

COUNCIL

09 JAN 2018

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Dear Sir

Regarding Objections to Planning reference App/17/01309

The Applicant claims he was advised to seek 'severe pruning' to avoid future possible damage to the wall beside the trees during a recent on site meeting. He states the pruning is also necessary due to the growth of long lateral branches, but this is misleading.

The following points are essential to bear in mind:

- a) *'Under no circumstances should a [Macrocarpaa] tree be "topped" to prevent wind damage. Topped trees produce many small, poorly attached sprouts and as they grow, the canopy weight and density is actually increased. In addition, topped branches often develop decay and diseased stems, which further weakens the tree and makes the branches more susceptible to breakage. Topping may seem to make a tree safer, but it actually increases the potential for storm damage with unhealthy epicormic sprouting and additional decay in the stems'. (Please see Note 1 for source)*
- b) The low sheltered location of these trees has ensured ~~ensures~~ that these trees are protected from the worst effects of direct winds from the North, South, and West. They are partly sheltered from Easterly winds by the small group of buildings on the other side of Dolphin Quay which includes the Lord Raglan, and Chequers Quay, but are more exposed to wind from the South East coming across the Slipper Pond. This sheltered location is why these trees have flourished, and have such symmetry and height. It is almost certainly the key factor why these trees have become specimen trees. They may have longer lateral branches when compared to Monterey Cypress in a more exposed and hostile coastal condition, but this cannot be described as a fault or potential weakness. Please note item d) below for more on tree strength.
- c) *'Do not try to "wind-proof" the tree by thinning out branches. Trees rely on proper branching habits and placement to dampen the wind energy affecting them. Excessive and unnecessary pruning creates wounds and additional stress on tree health. Allow the tree to develop fully and naturally by pruning only when needed.'* (Please see Note 1 for source).
- d) *'The strength of a tree is generally determined by how it grows in response to wind pressures put upon it over the years in a particular location. Over time, trees swaying in the wind develop extra strength to withstand directional forces. If conditions are consistent, trees will initiate changes in their development to compensate for these loading patterns. They are biologically engineered to adjust to external loading . . . This fibre strength has shown that it can minimise the impact of*

external forces, unless they are excessive such during a storm'. (Please see Note 1 for source)

These particular trees have already been tested by the strongest storms Emsworth has experienced over the past 40-50 years, including the gale of 1987. It is not unreasonable to assume that in this sheltered location, these trees now have sufficient inbuilt resilience to protect themselves and the ability to thrive and grow to full maturity, without representing a greater risk to the Applicant's property or a passerby than any other healthy other tree in the borough.

e) The pruning proposed at 3 to 5 metres is excessive. Any pruning that these trees need now, should only be remedial in nature to mitigate the low level damage that seems to have been caused by previous and a recent (unofficial) pruning of the lower branches above the towpath.

f) The applicant appears to be preoccupied with the wall beside the Monterey Cypresses. This is strange because it is already on record that:

- The top 300mm of the wall is in poor repair due to ingress of ivy and vegetation from the garden side of the wall from lack of basic maintenance to mortar joints.
- The wall is not 'dangerous' and the trees are not responsible for any defects of maintenance.

There is at present no evidence to indicate that either tree will be responsible for a future failure of the wall, and as pointed out above the trees have proved themselves in recent storms and over the past 40 odd years.

Recent observations of this wall show that ivy continues to grow into the wall, but of more concern is that this ivy is also growing up into one of the trees and this, if allowed to continue unchecked into the upper reaches of the tree, will adversely affect this tree's ability to deal with wind loading in the future.

Yours sincerely



Thomas Griffin

Notes

Trees and Storms, Lindsey Purcell, Urban Forestry Specialist,
Purdue University, Department of Forestry & Natural Resources.