



Ms Katie Everitt
Ground Control Ltd
Kingfisher House
Radford Way
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CM12 0EQ

Frances Martin
**Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services**

Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 2LU
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Our Ref: 191040/TPO
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 372440
Email: sarah.hanson@reading.gov.uk

11 July 2019

Your contact is: Sarah Hanson, Planning & Building Control

Dear Ms Everitt

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 10 NO. HOLM OAKS AT CLEARWATER COURT, VASTERN ROAD, READING - T1-T10 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 13/16

Thank you for your application of 27 June 2019 regarding the above and subsequent email of 2 July 2019 clarifying the proposed work.

You have applied for permission to:
'Undertake period pruning (twice a year) to maintain boxed form as per species and design specifications'.

In considering the proposal, I think it is useful to reflect on the recent history of the site and how the TPO came about. In 2016, a planning application for signage on the site was submitted. Prior to the determination of this, all the Crab apple trees on the frontage were removed; the trees having been secured and planted as part of the development of Clearwater Court. Given the importance of trees in this location, Thames Water was encouraged to carry out replanting. The planting of Holm oak was posed and Officers agreed that this species would have potential to provide good future amenity value given their ultimate size and Thames Water were advised to ensure tree pit/root space provision was adequate for future growth. It was confirmed by Thames Water that this had been considered and Holm oaks were then planted. However, it was then seen that the Holm Oaks planted were planted in a box – clipped form and the intention was retain

them at that small size. A TPO was therefore served on 3 August 2016 to ensure the long-term retention of the trees and to enable them to grow to their full potential without any inappropriate pruning works. No objections were received to making of this Tree Preservation Order.

At the end of September 2016, we were contacted via email by Savilles, on behalf of Thames Water, advising us that Thames Water would like to keep the trees regularly pruned in their current box shape and we were asked when we thought the first pruning should take place. Our response, as was explained to various persons who contacted us following service of the TPO (by phone), was that the Council would like to see these potentially large trees reach their full potential to provide canopy cover and amenity to this prominent town centre location. Savilles were of course advised that their client had the right to apply to prune them into a box shape, but that as this would significantly reduce the amenity of the trees, consent under the tree preservation order would not likely be forthcoming.

Your application is the first request seeking approval for pruning following the service of the TPO nearly 3 years ago.

Vastern Road is a designated 'treed corridor' in the Council's adopted Tree Strategy and the site is within a 10% or less canopy cover area, as defined in that Strategy. As such it is a site where tree planting and retention is a priority and canopy cover is of importance. The provision of large canopy trees is also of greater importance to help filter pollution on this busy, main route around the town centre. The amenity value of the trees as a clipped form is very limited and not considered to provide softening in scale with the building or of sufficient canopy to provide value to this very urban site.

Given the importance of trees on this site and the need for larger canopies which provide multiple benefits, the maintenance of the Holm oaks as small clipped boxes is not considered to be reasonable or appropriate and no arboricultural reasons have been provided to justify the work. The proposed pruning is therefore refused.

If you/your client 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 your client suffers any loss or damage as a result of this refusal of consent, they may be entitled to recover compensation from the Council. If they wish to make a claim they 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.

Please ensure your client receives a copy of the decision without undue delay.

Unfortunately you have not provided contact details so we are unable to provide a copy ourselves.

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