



Mr P Richardson
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RG4 7LZ

Emma Gee
Executive Director for
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11th August 2025

Your contact is:

Amy Daly: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Richardson

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 1NO. HORSE CHESTNUT TREE AT 67 KIDMORE ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7LZ - PART OF G1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 229/06

Thank you for your application of 7th July 2025, regarding the above.

Further to mine and my colleague Sarah Hanson's visit of 7th August 2025, I have the following comments:

We discussed the proposed felling of the Horse Chestnut tree, and you advised us of your concerns. It was noted on site that the tree is mature and forms the end of a row of five protected trees, including two other Horse chestnut trees. It is evident the tree is impacted by the Horse Chestnut leaf minor which is a common pest affecting the majority of Horse Chestnut trees in the country. The tree appeared to otherwise be in good condition. From a cursory ground inspection, there were no obvious signs of decline, no evidence of fungal fruiting bodies or decay and there was minimal deadwood within the crown.

You provided a supporting statement to justify the works listing 6 different points, which I will take in turn.

The first is the tree size and suitability for its environment, dominating your garden and affecting the amount light to your garden and adjacent properties. Our file indicates that no tree works application has been submitted for this tree since 2011 at which point felling of the tree was refused, one of the reasons cited being the size of the tree and shading. No alternatives to felling have been put forward to alleviate these concerns. As was indicated in 2011, there is a large portion of the garden that the canopy does not

overhang, albeit it is appreciated that the tree will result in shade on a larger portion of the garden due to its orientation.

We asked you if your chosen tree surgeon proposed an alternative other than felling to help alleviate this concern and you indicated that a 30% reduction of the trees canopy was mentioned. In accordance with good arboricultural practice this is the maximum canopy reduction we would accept, and it would have to be with appropriate justification, normally to address a serious defect in the tree, i.e. that extent of pruning being necessary to make the tree safe. As discussed, it is also difficult to determine what level of reduction would significantly improve the amount of light availability.

Sarah and I tried to consider an alternative specification; however, it is difficult to determine what amount of works would make a significant difference to improve the light and space available yet not cause a detrimental impact to the tree's health. We advise that to resolve this concern, professional advice is sought from your chosen tree surgeon who should be capable of proposing a reasonable specification to achieve a balance between alleviating your concerns and not harming the future health of the tree, which we would be happy to consider in a future application.

The second reason you provided is the impact of the tree to your boundary and the neighbouring land. You expressed that you are concerned that the tree will continue to grow and increase the pressure to move your boundary fence further into neighbouring land. It is not uncommon for tree trunks to straddle boundary lines and for fencing to have to be designed to accommodate these. One low, main branch is in close contact with the top of the boundary fence and we suggested cutting a gap in the fence to accommodate this, which is a more reasonable approach than felling the tree for this reason alone.

The third reason you put forward for felling was the health and condition of the tree. It is clear that the tree does have a defoliating pest present. The leaf minor is very common pest which affects most of the population of this species. It does not affect the tree's structural stability, nor does it cause immediate decline of a tree. Whilst it might affect the appearance of the tree, this is not justification for felling. It would set an unwelcome future precedent for felling other Horse Chestnut trees based on the presence of a common defoliating pest.

The fourth reason suggested by yourself was the lack of public amenity value due to the tree not being visible to the public. The tree is a mature tree that is located at the end of an avenue of trees forming a landscape feature. We were able to view the tree from Kidmore Road and therefore the tree does have a level of public amenity value and contributes (with the others in the avenue) to the verdant nature of the area. The tree is also visible from several houses within the near vicinity. Felling this tree would arguably set an unwelcome future precedent for others in the avenue protected by the TPO and other trees of similar amenity value.

The fifth reason proposed for justifying the felling is the potential structural risk and maintenance burden. You stated there is currently no evidence of any structural damage to property. It is therefore difficult to agree that this is a justified reason for felling. Every tree works application decision is based on the evidence present at the time and it

is unreasonable to allow the felling of a mature, healthy, protected tree based on future concerns that may never happen. The natural, seasonal nuisance which trees present is an aspect of owning trees that landowners must consider when purchasing a property that has a TPO applied - these are not considered to be reasons for felling.

