

Mr Niel Herdman
4 Graveney Drive
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 7EG

Our Ref: 220791/TPO
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 372440
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4th July 2022

Your contact
is: Sarah Hanson, Planning & Building Control

Dear Mr. Herdman,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TWO FIELD MAPLES PROTECTED AS T2 & T3 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 98/05 WITHIN THE REAR GARDEN OF 4 GRAVENEY DRIVE, CAVERSHAM, READING

Thank you for your application of 29th May 2022 regarding the above.

You have applied to cut back a Field Maple by up to 5m. The reasons given for the work is that the tree *‘currently has a few dead branches on it. More importantly it leans quite significantly. It is perched on a ledge at the bottom of the garden. The trees’ roots can be seen sticking through the other side. During recent storms a few big branches snapped broke off and hit my shed and neighbours shed and fence. I would like to prune the tree to take away dead branches but also to stop the tree from growing at an angle. My fears are in any future storms the tree will fall and hit the house’*, and your tree surgeon advised the work was prudent to *‘prevent wind loading and to balance to overall canopy. Plus to relive mechanical stress off lower limbs’*.

Firstly, a point of clarification, I note that in your application you have listed this as one (multi-stem) tree. However, the Tree Preservation Order records it as two separate trees. This application has therefore been interpreted as work to be undertaken to both protected trees which you have listed as being one multi-stem.

In response to your application, the Council’s Arboricultural Consultant visited the property to view the trees on Thursday 23rd June 2022 from the garden of 4 Graveney Drive only. She found that both trees have leaning stems and asymmetrical canopies which have formed in response to suppression from an adjacent larger tree which has since been removed or fallen and of which, now only the stump remains.

As the trees are now asymmetrical and without the shelter provided by the much larger adjacent tree, works are appropriate to reduce the canopy of the tree(s) in order to reduce the weight and wind loading on the recently exposed canopy.

The proposed overall reduction of 'up to' 5m of the entire canopy of the tree if undertaken evenly around the canopy outline could be interpreted as major pruning work which would create large cuts in excess of 100mm contrary to recommendations in the British Standard 3998:2010 (Tree Work 'Recommendations') and which would introduce decay pathogens which can weaken the structure of the tree.

Reading Borough Council considers that although a reduction of the trees is appropriate, the given specification of 'up to 5m' is vulnerable to misinterpretation and would potentially permit major pruning works contrary to accepted arboricultural good practice. There is therefore some risk to the health and amenity of the protected trees. For these reasons, your application to reduce the canopy of T2 and T3 (Field Maple) by up to 5m is refused.

An alternative specification of works has been consented to in the second half of this letter, to selectively prune back the canopy taking into account the asymmetrical form of the trees and to avoid misinterpretation in its execution in order to preserve the health and amenity value of the tree(s).

Approved Tree Works

T2 Field Maple (Northernmost tree)

- Reduce lateral spread of canopy over the garden of 4 Graveney Drive by approximately 4-5m and approximately 2-2.5m in height back to suitable reduction points and graded into the surrounding canopy over the garden of 4 Graveney Drive to create a smaller and more balanced canopy shape.

T3 Field Maple (Southernmost tree)

- Reduce lateral spread of canopy south and west over the garden of 4 Graveney Drive by approximately 2-3m and approximately 2-2.5m in height back to suitable reduction points and graded into the surrounding canopy over the garden of 4 Graveney Drive to create a smaller and more balanced canopy shape.

In all cases, pruning cuts should not exceed 100mm diameter

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. The approved canopy reduction 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.
3. Climbing spikes shall not be used whilst undertaking any form of works on living trees, except on trees to be felled.
Reason: Climbing spikes cause significant damage to trees and tree bark.

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 the refusal of consent to reduce the entire canopy of T2 & T3 (Field Maples) by up to 5m as per your application, or against any of the conditions attached to the approved works, 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 the consented works, 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