



Kenny McMullan
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6th September 2017

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning and Building Control

Dear Mr McMullan,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES ON LAND AT BRANAGH COURT, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 71/05.

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

You have applied to undertake the following tree works:

- T1 (Plane) Crown reduce by 30% (3-3.5m) & shape. Clear building and TV aerial to ensure a 3m clearance. Crown lift to 3m.
- T3 (Lime) Crown reduce back to previous points of reduction and shape. Remove epicormic growth to main crown break.

I can confirm that the Borough Council has no objection to re-pollarding of the Lime (T3) tree. As the tree has been heavily reduced in the past, it is appropriate to continue to maintain the tree in a reduced (pollarded) form.

Please note that your application states to '*reduce back to previous reduction points and shape*'. The specification '*to shape*' is not specific and does not quantify the extent of tree works you are looking to carry out. In addition, when taking a tree back to the previous pruning points it is rarely appropriate to go beyond this point as this will often mean removing the existing or early forming pollard knuckle. As such the proposed '*shape*' element of your tree work specification has been omitted from the approved tree work schedule for T3 and should be considered as refused.

You have also applied to carry out the following works to T1 (Plane) - a canopy reduction by 30% (3-3.5m), crown lift the canopy to 3m and to prune to give 3m clearance to the property and TV aerials. You have advised that this work is required as the tree is

affecting the aerial signals in the flats and also because the tree overhangs pathways and the bird droppings are making this a health and safety concern for residents especially when wet.

Due to the potential harm to trees, the Borough Council considers it is rarely appropriate to carry out a complete canopy reduction of a protected tree. A major canopy reduction may be approved for a tangible and tree-specific health and safety reasons, such as where there is evidence that all or part of the tree is prone to failure. To date no information has been provided to demonstrate that this tree work is required for tree related health and safety reasons.

The nuisances you seek to address would be applicable to many properties located in close proximity to trees. Allowing significant, protected trees to be reduced for these reasons would set an unacceptable precedent when it comes to dealing similar tree works applications in the future. I would encourage your client to consider other means of resolving these problems. This might include relocating or raising the aerials, placing bird-scarer(s) in the tree, path maintenance to remove bird detritus or installing a textured path surface.

Any benefit following the 3-3.5m reduction if permitted would be short-lived. The plane is a healthy, vigorous specimen tree and is likely to respond to the reduction with dense and vigorous new branching. In addition, the work will create multiple pruning cuts through the canopy which will act as potential entry points for decay and the tree will need to be pruned regularly following these works in order to prevent the failure of new growth due to the weaker attachment to the parent branch. As such, the detriment to the health and amenity of the tree will be long lasting and is not considered appropriate or acceptable at this time.

In view of the above considerations, the proposed 30% reduction to the Plane as per your application is refused. The Borough Council recognises that the Plane has a low canopy which is also growing in close proximity to the adjacent building. Reduced works to provided reasonable clearance, along with crown lifting are permitted within the approved work schedule below.

I can confirm that the following tree works are approved subject to the conditions below.

Approved Works

T1 – Plane – Crown lift to 3m above ground level. Prune back the canopy as required in order to give a maximum of 2m clearance to the adjacent buildings.

T3 – Lime – re-pollard reducing new growth back to the previous pruning points taking care not to damage or remove the emerging pollard knuckle; remove epicormics growth up to main crown break

Conditions

1. 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

2. 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

3. The works hereby approved to T3 (Lime) shall only be carried out within the months of June – August or January – February when the tree's energy reserves are at their highest.

Reason: To avoid harm to the future health of the tree.

Informatives

1. You are advised that this consent is valid for two years only following which date further consent must be acquired.

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 060 3900; enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

If you wish to appeal against the Council's 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 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.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer