



Mr B Nash
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Emma Gee
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Your Ref:

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10th April 2026

Your contact is:

Amy Daly: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Nash

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 1NO. BIRCH TREE AND 2NO. LIME TREES AT 74 CHAZEY ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING - T3-T5 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 90/03.

Thank you for your application of 16th February 2026, regarding the above.

You have applied for the following:

Lime T5 of TPO; T1 of application - *Providing a 2-3m reduction to nearest suitable growth points on 1x Lime tree to alleviate sail, reduce canopy size and release tension on poor unions specifically the twin stem. This tree is situated between two properties by opting for a reduction we aim to create a smaller crown limiting heavy regrowth.*

Lime T3 of TPO; T2 of application - *To crown thin another Lime by 20% by removing small epicormic growth and crown clean plus raising over highway.*

Both trees require raising from power lines.

Birch T4 of TPO; T3 of application - *Removal of 1x Hollow Silver Birch tree that is leaning towards property, the tree is showing signs of stress (thin crown)*

Further to mine and my colleague Sarah Hanson's visit of 27th February 2026, I have the following comments:

There is some history regarding previous works to T5 Lime tree (T1 of application) which needs to be discussed. Under the previous TPO (reference TPO 144) which has since been reviewed and replaced with TPO 90/03, we refused the reduction of this Lime tree by one third in 2001. This was then appealed in 2002 which was dismissed, so a reduction to this tree has never approved. However, it was evident from our site visit that the tree has been reduced at some point hence this work appears to be unauthorised.

The appeal Inspector noted in Section 3 of the covering letter that the tree appeared to have never had any significant works undertaken to it and as such, retains *'an excellent, natural shape which adds to its value'*. The poor union mentioned in your application form is also discussed within Section 09 of the Appraisal and is described as *'the fork at 7m is narrow but from ground observation appears satisfactory'*. The Inspector then concluded that *'there is no evidence to suggest that the tree poses any specific or likely safety hazard'*. Please refer to Figure 1 and Figure 2 showing the union in question.

Sarah sent you an email on 27th February 2026 following our site visit to ask if you had any further comments to add which would support the reduction proposed. To which you responded and cited *'there is a co dominant stem, we have opted for a full crown reduction, compared to target pruning the smaller stem, by doing that it would open up the main stem to wind. So a full reduction by 2-3m to suitable growth points would balance the tree out over both properties, reducing sail and slowing down pontes failure'*

To support a reduction, we require satisfactory evidence of the condition of the union/fork in question. When we visited, the union/fork was obscured by ivy and to our understanding a climbing inspection has not been carried out, hence we are lacking a clear inspection and assessment of the fork. I note your client would also like more light availability (mentioned in your response to Sarah). However, this was also discussed during the appeal for the previously refused reduction. This justification for reducing the tree was not supported either. As the appeal mentions, the tree is located on the southern side of the dwellings (no. 74 & 76) and thus will shade the front gardens, but this reduction wouldn't have altered the level of shading. Furthermore, the reduction you are proposing isn't expected to improve light availability and it is not something we consider justified alone when balanced against the potential negative impact to tree health and amenity value.

Given that a climbing inspection of the union/fork was not undertaken and cannot be assessed from the ground due to ivy, we have no evidence that the condition of this fork/union is a concern whereby it justifies a reduction. We also don't consider the impact on light availability as a justified reason to undertake such significant works, especially when this is not expected to improve light availability. **The '2-3m reduction to nearest suitable growth points' is therefore refused.**

We would be happy to reconsider these works within a future application if evidence of the union/fork's condition is provided to justify this. Whilst undertaking the approved works, I encourage that the ivy is severed from the base of the tree (undertaken carefully using hand tools to avoid damage to the bark and cambium layer) and removed from the fork/union so it can be thoroughly inspected - note Informative 6 below. Please ensure you take photographic evidence of any defects present within the fork/union to support a future application if you still consider that a reduction is necessary. Some works have been approved to this tree that we have considered reasonable for clearance purposes and are detailed below.

The works to T3 Lime tree (T2 of application) are considered reasonable to ensure adequate ground clearance over the adjacent highway and clearance from overhead wires. The 20% crown thin is agreeable in principle; however, this should focus in the first

instance on dead, dying, poor vigour and crossing/rubbing branches, i.e. a crown clean, the remainder of the 20% then being made up of other branches. In accordance with BS3998:2010, material should be removed systematically from throughout the tree rather than from the inner crown only. Uneven or over thinning increases the probability of branch failure so needs to be done with care. I appreciate you want to reduce the sail of this tree; however, crown thinning Lime trees is somewhat counterproductive as it encourages rapid regenerative growth, so this won't alleviate concerns about the tree's sail for a long period of time. Crown thinning also allows more air movement throughout the canopy of the tree and can leave branches more susceptible to failure, which if reducing the sail and associated potential branch failure is a concern, would not be appropriate management.

The removal of the Birch tree (T4 of TPO; T3 of application) is considered reasonable due to the condition of the tree. There is a cavity at the base of the tree indicating decay/dysfunction within the tree's main stem and you used a sounding mallet to determine that a level of decay is occurring. There are unfortunately limited options for remedial works as the canopy is sparser than expected and there are limited growth points to reduce the tree back to, to reduce the weight load on the tree's main structural stem which is compromised due to the cavity at the base. Birch trees are also not particularly good at resisting decay in comparison to other species and the decay is expected to worsen over time. Felling is therefore unfortunately the only option as remedial works are not appropriate to address the decay/dysfunction present.

I can therefore confirm that the following proposed works are approved subject to the conditions below:

- 1no. Birch tree (T4 of TPO; T3 of application): fell to ground level
- 1no. Lime tree (T3 of TPO; T2 of application): crown thin by a maximum of 20% to incorporate initial crown cleaning, i.e. removal of dead, dying, low vigour, crossing/rubbing branches with the remainder of the 20% made up of other branches; crown lift to the height of 5.5m above ground level over the adjacent highway, removing secondary growth only and leaving suitable growth points; selectively reduce branches growing towards the overhead wires and streetlamp to provide approximately 1m clearance, removing secondary growth only and leaving suitable growth points. Where secondary growth needs to be removed from the structural, lateral branches to facilitate this, the growth should be reduced back to the previous pruning points, and the structural lateral branches should not be reduced.
- 1no. Lime tree (T5 of TPO; T1 of application): crown lift to the height of 5.5m above ground level over the adjacent highway, removing secondary growth only and leaving suitable growth points. Where secondary growth needs to be removed from the structural, lateral branches to facilitate this, the growth should be reduced back to the previous pruning points, and the structural lateral branches should not be reduced.



Figure 1 & Figure 2: T5 Lime tree (T1 of application) union/fork in question

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. Following the felling of 1no. Birch tree (T4 of TPO; T3 of application) authorised by this consent, 1no. *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch) of a minimum of 8-10cm in girth and 2.75m in height at the time of planting shall be planted within the front garden during the planting season (Nov-March) following or at the time of the felling of the tree, whichever is soonest.

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.

5. 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. Crown lifting of trees over the footpath and carriageway: If the clearance of vegetation overhanging the highway only involves the removal of branches to give a ground clearance to the statutory heights of 2.7m over the footpath and 5.5m over the road, this does not require formal consent from the Council. You are advised, however, to give notice to the Council of these intended works in order that they can be agreed.

6. Prior to the severing of well-established Ivy at the base of T5 Lime tree (T1 of application), it would be prudent to carry out an assessment of whether any of the stems of the Ivy are forming a natural brace above a suspected bark-included union

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)

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. Miss Beuncamino, 74 Chazey Road