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Mr Stevens
Garden Smart
33 Middlefields
Ruscombe
Reading
RG10 9DG

Our Ref: 172051/TPO
Your Ref:

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

18 December 2017

Your contact
is: Sarah Hanson, Planning and Building Control

Dear Mr Stevens

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE ASH TREE AT 12 GRATWICK ROAD, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 59/004.

Thank you for your application of 16 November 2017, regarding the above.

Following receipt of your application we discussed both the type of application submitted and the proposed works to the tree. As you are aware, a tree works application was originally submitted seeking advice on tree works at which point Mrs Finn was advised of the two different application types, those being 1) a tree work application seeking consent for specific work (no fee), or 2) a pre-application seeking advice on suitable work (fee to be paid). Your application was submitted on a pre-application form but with no fee. You confirmed during our discussion that the intention was to submit a tree work application and that your advice was to reduce the Ash tree by 50% in both height and width. The reasons for the work are cited as being: to address light issues and to provide better clearance from the property. You also state that in your opinion, the tree is causing problems with footings and structure and maybe to surrounding properties if not removed in the future.

Further to my visit on, I have the following comments:

Due to the time of year of the visit, it was difficult to fully assess the condition of the tree as no leaves were present. However, a cavity was noted which I will be bring to the attention of the tree owner. I have advised Mrs Finn that it will be important to establish the extent of the decay in that cavity in order to establish whether substantial works to the tree are justified. Whilst this could be investigated at the same time as the approved pruning is carried out, it would seem prudent to check it prior to commencing any works so that the extent of work is confirmed.

The spread of the tree, height of the lowest branches and proximity to 36 and 38 Bran Close were noted and works were discussed with Mrs Finn that should reduce the concerns

in relation to light. However, these works are suggested on the basis that the tree is structurally sound. On this assumption, the proposed height and width reduction of 50% is considered excessive, harmful to the future health of the tree due to the large wounds that would be created and detrimental to the amenity value of the tree which is of importance. In addition, whilst cracking of the adjacent footpath was noted, which is normal for structures of minimal construction, no damage to the house was brought to my attention. The proposed 50% reduction has therefore not currently been justified and is therefore refused.

I can confirm that the following lesser works, as discussed on site and indicated on the attached photographs, are approved subject to the conditions below:

- Removal of dead and dangerous (e.g. broken and hanging) branches
- Crown lift to 5m above ground level through 360° reducing/removing minor branches only
- Prune branches growing south/south-west towards 38 Bran Close to 1-1.5m south of the rear boundary, i.e. so that they overhang the garden by only 1-1.5m
- Prune branches growing south/south-east towards 36 Bran Close by approximately 2m from the furthest extremity back to suitable growing points
- Prune branches growing north/north-west (parallel with rear boundary fence of 38 Branch Close) by approximately 2m back to suitable growing points

Please note informative 4 below. Ideally trees should be approached as a whole, however it will be at the owner's (and other neighbours') discretion as to whether they wish pruning to take place within their gardens. No pruning should take place past the boundary of 38 Bran Close without the tree owner's permission.

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. 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. 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 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 or against the refusal to allow a 50% reduction in height and width, 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 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 Hanson
Natural Environment Officer

C.c. Mrs J Stephenson, 12 Gratwicke Road
Mrs Finn, 38 Bran Close