



Ms S Duckworth
Duckworths Arboriculture
Glebelands Cottage East
Mildenhall
Marlborough
United Kingdom

Frances Martin
Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
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Our Ref: 230002/TPO
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 374294
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31 January 2023

Your contact is:

Andrei Nazare, Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

Dear Ms Duckworth,

RE: PROPOSED FELLING OF ONE MONTEREY CYPRESS AT 7 UPPER WARREN AVENUE, CAVERSHAM, READING - PART OF A1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 339.

Thank you for your application of 3 January 2023, regarding the above, accompanied by your Arboricultural Report dated December 2022.

Your application seeks approval to fell (and subsequently replace) one protected Monterey Cypress and it details the reason for felling as the declining health of the tree and the required reduction and maintenance efforts (with associated costs) which outweigh the alleged limited amenity of the tree. You indicate the tree is screened from the public highway by the street trees and other young tree vegetation on the frontage of the property, hence that its removal will *'not detract from the overall amenity provided by trees to the local area'*.

Further to my visit on 24 January 2023, accompanied by my colleague Sarah Hanson, I have the following comments:

Large conifer trees are common and characteristic for the frontages of properties on this part of the Upper Warren Avenue (for example the large Cedar at no. 3 or the Cedars at Nimbus across the street) and beyond, contributing to the treescape; that being a backdrop to the Warren Escarpment (designated as a Major Landscape Feature in our Local Plan - policy EN13). This character of the area should be preserved and enhanced by avoiding, where possible, the removal of large conifer trees as newly planted trees (as replacements) cannot replace their amenity value for many decades.

All frontage tree vegetation, together with the street trees, are part of the Existing Green Link as identified under the Council's Local Plan policy EN12 which relates to existing and potential biodiversity value and habitat. Mature and over-mature trees create unique habitats for birds, mammals, invertebrates and lichens that are not found in young trees. As such, the importance for retention of large, mature trees is increased by their disproportionate contribution to biodiversity and biodiversity habitats. I note the applicant's willingness to plant a replacement tree, but this will not compensate the loss of important biodiversity habitats currently provided by the Monterey Cypress.

The majority (by size) of the street trees and other frontage vegetation that screen the Monterey Cypress are broadleaves that shed their leaves in winter months. As such, while the tree is screened whilst adjacent trees are in leaf, it is visible from Upper Warren Avenue at all other times. We noted during our visit the tree is highly visible at this time of the year and include a photograph at the end of this letter taken from across the street demonstrating this. It is not accurate, as such, to assess the amenity value of the tree as negligible given it is the only mature evergreen tree on the frontage of 7 Upper Warren Avenue and it is visible from the public highway, hence it is not considered to be a valid reason to support felling.

In relation to the tree's condition, I refer to your Arboricultural Report Ref. SCD 05977/2022, which found that, while *'numerous split branches, and bark necrosis and decay in the upper canopy are noted, the base of the tree appears sound and the issues with the tree can be satisfactorily managed with a reduction of the tree's canopy [...]'*. Given the age and species of the tree, the poor form and condition of the canopy are not unusual, as acknowledged in your report, hence are to be expected and should be addressed by regular inspections and maintenance works as a preference to felling. Your report concludes the tree can be retained and you recommend a number of works to do so, which include reductions, thinning and selectively crown cleaning as an alternative choice to felling and replacing.

In conclusion, for the reasons stated above the proposed felling of one Monterey Cypress at the above address is refused.

However, as the tree can be retained if proper maintenance works are carried out within 4 months (as per your report of 9 December 2022), **I can confirm that the recommended alternative tree works advised in your report are approved subject to the conditions below:**

- 1x Monterey Cypress (T1 of application; part of A1 on TPO):
 - Reduce height by approximately 3m
 - Reduce extended branches over No. 7 by up to 2m
 - Thin low lateral branches on west side to reduce weight over neighbouring property
 - Crown clean selectively removing deadwood and reducing split branches back to a suitable reduction point to reduce risk of failure

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. 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

Appeals

If you are aggrieved by the refusal of consent for felling or by any of the conditions attached to your consent, 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

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 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 you 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,

Andrei Nazare

Andrei Nazare
Assistant Natural Environment Officer

C.c. Mr. P Dooley, 7 Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, Reading (via e-mail).

1. Photo from Upper Warren Avenue showing the tree visible from public Highway.

