



Mr A Archer
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RG6 5TZ

Emma Gee
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6 August 2025

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Archer

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE HORSE CHESTNUT AT EMMBROOK COURT - PART OF W1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 193/07.

Thank you for your application of 24 July 2025 and supporting VISUAL TREE ASSESSMENT AND DECAY DETECTION report Ref: SPH/VTA-25/12.06 dated 18 June 2025, regarding the above.

As you are aware, the Horse chestnut in question has been the subject to two previous applications (alongside other works) in the last 3-4 years: ref 221225 (then known as 'T48') and PL/25/0044 (tree renumbered as T479). In both cases works to the tree were ultimately omitted following the concern I expressed about the extent of reduction and the lack of evidence to justify the works; the first having no clear pruning specified and the second proposing a significant overall reduction.

The current application proposes a lesser reduction than previously put forward, based on the result of the specific inspection of the tree, as are detailed in the above report.

With reference to the report, I note the summary includes:

'There is no evidence to indicate any fungal infection, and the decay appears localised and is not considered to be structurally significant at this time'.

'The tree is in poor physiological condition'.

'The main stem has a natural lean of approximately 15 degrees towards the highway (Shinfield Road) and also has an abrupt change of direction at 9 metres leaning approximately 45 degrees to the north'

'The tree should be considered medium risk Remedial work is required to reduce the risk associated with the stem cavities and poor physiological condition'

The findings include:

'We found no evidence of root plate movement, no mounding or soil heave was observed around the tree. The stem has well defined buttressing on the tension side of the stem, we detected isolated decay and a small cavity internally at ground level'.

'there is evidence of bleeding canker (observations in 3.2.2), horse chestnut leaf miner and the tree has a poor physiological appearance (observations in 3.2.5)'.

'The bark was true to type and firmly attached The main stem has an abrupt change in direction at approximately 9 metres above ground level (AGL)..... Most probably having been suppressed'.

'The main stem has two small cavities and a larger bark wound at approximately 11 metres AGL'

Decay detection in the form of 5 drillings were undertaken (details in 3.2.6-3.2.8)

Conclusions include:

'The decay detected at ground level on the north and east sides does not appear to be structurally significant at this time poor physiological condition and peripheral die back are most probably a combination of bleeding canker, HCLM and climatic conditions'

'We are unable to provide a definitive opinion on the structural significance of the large wound and smaller cavities at 11 metres AGL. The cavities are typical of those resulting from pruning and the larger wound is characteristic of mechanical damage. They are located at a structurally significant position where the main stem changes direction and may increase the risk of stem failure that this location'

'The tree contributes to the landscape character of the area screening the adjacent road and provides amenity and ecological benefits'.

The final recommendation given is:

'We recommend that the canopy is reduced primarily on the north and west sides by a maximum of 1 metre +/- 0.5 metre and that the east side if required is pruned to provide a balanced framework. This work to be undertaken between September to November 2025'.

As advised, having had site of this report prior to submission, I was concerned about the wording of the specification as it seemed contrary to say a 'maximum' of 1m then also say '+/- 0.5m'. In addition, I advised that omission of east side pruning should be considered if for aesthetic reasons only, given that limited pruning is prudent on a tree under stress. Lastly, I advised that I was unclear why the works would be recommended Sep-Nov, given that the period immediately before or during leaf fall is generally accepted to be one of the times that reductions are not carried out, particularly to trees in sub-optimal condition. You have resolved the first and second concerns in the wording of your application and the last is dealt with via Condition 3 below.

I can therefore confirm that the following proposed works, as detailed in your application, are approved subject to the conditions below:

- Horse chestnut (T479 of report; part of W1 of TPO) - reduce canopy on the north and west sides by 0.5-1m, back to appropriate growing points to reduce weight on the side to which the tree leans.

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. The approved canopy reduction shall be undertaken in mid-late Summer (July - September) when the tree's energy reserves are at their height or during the Winter months of December - January during the period of dormancy.

Reason: Taking into account the tree's phenological cycle and in order to avoid any unnecessary detriment to the tree as a result of the pruning work.

4. 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

If you wish to appeal against any of the 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/government/topics/trees-and-hedges)

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer