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6 April 2022

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning

Dear Mr. Smith,

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES AT HIGHFIELD, UPPER WARREN AVENUE,
CAVERSHAM WITHIN TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 51/14.**

Thank you for your tree works application of 6th March 2022 regarding the above.

Following the Council's Arboricultural Consultant's visit on Monday 22nd March 2022, as you are aware, further work was suggested. This included the removal of one branch from T7 Norway spruce due to defects present in the tree and the felling of T9 False acacia due to the presence of Ganoderma brackets around the base of the tree. This additional work was detailed in my email to you of 29 March 2022 for your comment as to whether you wished this to be included in the application.

You confirmed in your email of 3 April that your client agreed to the inclusion of the works to the Norway spruce but did not wish to fell the False acacia. I assume that you client is aware of the potential impact of the presence of fungus on the tree and has fully assessed this in making the decision to retain the tree. I would recommend that the tree and impact of the fungus is monitored.

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

Approved Tree Works

- G1 - Lombardy Poplar group - reduce in height by approximately 1/3
- T1 - Sorbus - to remove one low branch over driveway back to source to improve the amenity of the tree, as indicated in application photograph.
- T7 Norway Spruce - remove one lateral branch, as shown in the photograph

below:



Officer Notes

In the right ground conditions, Lombardy Poplar can grow very big, very quickly. The vigorous rooting system and hardy nature of the tree means that they are very tolerant of pollution and can exploit an impoverished urban growing environment. However, as a consequence of this rapid growth, the tree's wood has little durability or resistance to decay.

For this reason, Lombardy Poplars growing in the urban landscape usually eventually get 'topped' (reduced in height) in order to reduce the weight and wind loading on the stems and associated risk of breakage.

The 10 Lombardy poplar trees subject of this application are early mature trees and particularly slender specimens. As a group the trees have some wider amenity value when viewed as a backdrop to houses in Chazey Road. One tree has suffered stem breakage in recent high winds. A second tree in the group also has a habitat hole mid-way up the stem indicative of stem decay. There is also a significant amount of deadwood and compressed forks with areas of bark inclusions present in all trees.

In view of this and taking into account the high occupancy of the residential location where the trees are growing; although it is acknowledged that the works will, regrettably, cause a permanent reduction in the wider amenity of the trees, it is still considered necessary and appropriate to allow the proposed reduction of these trees to bring the foreseeable risk of branch failure to within acceptable parameters in this residential setting.

As the trees are growing as a linear group, the Council has concluded that it is reasonable and appropriate to reduce all trees in the group to a similar height in order to preserve the amenity of the group as a whole rather than to only prune the declining specimens as and when required on a case-by-case basis. Following the work, the trees can continue to be maintained in a reduced form (pollarded) - subject to the necessary planning consents.

With reference to the Norway spruce, this has a number of weeping bark cracks on the bark particularly on the eastern side. It is not clear what is causing this - possibly storm damage and possibly some rootplate movement. It is considered prudent to help the biomechanics of the tree to remove a large lateral branch (as approved) which is growing out and vertically on the south-east side of the canopy and may be exacerbating the cracks on the trunk. Following this work, it is advisable to monitor for signs of instability - the gardener was advised of this on site.

Conditions relating to the approved works

1. 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

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

3. The approved canopy reduction to the Poplars shall be undertaken in mid-late Summer (July - September) when the tree's energy reserves are at their height or during the Winter months of December - January during the period of dormancy.

Reason: Taking into account the tree's phenological cycle and in order to avoid any unnecessary detriment to the tree as a result of the pruning work.

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

If you are aggrieved by 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. Ms. Caroline Mackenzie, Highfield, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, Reading
RG4 7EJ