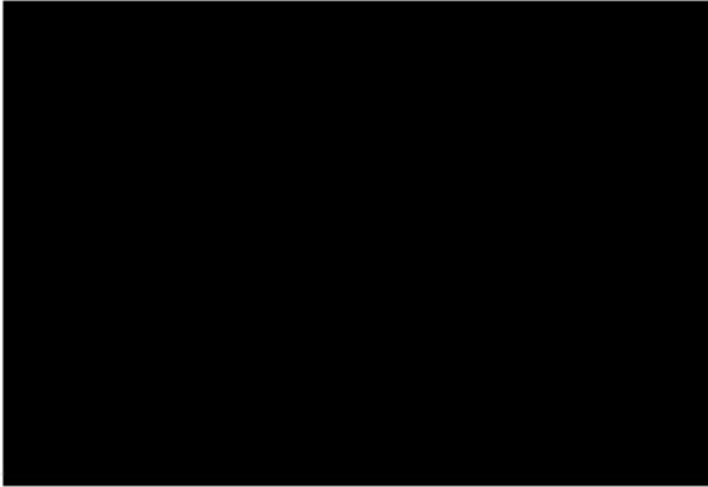




20 October 2018

Ms M Stewart
Neighbourhood Support
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
Havant
Hampshire
PO9 2AX

Dear Ms Stewart

Proposed Tree Works at 114 Southleigh Road, Havant, PO9 2PS
Your reference: APP/18/01022

Thank you for your letter of 16 October 2018 addressed to the Occupier/Owner of this property. I confirm that I am the owner.

Your letter relates to an application for tree works made by Mr Colin Lay of 39 Blenheim Gardens, PO9 2PW and invites comments on this.

Firstly, please note that this application is not made by me and I am not a party to it in any way. I will not be arranging or funding any works that may be carried out as a result of it. My role would, I think, be limited to granting access to my property to facilitate completion of works were that to be necessary.

Although it is disappointing not to have been consulted on or notified about the application before it was made I am not opposed in principle to appropriate works being carried out on this tree. I do, however, have the following observations to make given that the works proposed appear to be quite radical.

1. The tree is approximately 20 metres high, very mature and sited in close proximity to a number of homes within what is a pretty densely populated residential area. It is vitally important that nothing be done to weaken its structure and create a risk to those properties.

2. I am not, in any sense, an expert in arboriculture but I have read into the subject a little referring, in particular, to BS 3998:2010 which covers pruning and related work. This highlights that:

- If crown lifting involves the removal of branches which form a substantial proportion of the lower crown of a mature or old tree, the resulting wounds on the stem have the potential to become the seat of extensive decay, which could lead to mechanical failure;
- Extensive crown lifting should, if possible, be phased over a number of years, with a view to providing some opportunity for physiological and biomechanical adaptation to the resulting wounding and branch removal;
- Crown lifting should be avoided or minimised in mature or old trees. If it cannot be avoided, it should preferably involve the removal of secondary branches or branch shortening rather than (as proposed in the application) removal back to the stem;
- Crown lifting that involves cutting back to the stem should preferably not result in the removal of more than 15% of the live crown height. An example is then given of a 20 metre high tree already branch free to a height of 5 metres. 15% of its live crown height (15 metres) is 2.25 metres. On this basis alone the tree might be crown lifted to a height of 5 metres + 2.5 metres = 7.25 metres.

I estimate that our tree which, as noted above, is about 20 metres high is branch free to a height of about 2.5 metres. In that case the formula above would suggest that crown lifting may not be appropriate above 5 metres from the ground.

In conclusion, although I am very fond of our tree, my view has always been that it is too large to be sited so close to so many properties and ought really to be removed altogether. My understanding is, however, that the existence of its preservation order makes complete removal almost impossible to achieve. As the tree must be preserved in law and I am not free to remove it, Havant Borough Council is duty bound to ensure that no works are carried out that could undermine its structural integrity. Therefore the Council should not consent to the proposed works unless it is prepared to accept full responsibility for any damage that may be caused to persons or property in future arising from structural weakening related to or consequent upon those works.

If Council officials need access to my property in order to assess the site I will be happy to oblige. Please contact me to arrange this if needed.

