



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

Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 937 3787

Mr Boyce
2 Ferndale Close
Tilehurst
Reading
RG31 6UZ

Our Ref: 190544/TPO
Your Ref:

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

5 June 2019

Your contact
is: Sarah Hanson, Planning & Building Control

Dear Mr Boyce

**RE: PROPOSED FELLING OF ONE LAWSON CYPRESS AT 2 FERNDAL CLOSE, READING -
T10 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 109/06**

Thank you for your application of 31 March 2019 with supporting Arboricultural Report ref TH 1905, dated 29 March 2019, from Trevor Heaps Arboricultural Consultancy Ltd.

Further to my visit of 14 May 2019, I have the following comments with reference to the attached photographs:

The tree in question is one of seven Lawson cypress within the rear garden (plus one Norway spruce), with a further three Lawson cypress (plus one Oriental spruce) in the front garden. The tree in question (T10) is specified individually in the TPO and is highly visible from Ferndale Close, being the front (western) tree of those in the south side of the rear garden. I do not therefore agree with the statement in 6.1 of the Arboricultural Report that *'the tree forms part of a larger group of evergreens but, in itself, is not particularly valuable or visible from outside the site'*. Its loss would be noticeable, albeit the remaining trees behind it would reduce the detrimental impact of the lost amenity to a certain extent.

The Arboricultural Report submitted focuses solely on the tree for which felling is proposed, the Tree data schedule in Appendix 2 stating that the tree is in 'fair'

physiological and structural condition. Appendix 3 (Tree survey schedule explanatory notes) defines 'fair' structural condition as: *'some structural defects noted but remedial action not required at present'*. This indicates that structural defects present do not require the tree to be felled. The justification presented in the report is in 6.2-6.4 which states that the tree has a *'tight, weak, included union'*; that *'there is a possible risk of harm or damage if one of the stems were to fail'* and that *'to retain this tree within an acceptable level of safety would require the crown to be significantly reduced, which would both greatly reduce any amenity value it provides and would involve continued resources to maintain it'*. These comments are in conflict with the structural condition given in Appendix 2. No detailed information on the examination of the fork and the potential risk this presents, taking into account the growth form of the specific tree and nature of this species, has been provided.

Appendix 4 (Site plan) of the report gives the location of the tree in question (T1 in Appendix 2) which is coloured red on this plan. Appendix 3 indicates that those trees coloured red are those that require action to be taken, stating: *'these trees are considered to be hazardous to life and property and cannot be made safe by remedial works alone. These trees will need to be removed'*. I would suggest that neither Appendix 2 nor 6.2-6.4 support this definition. I note that the Site plan in Appendix 4 also shows one other tree (R1 - non-TPO) as green; that colour relating to (with reference to Appendix 3) trees which *'are considered to be in good condition / acceptable location with no significant defects noted'*. Whilst this tree is not included within Appendix 2 (tree data schedule), I noted whilst on site that this cypress is also of multi-stem form with a potential tight fork, but has not been coloured red as T1 has.

A multi-stem form is not unusual for Lawson cypress and it would be unreasonable to fell all trees of this species with this form in the Borough. The stems are very upright in nature hence the leverage on each, due to the upright angle, and risk failure from, e.g. high winds, is much reduced compared to a multi-stem tree where the co-dominant stems are growing apart at an angle. I would suggest therefore that the risk presented by the tree is not such that felling is currently justified. Given this, along with the inconsistencies within the Arboricultural Report and the limited discussion on the tree's structural condition, it is not considered that sufficient justification has been provided for the removal of the tree on safety grounds.

In conclusion, the proposed felling of the Lawson cypress (T10 of the TPO; T1 of the report) 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 Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer