



Mr D White
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Frances Martin
Executive Director for
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Our Ref: 230160/TPO
Your Ref:

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13 April 2023

Your contact is:

Andrei Nazare, Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

Dear Mr White,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE LAWSON CYPRESS AND ONE YEW TREE AT ALL SAINTS CHURCH, DOWNSHIRE SQUARE, READING - G1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 6/16.

Thank you for your application of 12 February 2023, regarding the above, with accompanying report from Crown Consultants.

You have applied to obtain permission to fell one Lawson cypress tree (T5 on application, part of G1 on TPO) and to reduce height to 4.5m and crown radial spread to 3m of one Yew tree (T6 on application, part of G1 on TPO).

Following my visit to view the trees on 14 March 2023 I can provide the comments below:

I note the poor condition of the Lawson cypress tree, which is described in your application and which I observed during my visit. It appears the tree has lost, through branch shedding, approximately 40% of its crown on the north-west side. This leaves the tree heavily unbalanced towards south-east (towards the Church building) in terms of weight but also in terms of wind-load during extreme weather events. I can also attest on the tree's lack of ability to recover from the crown loss over time as, on occasion of a previous TCA notice, I have visited the site accompanied by my colleague Sarah Hanson back in the summer of 2022. It appears the condition of the tree between my two visits has not only not improved but it has slightly worsened, showing sparser crown and more yellow spots. You state health and safety concerns as the reason for removal, due to its poor condition and proximity to the entrance of a primary school. As the tree is in poor condition and possibly in decline and, as due to its sparse crown it does not contribute significantly to the amenity in the area, its removal is agreeable. Please refer to condition 4 below.

With regards to the works proposed to the Yew tree, *height reduction of the southernmost stem to approximately 4.5m above ground level and reduction of radial spread of the tree to 3m*, I note these will effectively make the tree a standing trunk (3 trunks as it has 3 main stems) with very little crown and leaf area left. The height reduction of the southernmost stem will not only affect the top of the crown, but a large part of the north-western crown too as it is growing from the top section of said stem and will, therefore, be removed as part of the height reduction. Combined with the radial spread reduction to 3m, this will result in a significant leaf area removal, on top of that already lost.

On 6th April 2023 I sent you an e-mail with the observations above and proposed amending the application to lessen the proposed reduction of the Yew tree. Your e-mail response on 10th April provides confirmation that you agree to amending the proposed works on the Yew tree as follows: *crown lifting both above the Brownlow Road pavement (to 2.75m above pavement) and above the school entrance way (as shown on the annotated photo no.1), as well as a reduction on the W - N-W - N sides (as shown by the blue line on the annotated photo no.2).*

In conclusion, I can confirm that the following amended works, as shown on the annotated photographs below, are approved subject to the conditions below:

- 1x Lawson cypress (T5 on application, part of G1 on TPO) - fell to ground
- 1x Yew tree (T6 on application, part of G1 on TPO) - crown lifting both above the Brownlow Road pavement (to 2.75m above pavement) and above the school entrance way (as shown on the annotated photo no.1), as well as a reduction on the W - N-W - N sides (as shown by the blue line on the annotated photo no.2).

Your application also included proposed works to 3 other trees, which are not part of a TPO, as such we have considered these as a notice to works on trees in a Conservation Area and have already sent you a response under TCA ref. 230163 on 24 March 2023.

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

4. Following the felling of the Lawson cypress tree authorised by this consent, one evergreen tree a minimum of 2.5m tall (at the time of planting) shall be planted within

the same grass area or on the Downshire Square frontage of the Church, the species of which shall be agreed with the Natural Environment Team.

The tree shall be planted 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. 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 2.7m 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.

Appeals

If you are aggrieved 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 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. Mrs Elizabeth Hodge (via e-mail)

1. Annotated photo showing approved crown lift above school entry way



2. Annotated photo showing in blue extent of approved reduction

