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Mr. Zack Hart
Bearwood Tree Services Ltd
1 Park Road
Hampton Wick
Kingston Upon Thames
KT1 4AS

Our Ref: 220316/TPO
Your Ref:

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

8th April 2022

Your contact is: Sarah Hanson, Planning & Building Control

Dear Mr. Hart,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO REDUCE 2X HORSE CHESTNUT TREES ON / ADJACENT TO 23 PARKSIDE, READING BERKSHIRE - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 10/16

Thank you for your application of 5th March 2022, which was validated on 31st March 2022, regarding the above.

Your application form requested approval for the following:

*T1 - Horse Chestnut - Monolith failing / dead tree in order to make safe & create habitat.
T2 - Horse Chestnut - Monolith failing / dead tree in order to make safe & create habitat.*

In my acknowledgement email of 9 March, I raised concern that your application form, under the 'What are you applying for?' section, confirmed that you have no concerns about the condition of the trees, e.g. that they are diseased or that they may break or fall, which was in conflict with the proposed works. I therefore requested confirmation of the situation and detail on the findings of the tree inspection undertaken to support the felling and further requested confirmation of whether the trees are failing (still alive) or dead, as both could not apply.

Your initial response email of 31 March stated that '*both T1 & T2 are failing and in declining health*' (and made reference to a third tree that had failed) and confirmed you were '*suggesting to monolith the remaining two trees in order to make safe & create habitat*'.

My response email of the same date acknowledged your confirmation that the trees are

failing, rather than dead, and requested further commentary on their condition from your inspection, e.g. what is their crown condition; is there any decay present, confirmation that their condition is such that felling is the only option, or any comment on the potential reasons for their condition? As advised in that email, the information provided thus far was simply a statement, leaving officers to determine this information, which should be included in the application given the proposal to (effectively) fell, i.e. application submissions should give information to justify the work proposed. That email also asked for confirmation of the proposed monolith height you envisaged.

Your second email of 31 March, with seven attached photographs, stated:

*‘As you can see the trees are covered in ivy, although having large crown mass they are falling to show signs of sufficient budding as you would expect.
The two remaining trees have had some limb failure and as you can see from the photo the third tree was massively decayed.
We suggest a monolith to approx 6-8 foot above fence line’.*

Of the seven photos provided, four were photographs of the trees in question (the whole of the tree) and three were of the failed (non-TPO, Council) Horse chestnut tree on the Parkside Road / Shireshead Close corner.

From the above, the application was taken to be one to ‘reduce the height of 2x Horse Chestnut trees to approximately 6-8ft above the adjacent fence line (approximately 3.6-4m) to create a monolith and retain for habitat value’.

The Council’s Arboricultural Consultant visited the property to view the trees on 6th April 2022. At the time of the site visit the trees were coming into leaf and the leaf growth and bud density were as expected for a healthy Horse Chestnut at this time of year (see photographs at the end of this letter). There is no significant deadwood in the canopy of the trees however, it is noted that the visual inspection of the trees was greatly inhibited by the dense ivy growth around the tree trunks, and it was not possible to make a full and informed assessment of the trees’ structural condition.

Section 6 of the application form requires that if the condition of the tree is of concern then proof of this is required. The ‘no’ boxes have been ticked with regard to concern about the condition of the tree and very limited technical information has been submitted with the application for works to support the pruning proposal.

It is the responsibility of the applicant/agent to supply adequate proof, with the tree works application, regarding the specification and reasons for the proposed works to justify the proposals. The Council considers that these are mature specimen Horse Chestnut trees which are in keeping with the wider arboreal character of Parkside Road, contributing to the verdant street scene. As high amenity trees, a higher degree of justification is required to support significant tree works - this has not been provided.

In order to make a full assessment of each tree, it would be essential to sever and remove the ivy from the lower trunk of the tree. Following the removal of the ivy I would recommend a re-survey of the tree by a certified Tree Inspector. A detailed visual

assessment would provide an informed overview of each trees' health and structural condition and may also provide evidence to support essential tree works.

The Council has concluded that insufficient justification has been provided in support of the application to reduce the trees to a standing monolith. The proposed reduction of T1 & T2 (Horse Chestnuts) is contrary to good arboricultural practice would cause permanent and significant harm to the health and wider amenity of the trees. For these reasons, your application to reduce T1 & T2 (Horse Chestnut) has been refused.

This decision is made in accordance with the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25, which sets out the pathway to achieving the goal of 'a net zero carbon, resilient Reading' by 2030 and in view of the aims of our adopted Tree Strategy. In support of these aims, the Council will actively promote the retention and increase of trees numbers and tree canopy cover within the borough on public land and within private gardens, businesses and schools.

If you are aggrieved by the refusal of consent to reduce the 2x Horse Chestnut trees as per your application, 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 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.

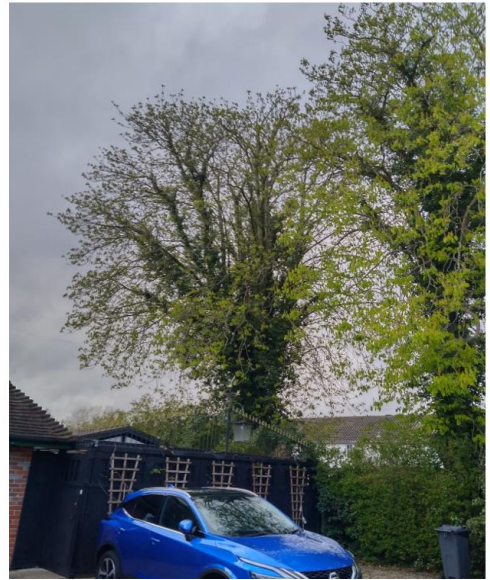
If you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer

cc. Mr Steven, 23 Parkside, Reading, Berkshire RG30 2BT



T1 & T2 Horse chestnut on 6/4/22