



Mr Mark Carter
MJC Tree Services Ltd
89 Hampton Lane
Blackfield
Southampton
SO45 1WL

Alison Bell
Director of Environment &
Neighbourhood Services
Civic Centre, Reading
RG1 2LU
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Our Ref: 181662/TPO
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 372440
sarah.duckworth@reading.gov.uk

5th November 2018

Your contact is:

Sarah Duckworth, Planning & Building Control

Dear Mr. Carter,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO T1 (PINE) ON LAND AT ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE & SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 1/16.

Thank you for your application dated 20th September 2018 regarding the above.

You have applied to fell T1 (Pine) to ground level as the tree is in poor health and declining rapidly. You have advised that insecticide treatment options are not economically viable for the tree.

I personally inspected this tree in May 2017 on behalf of the Borough Council and noted then the poor condition of the tree's canopy but that the base and stem of the tree were in a satisfactory condition.

I understand that the tree was again inspected independently last year and needles analysed by Bartlett Tree Experts did not identify any specific cause for the foliar dieback. Bartletts did not find any evidence of Red Band Needle Blight on the samples.

You have submitted a detailed Arboricultural report in support of this application to fell the tree. This report identified a grub within the needles of the tree the colonisation of which you have concluded is the likely cause of needle dieback.

In your report you have stated that the larger crown branches and trunk do not seem to be decayed or otherwise unstable and you have concluded that 'the structural condition

of the tree means it does not currently pose an unacceptable risk to harm persons or property through mechanical failure i.e. trunk and / or crown branch breakage.

My colleague Sarah Hanson has also been to view the tree in response to your application and noted that, despite the foliar issues, this remains a high amenity tree.

Although the Borough Council does not disagree with the findings of your comprehensive arboricultural report, or your decision that topical treatment options are not economically viable for the tree, I do consider that the removal of this otherwise structurally sound tree in response to this foliar pest is premature at this time.

Many trees suffer from foliar pests and diseases (a very current example is Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner which causes the premature defoliation of Horse Chestnut trees) and as an evergreen tree, the effects of the needle parasites are long lasting as the tree does not have the opportunity to shed all needles at the end of the growing season. However, it is uncommon for a parasitic insect which affects needles or leaves alone to kill a mature tree. Admittedly it does leave it unsightly but there may still be opportunity for the tree to recover should the insect population decline.

I must therefore advise you that your application to fell T1 (Pine) is refused. We would recommend that you and your client continue to monitor the condition of the tree and the Borough Council will reconsider this decision via a new tree works application at any time if it appears that the decline of the tree is terminal or the stability and safety of the tree is undermined in any way.

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

Sarah Duckworth
Assistant Natural Environment Officer

Ms. Rachel Sheridan, St Joseph's College, 64 Upper Redlands Road, Reading
Berkshire, RG1 5JT