



Frances Martin
Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services

Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 937 3787

Mr. Trevor Osborne
Naturally Trees
6 Long Close
Kintbury
Hungerford
Berkshire
RG17 9XQ

Our Ref: 220549/TPO
Your Ref:

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

28th April 2022

Your contact
is: Sarah Hanson, Planning

Dear Mr. Osborne,

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO A HORSE CHESTNUT TREE AT SHELLEY COURT,
46 LONDON ROAD, READING - T4 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 206/06**

Thank you for your application of 11th April 2022 regarding the above.

You have applied to reduce T4 (Horse Chestnut) back to the original pollard points which are approximately 6 metres above ground level. This work is proposed in order to alleviate the potential of a lapse pollard failure over road and parking spaces.

In my acknowledgement email of 12/4/22 I sought clarification on the works and asked: *'I note that you state it is a lapsed pollard and as such I would be grateful for your assessment of the acceptability of, and specific need to, reduce it back to previous pollard points rather than alternatives, such as reduction, as recommended in BS3998 for lapsed pollards'*. In response you stated: *'the Horse Chestnut borders a very busy junction with high target occupancy of pedestrians, and vehicles. From memory I think there is a pedestrian crossing very near the tree too. Furthermore the residents of Shelly Court are very concerned about the proximity of the canopy to the building and the car parking spaces'*. As your response didn't comment on the appropriateness of the proposed works in arboricultural terms, e.g. impact on the tree, BS 3998 guidance, and whether alternatives had been considered in view of these considerations, I sought further clarification, to which you advised that you had considered a reduction, but *'felt a pollard would achieve the desired outcome from a safety and management objective. The tree seems to be of good vigour and would be able to regenerate from the pollard, sometimes achieving the necessary outcomes is difficult within the BS3998'*. Following this I queried whether the condition of the pollard points were of such concern such that you don't think a reduction would be sufficient to address health & safety concerns, e.g.

was there extensive decay present? And further advised that whilst we can't always follow the BS, it is necessary to justify deviations from it, which is what I was trying to establish. I pointed out that with the pests & diseases affecting this species, their response to significant pruning is not always positive, hence the greater need to consider the extent of pruning and justify that. Your final response confirmed that *'There has not been an aerial survey completed on the tree, so I am not sure of the overall condition of the pollards. From what I remember the tree had been pollarded to a slightly higher height much more recently. Would you deem this more acceptable as an on-going maintenance routine to assist in the health & safety concerns and management of the tree for the clients?'*

In response to your application, the Council's Arboricultural Consultant visited the property to view the tree on 20th April 2022 and has found the tree to be a high amenity tree growing in a prominent location at the junction of Craven Road and London Road, one of the principal arterial routes into Reading. In view of the email exchange detailed above, the appropriateness of the work was considered taking into account the impact of the proposal on the health and amenity value of the tree and whether the proposal is justified on arboricultural grounds, in view of the reasons /concerns put forward in support of the works.

London Road is a designated 'Treed Corridor' within the Councils adopted Tree Strategy and an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in the Local Plan. Reading Borough Council is committed to enhancing tree canopy cover in these environmentally sensitive urban areas and preserving existing tree canopy cover plays an important role in this.

T4 is a mature Horse Chestnut of good form and physiological health. The tree is a lapsed pollard and was last reduced sometime around 2007/8 when the canopy was reduced to around 12m. There are earlier reduction points around 6m above ground level which is where you have proposed reducing the tree back to.

The Council has identified many large mature branches above the original 6m reduction point therefore, cutting the tree back to this point would create wounds in excess of 100mm contrary to the guidelines and recommendations outlined in the British Standard 3998 (Tree Work Recommendations).

The proposed reduction would remove most of the leaf bearing canopy of the tree significantly disrupting the flow of plant hormones created in the branch tips and reducing the overall health and vigour of tree by removing the energy stored in the severed branches. Following the work, the large pruning cuts are likely to be vulnerable to decay pathogens which can weaken the structure of the tree.

The proposed re-pollard of T4 (Horse Chestnut) is, for the reasons given, considered to be harmful to the health and wider amenity value of a healthy and significant protected tree contrary to good arboricultural practices, and has not been justified on arboricultural grounds, therefore your application is refused.

Lesser works have been consented (see below) to pollard back to the more recent

reduction points approximately 12m above ground level. This work would provide adequate clearance to the adjacent property and reduce weight on the previous reduction points whilst preserving the wider amenity of the tree.

I can confirm that the following works to T4 Horse Chestnut, are approved subject to the conditions below:

Approved Tree Works

T4 Horse Chestnut

- Re-pollard tree back to previous (last) reduction points (a reduction of approximately 2-3m) taking care not to prune beyond the pollard knuckles.
- Remove epicormic (sucker) growth on base and trunk
- Crown lift removing smaller secondary branches to create 4m canopy clearance above ground level.

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. 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: 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

If you are aggrieved by the refusal of consent to re-pollard back to the original pollard knuckles approximately 6m above ground level as per your application, or against any of the conditions attached to the consented 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 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.

Please ensure the applicant receives a copy of this decision without undue delay.

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