



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 January 2026

by **A J Engley** MArb (RFS) F.Arbor.A M.I.Hort M.I.C.For AARC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/TPO/X0360/10425

190 Reading Road, Wokingham, Berks, RG41 1LH

- The appeal is made under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 against a refusal to grant consent to undertake work to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)
 - The appeal is made by Shaun Taulbut against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: CY/TPO/1262/2008/242564 dated 8 October 2024, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2024.
 - The work proposed is described as: Crown raise the canopy to 5m; Reduce the lower limb on the north west side by 2m to stop it encroaching too far on the driveway; dead wood fell on my wife recently; Remove epicormic growth from the lower limbs and stem; Crown thin the tree by 20% to include the removal of deadwood and crossing rubbing branches.
 - The relevant TPO is The Wokingham Borough Council (Parish of Wokingham) Tree Preservation Order No 1262/2008, which was confirmed 13 January 2009.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed tree work on the character and appearance of the area and whether sufficient justification has been demonstrated for those works.

Reasons

3. Turning to the first main issue, Reading Road is a principle route located to the northwest of Wokingham, linking Wokingham to the M4 motorway network. No 190 lies within a mature residential locality, it is a substantial detached two storey house, set back on the south-westerly side of the busy road, approached by a driveway leading into the gravelled front garden.
4. Locally are similar properties interspaced with distinctive, large, fully mature deciduous and evergreen trees lining both sides of the wide road and footpaths, that typify the local wooded cover. The topography is fairly level land.
5. Facing from the road, T3 grows to the left side of the front garden, just inside the

boundary hedge. The near upright trunk forks at about 4.5m, supporting a dense, wide crown with outer limbs spreading up to the roadside verge, across the garden and a neighbouring property. The upper crown has numerous old pruning scars facing out across the road and footpath. T3 can be seen from the inside of No 190, neighbouring houses, and from properties across the road, it is a prominent, distinctive tree especially when approaching along Reading Road.

6. There can be no doubt T3 is a natural feature, which alongside the numerous other similarly large roadside trees, makes a significant positive contribution to the verdant landscape of the area and to its character and appearance.
7. Given the above, the proposed pruning of T3 would erode the mature and verdant landscape of the area and would give rise to some harm to its character and appearance. Consequently, any reasons given to justify the work, needs to be convincing. It is to these reasons, the second main issue, to which I now turn.
8. Proximity to the road and property alone is rarely going to be a valid reason to remove a substantial amount of crown foliage from a large visually prominent, protected tree.
9. The arguments put forward regarding the previously approved applications were cosmetic, and advice provided by the tree surgeon at that time, based on his observations of decay pockets on lateral limbs, was a crown lift to 5m and a crown thin by 20%, carried out at a later date, would ensure the tree remains healthy and it would reduce the wind-sail area of the canopy, therefore reducing the tree failure risks at that time
10. Furthermore, I could see the height of the lowest limbs were comfortably clear of all traffic therefore crown lifting would be of no safety benefit. Crown lifting the large low laterals facing the dwelling and across the garden to 5m and crown thinning 20% would remove a considerable amount of foliage, it would create many fresh unnecessary wounds which could considerably increase the risk of decay entry and the premature loss of a protected tree.
11. I have no doubt that the limbs are heavy and should they fail, they could cause serious damage to the gardens and their users. However, there is no detailed verified evidence before me or I saw on site, of tree weaknesses of significance to safety.
12. I appreciate the Council permitted the historic tree pruning of T3 on two previous occasions and the appellant now wishes this application would be considered as part of a planned ongoing process, be that as it may, the reason for the permitted tree works rests with the Council at that time and are not before me for consideration regarding this appeal.

13. In weighing up these competing considerations, the presence of established trees with large spreading canopies contribute substantially to the local amenity and sense of place. I consider the proposals would be harsh, potentially harmful and there is insufficient justification provided, for carrying out the work.
14. The evidence does not demonstrate a compelling justification to override these wider benefits when less severe pruning, carried out to BS: 3998 – 2010 has been approved by the Council. In my view, this is an important consideration in this case. Accordingly, for the reasons set out above and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alan Engley

INSPECTOR