



Mr A Yee
Peak Sights Investment Limited
51 Castle Street
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Emma Gee
Executive Director for
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Our Ref: PL/26/0141
Your Ref:

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2nd April 2026

Your contact is:

Amy Daly: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Yee

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 1NO. SYCAMORE TREE AT 7 CASTLE STREET, READING - T1
OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 17/19.**

Thank you for your application of 2nd February 2026, regarding the above.

You have applied for the following:

- 1. Crown reduction of the tree by approximately 20-30% overall, reducing the height and lateral spread evenly while retaining the tree's natural form.*
- 2. Removal of dead, diseased, crossing, and weakly attached branches throughout the crown.*
- 3. Pruning of branches overhanging the property roof and garden area to provide a minimum clearance of 2-3 metres from built structures.*

Further to mine and my colleague Sarah Hansons visit of 13th February 2026, I have the following comments:

The reduction proposed is significant in that it proposes to reduce the tree by 20-30% in height and lateral spread and is proposed without any reasoning. We do not consider reductions of this significance justified without arboricultural grounds to support this e.g. when the tree's structural integrity is questionable - no such evidence has been provided in your application. Significant reductions can have a detrimental impact on tree health by creation of multiple wounds (all entry points for pathogens) and thereafter confine trees to a lesser size, hence a lesser amenity value. The tree is also located in the Abbey Ward which is a low canopy cover ward (as defined in our adopted Tree Strategy), and reducing the tree by the amount proposed would forever reduce the amount of canopy and thereby canopy cover this tree could provide.

We appreciate that an adequate amount of clearance between the tree and adjacent structures is desirable; however, this can be achieved through lesser pruning which is discussed below. Whilst the tree is expected to continue to grow, adequate clearance from the tree and buildings can be achieved through repeated, lesser pruning to create clearance. This will maintain a positive relationship between the tree and adjacent buildings whilst offering a lesser negative impact to tree health and amenity value than the reduction proposed. **The ‘crown reduction of the tree by approximately 20-30% overall, reducing the height and lateral spread’ is therefore refused.**

The ‘*removal of dead, diseased, crossing, and weakly attached branches throughout the crown*’ is effectively a crown clean although the specification is slightly vague hence it has been re-worded in the approved works below. The use of the term ‘*weakly attached branches*’ is difficult to envision how it would be determined whether or not a branch should be removed and the extent of these branch removals is not completely clear; hence this has been omitted and the crown clean should focus on low vigour/dying branches. The removal of crossing/rubbing branches should focus on small diameter growth only to prevent excessive thinning and should not remove structural branches.

The ‘*pruning of branches overhanging the property roof and garden area to provide a minimum clearance of 2-3 metres from built structures*’ is also a slightly vague specification. It is agreed that creating a level of clearance between the tree and adjacent buildings is reasonable. We have reworded the approved works below to provide further clarity on the pruning specification which will still achieve the desired outcome.

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

- Crown lift to the height of approximately 1.5-2m above the roof of the single-story extension at No. 7, including complete removal of two small diameter low hanging branches back to their course (refer to Figure 1); crown lift to 1.5-2m above the roof of No.9 (it is expected the tree will still overhang the roofs but will create adequate vertical clearance), removing secondary growth only and leaving suitable growth points.
- Reduce lower lateral branches growing towards No.11 to create approximately 2m horizontal clearance from the main building’s rear elevation leaving suitable growth points, and including the removal of the low, secondary branch growing towards No.11 back to its source, as shown in Figure 2 below. Please refer to the indicative lateral reduction in Figure 3 below and the Officer note below Figure 3.
- Crown clean including the removal of deadwood, low vigour / dying branches and any small diameter crossing/rubbing branches.

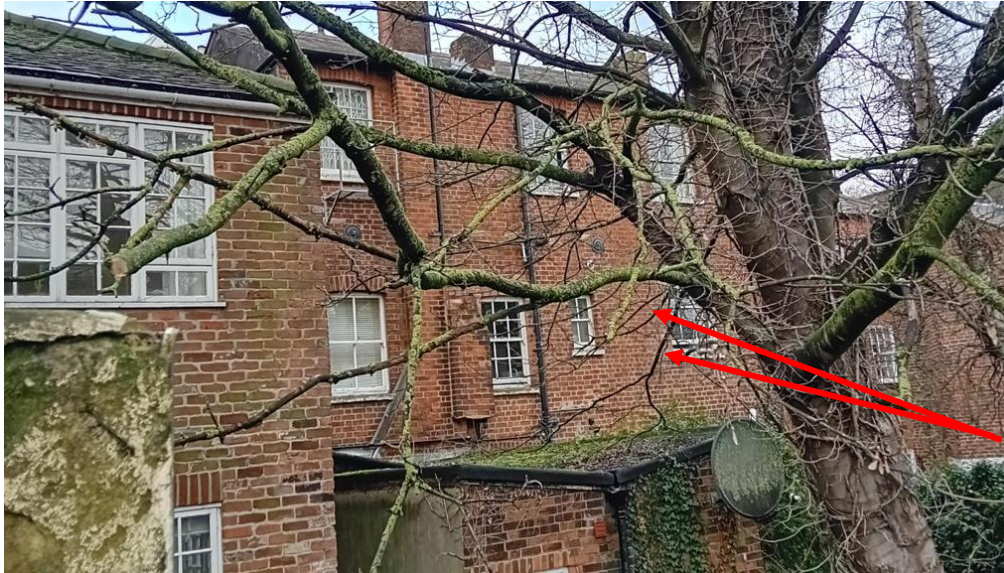


Figure 1 - Two small diameter branches to be removed back to their source as part of crown lift



Figure 2 - Low secondary branch growing towards No.11 (red arrow) to be removed back to its source (red line)



Figure 3 - Indicative lateral reduction to create approximately 2m clearance from No.11

Officer note: Upon visiting the site, we noted that the branches growing towards No.11 have recently been pruned prior to us issuing this decision notice, so this application is somewhat retrospective. Please be reminded that **it is a criminal offence to undertake works to a tree subject to a TPO without receiving formal approval**, unless you can demonstrate an exemption. The pruning cuts on the branches growing to No.11 are poor, not cleanly cut, they have been cut at an inappropriate angle in some places and no growth points left at the pruning points of the branches. I would hope that all occupiers/owners of the adjacent properties to this tree are aware that the tree is protected and associated TPO legislation. The level of clearance approved from No.11 has mostly been achieved already, so any further reduction will be of a small amount i.e. 0.5m or less. Please ensure you employ a qualified tree surgeon to undertake these works as they are familiar with the BS3998 2010 and will be able to rectify the poor pruning cuts made prior to this decision notice (note Condition 2 below).

If you are aware of the person who has undertaken the recent unauthorised works, I would be grateful if you could provide me their contact details so I can contact them directly.

From your application form it states you are the owner of the tree hence the owner of No.7 Castle Street. Please note Informative 5 below in terms of accessing other land to undertake the approved works.

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

4. Crown cleaning should not include the removal of fused natural braces (branches or stems), or the removal of entwining branches or rubbing branches (where they may be forming a natural brace) from the crown of a semi-mature to fully mature tree without carrying out an assessment of any junctions formed below such natural braces.

Reason: Removal of natural braces may lead to failure of weak unions.

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

5. 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 refused works and/or 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 suffer any loss or damage as a result of the refused works of this 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