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22 December 2016

Your contact is: Sarah Hanson, Planning and Building Control

Dear Dr Curtis

RE: OBJECTION TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NO. 22/16, RELATING TO BBC CAVERSHAM PARK, PEPPARD ROAD, READING.

Thank you for your letter of 14 December 2016, regarding the above.

It is common practice for the Council to place 'Area' Tree Preservation Orders on potential development land in order that all trees are protected until such time as it is appropriate to replace this with a more specific TPO; normally when development proposals are agreed. It is never our intention to retain an 'Area' Order in perpetuity. Any TPO needs to be either confirmed or replaced within 6 months of being served. As development discussions can take considerably longer than this, it is sometimes necessary to confirm an 'Area' TPO, however this can be revoked at a later date when a replacement TPO is served and confirmed.

In this case the planning pre-application gave us the expediency to serve a TPO and given that the extent of land included for development has not been confirmed and the fate of the land outside the development site not decided on, a TPO covering the whole BBC site was considered appropriate. Your letter advises that the grounds are under good management, however the BBC does not have any 'relationship' or understanding with the Council that would enable us to appreciate how the site is managed. In addition, we were advised at the pre-application meeting of 19 December 2016 that the TPO would result in numerous, regular applications being made for tree work consent, the implication being that tree works are currently carried out on an ad-hoc or reactive basis. No full tree condition survey has been done, which I understand is forthcoming. This would, I expect, include recommendations for work to all trees on site. This could then be submitted alongside a tree works application to obtain approval for the works. Tree work approvals generally remain valid for 2 years, hence the BBC would have this period

of time in order to undertake the works. This period can be extended if appropriate.

It should also be noted that certain works are exempt from requiring permission, albeit formal notice should be given. These include removal of dead wood/trees and removal of imminently dangerous trees or branches. In addition, with particular reference to the orchard, Government guidance advises:

'..the authority's consent is not needed before pruning any tree cultivated for the production of fruit, as long as the work is carried out in accordance with good horticultural practice'.

The TPO was served to demonstrate the importance of the trees on site for their amenity, historic and landscape value. The site is hugely important for its landscape value being on an elevated position, visible for many miles. Locally, the whole site is very important visually, including the green backdrop the development site provides along the southern edge of Caversham Park village.

Current Government guidance advises that:

'..it is not necessary for there to be immediate risk for there to be a need to protect trees. In some cases the authority may believe that certain trees are at risk as a result of development pressures and may consider, where this is in the interests of amenity, that it is expedient to make an Order'.

In conclusion, it is currently considered 'expedient in the interests of amenity' (in line with Government guidance) for an Area TPO to be retained on the site.

Your objections to the above Tree Preservation Order will be considered at Planning Applications Committee on 8 February 2017 for Members to decide whether the TPO should be confirmed. Planning Applications Committee is a public meeting, which you are free to attend, however there are no provisions for public speaking on TPO's. It is normally held in the Council Chamber on the ground floor of the Civic Centre, commencing at 6.30pm.

I will inform you of the outcome once the official minutes have been circulated.

Notwithstanding the above, I am happy to meet on site once the full tree condition survey has been completed to 1) agree tree works and 2) potentially reassess the TPO.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer