



Ms S Duckworth
Duckworths Arboriculture Ltd
Glebelands Cottage East
Mildenhall
SN8 2LR

Emma Gee
Interim Executive Director for
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Your Ref:

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1st September 2023

Your contact is:

Andrei Nazare, Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Ms Duckworth,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 11 TREES AT READING GIRLS SCHOOL, READING - PART OF A1 OF AREA TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 5/21.

Thank you for your application of 24th July 2023, regarding the above.

During my visit of 24th August 2023, I was able to confirm the findings of your tree condition survey, as included in the Arboricultural Report ref. SCD 06034/2023. I include a brief discussion on these findings below:

A number of four young trees which have been planted following redevelopment of the school (planting layout and details agreed under discharge of conditions application ref. 142006) and are, as such, included in the Area Tree Preservation Order, are dead. The removal of a dead tree does not require the formal consent of the Council. The intended removal for the following dead trees is noted:

- T009 unidentified during the survey/visit (English Oak as per Planting Plan Sheet 1-D1-P04, drawing RDG-MA-00-ZZ-DR-L-40101 Rev P04 submitted under App ref. 142006)
- T43 & T45 Beech
- T079 Silver Birch

Under Section 206(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, a landowner is under a duty to replace a tree which is removed because it is dead or dangerous. This duty to replace also applies to trees that have failed. Following the felling of the 4 dead trees mentioned above, four trees of the same species and a minimum of 10-12cm girth and 2.75m tall (at the time of planting) shall be planted within the school grounds, the species

of which shall be agreed with the Natural Environment Team.

Due to significant decay on exposed surface root, historic wounding, and decay on lower trunk, as well as due to one stem being dead, felling of T004 Flowering Cherry is agreeable. I note the dead stem is the likely result of a rope being attached tightly and girdling it over time. Attaching swings or ropes to trees should be avoided for this reason, as well as due to risk of branch failure and injury to any person or child using it.

You propose felling of two Cider gum trees (T028, T029) due to their poor condition and the identified defects - swollen base, cavity 400mm+ deep, audible decay, included bark (T028), vertical cracks (T029). Both are multi stemmed trees and while not all identified defects apply to all stems, removal of the affected stems will leave the remaining ones destabilised to the new wind profile and prone to failure. As such, on balance, removal of all stems of both trees is agreeable.

One Common Hawthorn (T060) growing on the Eastern boundary on the S-E corner of the school grounds is overwhelmed with climbing plants and the majority of its crown is dead. Its removal is agreeable.

Three trees growing on the frontage to Northumberland Avenue (T006, T008 Norway Maple, T007 Pedunculate Oak) will be laterally reduced on the building side to create appropriate clearance to it. This is considered reasonable management to mitigate conflict with nearby structures and is agreeable.

A group of 3 Blackthorn trees (T034) on the Eastern boundary present base decay (southern tree), have previously failed or have unbalanced canopies. These trees fit better as hedge vegetation and their reduction to 4-5m high and management as pollards is agreeable.

Likewise, the reduction to 5m and management as pollard is agreeable for T046 Weeping willow. This tree has suffered previous major branch breakage resulting in 50% loss of canopy volume, leaving it unbalanced and exposed to new wind profile.

You have also included proposed works to reduce a Poplar (T031) stump to 3m and to remove dead wood from three Oak trees (T066, T069, T070). As the Poplar was already a stump at the time of serving TPO 5/21, it is not included in the TPO and you do not need permission to carry out work to it. Likewise, as noted in your application, the removal of dead wood is being included as a notice only, as you do not need permission for this type of work - the notice is duly noted.

I can confirm that the following works, are approved subject to the conditions below:

- 1x Flowering cherry (T004) - fell to ground
- 2x Cider Gum trees (T028, T029) - fell to ground
- 1x Weeping willow (T046) - reduce height to 5m
- 1x Common hawthorn (T060) - fell to ground
- 3x Blackthorn (T034) - reduce to 4-5m high

- 1x Pedunculate oak (T007) - reduce small lateral branches to create 2m clearance to building
- 2x Norway Maple (T006, T008) - reduce small lateral branches to create 1m (T008) and, respectively, 2m (T006) clearance to building

During my visit I noted some dead, failed, or missing trees which are not included in the application - for example missing T078, failed Beech tree near T044 or dead Birch tree near T084. As these are part of the TPO but not included in this application, I will write a separate letter to Reading Girls School to advise on an appropriate course of action.

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 reduction 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

5. Following the felling of the 1 Flowering cherry, 2 Cider Gum and 1 Hawthorn trees authorised by this consent, four broadleaved trees a minimum of 10-12cm girth and 2.75m tall (at the time of planting) shall be planted within the school grounds, the species of which shall be agreed with the Natural Environment Team.

The trees shall be planted as close as possible to the removed tree's location, in order to replace the lost amenity, during the planting season (Nov-March) following or at the time of the felling of the tree, whichever is soonest.

Planting should be carried out in accordance with clause 10 (Planting) of BS 8545:2014 'Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations'

Should the replacement tree be removed, die or become severely damaged or seriously diseased, all within 5 years of planting, it shall be replaced by a tree of a similar size and species to that originally planted. Modifications to the requirements of this condition must be agreed in writing with Reading Borough Council Natural Environment Team.

PLEASE NOTE: The requirement to replant is the responsibility of the tree owner even if the application was submitted by another person.

Reason: To retain the present visual amenity value of the area and ensure continuity of tree coverage.

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. It is best to avoid works in the period immediately before or during bud burst and leaf fall to minimise the effect on the long-term health of the tree

5. 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.

6. Removal of any dead or dangerous protected tree: This does not require the formal consent of the Council. However you are required to give 5 days' notice of the work where it is not an emergency, to allow the Council to agree that the proposed works are exempt from requiring consent. The exception is where works are 'urgently necessary to remove an immediate risk of serious harm', in which case you are required to give notice to the Council 'as soon as practicable after the works become necessary'.

Once felling of a dead or dangerous tree has been carried out, the owner has a duty under Section 206(1) of the Town & Country Planning Act to replant another tree of an appropriate size and species in the same place as soon as they reasonable can. This replacement tree will be covered by the existing Tree Preservation Order. The new tree would be subject to the same requirements for a tree works application if you intend to carry out works upon it in the future.

7. 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 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

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
On behalf of Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer

C.c. Mr Richard Oti, Reading Girls School (via e-mail)