



Frances Martin
Executive Director for
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Mr Marc Wastle
Heritage Tree Services Ltd
Unit 5 The Beeches
Stoke Row
Henley-On-Thames
RG9 5RB

Our Ref: 211355/TPO
Your Ref:

Email: lee.garner@reading.gov.uk

13th September 2021

Your contact
is:

Lee Garner, Planning

Dear Mr Wastle,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO A DOUGLAS FIR TREE WITHIN THE REAR GARDEN OF 50 KNIGHTS WAY, EMMER GREEN, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 120/001

Thank you for your application of the 17th August 2021 and supporting Health & Safety Duty of Care Report dated June 2021, regarding the above.

Further to my site visit of the 16th September 2021, I have the following comments:

During my visit the Douglas fir tree appeared to be outwardly healthy individual and sustainably located within the rear garden of the above address.

Aside from the removal of the central leader, the canopy splay is not atypical of the species. The loss of the central leader and subsequent growth of remaining canopy has not resulted in an imbalanced crown.

Within the tree report provided, concerns were raised for “overextended lateral spread” due to the loss of the tree’s top and that these are considered to have a higher likelihood of failure.

Healthy branches can and do fail during inclement weather (e.g. during heavy snow fall or

during high winds) if trees or specific branches are overly exposed, and unable to cope with these extremes of weather. We have experienced numerous high winds over the past couple of years and have not been advised of any recent branch loss or evidence that the tree is unable to cope with wind pressure on its canopy. The last tree works application was in 2016 and there is no correspondence on file since then.

Your survey states: '*Reduce over extended laterals by 2m*' and refers to the picture within your report for a '*very approximate*' guidance on lateral pruning. The picture, whilst indicative, appears to show a significant amount of foliage removal and of an extent that is of concern over the impact on the tree's future health. In addition, the indicative nature, in this case, is a concern as to what work might actually be undertaken, particularly as only one photo from one angle is provided - it is assumed that the work will take place through 360°. It is difficult to appreciate from this photograph how it is focused on 'over-extended' laterals as it appears to involve the whole crown (all branches top to bottom). From this one annotated photograph, aside from the amount of foliage potentially removed, the appearance of the tree post-pruning is questionable.

Undertaking a crown reduction (which is effectively what is proposed, based on the photograph) to a tree places stress on its health and future condition and impacts on its appearance. It is important that when considering these works that the benefits of the pruning works outweigh the impact placed on the tree's health and amenity.

A crown reduction creates multiple pruning wounds throughout the canopy that are open to pathogens and decay. The trees will need to use considerable energy to contain the spread of decay and callus over the wounds, which in turn will place stress on the tree's future health.

As indicated above, I have concern over the impact on the amenity value of the tree following the work, based on the annotated photograph provided.

There has been insufficient evidence provided that would demonstrate foreseeable branch failure to specific branches; the work appears to involve the whole crown, i.e. not focus on specific branches and, based on the annotated photograph provided, would have a detrimental impact on the appearance, hence amenity value, of the tree. Therefore I do not consider that adequate justification has been provided for the significant works indicated.

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 reduction of the Douglas fir 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.

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