



Mr R Hamble
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Frances Martin
Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services

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Our Ref: 221893/TPO
Your Ref:

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

8 February 2023

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

Dear Mr Hamble

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES AT 1 LAWSON DRIVE, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 23/07.

Thank you for your application of 18 December 2023, regarding the above.

Your original specification for the works to the trees was deemed to be invalid (ref my email of 22/12/22) and you provided an amended specification in your email of 10/01/23, which is the specification assessed during my visit of 24 January 2023 with my colleague Andrei Nazare and was as follows:

*T17, T18, T20 (Limes) to be reduced in height by 3 meters - 4 meters to a growth point. Reduce the sides by 2 meters - 3 meters to a growth point. Remove any dead wood.
T19, T21, T22 (conifers) Reduce the height by approximately 3 meters. Trim the sides as necessary.
T15 (Walnut), Reduce the branch that is hanging over the driveway by approximately 6 meters.*

Following our visit, I expressed some concerns about the extent of the proposed works in my email of 24/01/23, detailing the concerns for each tree individually, as to whether they were appropriate. In your response email of 27/01/23, you amended the pruning specification by virtue of your response, as detailed below, and queried what height reduction would be acceptable for the conifers:

*T15 Walnut - reduce the reduction of the branch to 3 meters to a growth point.
The two Lime Trees nearest to the house - reduce as per the specification. However the 3rd tree in the conifers I will reduce by 1 meter.*

T17 (Lime) I will reduce as per your guidance.

T18 (Lime) I will reduce as per your guidance and also take off the lower growth.

T20 (Lime) I will reduce as per my specification (reduction of height by 3-4m) but leave the sides, or just trim to make it look equal.

In response to my subsequent query about whether the proposed height reduction to T20 was by 1 or by 3-4m, we confirmed in our exchange that it was as per your original specification (3-4m). Our email exchanges indicated that there was no arboricultural reason for the proposed reduction of the conifers with your email of 05/02/23, confirming the works were because *'they are far too big for the size of the garden, there is no light, the lawn plants and shrubbery is suffering'*.

In relation to the Walnut, I originally expressed concern about the extent of the branch reduction (6m) and that it would create a large wound (not ideal on a Walnut) and would remove the majority, if not all, of the foliage on that branch. You reduced your proposal to a 3m reduction. However, this is still significant and raises similar concerns about foliage loss and wound production hence this degree of reduction is refused. It is appreciated that a reduction of the branch to reduce its weight and give greater clearance from the house would be appropriate and as such a reduction of a lesser amount is agreed below.

In relation to the conifers, you have proposed to reduce the height by approximately 3m and 'trim the sides as necessary' (the latter not having been clarified). A height reduction of such species is rarely appropriate given the detrimental impact it can have on their appearance, hence amenity value. The reasons put forward in support of the reduction is not considered to outweigh the negative impact on the amenity of the trees from the pruning. No arboricultural justification is applicable for the proposed works. The proposed reduction of the conifers is therefore refused.

I can confirm that the following proposed works, as detailed in your amended application, are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the attached photographs:

- T17 Lime - lateral branch pruning (reduction of the sides only) using previous pruning points for guidance as to the maximum amount, leaving a flowing crown line.
- T18 Lime - reduction the higher, eastern stem and lower, western stem to their respective previous reduction points; remove lower epicormic growth.
- T20 Lime - reduce height by 3-4m, to suitable growing points.
- T15 Walnut - reduce low branch growing towards 1 Lawson Drive, back to appropriate growing points, to provide a maximum 2m clearance from the front elevation.

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 reductions to the Limes shall 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. The approved branch reduction of the Walnut shall not be undertaken in spring but shall be undertaken in late summer.

Reason: to avoid bleeding

5. 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 any of the conditions attached to this consent, 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 your client suffers any loss or damage as a result of this refusal of consent, they may be entitled to recover compensation from the Council. If they wish to make a claim they must do so within 12 months from the date of this decision (or, if they appeal to the Secretary of State, within 12 months from the date of his decision). Claims should be made in writing to the Insurance Section, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU.

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 Mills, 1 Lawson Drive