The occupiers at 65 Kidmore Road provided a statement listing similar concerns as you, and that they support the felling of the tree. An email sent to Sarah Hanson of 4th August 2025 from the occupiers at 65 Kidmore Road stated '*We have recently installed a new patio and retaining wall and are also concerned about potential root damage to these structures.*'. Sarah then queried how these were done within the potential root area of the tree in order to avoid damage; roots of protected trees are protected in the same way as the above ground parts. It was noted on site that this patio area and retaining wall are of a significant distance from the tree, however if there is ever evidence of direct damage caused by the tree roots in the future, we would be happy to consider an application supported by appropriate evidence

The final reason for justifying the felling of the Horse Chestnut tree was your proposal to replant a replacement tree. This is what we expect as part of a standard condition when felling of trees subject to TPO is approved; it is not a justifiable reason for felling a tree.

An additional point to note, as was raised in 2011, is the impact of removing the tree on adjacent trees in terms of exposing them to wind forces which they are not used to, i.e. it increases the risk of 'windthrow' (failure) of the adjacent tree(s).

To conclude, we appreciate that the reasons stated above and in your supporting statement collectively form a larger concern. However, the reasons stated for felling are difficult to fully justify as it will set an unwelcome precedent for the future felling of trees subject to a TPO, particularly Horse Chestnuts. The reasons put forward are not considered to justify the felling of a healthy, mature tree of amenity value. No concerns regarding the tree's structural condition or evidence of defects in the tree have been put forward to support felling. The proposed felling of the Horse Chestnut tree is therefore **refused**.

We do consider there to be scope to undertake some reasonable tree works which are listed below. We hope the approved works improve the clearance above ground and adjacent structures i.e. the fencing and the neighbouring outbuilding. This will allow the garden space directly underneath the tree to be more usable and it will prevent damage to nearby structures.

As indicated above, we would welcome a future application for proposed tree works as we recognise and appreciate the concerns raised. Sarah and I could not note any significant defects from a ground inspection of the tree. However, a more thorough climbing inspection may determine the presence of any defects that are not visible from the ground. We advise you seek professional advice from a tree surgeon who can comment further on the condition of the tree and offer a justified specification to help alleviate the concerns raised, without posing a detrimental impact to the tree's future health.

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

- Crown lift, through 360°, to approximately 3.5m above ground level, leaving suitable growth points; where the tree overhangs existing structures (garages to the rear), crown lift to provide 1m clearance above these (see Figure 1). Branches less than approximately 25mm can be removed from the main stem (see Figure 2 for example)



Figure 1 - 3.5m crown lift above ground level, through 360° (red line); crown lift to provide 1m clearance of garage roof (blue line)

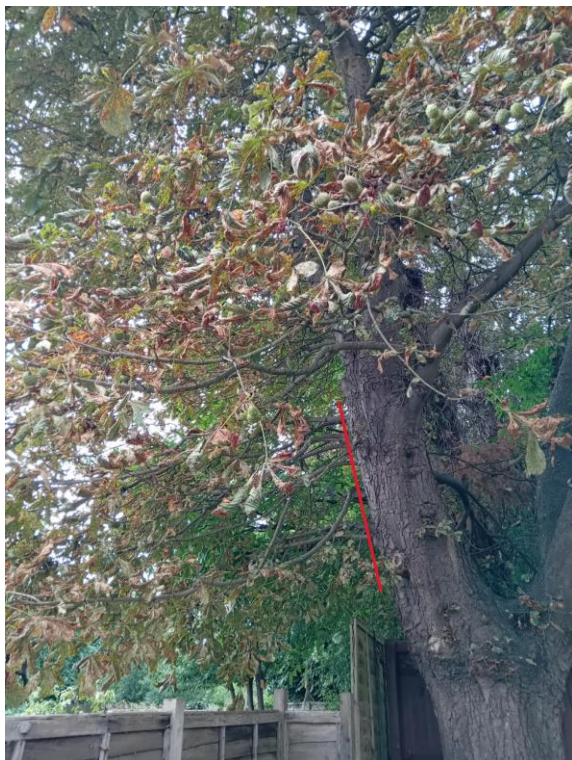


Figure 2 - Removal of branches less than 25mm in diameter back to the main stem (as part of crown lift)

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. It is best to avoid works in the period immediately before or during bud burst and leaf fall to minimise the effect on the long-term health of the tree

If you wish to appeal against any of the refused works and/or conditions attached to the consented works, 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