



Mr A Colville
Boswell Tree Surgeons Ltd
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Emma Gee
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Our Ref: PL/25/0786
Your Ref:

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21st June 2025

Your contact is:

Amy Daly: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Colville

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 1NO. YEW TREE AT KENTWOOD HOUSE, KENTWOOD HILL, TILEHURST, READING - T2 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 22/04.

Thank you for your application of 27th May 2025, regarding the above.

You have applied and given reason for the following:

'Raise up low canopy to approx 10ft (3m). The branches are currently sitting close to ground level. We'd like to carry out this work so the yew branches sit at a safe height for lawn maintenance etc.'

Further to mine and my colleague Sarah Hanson's visit on 18th July 2025, I have the following comments:

Upon visiting the site, it was apparent that the tree is a large, healthy, mature, Yew tree. Trees of this species are one of only three native coniferous species in the country. The tree is surrounded by a grassed residential area used by those who occupy the listed building of Kentwood House. The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory describes the Yew as a '*notable tree*' (Tree ID: 219628), the girth of which is over 3.5m at the height of 0.3m. The Yew's size and characteristics make it a tree of high amenity value and an asset to the area which surrounds it.

In agreement with that stated in your application, the branches of the tree are in close contact with the ground. Trees of this species commonly have a naturally occurring low canopy. It was noted that there is a change of ground level of the land where the tree is situated. Your application did not specify which ground level the crown raise height would be taken from. On the assumption that the ground level point would be at its highest, as

the reason for your application is '*so the yew branches sit at a safe height for lawn maintenance etc*', the proposed crown lift to 10ft (3m) would remove a significant amount of the lower foliage having a negative impact on the trees appearance and character.

Whilst the importance of maintaining the grass area safely is recognised, it was noted that there is no grass beneath the canopy of the tree. Even after crown lifting the tree to 10ft/3m, the area beneath the canopy would still be shaded and would inhibit grass growth. We also found that underneath the canopy of the tree was a variety of garden ornaments, placed in a neat arrangement (see Figure 3). This indicates that the lower canopy is in use and appreciated by the residents.

It is therefore difficult to justify the reasoning for the proposed work. Crown raising the lower branches to the extent proposed would have a detrimental impact on the natural character of this notable, mature Yew tree, as it would remove a significant amount of the dense lower foliage. The reasoning for the proposed work seems somewhat counterproductive as there is no grass beneath the tree due to continued canopy shading. The reasoning for the proposed works is not adequately justified and does not outweigh the negative impact it poses to the appearance of this high amenity value tree

The '*raise up low canopy to approx 10ft*' (3m) is therefore refused.

It is recognised that the lower canopy is in close proximity or in direct contact with the ground. We do therefore consider a level of crown raising appropriate, listed in the approved works below. Whilst lawnmowers will not need to operate directly underneath the tree, the approved works will allow the lawnmowers to operate around the perimeter of the lower canopy without the risk of branch damage.

Given its residential setting, it would also be prudent to remove the deadwood from the tree, which was noted during our site visit. We have taken your application to serve notice of this.

I can therefore confirm that the following proposed works, are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the annotated photographs provided:

- Crown lift to 1m above ground level, through 360°, taken from the higher ground level directly beneath the point of the canopy being pruned (see Figure 1, red lines), removing minor growth only (no main branches to be removed) and leaving suitable growth points.
- Remove basal growth, through 360°, up to point of the crown break (see Figure 2, red line).



Figure 1 - Yew tree's crown raise points (red lines) varying as the ground level does



Figure 2 - Yew tree's basal/epicormic growth and crown break point (red line)



Figure 3 - Ornament arrangement (also showing no grass beneath the trees canopy)

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

4. Tree work consents on land not owned by the applicant: It is strongly recommended that the owner of the tree be advised of any proposed works. The owner's permission must be sought if the tree works involve work past the boundary line. This consent does not in any way imply that this Council has informed the owner of sought permission or will condone the use of consents to force any landowner to grant such permission.

If you wish to appeal against any of the refused works or conditions attached to this consent, 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/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas)

If you suffer any loss or damage as a result of this refusal of consent, you may be entitled to recover compensation from the Council. If you wish to make a claim you must do so within 12 months from the date of this decision (or, if you 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

Amy Daly

Assistant Natural Environment Officer

On Behalf of Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer

C.c. Mr Trump, Kentwood House