

Ms N Wan
3 Bath Road
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Emma Gee
Acting Executive Director for
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29th May 2024

Your contact is: Andrei Nazare, Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Ms Wan,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE CYPRESS TREE AND ONE HORNBEAM TREE AT 3 BATH ROAD AND, RESPECTIVELY, BERKELEY COURT, COLEY AVENUE, READING - SUBJECT TO CONSERVATION AREA STATUS.

Thank you for your notification of 17th April 2024, regarding the above.

Further to your notification, annotated photographs and e-mail of 22nd April 2024 confirming the final work specifications for the Hornbeam tree, I can confirm that the Council have no objections to the following amended tree works:

- 1x Cypress tree - overall reduction as shown on the annotated photograph received 17th April 2024
- 1x Hornbeam tree - reduce overhanging branches as shown on the annotated photograph received 22nd April 2024

You initially proposed removal of an entire stem from the Hornbeam tree and subsequently amended this to a reduction of one side of the tree following advice from your tree surgeon. However, the amended reduction of the Hornbeam tree still appears excessive. Assessed based on the annotated photograph, at least 2 of the main stems will lose more than 60% of their leaf area. In order to ensure that a tree has enough energy to sustain itself, the amount of leaf area removed should be kept under 30% both individually for each branch and collectively for the entire crown. When the management objective does not allow to retain enough leaf area, the work should be done in phases if possible.

It is important to note that a notice has been given in February 2024 to lateral prune the Hornbeam tree to create 1.5m-2m clearance to the building at Berkeley Court. As such, if the reduction discussed here is also carried out in its entirety, it might compound to a loss

of more than 30% of the total crown leaf area of the tree in a very short period.

I stated the best practice guidance in terms of pruning amount, and I also provided the information on other recent works carried out on the Hornbeam tree. This should be enough to help the tree surgeon you've appointed make an informed decision on what is an appropriate amount to prune or whether doing this in multiple phases is appropriate. The Council does not support the proposed reduction amount, but as the tree is not suitable for inclusion in a Tree Preservation Order, the works are reluctantly agreed.

Your initial notification also included works to conifers on the frontage. However, as these are managed as a hedge, a notice isn't required.

The agreed works can now be carried out as soon as they can be arranged.

This decision is valid for two years from the date of this letter, after which it lapses.

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

If you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely,

Andrei Nazare

Andrei Nazare
Assistant Natural Environment Officer
On behalf of Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer