

Mr. Malcolm Bell
100 Kidmore End Road
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RG4 8SL

Alison Bell
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Our Ref: 161638/TPO
Your Ref:

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21st September 2016

Your contact is:

Sarah Duckworth, Planning and Building Control

Dear Mr Bell,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO AN OAK AT THE FRONT OF 100 KIDMORE END ROAD, EMMER GREEN - PROTECTED AS T1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 54/13.

Thank you for your application of 31st August 2016 which was received on 1st September 2016, regarding the above.

I visited your property on 8th September to view the tree and to consider the 2m reduction of the tree's canopy which you have applied for. I have noted that the Oak is a healthy specimen which has been reduced in the past and recovered well with healthy but not prolific regeneration from the old pruning cuts which are generally fully occluded or occluding well.

The work you have applied for is a further, substantial reduction of the tree's canopy which would remove much of the foliage and take the branches back to the previous growth points or beyond. This would have a detrimental and in my view unacceptable impact on the health and vitality of a protected tree.

I have also considered the impact the tree works would have on the amenity of the tree. In its current form the tree has the opportunity to recover from the last major prune without any lasting harm. However a further major reduction to the previous growth points would effectively result in a pollarded tree. Once a pollard cycle is commenced the tree would need to be managed in the future with a programme of regular reductions to reduce the risk of branch failure. This would reduce the tree vitality, creating an unnatural looking canopy form and reducing the amenity value of the tree in the wider landscape.

In view of the above consideration, the proposed 2m reduction of the tree's canopy is refused.

However, following our meeting on 15th September 2016, the Borough Council has granted consent for lesser works which may go some way towards addressing the issues you are having with the tree whilst limiting any long term harm to this protected Oak.

Approved work

- Crown lift branch tips to give 4m clearance from ground level using nearest suitable pruning points. Smaller tertiary branches may be removed back to parent branch (nearest branch collar) where appropriate.
- Reduce the length of the resulting lower lateral branch tips (below 5m from ground level) following the crown lift by 1m to improve the lower light levels plus additional pruning where required to give 2m clearance of the adjacent garages.
- With regards to the overall size of the tree, undertake a 'drop-crotch' reduction of the remaining canopy which would represent no more than a 20% thin / 1-1.5m reduction (see informative 2.).

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

4. The approved canopy reduction shall be undertaken in mid-late Summer (July - September) when the tree's energy reserves are at their height or during the Winter months of December - January during the period of dormancy.

Reason: Taking into account the tree's phenological cycle and in order to avoid any unnecessary detriment to the tree as a result of the pruning work.

Informatives

1. This decision is valid for two years from the date of this notice after which the consent is no longer valid and a new application must be submitted.

2. Drop-crotching is a type of thinning cut that reduces a tree's size while preserving its natural shape. To drop-crotch, select and cut higher branches back to laterals at least one-third the diameter of the limbs being removed. Cut outside the branch collar at a 45 to 60 degree angle to the branch bark ridge. Leave the branch collar intact to help prevent decay from entering the trunk. This type of thinning cut is proposed to stimulate growth throughout the tree without prompting prolific new growth from the pruning cut.

3. Removal of dead or dangerous wood from a living tree: This does not require the formal consent of the Council. 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'.

4. 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

If you wish to appeal against the Borough Council's refusal of permission to carry out the 2m reduction of the tree's canopy as per your application, 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,
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 Duckworth
Consultant Assistant Natural Environment Officer