



Mr N Cantell
Beechwood Tree Care Ltd
2 Playhatch Farm Cottages
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Emma Gee
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Our Ref: PL/26/0359
Your Ref:

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18 May 2026

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Cantell

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO TWO PLANE TREES AT READING SCHOOL, ERLEIGH ROAD, READING - G7 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 15/11.

Thank you for your application of 17 March 2026 regarding the above.

Your application related to the eastern tree of the group of two Planes and sought permission for the following:

London Plane - Reduce the dysfunctional stem in the upper canopy on the most Easterly tree, growing towards the East, to just beyond the decayed point.

Your application is supported by 6 reasons, as detailed in the separate document provided.

Reason 1 states: *'The large limb growing to the East is likely to fail due to the detected defect (possibly Massaria, but clear signs of delaminating and decaying bark.) The pruning will significantly reduce this risk of limb failing'.*

On request, I was provided with a photograph of the branch in question taken from above to try and assist with understanding this first reason:



In view of the above reason, I sought clarity in my email of 5 May on why you considered this might be Massaria given the image is not typically representative of Massaria. I also sought clarity on which parts of the branch you identify as delaminating and which areas are considered decaying. In response you advised that your climber *'has said that the bark was delaminating and it looked decayed. It's a big limb over a school so I don't think we should take any chances. Looking at the photo the darker section is the bit in question. Without removing the bark I think it's hard to say whether this is Massaria, however if almost certainly dysfunction. When we go to remove the branch, if it is not decayed then we would leave it but I'd suggest it needs some work'*

It is unclear from the above what you will do in terms of 'work' if not decay is found. It would, perhaps, have been useful for the climber to have removed some of the darkened area of bark to discover whether, e.g. there was just normal bark underneath, decay or evidence of a historic wound, in order to determine with certainty the appropriate works to the branch, if any. Further investigation will be required prior to any works.

Reason 2 states: *'The location of the tree means it is exposed to significant wind stresses which are likely to lead to branch failure. The pruning will have a positive long-term impact upon the sustainability of the tree'*. No explanation is provided to assist in understanding the particular exposure of this tree so this has been given little weight.

Reason 3 relates to following good arboricultural practice to 'all trees' indicating that all works should be approved that could follow BS3998 guidance. I'm not convinced this should be the case, as a general principle, but in any case, approved works are subject to following BS guidance.

Reason 4 advises that the vitality of the tree means it could tolerate the work - I have no reason to dispute this.

Reason 5 states: *'The target area should the tree or a portion of it fail is a school playground and a car park. Any failure has the potential to lead to significant damage to property and/or serious injuries'*. Target area is appreciated, albeit there is no indication in your application that the whole tree will fail.

Reason 6 argues that the branch reduction will have no significant impact on amenity - this is agreed.

During my visit of 15 May 2026, the branch in question could not be viewed easily due to the tree now being in leaf. Additional work was agreed with Warren Symonds due to the canopy being low to the ground and in close proximity to the adjacent building and has been added to the application.

Taking all the above into account, and to try and assist in enabling work to go ahead to the branch, if ultimately necessary, I can confirm that the following proposed works are approved subject to the conditions below and with the caveat stated for the branch reduction:

- London Planes (G7 of TPO):
 - Eastern tree - reduce the dysfunctional stem in the upper canopy, growing towards the East, to a maximum point just beyond the 'decayed' area, as indicated on the annotated photograph provided (as above), if this is deemed necessary following inspection of the area of concern, including removal of the bark to assess the branch underneath, with such inspection concluding that the branch is unsafe if left as it is. Photographic evidence, with commentary, shall be provided to justify the ultimate works undertaken to this branch, if any. Note Condition 3 below.
 - Crown lift both trees through 360° to approx. 1.5m above the height of the fence on the eastern boundary, primarily through tip reduction and removal of secondary and tertiary growth, but including removal of lower, minor branches growing directly from the trunk (see examples below in Figures 2 & 3).
 - Western tree - Selective branch reduction to provide approximately 2m clearance from the building to the south-west of the tree (see Figure 1 below).



Figure 1 - indicative reduction for building clearance



Figure 2



Figure 3

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 branch reduction works hereby approved to the eastern tree shall be subject to a prior inspection, as detailed in the approved works.

Reason: to ensure works are appropriate and justified.

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. 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

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

C.c. Warren Symonds, Reading School