



Mr O Speakman
Tree World Services Ltd
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Emma Gee
Acting Executive Director for
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Our Ref: PL/24/1469
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 372440
sarah.hanson@reading.gov.uk

29 January 2025

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Speakman

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO T1 OAK AND G1 LIME AT 20 ARMOUR HILL AND G1 SYCAMORE AT 7 WARDLE AVENUE - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 43/14.

Thank you for your application of 1 November 2024 regarding the above. Your application sought consent for the following:

T1 - Oak Tree, located at the front of property overhanging road:

To reduce crown by approx. 2m back to appropriate points all round to give clearance to house.

T2 - Small Leaf Lime Tree, in rear garden:

To reduce all round by approx. 1.5 - 2m back to appropriate points to create a more compact and balanced tree.

T3 - Sycamore Tree, growing in neighbour's garden - Reduce back to fence line.

My acknowledgement email of 1 November sought clarity on the reasons for the work to the Oak and Lime. Your email of 22 November advised that the reduction of the Oak is 'all round' in order to keep the tree balanced, as the clearance is only needed on the property side. In addition, you advised that reason for the work to the Lime is 'to reduce back to maintain the previous pollard points, thus creating a compact and balanced tree'.

Further to my visit on 16 January 2025, I have the following comments:

In relation to the Oak, whilst a reduction to give clearance from the house is reasonable, there appeared to be no reason to reduce the tree anywhere else, the pruning to provide clearance would not leave the tree so unbalanced as to justify further pruning, which

would be harmful to appearance of the tree and would thereafter have to be repeated, forever confining the size of the tree. As such this is REFUSED.

As per my email of 17 January, I advised that it would be acceptable to crown lift the Oak tree, and this would be necessary over the pavement anyway in order to provide the required statutory clearance of 2.75m. Your email of 28 January 2025 confirmed that this should be included. I noted the extent of Ivy of this tree and would strongly recommend this is severed and once access is possible, it would be prudent to inspect the tree in case of any defects currently hidden by the Ivy, especially given the tree's location directly adjacent to a highway.

In relation to the Lime, the previous pollard points were noted and referred to in the approved specification below.

In relation to the works to the Sycamore, you are proposing to remove all branches that overhang the rear garden of 20 Armour Hill. Due to the tree (within the neighbour's garden) being on the boundary, effectively half the crown (smaller in spread than would be expected) overhangs the garden. Removal of all overhanging branches is deemed to be excessive and detrimental to the health and appearance of the tree and as such is REFUSED. Lesser works are approved, as detailed below.

The excessive Ivy was noted on the Sycamore and if your client has a good relationship with the tree's owner, it would be prudent to ask them to sever the Ivy or offer to do it whilst undertaking the tree works. As you will be aware, Ivy can hide defects, increases shading, increases the sail area of the tree and adds to the weight on branches.

I can confirm that the following proposed works are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the annotated photographs below:

- Oak (T1 of TPO and application) - crown lift to main crown break through 360° (approx. 4-5m above ground level), as per the annotated photograph below; prune to provide 2m clearance from the house,
- Lime (part of G1 of TPO; T2 of application) - reduce height by approximately 1.5-2m, back to previous reduction / pollard points, and sides as appropriate (to previous reduction points where present) to form a flowing crown line,
- Sycamore (part of G1 of TPO; T3 of application) - remove lower branches overhanging the rear garden of 20 Armour Hill back to their point of origin (if agreed with the owner) or otherwise back to the boundary line.



Oak - maximum height of crown lifting



Lime - indicative reduction



Sycamore - low, overhanging branches to be removed

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. The approved canopy reduction to the Lime 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.

4. 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

Informatives

1. You are advised that, in accordance with Part 4, 17 (4) of The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012, this decision is valid for one pruning operation (as per the approved specifications) to be undertaken within two years

from the date of this notice, after which the consent lapses and a new application will be required.

2. Removal of dead or dangerous wood from a live tree: This does not require the formal consent of the Council. However you are encouraged to give 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 030 6000

4. It is best to avoid works in the period immediately before or during bud burst and leaf fall to minimise the effect on the long-term health of the tree

5. Tree work consents on land not owned by the applicant: It is strongly recommended that the owner of the tree be advised of any proposed works. The owner's permission must be sought if the tree works involve work past the boundary line. This consent does not in any way imply that this Council has informed the owner of sought permission or will condone the use of consents to force any landowner to grant such permission.

6. Crown lifting of trees over the footpath and carriageway: If the clearance of vegetation overhanging the highway only involves the removal of branches to give a ground clearance to the statutory heights of 2.7m over the footpath and 5.5m over the road, this does not require formal consent from the Council. You are advised, however, to give notice to the Council of these intended works in order that they can be agreed.

7. Prior to the severing of well-established Ivy at the base of the tree, it would be prudent to carry out an assessment of whether any of the stems of the Ivy are forming a natural brace above a suspected bark-included union

If you wish to appeal against the refusal of consent for the specified work or against any of the conditions attached to the consented works, please contact the Planning Inspectorate within 28 days of receipt of this letter to obtain the relevant forms:

Trees and Hedges
Room 3A Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol, BS1 6PN

Telephone: 0303 444 5000

E-mail it to: treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Website: [Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/topics/trees-and-woodland/trees-and-woodland-in-conservation-areas)

If your clients suffer any loss or damage as a result of this refusal of consent, they may be entitled to recover compensation from the Council. If they wish to make a claim they 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 Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer

C.c. Mr Crowshaw, 20 Armour Hill