

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 22 January 2025
My ref: TF/TPO/896/1997/242958



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Tim Watson
17 Leith Close
Crowthorne
Wokingham
RG45 6TD

Place and Growth
Development Management Team
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Watson,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 896/1997
APPLICATION NUMBER: 242958
SITE ADDRESS: LAND TO REAR OF 17 AND 18 LEITH CLOSE, CROWTHORNE, WOKINGHAM, RG45 6TD.

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received on 24 November 2024 and validated on the 26 November 2024. Please accept my apologies for the delay in determining this application.

I can confirm Wokingham Borough Council **refuses consent**, to the following work being carried out to tree(s) included in the above-mentioned Tree Preservation Orders (TPO):

Proposed tree works to W7 of TPO 896/1997:

T1, Beech:

- Crown reduction by approx. 4m.

Reasons stated for works:

Large beech tree has outgrown its surroundings, and is significantly overhanging the gardens of 17 and 18 Leith Close. A crown reduction of 4m is proposed, maintaining the shape and character of tree.

Officer comments:

When looking to undertake works to a protected tree it is the responsibility of the applicant to supply adequate proof with the TPO application, in the form of 'written arboricultural advice or other diagnostic information from an appropriate expert.' To date, no detailed arboricultural information has been submitted to demonstrate that the tree is dangerous or diseased or that the proposed work is in the interests of health and safety and no overriding arboricultural reason for the proposed work was apparent.

The subject tree is prominent within the landscape and visible from the surrounding properties, Public Rights of Way and Leith Close and contributes to the verdant character and appearance of the local area. The proposed crown reduction by 4m would cause extensive loss of leaf and live material creating multiple large pruning wounds which would increase the trees susceptibility to the ingress of decay and dysfunction particularly for Beech species.

Crown reduction is an operation normally carried out on trees if, owing to decay or structural weakness, there is a need to prevent failure of the tree in whole or part. A balanced energy level and photosynthetic capability are vital to a trees health and wellbeing, especially when trees are mature and the proposed work would compromise the trees ability to sustain itself in the future and lessen its stature in the local landscape reducing its amenity value considerably.

The Council appreciates that localised pruning to the lower crown and lateral spread can be considered reasonable to accommodate the size and position of the subject tree and some lesser pruning works appear to be necessary to give adequate clearance to the trees immediate surroundings, which are detailed below.

On balance the reasons and information submitted with the application are not sufficient justification for the proposed 4m crown reduction. However, if there are concerns over the trees structural integrity the Council would welcome a further Tree Work Application supported by appropriate levels of arboricultural evidence i.e. full VTA, aerial inspection (with photographs of all bio-mechanical defects) and results of any internal decay detection investigations of the lower main stem and/or scaffold branches (i.e. Sonic Tomograph and/or Resistograph Drill) to justify the proposed reduction works.

Due to the reasons stated above the proposed crown reduction of 4m has been refused.

I can confirm that Wokingham Borough Council **consents, with conditions**, to the following lesser work being carried out to the tree(s) included in the aforementioned Tree Preservation Order (TPO):

Approved Tree Work to W7 of TPO 896/1997:

T1, Beech:

- Tip reduce branches to ensure a 4m height clearance from ground level and provide a 2m clearance to the adjacent building line.

The consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The above works must be completed before **22 January 2027** and in the event of the works not being completed by that date, further consent will be required.
2. Work must be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998 – 2010 ‘Tree work - Recommendations’. Ensuring all branches are taken back to a suitable growth points.
3. Climbing spikes shall not be used whilst undertaking any form of works on living trees, except on trees to be felled.

Reasons for conditions 1-3.....

1. To ensure that our records remain accurate.
2. To ensure the health, safety and visual amenity of the tree(s) and ensure works are undertaken in accordance with recognised arboricultural good practice.
3. Spikes can cause extensive long-term damage to trees.

Informative:

If you are aggrieved by any of the conditions attached to your consent, you may appeal to The Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Because of coronavirus (COVID-19), you can currently only make a planning appeal online. You cannot currently apply by post.

For more information go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-preservation-order-appeal-form>

Telephone: 0303 444 5570 or e-mail it to: treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Your appeal should be received within one month of receipt of this decision or any such longer period as the Planning Inspectorate may allow.

You are advised that this letter is in respect of the **Tree Preservation Order only** and it does not imply that consent would be forthcoming from the owner of the tree(s) or any such other persons from whom consent would be required.

If we can be of any further assistance, please contact the Tree Officer via email to: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,



Chris Hannington
Trees and Landscape Team Manager

Please note that your attention is drawn to the following information:

Bird Nesting Season and Presence of Bat Roosts

In accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and Countryside Rights of Way Act (2000), consideration must be given to the timing and type of tree work operations, to avoid causing disturbance to any nesting birds or bat roosts that may be present within the tree(s).

The Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure, or take, possess, or trade in any wild animal listed, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places.

It is advised that all non-urgent major tree work and hedge cutting operations are undertaken at a time to avoid disturbing nesting birds during the breeding season (to which the bird nesting season is considered to be from March to July). Where bats are suspected to be present, it is recommended that advice first be sought from a licenced bat specialist and if appropriate, the relevant licence(s) be obtained before any major tree work or hedge cutting commences.

Further information can be found at the following:

DEFRA (Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs)
Tel: 08459 33 55 77 or by email at helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.defra.gov.uk/

Natural England
Tel: 0845 600 3078 or by email at enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
Website: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Bat Conservation Trust
Tel: 0845 1300 228 or by email at enquiries@bats.org.uk
Website: www.bats.org.uk

Forestry Act 1967 and Felling Licences

If it proposed to fell a tree or trees greater than 5 cubic metres or sell more than 2 cubic metres of timber in any calendar quarter, a Felling Licence from the Forestry Authority may be required.

Please note that Felling Licences are not required to remove trees from domestic (residential) gardens. Where you are the landowner of large pieces of land with numerous trees, clarification from the Forestry Commission may be required as to whether a Felling licence is needed.

For more information on Felling Licences, please speak to the Woodland Officer at the Forestry Commission on 01296 696543

Further Information can be found on the Forestry Commission Website:
www.forestry.gov.uk