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Mr P Sampson
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Our Ref: 201493/TPO
Your Ref:

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11 January 2021

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning

Dear Mr Sampson

**RE: PROPOSED FELLING OF ONE TULIP TREE AT 53 CRESCENT ROAD, READING -
SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 88/06.**

Thank you for your application of 23 October 2020, regarding the above, which was supported by the following documents:

Engineers Opinion Report x2 (letters of 26/11/2018 and 19/12/2018 from Innovation Group)

Engineers Addendum Report

Arboricultural report (Arboricultural Consultancy for Aviva) dated 21/06/2019, included within which are:

Geo-technical report dated 4 April 2019

Soil Analysis report dated 28 May 2019

Root Identification Report dated 9 April 2019

Drain Investigation report dated 22 January 2019 (repaired 13/06/19)

Level Monitoring report dated 19 September 2020 (subsequent monitoring provided Nov 2020)

Site Plan

A site visit was carried out on 11 November 2020. Evidence taken at that visit, alongside the survey video provided, was forwarded to our consultant engineers, Subtilis Consulting. As a result, we have the following comments:

- The pattern of cracking damage shows a pattern of cracking consistent with foundation movement with rotation of the rear extension towards the tree.

- The building suffered movement consistent with clay shrinkage subsidence and subsequent heave systematic of re-hydration of the clay subsoil following shrinkage.
- The timing of the damage (summer 2018) is consistent with that associated with the commencement of the moisture uptake of the nearby vegetation. This seems the most likely trigger for the initial shrinkage of the clay subsoil.
- The soil is cohesive (clay) and has low to medium volumetric potential; that is a material capable of experiencing significant changes in volume with a change in moisture content.
- The slight recovery (upward) movement recorded on the level monitoring stations suggests re-hydration of the clay subsoil during the Winter / Spring.

Taking the above into account, it is reasonable to implicate the tree in the damage to the rear extension hence we have ultimately approved the removal of the tree (see below). However, given the significance of the tree it is reasonable and appropriate to examine the extent of the damage and other factors to determine whether the removal of the tree is the most reasonable course of action at this time.

The damage to the rear extension is relatively minor in structural terms, with a maximum range of around 4.5mm along the rear elevation to the main house and monitoring to the rear left-hand corner of the extension exhibiting a lesser magnitude of movement with a range of 3mm. The range of movement recorded is considered to be on the threshold of that considered to be structurally significant; the report by Innovation Group dated 26th November 2018 confirming that: *'...in this instance the damage falls into category 2 and would be classified as slight'*.

The damage was first recorded during the extended dry summer of 2018 which is likely to have caused the roots from the Tulip tree to extend towards the property. The backing up of the drainage due to the root mass and blockage within the drainage pipework could have allowed leakage to enter the ground drawing roots towards the extension. The repair of the drainage (as is understood to have been done) ensuring that the pipework is watertight should minimise the potential for this to re-occur.

The tree itself is a mature Tulip tree which, based on a brief ground inspection, appears in good condition - no concerns over it's structural or physiological health are highlighted in the Arboricultural Report. Looking at the history of the locality, maps from 1900 show a nursery to be in that area. At some point between 1900 and 1915, the houses in Westwood Road, but seemingly excluding adjacent No. 102 & 104, were constructed, with the nursery remaining next door for further decades. Maps from 1915 indicate that the tree would have stood on the north boundary of 100 Westwood road (or a house on that location) with this boundary directly abutting Crescent road and then within the curtilage of 104 once it was built. It is possible that the tree existed within the nursery prior to 100 Westwood Road being built but at the latest would have been planted at that time. The tree is large and highly visible from the surrounding area, hence providing significant amenity value. Its loss would therefore have an unfortunate, negative impact and result

in the loss of a locally historic tree which is contributing to the canopy cover of the locality and Borough as a whole, with all the environmental benefits that provides.

Given the level of damage and range of movement recorded during the monitoring exercise, complete removal of the tree may not be warranted and would be detrimental for the reasons given above. In the first instance, reduction of the tree could be considered in combination with structural repair of the cracking damage to the affected areas of the property. The damage could then be monitored to assess the impact of the reduction and drainage repairs (already done). Any recommendations for reduction should be made in consultation with an Arboricultural consultant. As any reduction would be lesser work than approved within this application, a new tree works application would not be required as long as that work was carried out within 2 years. Such works should be carried out to good arboricultural practice and given the likely extent of the reduction, should not be carried out during or immediately before the period of bud burst or leaf fall.

It is acknowledged that insurance companies will take the cautious route in these circumstances, to eliminate any possibility of future damage, and push for the removal of a tree even when damage is classified as slight and alternative solutions and further monitoring could be done as an alternative. Given the significance of the tree, we request that appropriate further thought and liaison with the owner takes place prior to determining the final course of action.

I can confirm that the following proposed works, as detailed in your application, are approved subject to the conditions below:

- T1 Tulip - fell.

Conditions

1. Five days' notice in writing shall be given to the Council prior to undertaking the approved (or alternative, lesser) 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. Following the felling of the tree authorised by this consent, one replacement broadleaved tree of a minimum 10-12cm girth and 3m in height shall be planted within the rear garden during the planting season (Nov-March) following or at the time of the felling of the tree, whichever is soonest. The species shall be agreed with the Council and should be appropriate taking into account the soil type, i.e. a low water demand

species of a suitable (ultimate) size to avoid being within the zone of influence to limit the potential for future property damage.

Planting should be carried out in accordance with clause 10 (Planting) of BS 8545:2014 'Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations'

Should the replacement tree be removed, die or become severely damaged or seriously diseased, all within 5 years of planting, it shall be replaced by a tree of a similar size and species to that originally planted. Modifications to the requirements of this condition must be agreed in writing with Reading Borough Council Natural Environment Team.

PLEASE NOTE: The requirement to replant is the responsibility of the tree owner even if the application was submitted by another person.

Reason: To retain the present visual amenity value of the area and ensure continuity of tree coverage.

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. 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
3. Tree work consents on land not owned by the applicant: It is strongly recommended that the owner of the tree be advised of any proposed works. The owner's permission must be sought if the tree works involve work past the boundary line. This consent does not in any way imply that this Council has informed the owner of sought permission or will condone the use of consents to force any landowner to grant such permission.

If you wish to appeal against any of the conditions attached to this consent, 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 require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer

C.c. Mr & Mrs Carey, 53 Crescent Road