



Ms S Duckworth
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Emma Gee
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Your Ref:

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8th July 2026

Your contact is:

Amy Daly: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Ms Duckworth

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 1NO. NORWAY SPRUCE AT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE ENGLISH MARTYRS, LIEBENROOD ROAD, READING - T1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 51/06.

Thank you for your application of 22nd May 2026, regarding the above.

Further to mine and my colleague Sarah Hanson's visit of 1st July 2026, and with reference to the Tree Condition Survey, May 2026, Ref: 07023/2026, I have the following comments:

The tree in question is a Norway Spruce within the TPO documents hence I have referred to it as said species in the above. However, I note that your Tree Condition Survey identifies the tree as a Douglas Fir. For the avoidance of doubt, I have included both species in the different documents in the approved works below and in any case, there is no doubt which is the protected tree in question.

For context, the tree was struck by a lightning strike in 2014. Following this, Sarah advised some works to the previous person dealing with the tree at the time, although we don't have a record of these being undertaken. The works advised included crown lifting to 3-4m above ground level through reducing and removing branches.

The four branches of the first whorl are proposed to be removed back to their source (main stem). Given the defects mentioned in your Tree Condition Survey, including the failed/broken branch and the splitting of timber in two others, this is considered reasonable. Removing these branches, along with the reductions discussed below, will hopefully reduce the likelihood of failure, similar to that experienced by one of the branches already. The other branch without any defects is growing low and close to the building, hence it's removal to create clearance is considered appropriate. It is best these

branches are removed before reaching a large size in diameter and creating a larger pruning wound, more prone to decay/dysfunction.

Both the tip reductions of the branches on the west and north (northwest & northeast) aspects to manage the weight load and to create clearance from the adjacent building is considered reasonable. It is noted this is also proposed due to further exposure to natural forces following the removal of the four branches in the first whorl. It is hoped this will help reduce the likelihood of branch failure in the future. Sarah and I discussed the reduction of the branches growing on the south aspect to create approximately 1m clearance from the adjacent Plum tree as discussed with Mr Finch, to prevent branches conflicting with one another, to reduce suppression, and to reduce their weight - the details of which are in the approved works below.

In addition, the crown lifting is considered reasonable to create better clearance above ground level. I have amended this to include secondary growth only to avoid further branch removals on the tree's main stem.

The crown cleaning is also considered reasonable given the potential presence of other defective branches within the higher crown. The crown cleaning should only remove branches which are dead or branches which have defects that require removal to make them safe. It would be prudent for the chosen tree surgeon to undertake a climbing inspection of any defects not visible from the ground. It is encouraged that photographs of any defects are taken and sent to us, so that we have a record of the canopy's condition.

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

T1 Norway Spruce of TPO; T1 Douglas Fir of Survey

- Remove lower whorl of branches which includes of 1no. broken branch, 2no. split branches and 1no. branch with branch tips overhanging the building/parking area back to source, as shown in Figure 1 below;
- Crown lift secondary growth only to create 3-3.5m of clearance above ground level over the courtyard and 2.5m of clearance above ground level of the raised soft landscaped area, leaving suitable growth points;
- Tip reduce the lowest branch on the west aspect by approximately 2m (see Figure 2), ensuring no more than one third of the foliage is removed from the branch, leaving suitable growth points;
- Tip reduce lower branches on the northeast (see Figure 3 & 4) and northwest aspects (see Figure 4) by approximately 1.5m, ensuring no more than one third of the foliage is removed from each branch, leaving suitable growth points;
- Tip reduce the branches on the southern aspect (see Figure 5), growing towards the adjacent Plum tree to create approximately 1m clearance, leaving suitable growth points.



