



Mr S Stroud
Tree Dimensions
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OX100FN

Emma Gee
Executive Director for
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Our Ref: PL/26/1263
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎01189 372440
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23 October 2026

Your contact is:

Sarah Hanson: Planning, Transport & Public Protection

Dear Mr Stroud

RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO ONE PLANE TREE AT BRUNEL RETAIL PARK, ROSE KILN LANE, READING - SUBJECT TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 118/05.

Thank you for your application of 21 September 2026 regarding the above.

Your application sought approval for the following:

Pollard of London plane

The tree is located near the junction and are looking to improve the areas visibility. It's a large tree and overhangs the highways and doing a pollard we can keep to a regular maintenance plan. Obviously trees like this can handle a heavy reduction - pollard.

You also provided an annotated photograph to indicate the extent of reduction proposed:



Our acknowledgement email of 23 September sought clarity on the existing and proposed (final) dimensions of the tree. We also expressed concerns over the potential impact to the tree's health and amenity value given the significant works proposed, and sought any additional comment on the justification. In response you advised:

The proposed works are required to manage the tree's growth and maintain the crown at a sustainable size in relation to its surroundings. London Planes responds well to pollarding when the technique is undertaken correctly and subsequently maintained on a regular cyclical basis.

The proposed pollarding will retain the tree as a living and visually significant landscape feature. It is not proposed to remove or substantially impair the tree.

The intention is to establish and maintain a controlled crown structure through regular future management, thereby avoiding the need for more substantial and potentially inappropriate pruning at a later date.

It is noted that you make no reference to current planning application PL/26/0886 which includes replacement of the large totem sign next to the tree and under which similar works to a second Plane tree are proposed elsewhere on site. The applicant is aware of your tree works application and provided input from the site's facilities team who advised: *'Our landscaping supplier are already instructed to crown all the trees and hard cut back the shrubbery in this area in advance of the replacement works taking place'*. It is reasonable to suggest that the works have been prompted by the application, albeit I acknowledge you may have arboricultural views on appropriate management regardless.

Further to my visit on 19 October 2026, I have the following comments:

The Plane tree is a large, well-formed specimen in good condition, providing significant amenity value in this location. It has been subjected to minimal pruning in the past, most likely as a result of the TPO, which has prevented unnecessary works since 2005. The primary feature of a protected tree is its amenity value which is a sum of various factors, including visibility, size, form and condition. Any tree works proposals will assess the amenity value of the tree and the likely impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area, and in the light of this assessment, consider whether or not the proposal is justified, having regard to the reasons put forward in support of it. The potential impact on the tree's health will also be considered.

In terms of amenity, it is very clear that the proposals will significantly reduce the size of the tree, hence its amenity value will be significantly and detrimentally impacted. If pollarded, this would have to be repeated at regular intervals to manage the re-growth, forever therefore confining the size, hence amenity value, of the tree. The shape of the tree will also never be as it currently is, again being negatively affected by the proposed pruning. The marked difference in the appearance and value of this tree can be seen when comparing it to other Plane trees on site, which appear to have been managed in size. I do not agree that the tree would be left as a *'visually significant landscape feature'*. In terms of amenity then, the proposal is not acceptable.

In terms of the reason given to *'improve the areas visibility'*, the tree is not such a barrier to visual access to the retail park that the works are justified. The frontage of the

site is open, with only sporadic trees consisting of smaller Plane trees.

Whilst London Plane trees are often maintained as pollards, this is where such maintenance is a necessity, and such management should be started early in a tree's life, as per the guidance in BS3998:2010 'Tree works - Recommendations'. The tree in question is not young, is past the point of reasonably creating a pollard structure at the height proposed, without harm. The works would create multiple large wounds, each being an entry point for pathogens and decay. It is therefore considered that the proposed work would have a detrimental impact on the future health of the tree.

No arboricultural justification has been put forward to support the significant works and no alternative management has been discussed and dismissed to support the premise that the proposal is the only feasible option. The proposed pollarding is considered harmful to the health and appearance of the tree, with no sound justification provided, and is therefore **REFUSED**.

It is acknowledged that some pruning would be appropriate to provide better clearance from the adjacent signs, street furniture and to provide better clearance above ground level. Such work could reasonably be repeated over time (subject to consent), as required, to ensure the tree is managed appropriately for its surroundings. I can therefore confirm that the following lesser works are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the annotated photographs below:

- T1 Plane - selective branch reduction to provide 1.5-2m clearance from the adjacent totem sign (yellow line); selective branch reduction to provide 1m clearance from adjacent security camera and lamppost head (red lines); crown lift to 3-4m above ground level through 360° removing / reducing secondary and tertiary growth only.



Adjacent camera, light and totem sign - indicative reductions zones

If you wished to put forward an alternative pruning specification to that approved, we would be happy to consider that through a new tree works application.

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

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. 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.

6. 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 2.75m over the public/adopted footpath and 5.5m over the public/adopted 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.

If you wish to appeal against the council's refusal to allow pollarding of the tree or against any of the 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, 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/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas)

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

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer