



Mr N Gorst  
31 Elsley Road  
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Berkshire  
RG31 6RP

Frances Martin  
Executive Director for  
Economic Growth and  
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Your Ref:

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13 April 2023

Your contact is: **Andrei Nazare, Planning, Development & Regulatory Services**

Dear Mr Gorst,

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO SIX LIME TREES AT 31 ELSLEY ROAD, READING - G1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 52/12.**

Thank you for your application of 10 February 2023 and the 4 photographs sent via e-mail on 11 February 2023, regarding the above.

As you are aware, there was an initial delay in our team receiving your application, the reasons for which were explained in my acknowledgement email of 7 March. Time was then spent in correspondence with yourself to clarify the works and the reasons for them in order that the application could be validated.

You initially applied to carry out works to 7 trees, but following our e-mail exchange through the month of March, you have confirmed in your 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 e-mail that you agree to amend the application as follows:

- 3x Lime trees (north-western most of the group; part of G1 on TPO) - fell to ground
- 3x Lime trees (part of G1 on TPO) - re-pollard (assumed back to previous points)

In your 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 e-mail, you confirmed that you are not concerned for the condition of the trees, i.e. that there was no concern about their condition, and that there is alleged property damage attributed to trees. As explained in multiple emails, when there is alleged building damaged attributed to trees, you are required to submit supporting information from a suitable professional, hence this was requested. Your e-mail of 15 March confirmed that you wish to proceed with the application '*as it is*', without any additional information or documents supporting the proposed works.

During the e-mail exchange you kept your interactions to a minimum and you stated (in

the 13<sup>th</sup> March e-mail) that it would be '*much appreciated*' if we visited to look at the trees ourselves. This led us to believe that you will meet us on the occasion of our visit on site and will provide more information relating to the application and supporting the proposed works. In my 16 March 2023 e-mail, I informed you about our plans to visit on 30 March 2023 - we've had no response to that e-mail.

On 30 March 2023, accompanied by my colleague Sarah Hanson, I visited the above address. As you were not there to meet us (nobody else was at home) and as we have noted ground level changes and pruning works to the protected Lime trees (the property appears to be under ongoing landscaping and construction works), we entered the rear garden to record the situation. **Please refer to my second letter accompanying this decision which expands further on those findings.**

With regards to the 3x Lime trees for which you are asking permission to fell due to alleged property damage, you have not provided any relevant technical reports to support this and you did not meet us during our visit to provide relevant information verbally (which may have not been enough anyway) or allow us to view any internal damage. As above, I have advised you on multiple occasions (6 February, 7 March and 15 March e-mails) that supporting evidence and technical reports are necessary when you ask for permission to carry out works to protected trees due to alleged property damage. During our visit, we did note the N-E extension's proximity to these 3 Lime trees, but we are not qualified to assess property damage caused by trees (and were not able to enter the house). As we have not received any documentation to support the proposed works, we do not consider the reason stated as valid and do not approve the felling of the 3x Lime trees (north-eastern most of the G1). We noted that a structure has been in that location historically but that at some point after 2012 this was converted from a car port to a side extension. It is assumed that the whichever previous owner of the house (I am aware you have only owned it since September last year) undertook this, did so with appropriate structural advice given the presence of the trees.

During our visit we noted that the 3x Lime trees you have proposed re-pollarding for are 'lapsed pollards' - meaning the 3-5 years pollarding cycle has not been maintained and the growth is now so large that pollarding back to previous points would cause large wounds prone to dysfunction and decay. Once a tree becomes a lapsed pollard, good arboricultural practice advises against pollarding back to previous points, but instead it recommends a maintenance regime that manages the weight of the crown, i.e. a crown reduction. As such, we do not agree with the proposed re-pollarding, but would welcome a new tree works application, based on recommendations from a professional, asking permission to prune the 3 Lime trees by a reasonable amount necessary to manage the weight of their crowns. It was noted that each Lime is different hence each should be approached with a pruning specification tailored to their individual condition.

**In conclusion, for the reasons stated above, the following proposed works to six Lime trees are refused:**

- 3x Lime trees (north-western most of G1 on TPO) - fell to ground (refused)
- 3x Lime trees (part of G1 on TPO) - re-pollard (refused)

## Informatives

1. 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'.

2. 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

3. Trees not considered to be protected by the current Tree preservation order: Work can be carried out to this tree without the formal consent from this Council.

## Appeals

If you are aggrieved by the refusal of consent for the proposed felling and re-pollarding of the Lime trees, you may appeal to The Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Because of coronavirus (COVID-19), you currently can only make a planning appeal online. You cannot currently apply by post.

For more information go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-preservation-order-appeal-form>

Telephone: 0303 444 5500 or e-mail it to:

[treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Your appeal should be received within one month of receipt of this decision or any such longer period as the Planning Inspectorate may allow.

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

Yours sincerely,

*Andrei Nazare*

Andrei Nazare  
Assistant Natural Environment Officer