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Ms N Lightfoot  
Tree Surgery Dept  
Innovation Group  
Bembridge House  
1300 Parkway Solent Business Park  
Whiteley  
PO15 7AE

Our Ref: PL/26/0264  
Your Ref:

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

28 April 2026

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Ms Lightfoot

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 3 HORNBEAM TREES AT 3 NOTLEY PLACE, READING - T20-T22 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 50/13.**

Thank you for your application of 25 February 2026, regarding the above.

Your application was initially supported by the following documents:

Arboricultural Report dated 10/05/2024  
Geotechnical Report dated 26 April 2024  
Soil Analysis report dated 10/05/2024  
Root Identification Report dated 30 April 2024  
Drainage Investigation Report dated 20th May 2024  
Engineering Final Report dated 23/2/2026  
Level Monitoring report dated 9 February 2026 (covering period 02/05/2024- 04/02/2026)

On request, you subsequently provided:

The original engineers report dated 05 March 2026 (complete version received 13/3/26)  
Photographs of the damage (received 5/3/26)

### Discussion

Further to my visit on 9 April 2026 with my colleague Amy Daly and our consulting engineer Tim Pither of Subtilis Consulting, I have the following comments:

The technical reports provided confirm that the soil type on site has high volumetric potential; that is a material capable of experiencing significant changes in volume with a

change in moisture content. Also, that the pattern of cracking is consistent with foundation movement to the rear right-hand corner of the extension, and level monitoring shows a pattern of movement consistent with vegetation related subsidence as a result of moisture uptake from nearby trees. Foundation depths were found to be 1.5m thick and 2.0m deep at rear right-hand corner to the extension; that being the only point at which Level Monitoring showed evidence of seasonal movement. Live roots from *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam) were found beneath the foundation depth.

It is acknowledged that the design and installation of the foundations were within the guidelines provided by the NHBC, albeit this does not appear to have been sufficient. It was noted on site that patios, a low-level wall and sheds (with associated concrete bases) have been constructed within Root Protection Areas (as defined by BS5837:2012), the latter in extreme proximity to the trees. This has all been done without discussion with the Local Planning Authority, which should have taken place given that Permitted Development Rights do not override a TPO. As a result, there has been detrimental harm to the rooting environment of the trees in question, significantly reducing their favourable rooting environment, access to water and soil gas exchange. This may have resulted in root exploration to the extent seen from investigations in order to find a favourable rooting environment.

The Arboricultural Report, dated 10/05/2024, was written prior to completion of the technical reports, hence without the evidence within these, and has not been amended since the reports have been completed. I assume, therefore, that all recommendations within the Arboricultural Report are still supported.

It is agreed that T3, T4 & T5 of the Arb Report; that being the trees proposed for felling, are T20-T22 of the TPO. I note that the Arboricultural Report does not clarify why these 3 Hornbeams have been proposed for felling, and not the adjacent Hornbeams, which would have been useful given that the root identification (result pre-dating this report) is at species, and not individual tree (no DNA), level. It is assumed that Innovation Group are satisfied that these specific 3 trees are the sole cause of the damage.

### Decision

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

- 3 No Hornbeam (T3-T5 of application; T20-T22 of TPO) - fell

### Additional points

The Arboricultural Report recommends a crown reduction to T1 Sycamore (T19 of the TPO) and to T6 & T7 Hornbeam (T23 & T24 of TPO) but this work is not included in your application. I further note that no Section 211 Notice has been submitted for works to the non-TPO trees, which would be required as the property is within a Conservation Area. It is therefore assumed that Innovation Group are satisfied that further work is not necessary and that the felling of the 3 Hornbeam trees specified, alone, will prevent further property damage.

I note that the Arboricultural Report recommends that: *‘following tree surgery we recommended that the building be monitored to establish the effectiveness of the works in restoring Stability’*. This would seem prudent given the remaining trees and the lack of work proposed to these.

The Arboricultural Report also recommends that *‘we consider the impact on the wider public amenity from the proposed tree works is mitigated by the presence of further trees and the scope for replacement planting’*. The trees are part of a group, bordering Surley Row, are in a Conservation Area, are highly visible from Peppard Road and were planted as part of the development of Notley Place. Their amenity value is high and loss detrimental. As a result, replacement planting is required, of appropriate species at an appropriate distance from the house. Please note Condition 3 below.

**Please note that permission was given in 2020 (reference PL/20/1083) to fell T18 Horse chestnut in the rear garden on condition that a replacement tree was planted. We have no record of this being complied with hence this matter is outstanding and should be addressed at the same time as the replanting required under this current application to avoid enforcement action.**

#### 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 three Hornbeam trees authorised by this consent, three replacement trees of a minimum 8-10cm girth and 2.75m high (at time of planting) shall be planted within the rear garden of 3 Notley Place during the planting season (Nov-March) following or at the time of the felling of the 3 Hornbeam trees, whichever is soonest. The species and location shall be agreed with the Natural Environment Team prior to purchase and planting, and should have due regard to the soil type and water demand of the proposed species.

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 whilst minimising the chance of future vegetation related subsidence by careful species choice.

### 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.
4. Trees not considered to be protected by the current Tree preservation order: All trees on site are subject to Conservation Area Status hence no works should take place without a formal Section 211 Notice being submitted to this Council.

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](mailto:treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Website: [Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

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

C.c Mr & Mrs Namaseevayum, 3 Notley Place