



Mr. James Gillate
Roots, Shoots, Leaves Ltd.
5 Juniper House
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Aldermaston
Reading
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Frances Martin
Executive Director for
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Our Ref: 191495
Your Ref:

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30th September 2019

Your contact is:

Sarah Duckworth, Planning & Building Control

Dear Mr. Gillate

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO A HORSE CHESTNUT ON LAND AT MARIA COURT, READING -
PROTECTED AS T3 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 23/003**

Thank you for your application dated 16th September 2019 regarding the above.

You have applied to fell the Horse Chestnut (T3) as you consider the tree is in major decline with rotting trunk caused by fungal infection. You have advised that the work is required to avoid the failure of the tree close to two buildings.

T3 (Horse Chestnut) is a mature tree with a broad canopy growing in a sheltered location.

Please note that the Borough Council does not disagree with your assessment that the tree is in a poor physiological condition with sparse foliage, however the defects appear to be a vascular cause (supported by the bacterial cankers, large area of bacterial wetwood and weeping lesions on the trunk) and is not indicative of any structural defect with the tree. During my site visit, I noted that there was no audible decay around the base of the tree; nor any fungal fruiting bodies of decay fungi which one might usually expect to be present at this time of year.

It would appear that the tree has prematurely defoliated which can be caused by or fungal or foliar disease, or as a result of decline in vitality. However the tree is not considered to be dead or dangerous. I note also that there are a number of other Horse

Chestnut trees in the area - notably along the A4 Bath Road, which are also showing a similar level of defoliation. The foliage is extremely sparse yet the tree has not technically 'died back' - that is to say, the branches don't have leaves present but still support viable buds.

The cause of this decline has yet to be ascertained; however, whilst the tree is not yet dead, I consider that there does remain an opportunity for them to recover.

The tree is growing in a sheltered location between the residential buildings. As the tree is not considered unstable or decaying at this time, the Borough Council considers that it is not hazardous and therefore it is appropriate to retain the tree for now in order to determine whether this decline is terminal or if the tree can recover over time. This may become apparent in the New Year when the tree comes back into leaf.

In view of this your application to fell T3 (Horse Chestnut) is refused. We would recommend that you and your client continue to monitor the condition of the tree and the Borough Council will reconsider this decision via a new tree works application at any time if it appears that the decline of the tree(s) is terminal or the stability and safety of the trees is undermined in any way.

If you wish to appeal against the Council's refusal of consent to fell T3 (Horse Chestnut) or against any of the conditions attached to the permitted works, 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