

# Reading Borough Council is set to take down the lighting columns around Caversham Road, Reading

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Reporter



Campaigners don't want their lampposts replaced

COMMUNITY campaigners slammed the council's plans to replace vintage lampposts in their area with state-of-the-art LED lighting.

Reading Borough Council's (RBC) workers are set to replace the Victorian gas lighting columns in streets around Caversham Road.

But The Bell Tower Community Association wants to protect the 20 plus cast iron lampposts in the area, which they claim are a valuable part of the area's heritage.

Secretary David Neale said: "As well as being attractive, the old cast iron lighting columns are also a valuable part of our heritage, and many of them have an additional local connection, having been manufactured by foundries off Caversham Road.

"The area consists mostly of Victorian terraces, and has one of the largest clusters of original lamp posts in Reading. It would be a great shame to lose them."

The association believes the lampposts can be refurbished and fitted with new LED lights without having to take them down and install new ones. They have even offered to paint them on a regular basis to keep them in good condition.

Chairman Jonathan Dart added: "In its local plan the council describes Reading as 'a town which has rediscovered and embraced its heritage and landscape'. We hope the council will show it is in tune with the city it describes and commit to preserving our heritage.

"We think the parts to refurbish an old street light will be cheaper than installing a new column, and they are likely to last longer. We hope the council can preserve them, and that the old lighting columns in other areas of Reading will be saved too."

RBC received nearly £7m from the Department of Transport's Challenge Fund towards upgrading street lights across the borough.

The council vowed to replace 11,329 non-LED lights and 2,533 old or incompatible lampposts, which include the ones around Caversham Road.

Cllr Tony Page, lead member for planning, said the council would discuss the Victorian cast-iron lighting columns with the residents' association before pulling them down.

He added: "The Council fully appreciates the heritage value of cast iron columns, and our preference is of course to keep these columns in place wherever possible. In some instances however, serious structural faults are being found with cast iron columns of this age, which can cause obvious safety issues for the public.

"The Council is not removing any of these cast iron columns while it considers options, which we will discuss with the Conservation Area Advisory Committee and interested residents associations."