

Memo

To: Louise Fuller, Planning

From: Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 14 April 2025

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/25/0176

Officer: Louise Fuller

Application Type: Full planning permission

Address: 35 Jesse Terrace, Reading, RG1 7RS

Proposal: Change of use from 3-bed flat to a 5-bed flat, upgrades to exterior with new UPVC windows and painting of walls. Creation of 2 car parking spaces. (Retrospective Application).

The site is located in the Castle Street / Russell Street / Oxford Road Conservation Area, within an AQMA and within the lowest canopy cover ward in the borough. As such retention of vegetation and ensuring proposals do not reduce green / amenity spaces is a high priority.

I note the relevant conservation area appraisal list 35 Jesse Terrace under '6.3.8 Buildings of Townscape Merit'. It is arguable that the setting of such buildings, including front & rear gardens, is important.

I am aware that there is an Article 4 direction in place that removes normal rights to convert a house (C3 use) into a small house in multiple occupation (C4 use).

The Cherry Laurel in the rear garden has been part felled in November 2024, without a S211 Notice having been submitted.

The Cherry Laurel is given a stem diameter of 400mm in the tree survey, so large enough to have needed a Section 211 Notice to have been submitted for its felling or pruning. Whilst described in the Arboricultural Report as a 'shrub', this species can also be taken to be a small tree.

Proposals include the conversion of part of the garden to provide 4 parking spaces and the removal of the remainder of the tree/shrub (Cherry Laurel). A replacement tree (Silver Birch) is proposed in the rear garden to mitigate the loss.

When a S.211 Notice is submitted for the removal of a tree, the only way officers can object to the removal is by service of a TPO, IF the tree is worthy of a TPO. Any unauthorised works / felling should reasonably take this consideration into account when determining the appropriate action the Council should take.

As you are aware, a Planning Enforcement Officer visit on the day the works were done to the Laurel – there was an expectation that the owners would then make contact with me and / or submit a part retrospective Notice, which did not happen. Instead (and I expect in view of other activity on site), a planning application is now submitted, which includes the removal of the tree (a separate S.211 Notice then not also being required if planning approval is given).

The loss of the remainder of the tree would not be detrimental to the Conservation Area and its mitigation with the planting of a larger species would be positive. However, in this case, I would suggest the loss of garden / green space is the point of contention and an unwelcome proposal within the Conservation Area, especially given my first paragraph above.

If this application is approved, condition L1 will be required to secure landscaping.

If the application is refused, please let me know and I will invite a part retrospective S. 211 Notice.