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12<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Your contact is:

Sarah Duckworth, Planning and Building Control

Dear Ms Bricknell,

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO A BEECH TREE ON LAND AT PANTILES, UPPER WARREN AVENUE, CAVERSHAM, READING - WITHIN AREA 2 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 319.**

Thank you for your application dated 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and additional supporting information sent on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019, regarding the above.

You have applied to fell a Beech growing in the rear garden of the property Pantiles which is growing on The Thames chalk ridge to the north of the River.

The description of works given in your application are: *'Beech tree on the Warren Road has been historically reduced, although the canopy appears to be in reasonable fettle, there is some dysfunction around the base of the northern side which is the tension side, and this causes some concern. As to the stability of the tree, there are no obvious pathogens acting on the tree.'*

Your email dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019 provided the following supporting information. *'Three areas of dysfunction on the tension side of the tree. Also the canopy is at 60-70% of normal vitality with sections of dieback. The lean is towards a dwelling and the tree is growing on a chalk bank with thin soil.'*

The property is located within an area of the Reading Borough identified as having 'High Treescape Value' in the Borough's adopted Tree Strategy. The wooded ridge is also designated a 'Major Landscape Feature' in the Borough's adopted Core Strategy. As such, Reading Borough Council has a commitment to protect the trees along this bank and will only permit the removal of trees under the Tree Preservation Order when undertaken in accordance with the principles of good tree management or to address a substantiated health and safety concern.

I have been to view the tree in response to your application. I have noted that this tree is

one of many hundreds of trees growing along the wooded chalk bank north of The Warren. The tree in question is at the foot of the bank and has a slight lean or growth bias to the south due to phototropic growth (growing towards the light) as a result of competition with adjacent trees. A number of other trees also have the same growth bias to the south due to the density of tree growth along the bank.

The tree has a trunk diameter of approximately 550mm diameter. At the time of my inspection there were no signs of any root plate movement or decay at the base of the tree. I have looked at the three areas of dysfunction on the tension side of the tree which you have referred to and this appears to be fairly superficial areas of historic bark wounding. There was no audible decay, cavities or fungal fruiting bodies evident around the tree.

The tree has been reduced in the past and the foliage is slightly clustered with some dieback and minor deadwood suggesting lowered vitality but not exceptional in a tree of this age and species.

To date, no information has been submitted which demonstrates that the tree is hazardous condition. I acknowledge the tree is growing in thin soil on a chalk bank, however this applies to all other trees along this treed ridge and permitting a tree to be felled for this reason would set an unacceptable precedent for dealing with similar applications in the future.

In view of these considerations, your application to fell the Beech tree has been refused.

Lesser works to reduce the canopy of the tree as set out below are approved, subject to the conditions below:

#### Approved Tree Works

- Selectively reduce the canopy of the Beech growing adjacent to The Warren by up to 2m using suitable reduction points to leave a natural looking canopy outline.
- Crown clean, removing any dead, dangerous or dysfunctional branches from the canopy of the tree.

#### Conditions

1. 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

2. 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

3. 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.

4. Crown cleaning should not include the removal of fused natural braces (branches or stems), or the removal of entwining branches or rubbing branches (where they may be forming a natural brace) from the crown of a semi-mature to fully mature tree without carrying out an assessment of any junctions formed below such natural braces.

Reason: Removal of natural braces may lead to failure of weak unions.

### 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. Removal of dead or dangerous wood: This does not require the formal consent of the Council. 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'.

3. 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

If you wish to appeal against the Council's decision on this matter, or 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:

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](mailto: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*

Sarah Duckworth  
Consultant Assistant Natural Environment Officer

cc. Mrs Reeves, Pantiles, Upper Warren Avenue, Reading RG4 7ED