



Mr J Smith
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Frances Martin
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Your Ref:

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23 August 2022

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

Dear Mr Smith

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES AT WISDOM COURT & DUNLEARY COURT, WESTCOTE ROAD / SOUTHCOTE ROAD, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 4/01.

Thank you for your application of 19 June 2022, regarding the above.

Further to my visit on 3 August 2022, I had a number of queries regarding the proposed pruning and reasons. Our exchange of emails of the subsequent period clarified the final pruning specification for which approval is sought and reasons, as agreed in your email of 10 August 2022. These are as follows:

- T1 - Lime to be crown reduced by 2 metres. Reason To improve light and lower risk in high winds (no specific risk highlighted)
- T19 - Lime to be crown reduced by 2 metres. Reason To improve light and lower risk in high winds (no specific risk highlighted)
- T18 - Yew to be reduced in 3 metres over driveway. To improve light and allow large vehicles to pass.
- T17 - Hornbeam - Crown lift to 3-4m above ground level through 360 degrees. Reason to improve light and allow large vehicles in. *[specification amended for clarity]*
- T16 - Lime (lapsed pollard) - Crown reduce by approx. 8m *[specification amended from re-pollarding in line with BS3998 guidance on lapsed pollards]*
- T10 - Sycamore to be crown lifted to 5.5 metres over drive. Reason - To improve light and allow large vehicles to pass.
- T9 & T11 - Limes to be crown lifted to 5.5 metres over drive. Reason - To improve light and allow large vehicles to pass.
- T7 - Beech to be crown reduced by 3 metres. Reason - To reduce wind loading;

crown lift above the garages (1-2m) to provide better clearance and more light under the canopy to the residents next door and prune branches to give 1-2m clearance from the neighbours *[crown lifting and pruning away from neighbouring building added to provide appropriate clearance]*

- T6 - Beech to be crown lifted to 1-2m above the garages and crown reduced by 3 metres. Reason - To reduce wind loading; A crown reduction has been requested to allow light to residents and lower any risk to property should high winds return in the future. *[crown lifting added to provide appropriate clearance]*
- T5 - Holm Oak to be crown lifted to 1-2m above the garages and crown reduced by 4 metres. Reason - To reduce wind loading and improve light. The concerns are both the size of the tree and its location, A crown reduction has been requested to allow light to residents and lower any risk to property should high winds return in the future. Also sever climbers and Ivy. *[crown lifting added to provide appropriate clearance]*

During our exchange, I sought clarification of your concerns over 'wind loading' but this was not provided; with confirmation given that the reductions proposed were as a result of the applicant's perceived concerns and to alleviate light issues.

The proposed reductions to T1 Lime, T19 Lime, T7 Beech, T6 Beech and T5 Holm Oak have therefore not been supported with sufficient arboricultural justification to outweigh the negative harm on the appearance, hence amenity value, of the trees or the detrimental impact on their health from the production of multiple pruning wounds, each an entry point for decay. In addition, a reduction to improve light levels to T1 would not assist with that issue given the proximity of the tree to the building.

An additional site visit was carried out to check the tree numbering of those on the north boundary as there was still some confusion. It was noted that T8 Oak is no longer present. I believe T9 Lime is present but could not find T10 Sycamore or T11 Lime - both included in the application, hence these are not included this decision. I noted there is a small Sycamore (non-TPO) directly to the east of T14 Oak.

Refused works

- T1 Lime - crown reduced by 2 metres
- T19 Lime - crown reduce by 2 metres
- T7 Beech - crown reduce by 3 metres
- T6 Beech - crown reduce by 3 metres
- T5 Holm Oak - crown reduce by 4 metres

Approved works - subject to the conditions below:

- T1 Lime - selective branch reduction to provide 1-2m clearance from building, using previous reduction points where applicable; crown lifting through 360° to the main crown break and to 5.5m over the pavement
- T18 Yew - reduce branches over driveway by 3m.
- T17 Hornbeam - Crown lift to 3-4m above ground level through 360 degrees.

- T16 Lime (lapsed pollard) - Crown reduce by approx. 8m, leaving live growth where possible [please note condition 3 relating to timing]
- T9 - Lime to be crown lifted to 5.5 metres over drive. Reason - To improve light and allow large vehicles to pass.
- T7 Beech - crown lift to 1-2m above the garages and prune branches to give 1-2m clearance from the neighbouring building
- T6 Beech - crown lift to 1-2m above the garages
- T5 Holm Oak - crown lift to 1-2m above the garages including the removal of one low branch (with reference to the photograph below):



T5 Holm Oak – low branch that could be removed as part of crown lift over garages

The presence of a climber and excessive Ivy was noted on T5 - it would be beneficial to sever these to allow inspection of the tree in the future, reduce weight in, and sail area of, its crown (please note Informative 7).

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. The approved canopy reduction to T16 Lime 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.

4. 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

5. 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.

6. Crown lifting of trees over the footpath and carriageway: If the clearance of vegetation overhanging the highway only involves the removal of branches to give a ground clearance to the statutory heights of 2.7m over the footpath and 5.5m over the road, this does not require formal consent from the Council. You are advised, however, to give notice to the Council of these intended works in order that they can be agreed.

7. 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

If you wish to appeal against the works refused 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

[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

C.c. Mr Ashish Patel, Wisdom & Dunleary Court Management (via email)