

Mr Andrew Brown
C&D Facilities & Grounds Maintenance Ltd.
29 Lower Elmstone Drive,
The Nurseries
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Reading
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Alison Bell
Director of Environment &
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Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 2LU
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Our Ref: 171110/TPO

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10th August 2017

Your contact is:

Sarah Duckworth, Planning & Building Control

Dear Mr Brown,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES ON LAND AT 29 ELMSTONE DRIVE - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 12/00

Thank you for your application dated 3rd July 2017 regarding the above.

You have applied to undertake the following works:

- Fell T1 and T2 (Oaks) due to their size and excessive shading.
- Reduce T3 (Oak) by 25% due to increased size and proximity to the house.
- Fell T9 and T10 (Ash and Oak) to ground level (which you understood may previously have been approved under an earlier TPO application).
- Crown lift T7 and T8 (Oaks) to 6m over the public highway and 3m from path.
- T8 (Oak) 30% directional prune from 33 Lower Elmstone Drive.

Further to our meeting of 2nd August 2017 with your client Mr Seymour, I am writing to confirm that the Borough Council considers the work you have applied to carry out to protected trees would be potentially harmful to the long term health and amenity of the trees within Tree Preservation Order 12/00 and your application has been refused.

Trees make a significant contribution to the Borough. Their contribution to the environment is well established, but they also have proven economic and health benefits too. As I advised you on site, the Borough Council will not usually consent to the removal of an otherwise healthy protected tree, particularly where it is growing adjacent to the public highway and makes a contribution to the amenity of the Reading Borough.

To date no arboricultural information has been submitted which indicates that any trees are potentially hazardous at this time or that tree work is required in order to address a tangible health and safety concern or defect on the tree(s).

The 10 trees within the TPO are growing as a group with a shared canopy outline. The future management of the trees must therefore be considered collectively. It would not be appropriate to remove one or two individuals from within a group of trees without first considering the impact this would have on the stability of the adjacent trees. The removal of T1 and T2 (Oaks) which form part of the outer canopy of the tree group would leave a suppressed and high-canopied Oak (T3) exposed to new wind loading and possible root plate failure.

I must also advise you, that Reading Borough Council has no record of a formal application to fell T9 and T10 (Ash and Oak) before this current application nor has any consent been granted by the Borough Council in the last two years to remove these trees.

Shade, debris and leaf drop are some of the unfortunate consequences of living in close proximity to mature trees, however, permitting healthy protected trees to be removed or heavily reduced for this reason would set an unacceptable precedent when dealing with similar applications to fell trees in urban and residential areas in the Borough.

One of the issues raised by Mr Seymour is the difficulty he has growing grass under the canopies of these trees. I agree that this is likely to be the case as grass is often unable to compete for light and moisture under dense tree cover. Mr Seymour may need to consider other woodland species of grass and flora which would be better adapted to grow satisfactorily in this location.

At our site meeting we discussed a schedule of alternative tree works. I can confirm that the following proposed works, as agreed on site and confirmed via email on 2/8/2017, are approved subject to the conditions below:

Approved works

- T1 (Oak) Reduce the north side of canopy by 2-3m. This should include creating a minimum of 2m canopy clearance to the property ridgeline. Undertake a 2m crown lift and canopy reduction to the west side of the canopy towards the highway. Pruning cuts will be sensitively made to create a natural looking reduced canopy outline.
- T4, T7, T8 - 2m (Oak) Undertake a canopy lift and graded reduction of lower lateral branch tips by 1.5-2m (below 6m from ground level) which will improve lower light levels and provide adequate clearance to the public highway.
- T7 (Oak) Remove lower branch with stub end and prolific epicormic growth growing towards the adopted highway back to the main trunk.
- T9 (Oak) Reduce the south and eastern side of canopy by 2-3m to provide a minimum of 2m canopy clearance to the neighbouring property ridgeline. Undertake a 2m crown lift and canopy reduction to the south side of the canopy over the neighbour's property (33 Lower Elmstone Drive). Pruning cuts will be

sensitively made to create a natural looking reduced canopy outline.

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. Climbing spikes shall not be used whilst undertaking any form of works on living trees, except on trees to be felled.

Reason: Spikes can cause extensive long-term damage

Informatives

1. You are advised that this decision is valid for two years from the date of this notice after which the consent lapses and a new application will be required.

2. 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'.

3. 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 030 6000

4. The remaining trunked monolith of T11 - Oak is not protected by the Tree Preservation Order: Work can be carried out to this tree without the formal consent from this Council.

If you wish to appeal against the refusal of consent or 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, 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

cc. Mr Ian Seymour, 29 Lower Elmstone Drive, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 5EB