



Mr A Richards
Valley Provincial Group
Chalcraft Nurseries
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DA2 7SE

Frances Martin
Executive Director for
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Our Ref: 221648/TPO
Your Ref:

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31 January 2023

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

Dear Mr Richards

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO THREE PLANE TREES AT 27 ROSE KILN LANE, READING - T5, T6 & T7 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 2/10.

Thank you for your application of 3 November 2022, regarding the above. Please, again, accept our apologies for the delay in processing your application - my colleague's acknowledgement email of 23 January 2023 explains the reason.

Your application seeks approval to pollard all three trees and crown lift all three up to 3m. The reason for pollarding in each case is that the trees are '*blocking signage to the Big Yellow monolith signage*'. Crown lifting is proposed to '*ensure the tree is clear of the footpath*' (hence crown lifting is assumed to be proposed above the pavement only).

Further to my visit on 24 January 2023 with my colleague Andrei Nazare, I have the following comments:

The three trees are the southern-most of a line of seven on the frontage of No. 27. These seven continue the line of Planes (another eight) at the front of neighbouring No. 25, which are also subject to a Tree Preservation Order; all forming a continuous line of Plane trees across both properties. The trees were secured as part of the landscaping when the two sites were developed to contribute to the A33 as a 'treed corridor' (as designated in our Tree Strategy) and to help mitigate air pollution; the site being within the designated Air Quality Management Area (ref Local Plan Policy EN15). The trees contribute to Objective 4 of the adopted Tree Strategy in both these respects. The Tree Strategy can be viewed on our website at: [Trees - Reading Borough Council](#)

The intention for all the Planes has been to allow them to reach their full potential in order to maximise their visual and environmental benefits. The environmental benefits of

large canopy trees are well documented and are known to be considerably greater than small canopy trees. Previous suggestions of pollarding and reduction have been resisted (see details of previous application at the end of this letter) as such work is contrary to the purpose of these trees and would decrease the benefits they provide. As you will be aware, once a tree is pollarded, good arboricultural practice dictates that they should be pollarded on a regular cycle (normally every 3-5 years), so whilst your application is only asking for a one time only operation, the implication is that the trees will have to be managed thereafter at the reduced size, stated in your accompanying document as a final height of 8m and final spread on all aspects of 2m. This is a considerably smaller size than the potential of this wide spreading tree species with an ultimate height of 17-22m.

Whether or not the trees would tolerate the work, as you indicate they would, is therefore considered irrelevant as the principle is not acceptable.

The pollarding of the three trees in question, of the line of Planes (15 in total), would set an unwelcome precedent in determining other such requests. I am mindful of the reasons for the work which are stated as being specific to the three trees in question, but other signage and street furniture exists along the frontage which could be cited as reasons for similar works. In any case, it is not accepted that the relationship between the monolith sign and trees is the same for each of the three, with only the branches of T6 growing around the sign. In resisting previous requests for pollarding and reduction (both formal and informal), we have pointed out that the primary views of the site will be to pedestrians and motorists, who would view the site at a low level, i.e. under the canopy of the trees (appropriately crown lifted over time). If the applicant is concerned that the company name (also provided on the building frontage) can not be seen on the monolith sign, there is the option of moving the company name /adding it to the bottom of sign so it could be viewed by passers-by as opposing to significantly pruning the trees to try to allow this. I am not, in any case, convinced that the proposed works of a 2 metre height and spread reduction would make such a significant difference to sign visibility that it justifies the harm from the work, including the future maintenance, given the current dimensions of the trees compared to the size of the sign and its relative location.

For the reasons given above, the pollarding of the three Plane trees is refused. Lesser, minor targeted work is approved below to T7 by selective branch removal.

In relation to the proposed crown lifting, it is not considered that a blanket crown lift to 3m is appropriate but that each tree should be treated individually. The application specially seeks a crown lift of 'up to 3m' and, as indicated above, is taken to be above the public pavement only, given the reason for the work. Due to the non-specific pruning specification, which can easily be devised for three trees, the blanket crown lifting up to 3m is refused, however targeted crown lifting is approved below to provide appropriate clearance above the pavement and site - this may or may not amount to a similar result, but specifics are preferable to non-specifics.

I can confirm that the following lesser works are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the attached photographs:

- T5 Plane - remove one low branch growing over the pavement

- T6 Plane - remove two low branches (one growing north and one growing over the pavement)
- T7 Plane - remove low branch growing north, secondary branch growing over pavement and one minor secondary branch; remove one secondary branch growing close to adjacent lighting column

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

4. Tree work consents on land not owned by the applicant: It is strongly recommended that the owner of the tree be advised of any proposed works. The owner's permission must be sought if the tree works involve work past the boundary line. This consent does not in any way imply that this Council has informed the owner of sought permission or will condone the use of consents to force any landowner to grant such permission.

5. 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 2.75m 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 the refusal of consent to pollard the three Plane trees and crown lift them up to 3m or against any of the conditions attached to the consented work, 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 you/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.

Please ensure your client receives a copy of the decision without undue delay - you have provided no contact email for us to do this.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson, FArborA
Natural Environment Officer

Previous applications:

App ref	Address	Proposed work	Decision	Approved work
211538	25 Rose Kiln Lane (TPO 109/09)	T1,T2 and T3 to be tip reduced over forecourt and crown raised to 4 metres and prune away from signage. T4 to be crown raised to 4 metres and pruned to allow sign to be seen from road side and forecourt. T5, T6 and T7 to be crown raised to 4 metres	Split decision	Selectively prune by undertaking a crown lift of up to 3.5 metres above ground level, ensuring that no branches greater than 25mm are removed; Selectively prune branches in order to provide 0.5m clearance to signs
162246	25 Rose Kiln Lane (TPO 109/09)	T1-T8 Plane - reduce full canopy by 1-1.5m; crown lift to 5m	Refused	