

Mrs Cyndie Stilwell
31 Bath Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 6HL

Alison Bell
Head of Environment &
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Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU
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Our Ref: 171372/TPO

Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 374294
sarah.duckworth@reading.gov.uk

20th September 2017

Your contact is:

Sarah Duckworth, Planning and Building Control

Dear Mrs Stilwell,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES ON LAND AT 31 BATH ROAD AND SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 51/01.

Thank you for your application dated 8th August 2017 regarding the above.

Further to our meeting of 7th September I am writing to confirm that, I have some concerns regarding the extent of the tree work applied for in your application.

You have applied to undertake the following tree works:

- T1 Horse Chestnut - Reduce the crown by approximately 3 metres leaving the tree with a finished height of approximately 12 metres. To reduce the crown spread by approximately 2 metres leaving a radial spread of 4m, Lift crown to give a clearance of up to 5 metres and thin canopy by 15%.
- T2 (Sweet Chestnut) - Reduce the crown approximately 3 metres leaving the tree with a finished height of approximately 9 metres. To reduce the crown spread by approximately 2 metres leaving a radial spread of 3m, Lift crown to give a clearance of up to 5 metres and thin canopy by 15%. Remove deadwood.

As we discussed on site, the borough council will only permit minimal works necessary on a protected tree. A canopy reduction will be approved only when required for essential health and safety works.

I note that the Horse Chestnut has been topped in the past and has mature regrowth. It is therefore appropriate to continue to manage the tree in a reduced form in the future. The canopy reduction as proposed to this tree is acceptable in principle.

However, the British Standard 3998 'Tree Work Recommendations' advises that '*Due to its potentially negative effects, crown reductions should not usually be carried out in addition to other crown pruning operations which would add to the amount of wounding and leaf loss.*'

In view of this, the additional thin of 15% as proposed would have no long term benefit to the overall light issue in relation to your property but would cause considerable additional harm to the trees from the loss of twigs and foliage cover. Crown 'thins' can also change the oscillation of branches in high winds and increase the incidence of branch and twig breakage. As such this aspect of your application is refused for both trees.

The proposed work to T2, a mature Sweet Chestnut at the rear of your property is considered to be major pruning works. This tree has a large bole with a relatively small canopy volume and some larger pieces of deadwood in the upper canopy. The proposed work represents a sizeable reduction of the canopy with no obvious benefit to the health or stability of the tree.

In view of the above considerations, I am writing to advise you that your application to reduce and crown lift this tree is refused. However, the borough council has approved a reduced schedule of tree works which, subject to the attached conditions can be undertaken without causing significant harm to the protected trees on site. This includes a formative reduction of the Sweet Chestnut canopy following the reduction of several stag headed branches which are in a state of decline.

Approved tree work

- T1 Horse Chestnut - Reduce the crown by approximately 3 metres leaving the tree with a finished height of approximately 12 metres. To reduce the crown spread by approximately 2 metres leaving a radial spread of 4m, Lift crown to give a clearance of up to 5 metres.
- T2 (Sweet Chestnut) - Reduce the crown approximately 1-2 metres leaving the tree with a finished height of approximately 11 metres. Reduce the crown spread by approximately 1-2 metres leaving a radial spread of 4-5m, Lift crown to give a clearance of up to 3 metres. Remove deadwood.

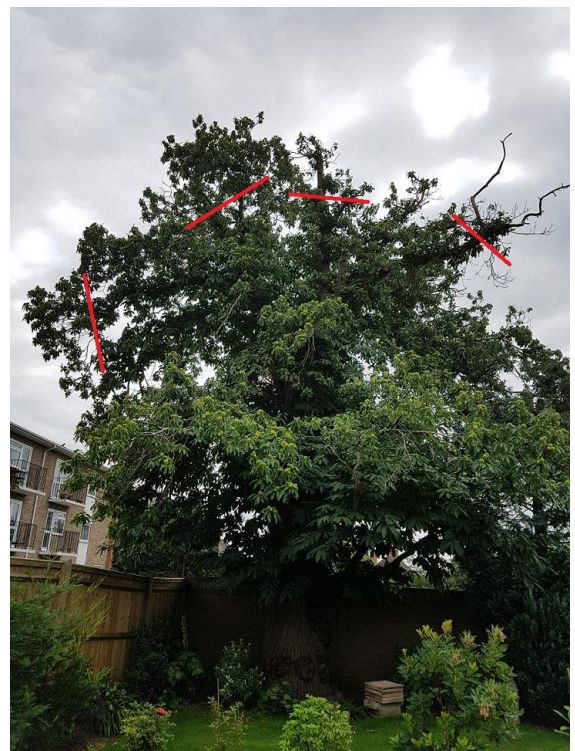


Figure 1 Approximate location of pruning cuts on T2 (Sweet Chestnut).

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 consent is valid for two years following which date it will expire and a new TPO 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. The large pieces of deadwood in the canopy of T2 contain several habitat holes which can be used by bats and 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. 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

If you wish to appeal against any our refusal of consent for tree works or 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 suffer any loss or damage as a result of the 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
Consultant Assistant Natural Environment Officer