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19th July 2022

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning

Dear Mr. Arnold,

**RE: PROPOSED FELLING OF A CEDAR AT 4 BEXLEY COURT, READING, RG30 2DY,
SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 156/07.**

Thank you for your application dated 28th April 2022 regarding the above, which was validated on receipt of supporting information received on 9th June 2022. In support of your application to fell, you have provided the following documents:

- Supporting statement dated 28 February 2022
- Supporting statement dated 9 June 2022
- Location plan

Of relevance from a Local Planning Authority perspective are the following:

- 200431 - Approval for the removal of an adjacent Cedar (T2) and refusal of the removal of a Cedar (T1) (now subject of this current application to fell).

Further to the Council's Arboricultural Consultant's site visit on 18th July 2022, the Council makes the following observations:

The Cedar (T1) is one individual tree in a historic linear group of mature Cedars which pre-date the adjacent houses and which collectively form a significant landscape feature. It is recognised that the tree both as an individual specimen and as part of the group provides high amenity value to the surrounding area. However, the recent removal of an adjacent tree under application 200431 has broken up this linear group and although the amenity of individual trees remains significant, I consider the amenity of the linear group as a whole to be somewhat reduced as a result.

In support of your application, you have submitted a statement which outlines the overall

impact of recent small branch failure on the adjacent property and residents. We have also spoken with Mr. MacDonald to discuss his experiences on the matter.

T1 is a large, full-sized Cedar and its canopy spans over three residential gardens and the adjacent public highway (turning head). Much of the front parking area of 4 Bexley Court is under the canopy of the tree and there is a high risk of impact to property including to the dwelling and vehicles in the event of even a minor branch breakout. We have been sent pictures of the damage to property following the previous branch failure from Mr. Mac Donald which have been taken into account in our assessment of this application.

The Council considers that the rooting area of the tree has been historically compromised by the extent of development and hard surfacing within its rooting area, which has put the tree under a considerable amount of physiological stress.

From the Council's site visit, it is apparent that the tree has shed a number of secondary branches which, although small in the context of the overall tree structure, are large in relation to persons and property under the tree and therefore have the potential to cause significant harm in the event of striking a person or property. A number of branches were shed during the exceptionally high winds experienced in storm Eunice and Franklyn in February 2022. Although it is not unusual for a mature Cedar to drop minor branches in such extreme weather events, the Council recognises that the risk of harm is notably greater for this tree given the high level of occupancy in the area directly under the tree.

Having reviewed the condition of the tree, the base and trunk appear to be well-formed and structurally sound. The canopy is now asymmetrical with areas missing following recent branch breakouts and there are a number of branches present in the canopy which have tear out wounds and have been undermined following the previous branch failure.

When considering the felling of any tree it is appropriate to consider whether the risk it represents is at an acceptable level taking into account the combination of the likelihood of failure (historic failures plus condition), the tree's location (target area) and likelihood of harm if further branches fail. We have assessed the information put forward in support of the felling of this tree and whether that is considered sufficient to justify the amenity lost from its felling, i.e. which is considered to be the overriding factor 'on balance'.

The Council's conclusion is that this tree has suffered irreparable harm as a result of overdevelopment within its rooting area. Correspondingly, the tree is now growing in an area of high occupancy which carries with it a significant risk of harm to persons or property in the event of even a minor branch breakout. The tree has suffered previous branch failure which has undermined the stability of other branches in the canopy and remedial pruning works are not viable due to the nature of the wounds and the characteristics of the species. Further branch breakage is foreseeable and risk of harm to persons or property present under the tree is found to be unacceptable as a result.

In conclusion, I can confirm that the proposed felling of T1 Cedar, growing to the front of 4 Bexley Court is approved subject to the conditions below.

You will note that, as with 200431, there is a replacement condition attached and as

stated for 200431, we will expect the species to be of a sufficient size to replace the amenity value lost and be appropriate for the creation of a new line of trees of landscape value if/when further Cedars require removal. Given that the replacement required under 200431 is overdue, please ensure that both replacements are agreed and planting arrange for the forthcoming 2022-23 planting season.

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. Following the felling of the trees authorised by this consent, one tree of a minimum 10-12cm girth and 3m in height shall be planted in the same place during the planting season (Nov-March) following or at the time of the felling of the tree, whichever is soonest. The species and location of the replacement tree shall be agreed with the Council prior to purchase and planting.

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 two years from the date of this notice, after which the consent lapses and a new application will be required.

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 030 6000

If you wish to appeal against 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 5570 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

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer

cc. Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald, 4 Bexley Court, Reading, Berkshire RG30 2DY