



Mr Simon Ringrose,
Ringrose Tree Services,
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Fox lane
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Alison Bell
Head of Environment &
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Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU
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Our Ref: 161439/TPO
Your Ref:

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18th August 2016

Your contact is: Sarah Duckworth, Planning and Building Control

Dear Mr Ringrose,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO A CEDAR (T1) AT THE FRONT OF 2 ASHCROFT CLOSE, CAVERSHAM, READING, BERKSHIRE RG4 7NU - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 136/001.

Thank you for your application dated 1st August 2016, regarding the above.

I went to view the Cedar on 10th August to assess your application and again this morning to discuss the concerns of the tree owners with regards to the tree.

This Cedar is a very large specimen tree growing approximately 7m from 2 Ashcroft Close and in a prominent location adjacent to the highway. The stem is clear and in a satisfactory condition with no audible decay. The tree has a raised canopy with approximately 6m of clear stem. The tree canopy is healthy with occasional small bits of deadwood and a larger hanging dead branch approximately 100mm diameter on the east side of the canopy. The tree has been reduced in the past on the property side with limited regrowth and occlusion indicating low vigour.

The work applied for is to undertake a crown clean and to thin the trees canopy by 20%. The tree work specification was amended following an email exchange with your client Dr Hughes to include the removal of two lower branches to 'lift' the crown.

Having viewed the tree, I consider that the removal of the two lower branches would raise the canopy of the tree creating two large pruning cuts on the main stem which would be potential entry points for decay. I am also concerned that the removal of these branches would also remove the dampening effect they have on the movement of the tree. This can increase the oscillation of the tree in high winds and strain on the structural framework of the tree. Excessive crown-lifting also reduces the draw of nutrients and water up the tree and would put the remaining canopy under additional stress.

With regards to the crown thin, I do not feel that this work would have any significant long-term benefit for the residents. A crown thin, particularly on a Cedar with its distinctive horizontal branch structure can change the wind loading on the remaining canopy and potentially increase the risk of branch failure where branches are exposed to new wind loading.

In light of the above considerations, I consider the above works would be potentially harmful to this significant protected tree and as such the application is refused.

Following my site visit and discussion with the tree owner, I have approved lesser works to be undertaken to the tree subject to the conditions below:

Approved work

- Prune canopy tips where required to give 0.5m clearance to adjacent trees.
- Selectively reduce extended laterals on southern side of canopy towards the dwelling of 2 Ashcroft Close by up to 1.5m using a 'drop crotch technique' to suitable pruning points, leaving a natural looking canopy outline (Informative 2).
- Undertake a crown clean removing any dead, dangerous or dysfunctional wood. The crown clean includes removing snags and any tertiary crossing / rubbing branches (subject to Condition 4) and the re-pruning of branch stubs. The removal of unwanted climbing plants and accumulated windblown debris is included in the specification but does not require consent under the TPO.

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. Crown cleaning should not include the removal of fused natural braces (branches or stems), or the removal of entwining branches or rubbing branches (where they may be forming a natural brace) from the crown of a mature or semi-mature tree without carrying out an assessment of any junctions formed below such natural braces.

Reason: Removal of natural braces may lead to failure of weak unions.

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. 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. This decision is valid for two years from the date of this notice after which the consent lapses.

If you wish to appeal against any of the conditions attached to this consent or against the refusal of works, 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 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
Consultant Assistant Natural Environment Officer