

Mrs C Salvesen
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Emma Gee
Acting Executive Director for
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26th June 2024

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

Dear Mrs Salvesen,

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE WESTERN RED CEDAR TREE AND ONE ASH TREE AT 69 HAMILTON ROAD, READING - SUBJECT TO CONSERVATION AREA STATUS.

Thank you for your notification of 20th June 2024, regarding the above.

Further to your 20th June 2024 notification over the phone and to my visit on 25th June 2024, I can confirm that the Council have no objections to the following proposed tree work:

- 1x Western Red Cedar in front garden
 - Lateral reduction by 1-1.5m on the north side, to bring it in line with the window opening
 - Height reduction by 1m
 - Minor trimming on all other sides to commence management as hedge
- 1x Ash tree
 - Fell to ground

You gave the initial notification over the phone and it only included works for 'one conifer' tree - we now know this is the Western Red Cedar tree. During my visit you asked me to amend the notification to also include one Ash tree growing in the rear garden.

With regards to the Western Red Cedar, I note the tree is well formed, shows vigorous growth and has the potential to grow to a significant size, which would not be suitable for the available space on the front garden. To contain the tree, you intend to manage it

more like a hedge going forward, which requires a one time heavy lateral reduction on the north side as well as a 1m height reduction now and will necessitate regular maintenance trimming from next year onwards. You also intend to have the other 3 sides of the tree trimmed to aid with the hedge form (just the face of each side). The heavy lateral and top pruning will deteriorate the tree's form and will leave it looking poorly, with visible stubs from the reduced branches - this is not in line with good arboricultural practices. However, considering the long term management plan for the tree (to contain the ultimate size as a hedge), the earlier this operation is done the better (smaller wound size) and given the likelihood of regrowth from the pruned areas, the Council does not raise any objections to these works.

The Ash tree in the rear garden is covered by Ivy up to lower crown level, therefore I was not able to note any defects or symptoms on the trunk. However, it is growing against the boundary brick wall, two thirds of its crown is already dead and the remaining third part is very sparse (in terms of green leaves). You told me the tree has showed a steep decline in the past 2-3 years and we agreed that it is not certain it will even come in leaf next year if the trend continues. Without a closer inspection, I cannot state with confidence if the tree suffers from Ash Dieback, but it appears this is the case. Given its declining condition and due to its growth against the boundary wall, its removal is agreeable.

In order to mitigate the impact of climate change, maintain or increase canopy cover throughout the borough (one aim of our adopted Tree Strategy), reduce air pollution and heat islanding effects, and to maintain the character of the verdant conservation area, the council encourages replacement planting for all lost trees. This is especially important in high priority areas, of which conservation areas are one. By provisioning, voluntarily, replacement planting for the removed Ash tree, you secure the availability of a healthy tree stock for the future. However, you should choose the right tree for the available space (in terms of species ultimate size) and to plant any replacements at least 1m away from any structures and boundary walls.

You also told me you wish to remove a dead shrub tree growing near the Ash tree. As this is a shrub, you do not need to formally notify the Council before removing it. You also intend to have deadwood removed from two Hybrid Black Poplar trees in the rear garden.

The two large Hybrid Black Poplar trees growing at the rear of the garden have Ivy growing into their crowns - it currently reached the base of the crowns. Left unchecked, excessive Ivy growth hides defects on the parts of the tree it covers and it also increases the sail area and weight on the crown, which can affect the tree during extreme weather events. As such, it is advisable to sever the Ivy at the base, leaving a 2 inch gap to prevent it from re-connecting, and let it wilt for 1 season. It will then be easy to remove it or it will fall down by itself. Allowing the Ivy to wilt on the tree, hence reducing the shade it creates gradually, will also mitigate the risk for the trees to suffer sunburns - especially as Hybrid Black Poplar trees have thin bark.

The agreed works should not be carried out before two weeks from the date of your notification, i.e. before 4th July 2024.

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