



Mr D White
Whiteknight Tree Care and Consultancy
5 Cressingham Road
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RG2 7RS

Frances Martin
Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
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28 March 2023

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

Dear Mr White

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE OAK TREE AT 73 KILN ROAD, READING - T1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 18/11.

Thank you for your application of 2 March 2023, regarding the above.

Further to my visit on 9 March 2023 with my colleague Andrei Nazare, and our telephone conversation of 27 March 2023, I have the following comments:

You have applied for consent for the following:

All-round crown reduction, removing approximately 2.5m in branch length (see annotated photos) to retain the tree whilst minimising the negative impacts it causes for tree owner due to its close proximity to/overhang of the property, i.e. blocked gutters, falling detritus on vehicles, low light levels, etc.

Clear main stem of epicormic growth

Remove major deadwood

It is acknowledged that the Oak is a large tree and in close proximity to the house, hence that some management is appropriate to maintain an appropriate relationship between the two. Pruning to alleviate concerns is often acceptable, but this has to be balanced with the potential impact on the health and/or amenity value of a tree, i.e. appropriate justification for pruning is required and a balanced decision reached that hopefully alleviates concerns raised whilst causing minimal, detrimental impact on the tree.

As discussed, a 2.5m reduction appeared to mostly be excessive, even taken from the outer branch tips, but some reduction is acceptable, as discussed below.

I raised the justification for the height reduction both with Mrs Benson and yourself, given the reasons put forward to support it. It is difficult to appreciate that a height reduction would make any difference to the nuisance issues raised, given the proximity of the tree. As such, this is considered as unnecessary pruning and of no benefit.

With regards to reducing branch length over the drive, it is difficult to appreciate how anything other than a significant reduction to cut back all overhang, would remove the concerns raised. Minimal reduction could be undertaken (see approved works), but in deciding whether to proceed with that, Mrs Benson may like to consider the benefits against the cost.

In relation to reduction the north side of the tree, some degree of reduction is acceptable, particularly to reduce the longer, low lateral (see approved works). Reduction of the canopy growing towards the house is acceptable to provide a greater degree of clearance from the property. As discussed, specifying this is distance from the house is helpful (see approved works).

With regard to the east side of the canopy overhanging the road, a reduction is not arguable given the reasons put forward in support of the works. I would also expect the canopies of the trees in Clayfield Copse opposite to confine the canopy spread of the Oak in that direction - the two meet in the middle of the road. I understand that there are no particular health and safety concerns with this section of the tree, which might justify works for highway safety reasons. Therefore, works should be confined to ensuring branches are to the statutory heights of 2.75m above the road and 5.5m above the road, if they are not already, by minimal pruning to achieve this.

Some crown lifting by removal of epicormic growth, alongside removal of dead wood is reasonable management.

In conclusion, the proposed all-round crown reduction, removing approximately 2.5m in branch length is refused for the reasons stated above. However, alternative, lesser works are approved alongside the removal of epicormic growth.

I can confirm that the following proposed works are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the attached photographs (a combination of officer and submitted photographs):

T1 Oak:

- Reduction of south side / overhanging driveway by 1-1.5m, leaving a flowing crown line
- Reduction of north side (opposite driveway) by 1-1.5m, focusing on the extended low, lateral branch, leaving a flowing crown line.
- Reduction of the west side growing towards the house by approx. 2.5m, to provide approx. 1-1.5m clearance from the front of the house, leaving a flowing crown line
- Removal of minor, epicormic growth up to the first main branches

The removal of dead wood is exempt from requiring permission and the intention to carry out this work is noted. Likewise, pruning, by the minimum necessary, to achieve the aforementioned statutory heights, does not require formal approval and I will leave you to assess whether this is required.

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 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. 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

4. Crown lifting of trees over the footpath and carriageway: If the clearance of vegetation overhanging the highway only involves the removal of branches to give a ground clearance to the statutory heights of 2.7m over the footpath and 5.5m over the road, this does not require formal consent from the Council. You are advised, however, to give notice to the Council of these intended works in order that they can be agreed.

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/government/topics/trees-and-woodland/tree-preservation-orders)

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. Mrs A Benson, 73 Kiln Road