Figure 1: 4no. branches within the first whorl to be removed back to source

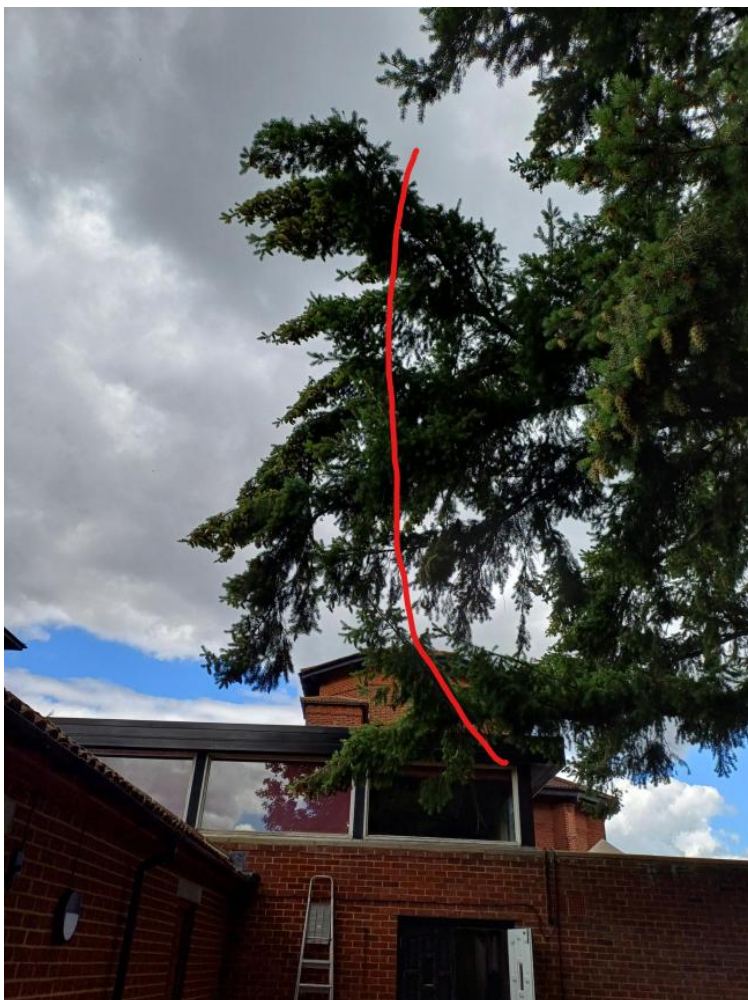


Figure 2: tip reduction of the lower branch on the west aspect by approximately 2m



Figure 3: tip reduction of lower branches on the northeast aspect by approximately 1.5m

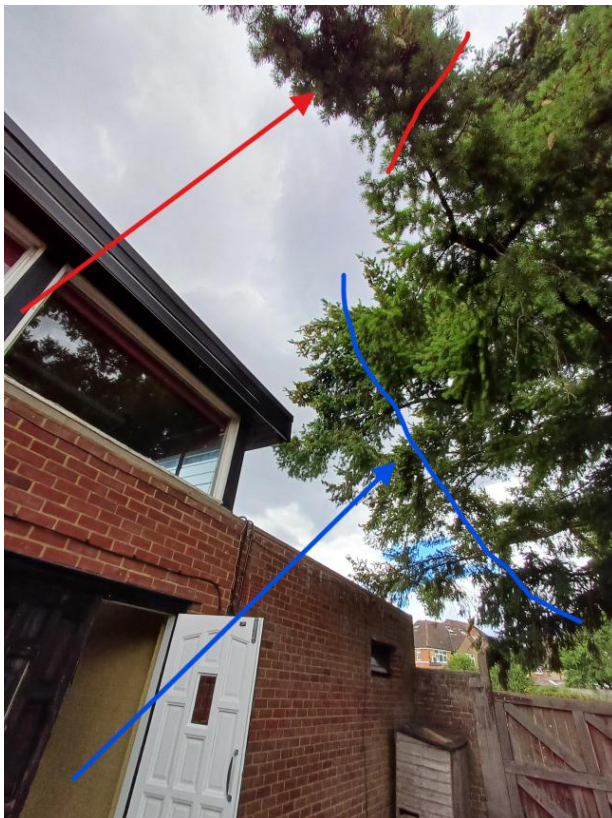


Figure 4: tip reduction of lower branches on the northeast (blue) and northwest aspects (red) by approximately 1.5m

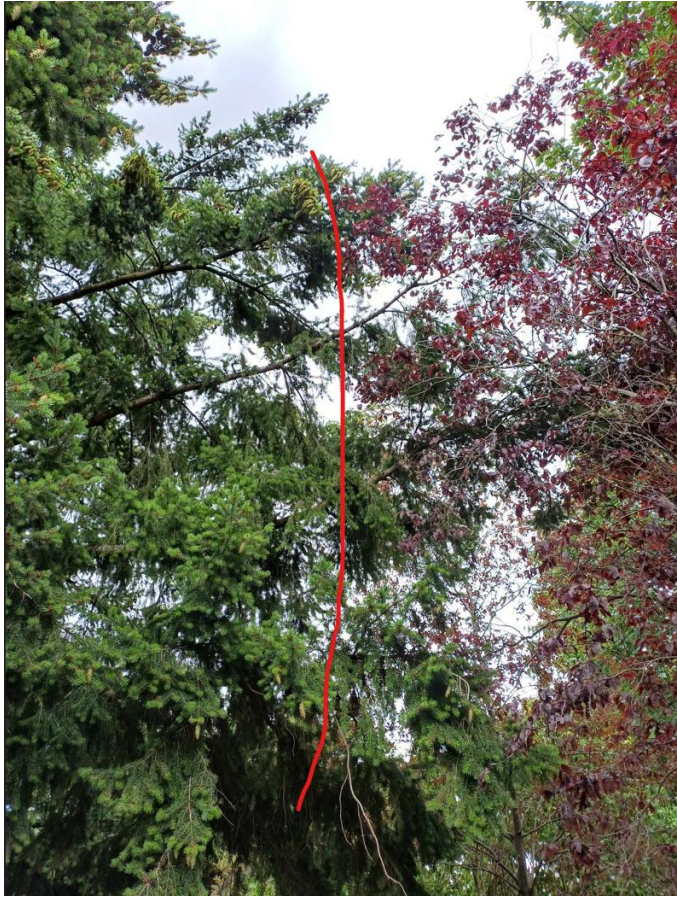


Figure 5: tip reduce branches growing towards the adjacent Plum tree on the south aspect to create approximately 1m clearance

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. 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 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 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 Finch, Roman Catholic Church Of The English Martyrs, Liebenrood Road