent to re-pollard 13 Limes (T2-T14 of the report) to the original pollard points at approximately 3m above ground level; 8 for arboricultural reasons and 5 to 'maintain the arboricultural feature', i.e. to treat and manage the line of Limes as one entity. The application also proposes work to trees overhanging from a neighbouring property.

As you are aware, the Limes (12 of the current 13) have been subject to two previous applications. 211187/TPO proposed re-pollarding of all down to the original pollard points at 3m and 230554/TPO proposed reducing 3 Limes to form a pollard knuckle at 6-7m above ground level and reducing 9 Limes to form a pollard knuckle at 9m above ground level. Application 211187/TPO was refused and application 230554 agreed re-pollarding to 5 Limes (to two different heights) and refused the remainder. The reason for refusal was consistent across both applications in that there was a lack of evidence to justify the works, as no individual inspection had been done on each tree to determine its condition, hence whether the works were reasonable.

The report from Certhia Consulting Ltd has provided the individual inspection requested, in order to support the current application. As noted above, the re-pollarding of all to the original pollard points is not for arboricultural reasons for 5 of the trees but is in order for

the owners to maintain the line of trees at the same height, cited in the report to 'maintain the arboricultural feature'.

The desire to treat and maintain the line of Limes as a linear feature at the same height is appreciated from an aesthetic point of view, and I understand that maintenance of pollards at 3m above ground level is cheaper than at a higher level, i.e. where it can be done from a ladder, particularly as access to the trees is not without challenges. However, in considering this reasoning, it is also appropriate to consider the potential harm to the trees for which the re-pollarding is not required for arboricultural reasons, both in terms of their future health and amenity value, and to take a view as to whether the maintenance of the 'arboricultural feature' is so important that it outweighs that harm. In relation to cost, whilst it is appreciated that this is a factor for your client, it has little weight in determining the acceptability of the proposed works.

Taking into account the results of the inspection and observations from my visit, the re-pollarding of Limes T2-T8 & T10 to 3m is acceptable for arboricultural reasons. For clarity, these include T5, T6 & two south-western Limes (not numbered) of application 230554/TPO for which this work was approved and T3 of the same application for which pollarding to 6-7m above ground level was approved.

In relation to the remaining Limes (T9, T11-T14), the re-pollarding is not required for arboricultural reasons and this is accepted within the report from Certhia Consulting Ltd which states:

'The Lime trees are clearly of differing structural quality. Those to the northern end of the line have been less affected by the adjacent trees and have developed a full crown over the new pollard points. The speed of regrowth has allowed the trees to grow over and with the pollard points so preventing significant decay developing in those areas'

'Certain individual trees may not structurally require a full re-pollard e.g. [T13] and [T14]. However, it would be prudent to recreate this historical linear feature and thus facilitate future management. These trees are not veteran or ancient trees when considered against any accepted characteristic descriptors. The trees have established stems above the original pollard points. In one case this appears to form a singular trunk. These re-growths are in the region of 200mm diameter, a size the British Standard suggests it is still possible to create a new pollard. The majority of the stems are within or around the 200mm diameter mark'

In relation to the comments above, it could equally be argued that not re-pollarding just those on the northern end would not be working on the line 'piecemeal' and would not therefore 'devalue' the linear feature. In terms of wound size, it is noted that the stem diameters of the trees (in numerical order) is given as 360mm, 290mm, 410mm, 480mm and 510mm, with only specific stems sizes given for re-pollarding for T13 (290mm) and T14 (340mm). From that provided, stems are in excess of the maximum 200mm diameter considered acceptable in the report; which refers to 7.10 of BS3998:2010. It should be noted that 7.10 states:

'If the stem has attained a diameter of more than 50mm, but less than about 200mm at

2m to 3m height, pollarding may still be initiated. The tree should be cut at or near the same height as a younger tree, but extra care should be taken to retain some existing branches’.

It could be argued that the above advice has been interpreted to support the application, yet the proposals do not strictly follow this advice given the height of the pollard points, size of stems and the lack of specified branch retention.

The report from Certhia Consulting Ltd also states:

‘Lime are very tolerant to hard pruning. For some of the trees there will be larger wounds created. However, the trees will react to that and, with a cyclic repollard regime initiated, will start to develop a more traditional knuckle that is never loaded to failure’

Given the decay noted in the report at previous pollard / topping points, it is evident that decay will occur over time to large wounds and even a re-pollarding cycle back to those same points may not be sufficient in the long-term, with further work then having to be considered, e.g. pollarding below those points. An example of where that has occurred would be the mature Limes at Reading School which Beechwood Tree Care have recently dealt with (application reference 230783/TPO).

