



Ms Caroline McKenzie
Highfield
Upper Warren Avenue
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Frances Martin
Executive Director for
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21st October 2019

Your contact is:

Sarah Duckworth, Planning & Building Control

Dear Ms. McKenzie,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO FELL A NORWAY SPRUCE WITHIN THE REAR GARDEN OF HIGHFIELD, UPPER WARREN AVENUE, PROTECTED AS T7 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 51/14

Thank you for your application dated 11th September 2019 regarding the above.

You have applied to fell T7 - Norway Spruce as the tree is very large and creates a huge amount of shade. You have advised that you would like to plant a large maple tree in its place.

T7 Norway Spruce is a prominent and outwardly healthy, mature specimen tree in keeping with the size and character of many other mature, forest-style trees growing within the residential properties along Upper Warren Avenue. Although located to the rear of the property, the height of the tree means that it can be seen in wider views from Upper Warren Avenue and thus has considerable public amenity value, contributing to the wooded landscape character of Upper Warren Avenue.

I accept that the tree casts shade over your garden, however, as tree is located to the north of your property much of the shade cast by the tree will be to the north and away from your property. Generally speaking, shadows move in an arc from the north-west to the east over the course of a day. I acknowledge that there will be shade towards the end of the day in summer over the lawn to east of the tree at the end of the day. However, in

a large garden this level of shade is not considered to be excessive or unsupportable in an area where the overriding landscape character is created by mature trees.

You have advised that you would replace the tree with a large maple tree. On site you indicated to me a Liquidamber tree (Sweet gum) or Japanese maple (*Acer japonicum*) which you have already planted at the front of the property. Although attractive ornamental trees, neither of these species would grow sufficiently large to replace the amenity lost by the removal of the Norway spruce when they mature. Any visual benefit from the trees when planted to the rear of the property would only be discernible to the occupants of Highfield.

Larger maples such as Norway maple (*Acer platanooides*) or Silver maple (*Acer saccherinium*) would come with their own problems for residents such as the seasonal nuisance of mildew and leaf fall. With broader canopies they are likely to cast more shade over the garden of Highfield and so cause a similar - if not greater level of nuisance to your property in the long-term.

Regrettably, shade is an inevitable consequence of living in any area with trees and this alone would not support an application to fell a healthy protected tree. Allowing a tree to be removed to alleviate shading alone could be used to support the removal of most trees within an urban area and would set an unacceptable precedent for deciding similar tree removal applications in the future.

The Borough Council considers that trees are vital to the future sustainability of the urban environment. They contribute many social, environmental and economic benefits to the local area. Aside from providing habitat and foraging for birds and wildlife, trees counter pollution and have been found to have a notable benefit to the health and mental wellbeing of local residents.

The Council declared a Climate Emergency earlier this year. The Borough's trees will play an important role in countering the effects of climate change and the urban heat island effect by providing shade and slowing surface water run off to reduce flooding. As such, the Borough Council is committed to preserving and enhancing tree cover where it is safe and reasonable to do so, in accordance with the Borough's adopted Tree Strategy.

I am therefore writing to advise you that, for the reasons given above, your application to fell a Norway Spruce protected as T7 of Preservation Order 51/14 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:

The Environment Appeals Team, Trees and Hedges, The Planning Inspectorate Room 3/25, Hawk Wing, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN

Email: environment.appeals@pins.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 0303 444 5584

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 Duckworth
Assistant Natural Environment Officer