



Mr S Arnold
Tree Solutions Arboriculture Ltd
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Frances Martin
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Your Ref:

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12 October 2020

Your contact is: Sarah Hanson, Planning and Building Control

Dear Mr Arnold

**RE: PROPOSED FELLING OF ONE BEECH TREE AT 277 HEMDEAN ROAD, READING -
SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 160/05.**

Thank you for your application of 3 August 2020, regarding the above. I apologise for the delay in providing a decision, which is due to a current exceptionally high workload.

Further to my visit on 1 October 2020, I have the following comments:

The Beech tree appears to be in good health having responded vigorously to the previous pruning in 2015. There is one area of dysfunction/decay on the north side extending from the base, several metres up the trunk and along the lowest branch - I understand that this is as a result of fire damage caused when the land (to the rear) was being developed. The tree is wide spreading with an approximate 6-7m spread but not as tall as one would expect. Its crown is fairly low to the ground (of the upper lawn) and very dense. In terms of amenity, the tree is visible from Hemdean road, forming part of the treescape along with larger trees on the escarpment to the east. It provides a useful screen between No.277 and the houses to the rear and as a screen when viewed from Hemdean Road. The reasons given in support of felling are cited as:
This tree is very dense from its pruning and is now dominating the garden. The level of pruning to bring it back into perspective with the garden would be of a level not recommended for a Beech

During my visit I identified work that could be carried out in order to crown lift the tree to allow more light under the canopy. However, it is appreciated that a more substantial crown reduction than previously undertaken, alongside significant crown thinning would also be required to make a reasonable difference. I take onboard the point that that such extensive work would not normally be recommended for this species, however it could be done in order to keep the tree in the medium term at least.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the Beech (as it is) affects light to the upper/rear part of the garden, the lower part of the garden is unaffected, directly, and acceptable work can be done to alleviate concerns regarding the upper garden.

In determining whether an application to fell is reasonable, the Council has to consider the reasons put forward for the work and whether those reasons justify the loss of amenity that would result from the trees removal. The TPO was placed on the tree 15 years ago in order to ensure its retention during the development to the rear. 15 years on, it is also reasonable to assess whether the tree's retention is appropriate.

The tree is in good condition physiological condition and there is no reason to indicate that it will not respond favourably to pruning. There is an area of dysfunction/decay present, as acknowledged above, however there was no evidence of fungal fruiting bodies present and none were indicated on the application.

Whilst the works approved below are acknowledged to be over and above that normally recommended for a Beech, they will enable this amenity tree to be retained hence 'on balance' we do not consider that the felling is reasonable at this point in time, hence felling is refused.

I can confirm that the following lesser works are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the attached photographs:

- T1 Beech - crown lift through 360° to 3m above the ground level at which the tree sits, by tip reduction and removal of secondary and tertiary branches only; remove three damaged, lower, main branches growing toward the rear/east; remove two main branches growing towards the boundary fence with No. 279; crown reduce height and spread by 2m leaving a flowing crown line; crown thin by a maximum of 20%

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. The approved canopy reduction shall be undertaken in mid-late Summer (July - September) when the tree's energy reserves are at their height or during the Winter months of December - January 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.

Informatives

1. 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 the refusal of permission to fell the tree or against any of the conditions attached to the consented work, 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

C.c. Mr & Mrs Small, 277 Hemdean Road