



Frances Martin
Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services

Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 9373787

Mr Nick Jones
21 Maytree Walk
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 6LZ

Our Ref: 212081/TPO
Your Ref:

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

26th January 2022

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning

Dear Mr. Jones,

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES ON LAND TO THE REAR OF 1-9 JEFFERSON CLOSE,
CAVERSHAM, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 72/003.**

Thank you for your application dated 23rd December 2021 and validated on 5th January 2022, regarding the above.

Within the tree works specification, you have applied to reduce T2 - White Poplar down to the main stem fork (approximately 8m above ground level), to fell an Ash tree with early Ash Dieback Disease to ground level and prune one Sycamore.

The Council's appointed Tree Consultant, Sarah Duckworth, met with you on Thursday 20th January 2022 to view the trees and assess the expediency of the works. In response to the proposed work Ms Duckworth advises as follows:

T2 (White Poplar)

T2 (White Poplar) is a large slender tree, visible as a backdrop to houses in wider views from Jefferson Close and more fleetingly, from Peppard Road. Overall, the tree is in a poor form having been topped in the past and with long extended regrowth from the previous reduction points.

In the right ground conditions, Poplar can grow very big, very quickly. The vigorous rooting system and hardy nature of the tree means that they are very tolerant of pollution and can exploit an impoverished urban growing environment. However, as a consequence of this rapid growth, the tree's wood has little durability or resistance to decay.

For these reasons many Poplar which are incorporated into the urban landscape eventually get 'topped' (reduced in height) in order to reduce the weight and wind

loading on the stems and associated risk of breakage. This practice, although often justified to eliminate a foreseeable hazard, unfortunately accelerates the spread of decay by exposing the heartwood, further reducing the safe useful life expectancy of the tree. The result is a tree with reduced amenity value which requires careful ongoing management.

The Council recognises that a further reduction of this tree is required and appropriate, however, the reduction you have applied for goes beyond the previous reduction points and would effectively leave the tree as a short 'monolith'. Following the works the tree would have no branch structure and large cross-section wounds on the trunk which would act as entry points for decay. Following this work, views of the tree would be largely obscured by the surrounding houses and the wider amenity provided by the tree to the local area would be effectively lost.

For this reason, the proposed work to reduce the Poplar is considered harmful to the amenity provided by tree to the local area and harmful to its future health, hence is refused. Consent for a lesser reduction is provided at the end of this letter. Work is also recommended to sever the ivy from the tree in order that a full inspection of the base may be undertaken.

T3 (Ash)

You have advised that T3-Ash has early Ash dieback symptoms. The Council is aware that Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) poses a significant threat to the health of Ash trees in the UK and in many areas of the UK a significant percentage of Ash trees have already been affected by Ash dieback to varying degrees.

Although winter is not a good season in which to spot the disease as many symptoms are foliar and therefore not visible, affected Ash trees in winter frequently exhibit dieback in the outer canopy, and more prolific epicormic growth lower down the crown. Deadwood and uneven bud distribution are also indicative of the disease. None of these symptoms were visible at the time of the Consultant's site visit.

Current management guidelines from Forest Research (Great Britain's principal organisation for forestry and tree related research) recommend a general presumption against felling living ash trees, whether infected or not. This is because there is good evidence that a small proportion will be able to tolerate *an Ash Dieback* infection. There is also the possibility that a proportion of Ash trees can become diseased, but then recover to good health. These trees would be valuable for research.

The Borough Council takes a view that, in line with Government guidelines, Ash trees should be retained unless their condition is so undermined that recovery is not considered viable or without the structure of the tree being severely impaired as a result or their condition that it poses an unacceptable risk to people or property.

I note from your email of 11/01/21 that you confirm that symptoms you noted (which you attributed to Ash dieback) are of an insignificant amount at this current time and you indicate that your recommendation to fell is mainly due to ease of access should the tree decline. We do not consider this reasonable justification to fell a mature tree of amenity

value whose current condition does not warrant felling and whose future decline is not certain. It would be prudent to monitor the condition of the tree, including a check in summer once in full leaf.

For these reasons the proposed removal of T3 (Ash) is considered contrary to arboricultural good practice and current Government guidance hence your application to fell the tree is refused.

T4 (Sycamore)

The branches overhanging the adjacent garden (No.6) were noted and reduction considered reasonable and without harm to the tree.

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

Approved Tree Works

T2 - White Poplar

- Reduce regrowth (approximately 5-7m long) back to previous reduction points retaining the pollard knuckle where present.
- Prune out any dead, dangerous or dysfunctional wood.

Works are also recommended to sever the ivy around the lower trunk and to carry out a full inspection of the tree base.

T5 - Sycamore

- Reduce lateral spread over garden by 2-2.5m, tapering into top.

Conditions relating to the approved works

1. Where possible, 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 to T2 Poplar shall be undertaken in mid-late Summer (June - September) when the tree's energy reserves are at their height or during the Winter months of December - February 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 for works to T2 (White Poplar) or T3 (Ash), or against any of the conditions attached to your consent, 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 your clients suffer any loss or damage as a result of the refused of work, they may be entitled to recover compensation from the Council. If they wish to make a claim they must do so within 12 months from the date of this decision (or, if they 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

cc. Mr. Alan Bateman, Jefferson Close Management Company - 5 Jefferson Close - Emmer Green - RG4 8US