



Dr D Zhu
31 Benyon Court
Bath Road
Reading
RG1 6HR

Emma Gee
Executive Director for
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Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 9373787

Our Ref: PL/26/1171
Your Ref:

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8th October 2026

Your contact is:

Amy Daly: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Dr Zhu

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO MONKEY PUZZLE AT 31 BENYON COURT, BATH ROAD, READING - T1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 52/01.

Thank you for your application of 31st August 2026, regarding the above.

Further to mine and my colleague Sarah Hanson's visit of 4th September 2026, I have the following comments:

You had initially proposed to undertake a crown reduction to the tree as concerns were expressed regarding potential branches falling and damage to the property. When assessing the tree, we noted that there is a significant amount of deadwood within the crown, which is prone to failure from natural forces, so removing this should alleviate concerns regarding branches dropping. We also mentioned that there are several dying/low vigour branches, which could be removed as part of a 'crown clean'.

The branches that overhang the roof are not in conflict with the roof and have adequate clearance from the roof so that they wouldn't make contact in strong winds - a point you agreed. We explained that Monkey Puzzles are a species which carry the majority of the live foliage on the tips of the branches, and it would be difficult to determine how much of the live foliage could be removed, as part of a reduction, whilst still retaining enough so that the tree can sustain itself. We came to an agreement that a 'crown clean' would be a reasonable alternative, to remove any branches which pose a foreseeable hazard, which we hope alleviates concerns regarding the branches dropping. For peace of mind, it would be prudent to request that your chosen tree surgeon undertakes an inspection of the tree whilst the approved works are carried out, to assess the tree from a safety perspective. If any defects are found, please ensure these are photographed, so that if further works are required, we can use this as evidence to make an informed decision.

We also discussed the closure of the footpath so that the approved works can be undertaken. It was unknown at the time whether the footpath was privately owned or owned by the Council, but I can confirm that the footpath is Council highway. You will note I have provided you with the details of the relevant department which will be able to assist in organising the closure of the footpath, in my covering email.

I can therefore confirm that the following proposed works, as agreed during our site visit, are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the annotated photographs below:

- T1 Monkey Puzzle: crown clean by removing any dead, low vigour/dying (see Figure 1 for example) and crossing/rubbing branches that are small in diameter



Figure 1: example of low vigour/dying branch i.e. brown foliage

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

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:

Planning Inspectorate
C/O Quadient
69 Buckingham Avenue
Slough
SL1 4PN

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)

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