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17 April 2023

Your contact
is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

Dear Mr Blakeley

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE SYCAMORE TREE AT 3 ALEXANDRA ROAD, READING -
SUBJECT TO CONSERVATION AREA STATUS.**

Thank you for Tree Works Notice of 9 March 2023, relating to the above.

I can confirm that the Council have no formal objections to the following proposed tree work:

- Sycamore in rear garden - remove one main, low branch.

As discussed during our meeting on 22 March 2023 (also with Diane Parashar), the removal of the branch is advised against. The diameter of the branch is large relative to the main stem (at least one third of) and its removal goes against good arboricultural practice. Sycamore trees are not good at resisting decay and the creation of a large wound, in addition to the wounds already existing in a similar location, will be prone to decay, which will eventually extend into the main stem (collectively) resulting in the structural stability of the tree being negatively impacted. If the branch is removed, this issue should be acknowledged by all, with the need for regular monitoring of the extent of decay into the future.

I note that the reason for the branch removal is due to difficulty in accessing the boot of your car when parked adjacent to the tree. You advised that you are not able to park forwards into the space to resolve this.

In relation to damage to the wall, we looked and discussed this during my visit. It was difficult to appreciate the issue, currently, due to the extensive Ivy on the wall. As

suggested it would first be appropriate to establish the ownership, hence responsibility of the wall, which will hopefully be on the property deeds, if these are available. Removal of the Ivy would then be prudent to establish the condition of the wall - this should be done with care to avoid damaging the wall. It may be that professional advice will be required to assess the structural integrity of the wall, the cause of any damage and to advise on any necessary repairs. As discussed, if it is possible to retain the tree (if the wall is currently sound or only minor repairs are needed) or if the wall needs to be rebuilt, then to build this around the tree (there are common ways of doing this), then that would be positive. The Sycamore is a mature example, contributing amenity value, adding to the verdant nature of the conservation area and to improving air quality in the Council's designated Air Quality Management Area in which the property sits. As advised, the only way in which a formal objection to the tree works could be made by the Council is by service of a Tree Preservation Order - we have erred against this, on balance, due to the proximity of the tree to the wall.

This decision is valid for two years from the date of this letter, after which it lapses.

As 6 weeks has lapsed since submission of your notice, the works can go ahead, if they do, at the discretion of the residents. However, please note Informative 2 below.

Informatives

1. 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 060 3900; enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

2. It is best to avoid works in the period immediately before or during bud burst and leaf fall to minimise the effect on the long-term health of the tree

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. Ms D Parashar, 3 Alexandra Road