



Mrs R Sheridan
Estates Bursar
St Josephs College
64 Upper Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5JT

Emma Gee
Acting Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services

Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 9373787

Our Ref: PL/25/1110
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 372440
Sarah.hanson@reading.gov.uk

15 August 2025

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mrs Sheridan

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE CEDAR TREE AT ST JOSEPHS COLLEGE, UPPER REDLANDS ROAD, READING - T2 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 1/16.

Thank you for your application of 6 August 2025 regarding the above, with supporting 'Tree Safety & Condition Report' from Tree Fella's Tree Surveyors, dated 5 August 2025.

From the location plan provided with the report, the tree appeared to be T3 of the TPO, however you advised that it was T2, which was confirmed on site.

Further to my visit on 11 August 2025, I have the following comments:

I am aware of previous inspections of this tree over recent years (since 2017) and that the 'audible decay' referred to in the most recent report (confirmed on site) has been evident since 2017, appearing to have worsened over time, now extending around approximately one third of the circumference of the main stem (trunk). This is accompanied by clear bark discolouration in this zone. In addition, there is vertical bark delamination on the south side of the north-west main upright stem from the main union to the top of the crown, the extent of which also appears to have worsened.

The current tree report mentions potentially two fungal brackets at around the height of 11m and dried remains of fungal fruiting bodies from ground level to the height of 8m on the SE side. As you are aware I was unable to verify this on site.

The tree is in a high occupancy location, close to the adjacent building and overhanging the adjacent children's play area. The defects noted in the tree result in the tree having

an increased risk of failure / partial failure. This, combined with its location and occupancy, results in the tree presenting an unacceptably high risk, and as such felling is considered a reasonable course of action.

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

- Cedar (T2 of TPO; T1 of tree report) - fell to ground level

I note the application proposes that the tree to be monolithed to 6m, i.e. leaving a 6m tall trunk. The approval allows for felling to ground level and I will leave the school to consider retention of any trunk depending on your wishes and the condition of the trunk below this height.

Please note the replacement condition below. I have left this open to allow further discussion, but we did discuss this briefly on site. It is evident that a tree of an ultimately similar size to the Cedar is not feasible - this is a pity as the Cedar, along with the remaining Cedar and Pine and the previous T4 Pine (felled) provided a notable treescape when reviewed from the road. I suggested the use of a fastigate (narrow) form tree, that still gave some height but without the spread, and associated nuisance issues, over the adjacent play area. There are a number of cultivars that could be considered, including the following which are all no more than 4m spread after 50 years, most of which are less than that:

Acer campestre 'William Caldwell' (Field maple)

Acer platanoides 'Columnare' or 'Crimson King' (Norway maple - the latter having purple leaves.

Carpinus betulus 'Lucas' or 'Frans Fontaine' (Hornbeam)

Fagus sylvatica 'Dawyck' or 'Dawyck Purple' (Beech)

Quercus robur 'Fastigiata Koster' (Oak)

Ulmus 'Columella' (Elm)

In terms of the timing of the replacement, it is normal for us to require this in the planting season (Nov-March) following or at the time of felling, whichever is soonest. We discussed this on site as I was mindful of the cost to the school of felling the Cedar, which I understand is intended prior to the start of the September term. I have therefore pushed this timing to the end of 2026 to allow further time for funds to be accumulated.

Please also be reminded that the replacement for T4 Pine, as required by condition 3 of tree works approval 210551/TPO is still outstanding hence also needs to be actioned. I am aware that felling of this tree took place in January 2022 and as such the replacement should have been planted before the end of March 2022. Please arrange this for the forthcoming planting season, i.e. before the end of March 2026, agreeing the species with us in advance as per the wording of the condition.

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. Following the felling of the Cedar tree authorised by this consent, one replacement tree of a minimum 8-10cm girth and 2.75m high (at time of planting) shall be planted in the same grass area before the end of 2026. The species /cultivar shall be agreed with the Natural Environment Team prior to purchase and planting.

Planting should be carried out in accordance with clause 10 (Planting) of BS 8545:2014 'Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations'

Should the replacement tree be removed, die or become severely damaged or seriously diseased, all within 5 years of planting, it shall be replaced by a tree of a similar size and species to that originally planted. Modifications to the requirements of this condition must be agreed in writing with Reading Borough Council Natural Environment Team.

PLEASE NOTE: The requirement to replant is the responsibility of the tree owner even if the application was submitted by another person.

Reason: To retain the present visual amenity value of the area and ensure continuity of tree coverage.

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. 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

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer