



Ms F Howles
Chancery Mews Residents Association
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RG7 2AZ

Frances Martin
Executive Director for
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Our Ref: 221070/TPO
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 372440
sarah.hanson@reading.gov.uk

14 November 2022

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

Dear Ms Howles

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TWO YEW TREES AT CHANCERY MEWS, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 20/06.

Thank you for your application of 20 July 2022, regarding the above.

For initial clarity, the TPO lists two Yew trees, but the application has taken them to be one; I assume as their canopies have grown such that they present themselves as one tree. We have assessed the overall impact as if it were one tree, but you will see in the approved works that both T1 & T2 are referred to for clarity.

Your application sought permission for:

Proposed works:

- 1) A reduction of the height by approx 6-10ft/2-3m and a reduction of the crown by approx 6-10ft/2-3m - please see attached photo of proposed reduction.*
- 2) Crown raise to 12-15ft/3.5-4.5m.*
- 3) Remove any dead or significant crossing limbs.*
- 4) Minimal crown thin of 10-20%.*
- 5) Remove epicormic from the base and trunk.*

The reason for the reduction is to keep the tree clear of the gutter and windows, increase light levels for occupiers and reduce risk of snow damage.

Further to my visit of 3 August 2022 with my colleague Andrei Nazare, I provided an email on 4 August to explain some of the concerns about the proposed works. To reiterate the content of that email, the overall reduction is significant, removing a large amount of the crown, hence it is appropriate for the Council to consider if this, and the subsequent reduction in amenity value of the trees, is justified and if an alternative pruning

specification might alleviate concerns. As a point of good arboricultural practice, the implementation of crown thinning at the same time as a reduction is advised against (ref 7.7.1 of BS3998:2010). Having said that, 'crown cleaning', i.e the removal of dead, dying crossing/rubbing branches can equate to a small crown thin and would be acceptable rather than it being a separate operation to point 3 above; effectively combining points 3 & 4.

The proposed crown lifting (point 2 above), through 360 degrees, which we would take to include the removal of basal / epicormic growth (point 5 above), seems reasonable as this will allow more light under the canopy, especially to the southern section of the building. It is also perfectly reasonable to prune the canopy away from that southern section of the building as the branches are touching. Clearance towards the other two elevations is already good.

A height reduction (as included in the crown reduction) would not make any noticeable difference to light levels given the proximity of the tree hence does not appear justified.

In that same email, I suggested an alternative pruning specification. In your emails of 2 November 2022, you confirmed that following discussion with the other Directors and your tree surgeon that you wished to stick with the original pruning specification, which of course is your right. You advised:

'Our arborists expect the yew tree to fully recover from the works proposed. As Directors the concern is that the more limited scheme you suggested would not yield the benefits required for the tenants, particularly an improvement in light levels, and would require an expensive revisit in the next few years'.

As above, with reference to my email of 3 August, we do not consider that a height reduction is justified in view of the reasons put forward in support of it. A height reduction was refused in 2006, so our approach is consistent, albeit an unauthorised height reduction was subsequently carried out. Lateral reduction, other than that to the southern limbs, does not appear justified as clearance from the buildings in the other directions is already good. **As such the proposed reduction of the height by approx 6-10ft/2-3m and a reduction of the crown by approx 6-10ft/2-3m in the north, west and easterly directions is refused.**

I can confirm that the following alternative and lesser works are approved subject to the conditions below:

T1 & T2 Yew:

- Crown raise to 12-15ft/3.5-4.5m, through 360 degrees, including the removal of basal / epicormic
- Reduction of southern limbs, back to suitable growing points, to give approx. 1m clearance from the building (gutter)
- Crown clean, i.e. removal of dead, dying crossing/rubbing branches to equate to no more than a 10-20% crown thin

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.

If you wish to appeal against refusal of works, as detailed above, or against any of the conditions attached to the consented works, 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 5570

E-mail it to: treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Advice and forms available at: [Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

If you suffer any loss or damage as a result of this refusal of consent, you may be entitled to recover compensation from the Council. If you wish to make a claim you must do so within 12 months from the date of this decision (or, if you 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.

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