



Mr J Nason
J N Treescape Ltd
3 Court Farm Cottages
Court Drove
Overton
RG25 3ES

Emma Gee
Acting Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services

Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 9373787

Our Ref: PL/24/1429
Your Ref:

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

30 January 2025

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Nason

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 7 CORSICAN PINE TREES AT 107 COCKNEY HILL, READING - T1 & T3-T8 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 75/05.

Thank you for your application of 25 October 2024 regarding the above.

You applied for permission for the following:

*T1 Reduce height of Corsican Pine by 2 metres to reduce the sail of the tree.
T3 Reduce height of Corsican Pine by 2 metres to reduce the sail of the tree.
T4 Reduce height of Corsican Pine by 2 metres to reduce the sail of the tree and branches overbearing.
T5 Reduce height of Corsican Pine by 2 metres to reduce the sail of the tree and reduce lowest and sixth branch on left side by 1-2meters - branches overbearing.
T6 Reduce height of Corsican Pine by 2 metres to reduce the sail of the tree and reduce first and third branch by 2-3 meters - branches overbearing.
T7 Reduce height of Corsican Pine by 2 metres to reduce the sail of the tree. Reduce first and second branches by 1-2 meters - branches overbearing.
T8 Reduce on side overhanging house by 2 meters - unbalanced tree, overbearing branches.*

My acknowledgement email of 28 October 2024 sought clarity on why you felt the sail area of the trees needs to be reduced, i.e. why are they at particular risk of wind impact? Your response email of 12 November advised that '*the trees are some of the tallest in the area and are in an elevated position, so exposed to high winds . Considering their proximity to the surrounding property's my clients would like to reduce the height and over baring branches to mitigate some of the potential risk of limb/stem failure*'.

Following my visit on 16 January, my email of 17 January sought confirmation that I had understood which branches were referred to in your application and suggested entire removal of one branch from T6 (I provided annotated photos). Your email of 27 January confirmed my understanding and requested addition of the suggested branch removal.

The line of Pines form a significant landscape feature at the bottom / east end of Cockney Hill, being visible from further west in Cockney Hill and from Honey End Lane (south and north of Cockney Hill); the prominence more pronounced in winter when the other, mainly deciduous, trees in the vicinity are not in leaf. Any works that impact their amenity value should therefore be fully justified.

Having identified the branches referred to on site, the proposed specific branch pruning is reasonable and addresses low hanging and over-extended branches, effectively lifting the crowns to create greater ground clearance and at the same time reducing the risk of failure. These works will not impact the health or appearance of the trees.

In relation to the proposed reduction in height (by 2m) of all trees, this raises concerns. As you will appreciate, a height reduction of coniferous trees, in general, is not common as it detrimentally impacts their appearance, leaving an unnatural shape. It is difficult to see how the trees, particularly those with a flatter top, lend themselves to a reduction without visual harm. I would also suggest that as each tree differs in height and form that an overall specification is not appropriate and each tree should have been assessed individually to determine if a height reduction was justified and if so, by what amount.

I am aware of sporadic branch loss over time, which appears to have occurred in extreme weather. Such loss would not be unexpected and would not justify detrimental or unjustified works to a tree(s). I am unclear from your comments about the wind risk how a 2m reduction was arrived at or how this would then make the risk the trees present acceptable to you and the homeowner, especially given that the trees would still be 'exposed' insofar as there are no surrounding trees offering protection.

In relation to the height reduction, there is not considered to be sufficient justification for the proposed works, nor is an overall specification (the same for each tree) considered appropriate and as such this work is REFUSED.

I can confirm that the following proposed works, as detailed in your application, are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the annotated photographs attached:

- T5 Pine - reduce lowest and sixth branch on left side (when looking from the road) by 1-2 metres.
- T6 Pine - remove first (lowest) branch overhanging the garden; reduce third branch by 2-3 metres.
- T7 Pine - Reduce first and second branches by 1-2 metres.
- T8 Pine - Reduce on side overhanging house by 2 approximately metres. For clarity, this is from the furthest tip overhanging the garage and would equate to 1-1.5m from the front elevation of the garage.

You will have noted the twin-stemmed nature of T7 and that a cable brace has been fitted (agreed in 2020). Once fitted, these should be checked and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. If this has not been checked since installation, it would be prudent to do so, if this is something you are able to assess.

Mr Walker advised on site that solar panels were due to be fitted on the garage roof (south / front facing roof) - there were clean patches of roof prepared for this. It should be noted that the decision to install these is with full knowledge of the presence of the tree and their protected status. Any future applications for pruning to allow more light to the panels will not be looked on favourably if the works are considered harmful to the future health or appearance of the trees.

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

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

If you wish to appeal against the refusal of consent for the height reduction 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/tree-preservation-orders)

If your client suffers 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/they 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 Walker, 107 Cockney Hill