



Mrs Christine Cope
7 Grass Hill
Caversham
Reading
RG4 7TJ

Frances Martin
Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services

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

Our Ref: 211619/TPO
Your Ref:

Email: lee.garner@reading.gov.uk

16th November 2021

Your contact
is: Lee Garner, Planning

Dear Mrs Cope,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TWO ASH TREES (G7) WITHIN THE REAR GARDEN OF 7 GRASS HILL, CAVERSHAM, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 3/19

Thank you for your application dated 28th September 2021 regarding the above.

Further to my site visit on the 11th October 2021 and following our subsequent emails I have the following comments:

Your application seeks approval for both Ash trees to be ‘extensively pollarded’. Section 4 (1) of your application form indicates that you are concerned about the condition of the trees, i.e. that they may break or fall, however no supporting advice or report from a professional is provided, as is required.

As discussed during my visit and via our subsequent emails, the application is therefore assessed only on the evidence/information provided on the application form, i.e. the statement that “*Small branches keep dropping but this last one was about 15ft long and 3 inch diameter, sufficient to inflict a fatal blow*”. We consider the information provided does not support the application sufficiently, nor did our observations during the site meeting, and therefore we advised that you seek independent arboricultural advice from a tree professional who can inspect and provide a formal report to support your application. You confirmed that you wished to continue with the application without this additional advice/evidence.

During my visit I noted the large prominent Ash trees are located on raised land to the rear of the above property. On inspection the trees appeared to be outwardly healthy individuals. I noted several large dead branches within the crown of both trees to diameters in excess of over 50mm and 1000mm in length, which we recommend should be removed for safety reasons.

Within the application there were concerns raised for the failure of a branch, around 35mm in diameter and around 2 metres in length, which had failed and landed on the ground. The branch appeared healthy and wasn't displaying any signs of known defects that would show why the branch had failed. It is fair to assume that the branch had failed or was damaged during inclement weather, resulting in the branch ultimately falling. Aside from the large pieces of deadwood within the canopy of the trees, there were no other defects noted, whilst viewing the trees from your property (from ground level).

The tree works requested were to undertake pollarding works to the canopy of both Ash trees. The trees are mature trees that have never been pollarded before. Good practice advises that pollarding works are to be undertaken to trees that are yet to reach maturity and thereafter repeated on a regular cycle to limit the detrimental impact of the works on the tree's health and condition. Undertaking the proposed works to the mature Ash in question is deemed as "topping", which should only be undertaken in the most extreme cases, due to the negative impact on health and condition of a tree. We have no evidence that such extreme measures are required in this case.

Undertaking the requested pollarding/topping works to the tree will create multiple large pruning wounds that are exposed to infection and decay. The loss of the entire energy producing foliage will have significant impact on the trees ability to create energy, which the tree uses to function i.e. growth, repair, leaf fall & bud burst and to recover from pruning. The tree will also loose significant stored energy from within its scaffold/secondary branches, when these are pruned/removed.

Undertaking such extensive works (pollarding) will have significant detrimental impacts on the health and condition of these trees, as well as their amenity value. Without any evidence demonstrating the need to undertake such extensive works to these 2 Ash trees, it is deemed that the works requested are premature and unsubstantiated.

In conclusion, without supporting evidence/information the proposed pollarding of the Ash trees is refused.

If you wish to appeal against the Council's decision on this matter, 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

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.

Note: It is strongly advised that the trees are inspected all round by an independent competent tree professional. The following link will take you to the Arboricultural Association approved consultant list: [Arboricultural Association - Registered Consultant Directory \(trees.org.uk\)](http://Arboricultural Association - Registered Consultant Directory (trees.org.uk)) and to consultant approved by the Institute of Chartered Foresters: [Forestry Consultant Services | Arboricultural Consultants | ICF \(charteredforesters.org\)](http://Forestry Consultant Services | Arboricultural Consultants | ICF (charteredforesters.org))

If you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely

Lee Garner

Lee Garner
Consultant Assistant Natural Environment Officer