

Mr E Jones
Oakey Tree Services
Keith Lock Gardens
Mortimer
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RG7 3UZ

Frances Martin
Director for Economic Growth
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15 November 2022

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

Dear Mr. Jones,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ELEVEN TREES AND ONE CONIFER HEDGE AT 5 DOWNSHIRE SQUARE AND ONE TREE AT 7 DOWNSHIRE SQUARE, READING - SUBJECT TO CONSERVATION AREA STATUS.

Thank you for your notification of 17 October 2022, regarding the above.

Further to my visit on 4 November 2022, the proposed works were discussed with your client and clearer specification devised in some cases, as are detailed below.

I can confirm that the Council have no objections to the following amended tree work, as discussed:

- Atlas cedar (T1) - fell to ground
- Eucalyptus tree (T2) - fell to ground
- Cypress tree (T3) - fell to ground
- Conifer tree (T4) - reduce height by 1.5m and all around feathering.
- Apple tree (T6) - reduce height by 3m and some lateral pruning to form
- Yew tree (T7) - prune back to previous cutting points
- Apple tree (T8) - fell to ground
- Apple tree (T9) - remove dead wood
- Laurel tree (T10) - reduce height by 2m and all around feathering
- Conifer hedge (T11) - reduce height in line with back wall
- Holly tree (T12) overhanging from No. 7 - reduce side back to wall boundary
- Cypress trees (T14 and T15) - trim and shape to manage size

Two of the trees your client intends to fell, the Atlas cedar (T1) and the Eucalyptus (T2), have poorly formed forks which makes them unsuitable for inclusion in a Tree Preservation Order. The Atlas cedar formed a fork about 3-4 m high on the trunk following a significant reduction in the past, while the Eucalyptus has a fork at ~1m above ground which shows signs of decay. Their felling is, therefore, agreeable.

The Cypress (T3) shows significant foliage dieback while the Apple tree (T8) is an old fruit tree with very little vigour, few live branches left and limited life expectancy, as such their felling is also agreeable.

All the works proposed to the other trees (T4-T7, T9-T12, T14, T15) are considered as part of ongoing maintenance of the vegetation within the garden and are, as such, agreeable.

Please note I have not included the Choicer shrub (T5) in the list of the works above as it is not a tree and your clients do not need to notify us prior to trimming or reducing it. However, I have included one additional Cypress tree (T15, located next to T3 and T14) in the list at your client's request during my visit.

The Council and the Downshire Square Conservation Area assessment regard the mature street Lime trees as an important part of the character of the area, as such the interference of the Atlas cedar (T1) in the crown of one such street tree is yet another reason to agree to felling the tree (T1). If your team will be carrying out the felling, please instruct them to be extra cautious in doing so to avoid causing any damage to the street tree.

During our conversation, your client pointed out to me the hollow trunk of the Apple tree (T6) and I have advised them that an option for the future is to reduce this tree to a standing trunk (2-3m in height) to the benefit of local wildlife and biodiversity. Standing dead wood is becoming rarer in large parts of the landscape, meaning that the habitat of specialized dead wood species is reduced significantly.

I also confirmed to Mrs Fielding that they do not have to notify the Council about pruning of trees grown exclusively for fruit production - such as Apple trees. Although, it is arguable whether the apple trees in their rear garden are grown exclusively for fruit and they provide limited amenity to themselves and their neighbours. Regardless, the Council welcomes notices about carrying out such works as these prepare us for any calls from concerned neighbours.

The Council is encouraging replacement planting for all felled trees in order to help reach the Tree Strategy's objectives to increase canopy cover in the Borough, to mitigate climate change effects (reducing heat island effect, rain-water runoff, air and noise pollution) as well as to maintain amenity value on the property and in the wider area. If your client decides to plant replacement trees, I advise them to browse the [Council's Tree Strategy](#) to familiarize with the tree species status in Reading. As per the Tree Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan, we are encouraging planting of trees that are either native or provide wildlife value for biodiversity benefits.

The agreed works should not be carried out before six weeks from the date of your notification, i.e. before 28 November 2022.

This decision is valid for two years from the date of this letter, after which it lapses.

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 060 3900; enquiries@naturalengland.org.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

C.c.
Mrs S Fielding, 5 Downshire Square