



Mr. C. Horsfall
Beechwood Tree Surgeons
64 Primrose Place
Dorrington
Wiltshire
SP4 8FE

Frances Martin
Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services

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Our Ref: 190488/TPO
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 374294
sarah.duckworth@reading.gov.uk

29th April 2019

Your contact is:

Sarah Duckworth, Planning and Building Control

Dear Mr. Horsfall,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO A PLANE TREE AT LANCING CLOSE & TO THE REAR OF ST EDWARDS SCHOOL, TILEHURST ROAD, READING, RG30 2JH, PROTECTED AS T12 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 29/03.

Thank you for your application dated 25th March 2019 regarding the above.

You have applied to reduce and prune back lateral limbs by approximately 3-4m from a large Plane Tree (T12) where it over hangs the playground of St. Edwards School. You have specified that branches would be 'blended' in to the remaining canopy to leave the tree looking in good form.

On 17th April 2019, I met with Tracy Glass, Business Manager at St Edwards School, to view the tree and consider your application. Ms Glass was able to provide me with extracts from the last three tree inspections which confirm that the tree was identified as being '*a very large and fine specimen. Visible junctions inspected with binoculars and appear sound. The tree has a very large, heavy and spreading crown.*' In your report you have advised that '*Trees of this size, age and crown weight carry the inherent risk of limb failure even when appearing upon inspection to be structurally sound. This tree is particularly vulnerable to limb failure during extreme weather events.*'

I have viewed the tree from both within the School site and viewed the base of the tree from ground level at Lancing Close. I agree with you that this is an exceptional specimen in terms of age and size which makes a significant contribution to the amenity of the local area.

The Plane (T12) has a large base which, as viewed from Lancing Close, is in good condition and with no areas of decay, bark necrosis or fungal fruiting bodies visible. A 'hammer test' was satisfactory with no audible decay or defects recorded. The tree has a single stem with all historic pruning cuts on the main trunk fully occluded and satisfactory. Tree roots are traceable under the playground surface.

The branch forks and unions are open and optimised. The tree has a very large, broad canopy with pendulous secondary growth tips. There is no evidence of any recent major branch failure and the bud density is dense and even, indicating good health and vitality. Small to medium sized pieces of deadwood were noted in the canopy of the tree which is not unexpected in a tree of this stature.

Your records from the last three annual inspections demonstrate that the tree is stable and there has been no marked changes in tree condition over the last three years. The tree is on land owned and maintained by the Borough Council and is also under routine inspection by the Council's Arboricultural Surveyor. I understand that the Council's Borough Council recently carried out works to remove deadwood.

The Borough Council would not usually consent to the reduction of an otherwise healthy protected tree. Given the pendulous form of the secondary branches, a 3-4m reduction in canopy width such as would be required to reduce the overhang over the playground would result in a significant loss of branches and leaf area to the detriment of the tree health. The reduction would also harm the amenity of the tree and create numerous pruning wounds throughout the tree canopy which would act as potential entry points for decay pathogens.

The regeneration from these pruning cuts would have a weaker attachment to the parent branch and thus be at greater risk of failure. The reduction work would need to be repeated when the tree regrows and any harm to the amenity of the tree would be long lasting.

You have not provided any supporting arboricultural information which identifies that the reduction of this tree is necessary to prevent the break or failure of part of the tree or to address a tangible health and safety concern.

In view of these considerations, the Borough Council has concluded that the proposed tree works would be potentially harmful to the tree without an overriding health and safety concern to support the need for major tree work at this time. As such, the proposed reduction is contrary to good tree management and your application to reduce the tree by 3-4m 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

cc.

Mr. Slade, Site Supervisor, St. Edwards School - site.supervisor@stedwardsprep.com

Ms. Glass, Business Manager, St. Edwards School - t.glass@stedwardsprep.com

Kevin Lee - Reading Borough Council Tree Officer