



Mr T Heaps
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15th August 2025

Your contact is:

Amy Daly: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Heaps

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 1NO. DAWN REDWOOD TREE AT 10 KNOWLE CLOSE,
CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7LH - T1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 142/01.**

Thank you for your application of 10th July 2025, regarding the above.

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

Upon visiting the site, it appeared from a ground inspection that the tree is in good condition. There was no evidence of internal decay or fungal fruiting bodies. There was some minor deadwood in the crown however live foliage comprises the majority of the canopy. The tree is visible from the road of Knowle Close and from properties within the near vicinity contributing to the verdant nature of the locality.

In support of your application, you provided a list of eight reasons to justify the felling of the tree, which I shall address in turn. These reasons were also discussed with Mr Bowler during the site visit.

The first reasoning being that the tree is young and has the potential to grow much larger. Whilst we recognise that the tree is likely to grow larger in height, it is not agreed this is a justified reason for felling, particularly as there is sufficient space around the tree to accommodate future growth.

The second reason is that it has outgrown the space which it is situated. It was noted that the lower canopy conflicts with the adjacent shed and fence, but crown lifting could be done to alleviate this; felling being a disproportionate response. The main stem is of an adequate distance away from the fence and the shed, both now and for the foreseeable

future. The upper canopy has adequate space around it to grow and therefore it is difficult to agree this is an acceptable reason for felling a healthy tree of amenity value.

The third reason to support the felling was that the tree is sparse and has deadwood in the crown. Sarah Hanson enquired via email of 10th July 2025, asking for further comments on the trees condition. You stated *'It's just sparser than would be expected. Nothing more or less than that for its condition.'* Your response does not indicate that there are any concerns regarding the trees condition i.e. it doesn't state there are any defects of concern to question the trees structural stability or physiological condition. Dawn Redwood trees have relatively sparser crowns when compared to other species, hence it is a natural characteristic, and it is not agreed this is an acceptable reason for felling.

The presence of only minor deadwood in the crown was noted. Mr Bowler expressed that the deadwood being dropped from the canopy to the ground is inconvenient for himself and his grandmother to clear. In order to alleviate this concern, we suggested that the deadwood is removed from the crown which does not require formal consent. Instead, we ask a 5-day notice is provided prior to undertaking the works.

The fourth justification for felling was that the tree is non-native and attracts little native wildlife. We do not omit non-native trees from TPOs and to do so would risk hundreds of such trees across the Borough, which all form part of the overall tree coverage. Each tree is considered on its own merits, with amenity value being the primary factor, which this tree provides. Non-native trees, as part of our tree stock, will be important in ensuring the tree population is more resistant to the impact of climate change and pests & diseases. Felling a healthy, protected because it is not native would set an unwelcome future precedent. We therefore do not deem this as an acceptable reason to justify the proposed felling.

The fifth reason for justifying the felling was the presence of pigeon droppings make the area of the garden beneath the tree unpleasant to use. Whilst we recognise and appreciate this concern, it is a common impact of having trees in a garden. From our site visit we noted the tree is in the rear corner of the garden, leaving a significant amount of useable garden space outside its canopy. We do not agree the presence of bird droppings in this one area of the garden is an acceptable reason to fell a protected tree.

The sixth reason to support the felling was that the tree roots can cause direct damage to hard surfaces around them. As discussed with Mr Bowler, block paving is particularly susceptible to movement through root activity/growth, with little movement resulting in a potential trip hazard. Removal of a tree is a disproportionate response to this concern and instead it would be reasonable to replace the surfacing with a more flexible material. We, therefore, don't consider this as acceptable reasoning for felling.

Your seventh reasoning for the proposed felling was the potential structural damage the tree could cause to the bungalow at 11 Knowle Close and there being 7.5m of distance between them. We base the decision for every application based on the evidence present at the time. We have not received any correspondence from the occupiers at 11 Knowle Close expressing concerns or providing evidence of this. We do not consider it acceptable

to fell a protected, healthy tree of amenity value, as a precautionary measure for a situation that may never happen. If the situation was to occur, we would be happy to consider a future application supported by appropriate evidence.

The final reason to support the felling was that the trees conical form doesn't allow it to respond favourably to pruning, suggested to contain its size, without being detrimental to its health. As stated above, the tree has adequate space around it to continue to grow. It is therefore not considered necessary to contain its size given that there are no obvious structural defects and it is not in direct conflict with adjacent structures other than the fence and shed, which concerns can be alleviated through lesser pruning. We, therefore, don't deem this as an acceptable reason for felling a tree in good condition and of amenity value.

Lastly, you suggested mitigating for the loss of the tree by replanting a replacement Silver Birch tree. The replanting of a replacement tree is a standard condition attached when felling a tree subject to a TPO and therefore this doesn't further justify the proposed felling.

To conclude, we appreciate the concerns put forward collectively form a larger concern. However, we do not agree that the reasons are acceptable to support the felling a healthy, protected tree of amenity value for the reasons given above. The felling of protected trees is a last resort where there are no options for remedial works to alleviate any significant concerns put forward.

The felling of the Dawn Redwood tree is therefore refused.

As mentioned above we do consider there to be scope to undertake some lesser pruning works to the tree, listed in the approved works below, as we recognise the lower canopy is within close contact to the adjacent fence and shed. This will create adequate clearance between them and aims to help alleviate concerns regarding the tree's future growth and potential damage to adjacent structures.

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 1m above the height of the adjacent shed and fence, leaving suitable growth points and including the removal of 4no. lower branches back to the source (see Figure 1)



Figure 1 - 4no. lower branches to be removed back to main stem

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/government/topics/trees-and-woodland/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 Bowler, Knowle Close