



Mr S Poole
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Frances Martin
Executive Director for
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Our Ref: 201034/TPO
Your Ref:

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17 August 2020

Your contact
is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning and Building Control

Dear Mr Poole

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE OAK TREE AT 18 HIGHBRIDGE CLOSE, READING -
SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 60/01.**

Thank you for your application of 19 August 2020, regarding the above. Your application seeks consent for a *'40% reduction in height and spread leaving 60%'*. Following submission of your application, you made me aware of damage to your neighbour's property at 16 Galsworthy Drive. Their insurer's representative is indicating that the Oak may be implicated in the damage, however no full suite of required technical reports have been provided to demonstrate that the Oak is the cause, or majority contributory factor in the damage. I was, however, mindful of the recommended overall reduction of 2m from MWA (within the Arboricultural Report from the insurers) during my visit, however we are under no obligation to formally consider this at the moment. As you are aware, your neighbour from 16 Galsworthy Drive joined us at the start of the meeting and I gave some general advice to her, which I subsequently followed up in an email to her insurers representative (Sedgwick International UK).

Further to my visit on 13 August 2020, I have the following comments:

From my brief ground inspection, the tree appeared to be in good health with no fungal fruiting bodies evident. As explained during our meeting, your proposed 40% reduction was not acceptable as it goes against good arboricultural practice. Generally, a 30% reduction is the maximum that should be considered on any tree and even then, there

should be sound arboricultural reasons for carrying out this work, e.g. the tree has a major defect(s) that needs to be addressed. A 40% reduction would remove a significant amount of the tree's foliage bearing structure, i.e. reducing its photosynthesising ability, hence the amount of 'food' it can produce. In addition, multiple wounds would be created, each being an entry point for pathogens and decay. No arboricultural evidence has been provided in this instance to justify such a significant reduction, which would have a detrimental long-term impact on the amenity (appearance) and health of the tree.

In relation to the 2m overall reduction recommended by MWA, whilst this is not formally being considered, I would comment that it appears rather generic and does not take into account the growth form of the tree or its proximity to the house and neighbours. A more targeted approach in specifying the reduction would be appropriate and this was discussed on site with you and your neighbour at No. 17.

I can confirm that the 40% reduction is refused for the reasons given above, however the following, lesser works, as discussed on site, are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the attached photographs:

- North side of crown growing over alleyway - reduce over-extended laterals to bring them back in line with the main crown as indicated.
- South side overhanging No. 17 - reduce canopy by reducing so that the lowest part of the canopy is approximately in line with the boundary, the remainder being shaped as height increases to create a flowing canopy line as indicated
- East side growing towards the house - reduce to give approximately 1.5m clearance from the rear elevation, maintaining a flowing canopy line as indicated.
- Crown lift by removing lower epicormic growth up to main crown break.

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. This decision is valid for two years from the date of this notice after which the consent lapses

4. 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

5. The works hereby approved shall NOT be carried out in the period immediately before or during leaf fall or bud burst.

Reason: To minimise harm to the future health of the tree.

Informatives

1. 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'.

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 060 3900; enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

If you wish to appeal against any of the conditions attached to the consented work or against the refusal to allow the 40% reduction, 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

Email: treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Tel: 0303 444 5570

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

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer