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Date: 31 October 2024
My ref: TF/TPO/1185/2007/242176



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mrs Samantha Howland
35 Pine Drive
Finchampstead
Wokingham
RG40 3LD

Place and Growth
Development Management Team
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mrs Howland

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER: 1185/2007

APPLICATION NUMBER: 242176

SITE ADDRESS: 35 PINE DRIVE, FINCHAMPSTEAD, WOKINGHAM, RG40 3LD

With reference to your application which was received on the 26 August 2024 and validated on 27 August 2024.

I am writing to advise you that Wokingham Borough Council **refuses consent** to the following work being carried out to the subject Pine trees included in the above-mentioned Tree Preservation Order (TPO):

Proposed works to G2 within TPO 1185/2007:

x2 Pine:

- Fell.

Reasons stated for works:

We have ongoing concerns about these trees and, because of their proximity to our house and mains electricity cable, the potential danger presented to our building, our elderly neighbour's buildings and potentially the habitants of any buildings if either were to fall or sustain damage in the inclement British weather.

I am concerned that these trees, in particular, are not helping with light fall and water resource for the other shrubs, plants, oaks, yews, hollies and carbon stores in the garden. Our neighbours behind in Foxcote also have concern about the proximity of large trees to their house and the lack of light in their gardens. Removal of these two scots pines would allow more dappled light to reach them, without further pruning of the two large oaks in this protected cluster. The oaks will only thicken further the more they are thinned.

We want to be able to grow food in our garden for a more sustainable life. Removal of the two scots pines would provide sufficient light as illustrated in the photo submitted.

Reasons for Refusal:

The Pine trees subject to this tree works application form part of a group of trees which are a prominent amenity feature within the local landscape contributing positively to the street scene and are protected by the Tree Preservation Order 1185/2007.

As part of the application process applicants must demonstrate that the works proposal is a proportionate solution to the concerns raised and meets the requirements of sound arboriculture. However, the proposed removal of x2 mature Scots Pine trees appears to be excessive given the supporting information submitted with the application.

When setting out the reasons for the proposed works to trees an applicant is required to provide sufficient evidence to support this. Proposals that would endanger the health or condition of a tree or greatly reduce/remove its amenity value to the local environment are unlikely to be given consent. The reasons stated for the removal of the two Pine trees fail to highlight any details to conclude that the works are 'proportionate' and justified in the interests of health and safety at this time.

Allowing trees to be removed for these reasons would set an unacceptable precedent for dealing with similar applications in the future and would threaten the retention of many urban trees growing close to the built form throughout the Borough.

Wokingham Borough Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 which commits us to playing as full a role as possible in reducing our carbon footprint to be net carbon zero by 2030. The Borough Council aims to increase the levels of carbon sequestration through greening the environment. The preservation and enhancement of tree canopy cover in the Borough will play an important role in this.

On balance the information submitted for the proposed works is not sufficient justification for the removal of prominent, mature landscape trees, however the Council would welcome a further Tree Work Application supported by appropriate levels of arboricultural evidence to demonstrate the trees are dangerous and justify the proposed works.

Due to the reasons stated above the proposed works have been refused.

Informatives:

If you are aggrieved by the refusal of permission or against any of the conditions attached to your consent, you may appeal to The Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Because of coronavirus (COVID-19), you currently can 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>

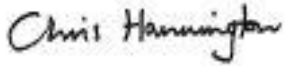
Telephone: 0303 444 5570 or e-mail it to: treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

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 and Landscape Officer via development.control@wokingham.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Hannington". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Chris Hannington
Trees and Landscape Team Manager