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Ms. Cate MacKenzie
Tree World Services Ltd
Ufton Lane
Ufton Nervet
Reading
Berkshire
RG7 4HG

Our Ref: 220081/TPO
Your Ref:

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

14 March 2022

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning

Dear Ms. MacKenzie,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES AT 37A RICHMOND ROAD, CAVERSHAM WITHIN TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 25/00.

Thank you for your tree works application, which was received on 21 January and validated on 25 January 2022. Following the Council's Arboricultural Consultant's visit on Thursday 3rd March 2022 I have the following comments:

Within your tree works application (clarified in your email of 25 January) you have applied to reduce the crown of T2 & T3 (Beech) by 2m in height and 1.5m in width (all round) in order to allow more light to reach solar panels on the roof of the property.

As the Council's representative advised Mr. Saundh at the site meeting, there is no legal requirement to prevent or negate the shading of solar arrays by trees and this is not a legal 'nuisance' as defined in law which might otherwise override the restrictions of the Tree Preservation Order.

Reading Borough Council would not usually permit the reduction of healthy and high-amenity protected trees in order to improve light to solar panels. The trees' canopies would grow back, and any benefit would be fleeting and short-lived. Seeking to maintain tree's height for perpetuity to improve the performance of solar panels is not sustainable in the long term and would cause significant harm to the long-term health and wider amenity of the tree(s).

Although the Council acknowledges the green credentials of solar panels on residential property, they must be suitably positioned so as to not conflict with the future growth of adjacent trees. The environmental, ecological and health benefits of retaining a healthy tree stock and full canopy trees in urban areas are more numerous and far exceed those of the solar panels on one property,

therefore where there is a perceived conflict between the two, maintaining the health of the trees must take priority. It is also of relevance to note that original planning permission 150753 included no solar panels on the roof scape, nor did Non-material amendment application 182118. The solar panels were therefore installed at your (or the developer's) risk given the surrounding TPO trees.

The Council has concluded that the proposed reduction in height and lateral spread of T2 and T3 (Beech) would cause considerable harm to the long-term health and wider amenity of healthy and visually significant urban trees and set an unwelcome precedent to maintain the trees at a reduce height in the long term. In view of this, the proposed reduction of T2 and T3 (Beech) is refused.

The Council has granted consent (below) for pruning works to cut back T2 (Beech) in order to create reasonable clearance to property. Consent for the other tree works listed in your application have also been included in the consent letter below.

I can confirm that the following tree works are approved subject to the conditions below:

Approved Tree Works

- T1 - Beech - Lift canopy to approximately 4 metres above ground level to allow more natural light to enter the garden and access for lawn mowing.
- T2 - Beech - Selectively reduce lateral spread on the north (property) side to create 3m clearance between outer branch tips and side elevation of 37A Richmond Road.
- T3 - Beech - Remove deadwood and thin the crown by 10%.

Conditions relating to the approved works

1. All tree surgery shall be in accordance with BS 3998: (2010) Tree Work - Recommendations. Pruning cuts shall not exceed 100mm diameter.
Reason: To ensure that all works are carried out in an acceptable arboricultural manner

2. 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. It is best to avoid works in the period immediately before or during bud burst and leaf fall to minimise the effect on the long-term health of the tree

If you are aggrieved by the refusal of consent to reduce the canopies of T2 and T3 (Beech) as per your application, or 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
Natural Environment Officer

cc. Mr Pritpal Saundh, 37a Richmond Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire RG4 7PR

