



Mr. Stephen Naylor  
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Reading  
RG4 8SZ

Frances Martin  
Executive Director for  
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Our Ref: 220188/TPO  
Your Ref:

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17<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Your contact is:

Andrei Nazare, Planning

Dear Mr. Naylor,

**RE: PROPOSED FELLING OF ONE BIRCH TREE AT 12 ST BENETS WAY, READING - PART OF W1 OF WOODLAND TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 216/06.**

Thank you for your application of 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022, regarding the above.

I can confirm that the following proposed works, as detailed in your application, are approved subject to the conditions below:

- Birch - fell to ground

You described the tree's condition as poor, stating that only a few upper limbs show signs of life, it has a number of dead limbs and it started to lean. You also said the tree is heavily covered in Ivy, has no amenity value and it worries you that it may fall over if not taken down. The photographs you provided confirm all of the above and whilst such trees can be valuable habitat in a woodland setting, the proximity of the tree to the house presents an unacceptable risk due to its condition - as such, felling is agreeable.

Your application also requests permission to fell a dead Birch tree. This is shown on the photographs as growing alongside the other Birch tree for which felling approval is granted above. The removal of a dead tree does not require formal approval for felling, as such we will take the request as a 5-day notice of intention to fell one dead Birch tree.

I note your intention to plant a mix of Hazel and Oak trees on your property following the felling of the Birch trees. As Oak is one of the species included in the TPO, we can

consider it a replacement for the live Birch. Please see to condition 3 below which refers to the requirement to replant.

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 you decide to plant a replacement for the dead Birch and additional planting (as you've indicated), it would be prudent to follow the 'right tree in the right place' principle to maintain a healthy species composition in the woodland and to ensure consideration of their mature size in relation to adjacent houses. 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.

While the decline shown in the photographs is a long process, which was aided or sped up by the unchecked growth of Ivy and possibly a number of other unknown factors, I note that some rubble and debris are piled at the base of the tree. It is likely that, at least to some extent, this pile lead to soil compaction and water or oxygen deprivation in the soil, which affect the root system and can further speed up the process of tree decline. In the future please keep the soft areas around trees clear of any materials or covers so that they benefit from optimal conditions and remain healthy.

I also recommend that you or a hired professional, inspect the (remaining) trees periodically in order to identify potential decline signs early and take remedial action as necessary. For example, Ivy growth is easy to keep in check if addressed early, before it overgrows the whole tree. Sarah Hanson's email of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022 provided advice on potential Ash dieback and suggested a way forward in terms of management of the woodland and tree work approvals.

### 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 live Birch tree (part of W1 of TPO), one native broadleaved tree, of a minimum 6-8cm girth and 2.5 metres in height shall be planted in a suitable location within an opening (area of sparse canopy cover) in the woodland during the planting season (Nov-March) following or at the time of the felling of the tree, whichever is soonest. The exact species and location of the new trees should be agreed in writing with the Borough Council prior to being purchased.

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 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. Removal of any dead or dangerous protected tree: This does not require the formal consent of the Council. However, you are required to give 5 days notice of the work where it is not an emergency, to allow the Council to agree that the proposed works are exempt from requiring consent. The exception is where works are 'urgently necessary to remove an immediate risk of serious harm', in which case you are required to give notice to the Council 'as soon as practicable after the works become necessary'.

5. Prior to the severing of well-established Ivy at the base of the tree, it would be prudent to carry out an assessment of whether any of the stems of the Ivy are forming a natural brace above a suspected bark-included union.

## Appeals

If you wish to appeal against any of the conditions attached to this 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](mailto:treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Your appeal should be submitted 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,

*Andrei Nazare*

Andrei Nazare  
Assistant Natural Environment Officer