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Mr S Smith
Clerk,
Reading Quaker Premises Committee

Our Ref: 182028/TCA
Your Ref:

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

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning & Building Control

Dear Mr Smith

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES AT AND ADJACENT TO FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, 2 CHURCH STREET, READING - SUBJECT TO CONSERVATION AREA STATUS.

Thank you for your email of 19 November 2018, regarding the above.

Your Notification included pruning back 4 Sycamore at the hostel in Crosslands Road to the boundary line, along with reducing and crown lifting a Laurel within the Meeting House garden.

During my site visit of 12 December 2018 with Christina, we established that no work was required to the first two Sycamores (counting from Crosslands Road). The next Sycamore has a number of lower branches overhanging the garden and it would be reasonable to remove some of these to give greater clearance above the garden. I expressed my concern about pruning all branches (to the full height of the tree) back to the boundary as this would leave the tree one-sided and would be detrimental to its future health. Instead, we agreed that the removal of the 5 lowest branches overhanging the garden would be reasonable plus the reduction of the next highest branch to a fork (as discussed) along with removal of secondary downward growing branches from this. In relation to the last Sycamore (closest to the Meeting House), again I expressed concern about the impact of pruning all branches to the boundary and we agreed that crown lifting (removing lower branches) to 4m above the ground level (of the garden) would be reasonable.

In relation to the Laurel, your Notification gave only general detail of the proposed work. We agreed that a reduction in height to a point approx. level with the top of the Ivy on the adjacent wall and crown lifting to 3-4m on the garden side would be reasonable.

Where we receive Notification for works within a Conservation Area, the only way the Council can object / stop the proposed work is by serving a Tree Preservation Order. The Sycamore trees on adjacent land are not considered worthy of a TPO, therefore we offer no objection to the proposed works (pruning back to the boundary). However, I hope that you will consider carrying out the alternative works as detailed above, for the reasons given.

The works should not be carried out before six weeks from the date of your notification, i.e. before 31 December 2018.

This decision is valid for two years from the date of this letter, after which it lapses.

Informatives

1. Removal of dead or dangerous wood: This does not require the formal consent of the Council. However written notice must be given 5 working days in advance of removing dead wood. 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'.
2. 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 060 3900; enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
3. It is best to avoid works in the period immediately before or during bud burst and leaf fall to minimise the effect on the long-term health of the tree
4. Tree work consents on land not owned by the applicant: It is strongly recommended that the owner of the tree be advised of any proposed works. The owner's permission must be sought if the tree works involve work past the boundary line. This letter does not in any way imply that this Council has informed the owner or sought permission or will condone the use of consents to force any landowner to grant such permission.

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

C.c. Christina Hughes Nind