



Frances Martin
Executive Director for
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Mr Neil Wilson
Beechwood Tree Care LTD
2 Playhatch Farm Cottages
Playhatch
RG4 9QX

Our Ref: 211187/TPO
Your Ref:

Email: lee.garner@reading.gov.uk

21st September 2021

Your contact
is:

Lee Garner, Planning

Dear Mr Wilson,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO A GROUP OF LIMES AND A FALSE ACACIA WITHIN THE GARDEN OF THE GLEN, BOUNDARY LANE, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 98/05

Thank you for your application dated the 19th July 2021 with supporting tree report and subsequent email on the 10th September 2021 confirming pollarding specification.

Further to my site visit of the 6th September 2021 I have the following comments:

During my visit I noted the group of 12 Limes and one False acacia tree to all be outwardly healthy individuals. They currently provide good visual amenity value, contribute to the verdant nature of the area and are considered sustainable in their location.

You have requested that a large branch is removed from the False acacia tree (designated T1as within tree report) located next the garage, due to a defect being present. Within the tree report there has been no defect identified for us to consider. As it stands, removing this branch back to source would leave a wound greater than 1/3rd of the parent stem, which is not in line with current best practice (BS:3998:2010 see section 7.2.4). However, undertaking a lesser reduction in-line with the gutter of the outbuilding would be acceptable and has been permitted below. However, as it is not clear as to what the defect is present, I am unable to determine whether this will alleviate the concern.

With regards to the group of Limes (designated as T2 - T13 within tree report) you have proposed pollarding at approximately 3m above ground level at historic pollard knuckles. In support of this, you have stated that decay and included unions are visible on some of the old pollard points, however this has not been specifically identified within the report or further comment on the extent of these issues. Although the premise of pruning trees as a group is appreciated, where such extensive works have been requested (pollarding the trees down to 3 metres above ground level), the works needs to be justified due to the large pruning wounds that would be created and resulting decay, i.e. the detrimental impact on the trees' future health (as well as amenity). As the trees have not been individually inspected there is no detail of how many trees are thought to be defective and evidence provided that the defect(s) is in fact significant enough to justify the proposed work. It is therefore more difficult to justify the pollarding of the remainder.

Undertaking historical management such as pollarding works is acceptable in principle, providing works have been undertaken regularly, however, in this case, we are dealing with lapsed pollards that have not been pollarded for many years (to the height proposed). Most recent record of works undertaken was in 2013, where some reduction works and some pollarding (at a higher level than currently proposed) were permitted, with each tree being treated individually. Inline with current best practices (BS3998:2010 section 7.10) where pollard cycles have been allowed to lapse, a crown reduction should be proposed instead.

A tree that undergoes a regular pollard will store its energy beneath the pollarding points (within the knuckle) so that this valuable resource is not lost during the pruning process. As the trees have not had regular cyclical pollarding undertaken (to the height proposed) and have been allowed to lapse, this storage of energy would now not occur and will be lost. The combination of such extensive canopy/energy loss would have significant impact of the trees' future health.

Notwithstanding the above, if any trees hold such defects that would warrant such extensive works due to safety, principally this would not be unreasonably refused. However, as it stands, observations made with regards to defects isn't specific to any one tree. It is not unreasonable to require noted defects for each tree, the location of the defect within the tree and photos in support. It may even, in some circumstances, be necessary to undertake further investigation of a defect to determine its significance.

Although I do not disagree with some of the reasoning made within the application, the fundamental points of substantiating a safety concern and following up with recommendations suitable for the individual trees and therefore impact on the group has not been executed. In order for us to consider and approve such extensive works, we will require evidence to substantiate these works.

There has been insufficient evidence provided that would demonstrate foreseeable tree failure. The works would not only impact on individual tree health, but would have a

detrimental impact on the appearance, hence amenity value, of the tree group. Therefore, I do not consider that adequate justification has been provided for the significant works requested.

It may be that some pruning can be justified, however a greater level of detail and specific pruning specifications will need to be provided in a new application.

In conclusion, the proposed pollarding works requested to be undertaken to the group of Lime trees, i.e. down to approx. 3m above ground level, is **refused**. Also, removing the large branch from the Acacia tree has been **refused**, however lesser works have been approved below.

The following works are **approved** subject to the conditions below:

False Acacia (designated as T1 within Tree report and covered by TPO 98/05)

- Selectively tip-reduce the largest lowest limb that extends over the outbuilding back inline with the closest gutter.

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. 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

Informative(s)

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 wish to appeal against the refusal of consent to pollard the Limes or remove the branch from the False acacia 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 Hedge
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 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.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Garner

Lee Garner BSc (Hons) Arboriculture
Consultant Assistant Natural Environment Officer

cc. Mr Kietz, The Glen, Boundary Lane, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7TD