Given the above, it is considered that re-pollarding of T9 and T11-T14 back to the original pollarding points is not acceptable, in principle. It is accepted that their previous management, in accordance with guidance in BS3998, justifies a reduction and hence the creation of higher pollard points, as per your specification in application 230554/TPO, is considered reasonable to address the load on the original points and the potential decay and dysfunction at these points, albeit nothing of significance is noted in the report. However, in relation to T9, I have taken a balanced view and consider that in order to avoid a ‘piecemeal’ approach with T9 being pollarded high, T10 re-pollarded to 3m and T11-T14 pollarded high, agreement is given to re-pollard T9 to the 3m height alongside T2-T10. In addition, I have taken a balanced view with T11 given its closer proximity to the house than T12-T14 and relatively small stem size (190mm) and agreement is also given to re-pollard T11 to the 3m height alongside T2-T10. The maintenance of the last 3 Limes at the northern end of the row (T12-T14) at a higher level is not considered to devalue the linear feature but will retain some wider amenity of the line, i.e. the maintenance of these 3 Limes as part of a lower linear feature is not considered so vital as to outweigh the harm to their future health and amenity value if re-pollarded down to 3m.

In conclusion, the re-pollarding of T12-T14 back to the original pollard points at 3m above ground level is **refused**, however, lesser works is approved below.

I can confirm that the following works are approved subject to the conditions below:

- Limes T2-T11 (10 trees) - re-pollard to the original pollard points at approx. 3m above ground level
- Lime T12-T14 (3 trees) - Form into multi knuckle pollard by forming pollard knuckle at approx. 9m at the appropriate branch unions - see photo at the end of this letter

- for approx. location of knuckles, 50-100mm stubs to be left to aid regrowth,
- Remove all basal growth and remove epicormic growth up to the height of the pollard point on each tree.
 - Reduce overhanging foliage from the property to the north-east (Garden House, St Peters Avenue); that being the Hazel, Lime, Sycamore and Ash alongside the southern end of the Limes (adjacent to T2) and the Ash adjacent to T10. Trees are to be cut back to the boundary (at the maximum) pruning as close to the boundary as possible depending upon availability of appropriate growth points as recommended by BS3998, i.e. no greater than 1/3 of the diameter of parent branch.

For clarity, the consented works above entirely supersedes that approved under 230554/TPO.

Conditions

1. Five days' notice in writing shall be given to the Council prior to undertaking the approved works.

Reason: To ensure that the Local Planning Authority is given sufficient notice of the works to enable the effective monitoring of tree work within the Borough.

2. All tree surgery shall be in accordance with BS 3998: (2010) Tree Work - Recommendations.

Reason: To ensure that all works are carried out in an acceptable arboricultural manner

3. The approved canopy reduction / re-pollarding shall only be undertaken in mid-late Summer (July - September) when the tree's energy reserves are at their height or during the Winter months of December - January during the period of dormancy.

Reason: Taking into account the tree's phenological cycle and in order to avoid any unnecessary detriment to the tree as a result of the pruning work.

4. Climbing spikes shall not be used whilst undertaking any form of works on living trees, except on trees to be felled.

Reason: Spikes can cause extensive long-term damage

Informatives

1. You are advised that, in accordance with Part 4, 17 (4) of The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012, this decision is valid for one pruning operation (as per the approved specifications) to be undertaken within two years from the date of this notice, after which the consent lapses and a new application will be required.

2. Removal of dead or dangerous wood: This does not require the formal consent of the Council. However written notice must be given 5 working days in advance of removing dead wood. Where a branch is deemed to be 'dangerous', i.e. where works are 'urgently necessary to remove an immediate risk of serious harm', you are required to give notice to the Council 'as soon as practicable after the works become necessary'.

3. Disturbance of wildlife: It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to disturb roosting bats or nesting birds. It is advisable to consult your tree surgeon/consultant to agree an acceptable time for carrying out any work. Wildlife and habitat controls are administered by Natural England who can be contacted on 0300 030 6000

If you wish to appeal against the refusal of consent to re-pollard T12-T14 down to 3m or against any of the conditions attached to the consented works, please contact the Planning Inspectorate within 28 days of receipt of this letter to obtain the relevant forms:

Trees and Hedges
Room 3A Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol, BS1 6PN

Telephone: 0303 444 5000

E-mail it to: treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Website: [Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas)

If you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer

C.c. Mr & Mrs Prytherch

Enc - photo below



Photo from application 230554/TPO indicating the reduction height at approx 9m (to create a pollard knuckle) of T7-T12 of that application - to be applied to T12-T14 of the current application.