



Mr N Cantell
Beechwood Tree Care Ltd
2 Playhatch Farm Cottages
Playhatch
RG4 8NL

Emma Gee
Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
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Our Ref: PL/25/1514
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 937 2458
Amy.daly@reading.gov.uk

15th December 2025

Your contact is:

Amy Daly: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Cantell

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 1NO. OAK TREE AT THE TENNIS COURTS TO THE REAR OF 52-61 BALMORE DRIVE, READING - T2 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 63/14.

Thank you for your application of 22nd October 2025, regarding the above.

You have applied for the following:

Remove the 2 lowest limbs over the court back to source; reduce crown over courts by approximately 1.5m

Your proposal was supported with a list of nine reasons to justify the works, with the main intention to reduce the amount of canopy overhanging the tennis court and thereby reduce the amount of bird droppings falling into the tennis court.

Further to mine and my colleague Sarah Hanson's visit on 14th November 2025, I have the following comments:

Upon visiting the site, Sarah and I were unclear on the branches proposed to be removed, as these were not specifically labelled in the photographs submitted alongside your application; the only annotated photograph appearing to be of an adjacent non-TPO Sycamore.

I emailed you on 27th November 2025, to gain clarity on the two branches proposed to be removed and the reasoning for their removal.

Your reasoning was stated as follows:

'The idea was to remove the two smaller lateral branches to not only give clearance, but to limit the amount of perching spots for the birds as the faeces is damaging the courts, we understand that this won't stop the issue completely but it will help'

After assessing the annotated photograph and reasonings for the proposed removal of these two branches, which you provided via email on 11th December 2025, I note that these two branches are long structural branches which contribute to the trees balance and shape on the side where the tree overhangs the tennis courts (see Figure 1 below). I have concerns that removing these two branches and reducing the remaining lateral branches over the tennis courts, will remove a significant amount of the tree's foliage bearing structure, and will leave the canopy unbalanced, with the tree's canopy heavily weighted on the opposite side to the tennis court. This will thereby impact the trees amenity value, which I don't consider fully justified. As agreed by yourself, these works will not eliminate all the overhang of the branches or eliminate bird droppings impacting the tennis courts and will only reduce these concerns (by an amount that can't be determined).

On balance, bearing in mind the remaining canopy overhanging the tennis court is also to be reduced, I do not consider the impact to the trees health and amenity value from removing these two branches as fully justified, when lesser works i.e. reducing them instead, will achieve a similar outcome to alleviate concerns regarding the enjoyment of the use of the tennis court. As agreed by yourself, this will only improve the situation and not fully resolve these concerns. **The removal of the two lowest limbs overhanging the courts is therefore refused.**

I did question in my email exchange with you, why the proposed branches to be removed can't be reduced with the remaining canopy instead of removing them completely. Whilst I appreciate removing these branches may reduce perching points for birds, it seems reasonable to suggest that birds would move the higher branches. The branches in question can be reduced with the remaining canopy overhanging the tennis courts to alleviate these concerns. This would have a lesser negative impact to tree health and amenity value but would still reduce the amount of canopy overhang over the tennis courts, particularly over the playing area (court lines) of the court.

I do appreciate the concerns raised and I do consider the reduction of the branches overhanging the tennis court as reasonable, particularly to provide clearance of the rear court line. I hope that the approved works will help alleviate concerns and improve the enjoyment of the use of the tennis courts.

I can therefore confirm that the following proposed works, as detailed in your application, are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the reproduced and annotated photographs below:

- T2 Oak: reduce the lateral branches growing over the tennis court by approximately 1.5m (see Figure 2 below) taken from the furthest extremity i.e. the tip of the longest branch, shaping the reduction to form a natural canopy shape, ensuring no more than one third of the foliage is removed from each branch and leaving suitable growth points.



Figure 1 - refused two branches to be removed



Figure 2 - approved reduction of lateral branches over the tennis court to clear rear court line

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 to T2 Oak 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
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 conditions or refused works 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)

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 Steiner, Blue Fernlandscapes