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Mr S Arnold
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Our Ref: 181047/TPO
Your Ref:

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22 August 2018

Your contact
is: Sarah Hanson, Planning and Building Control

Dear Mr Arnold

**RE: PROPOSED FELLING OF ONE WELLINGTONIA AT 20 SCHOOL ROAD, READING -
SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 81/01.**

Thank you for your application of 5 June 2018, received on 14 June 2018, regarding the above.

Your application was accompanied by a Visual Tree Assessment and originally requested permission for crown cleaning and a reduction in height and spread. It also recommended decay detection due to the presence of a large basal (closed) wound. I suggested that it would be prudent to have the decay detection carried out in order to determine whether the tree was actually safe to retain, i.e. so that the application could apply for appropriate permission.

On 15 August 2018, the applicant provided a Picus and Resistograph report, dated 10.08.18, from Fulford-Dobson Associates Ltd, which I understand you commissioned. The report showed significant basal decay associated with the externally visible wound and recommended two courses of action: 1) a reduction in height and spread along with removal of dead, damaged and hanging branches, or 2) felling and replacement planting. The applicant confirmed that he wished the application to be amended to felling.

The suggestion of pruning was given with the caveat that this would only be a short-medium term solution and that the work would have a significant impact on the

appearance, hence amenity value of the tree. Officers agree that this would be the case.

The tree is a prominent specimen and important locally and the comment within the report that passers-by (during testing) expressed a desire to see the tree retained is noted. Any proposal to fell should therefore be supported by an appropriate level of detailed, technical evidence to support the proposal, given the loss of amenity that will result from its felling.

The tree is within a high target zone location, directly adjacent to the highway on a busy road, hence any defect that could result in the tree posing an unacceptable risk needs to be considered carefully. Given the extent of decay/dysfunction demonstrated through the two decay detection methods, it is considered that sufficient evidence has been provided to justify the felling of the tree. Whilst this is very unfortunate, health and safety is the overriding factor in this case.

I can confirm that the following proposed works, as detailed in your amended application, are approved subject to the conditions below:

- T1 Wellingtonia – fell.

It is noted that the report recommends replacement planting, which we agree is important in this location – please note condition 4 below.

Conditions

1. Five days notice in writing shall be given to the Council prior to undertaking the approved works.

Reason: To ensure that the Local Planning Authority is given sufficient notice of the works to enable the effective monitoring of tree work within the Borough.

2. All tree surgery shall be in accordance with BS 3998: (2010) Tree Work - Recommendations.

Reason: To ensure that all works are carried out in an acceptable arboricultural manner

3. This decision is valid for two years from the date of this notice after which the consent lapses

4. Following the felling of the tree authorised by this consent, one replacement tree, of a minimum 2.5-3m high and of a species to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, shall be planted on the school road frontage during the planting season (Nov-March) following or at the time of the felling of the tree, whichever is soonest.

Planting should be carried out in accordance with clause 10 (Planting) of BS 8545:2014 'Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations'

Should the replacement tree be removed, die or become severely damaged or seriously diseased, all within 5 years of planting, it shall be replaced by a tree of a similar size and species to that originally planted. Modifications to the requirements of this condition must be agreed in writing with Reading Borough Council Natural Environment Team.

PLEASE NOTE: The requirement to replant is the responsibility of the tree owner even if the application was submitted by another person.

Reason: To retain the present visual amenity value of the area and ensure continuity of tree coverage.

Informatives

1. 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

2. 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 consent 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 wish to appeal against any of the conditions attached to this consent, please contact the Planning Inspectorate within 28 days of receipt of this letter to obtain the relevant forms:

The Environment Appeals Team, 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: 0117 372 8192

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. Mr A Davis, A W Davis Properties Ltd (via email)