

Tel: (0118) 974 6000  
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk  
Date: 11 August 2025  
My ref: TF/TPO/1657/2018/251433



## WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Nathan Cantell  
Beechwood Tree Care Ltd  
2 Playhatch  
Farm Cottages  
Playhatch  
RG4 9QX

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

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Tel: (0118) 974 6000

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Dear Mr Cantell,

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 1657/2018**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 251433**

**SITE ADDRESS: 153 NINE MILE RIDE, FINCHAMPSTEAD, WOKINGHAM, RG40 4HY**

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received and validated on the 16 June 2025.

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 Single 1 of TPO 1657/2018:**

T1, Oak:

- Remove 3 no. low, selected smaller primary stems in the customer's garden
- Remove 3 no. low, selected primary stems growing into the neighbouring garden
- Crown lift to approx. 4.5m by removing secondary growth only where possible
- Reduce the southern aspect of the upper canopy by approx. 1.75-2m
- Crown reduction of the remaining tree by approx. 1.5m of the radial crown spread and up to approx. 1.25-1.5m of the height.

**Reasons stated for works:**

*Summary:*

*There are clear safety and structural concerns that the proposed work addresses. A weakened limb on the western side poses a failure risk, and the overextended southern canopy is likely to develop into a structurally unsound leader. Reducing these elements will mitigate the risk of branch failure, especially in areas regularly used by families and children. The works will also improve the tree's balance and reduce wind loading on vulnerable limbs. Given the tree's continued growth since the original TPO designation, this proposal represents a proportionate and responsible approach to ongoing tree management, safety, and amenity.*

*The proposed pruning works aim to allow fair and safe enjoyment of the gardens by both the owners and neighbours. The tree's current canopy significantly restricts light and rainfall to the*

*ground, dominating nearby planting areas and reducing the biodiversity and usability of the space. Reducing the crown, particularly on the southern, eastern and western sides, will relieve pressure on hedging.*

**Officer comments:**

While the local authority recognises that certain aspects of the proposed works such as limited crown lifting by removal of secondary growth and removal of deadwood or clearly defective branches may be acceptable as part of routine maintenance, the broader scope of the proposal includes excessive removal of multiple primary branches back to the stem and a significant crown reduction. These elements raise serious concerns about the long-term health, structural integrity, and amenity value of the subject tree.

The removal of multiple low, primary stems back to the main trunk, combined with the proposed crown reduction of up to 1.5m across the radial spread and 1.25–1.5m in height, represents a substantial loss of the tree's photosynthetic area. This level of pruning risks disrupting the tree's energy balance and its natural ability to sustain healthy growth, particularly as the proposed works estimate removal of up to 25–30% of the total leaf area in one operation.

Excessive removal of primary branches can lead to large wounds that are slower to occlude, increasing susceptibility to decay and pathogen ingress, loss of key structural branches that help balance the crown, potentially leading to instability or further structural defects and a proliferation of weakly attached epicormic growth, which can lead to long-term maintenance issues.

The proposed crown reduction is not supported by sufficient arboricultural justification in this case. The tree is located approximately 10 metres from the applicant's rear elevation, and there is no evidence that its size or condition presents an unreasonable risk to property or persons. Nor is there evidence that the tree's size currently exceeds the limitations of its setting.

While light reduction and concerns over dominance are noted, such issues do not typically justify a structural reduction of this extent, especially when alternative, less invasive management options are available. The desire to "contain future growth" is not a sufficient justification under TPO legislation for extensive crown reduction.

The application proposes removal of multiple structural limbs, a crown reduction, and crown lifting, cumulatively amounting to a substantial impact on a tree that is otherwise described in the application as being in good vitality and condition. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the subject tree requires such extensive pruning for health or risk management purposes.

The suggested concerns over wind loading and limb failure are speculative and not supported by structural assessments or biomechanical analysis. Pruning as proposed could, in fact, increase wind loading on remaining limbs by altering the crown's natural form and creating imbalanced lever arms.

T1 Oak is a mature specimen that contributes significantly to the visual amenity of the local area and to the overall canopy cover within the vicinity. The proposed crown reduction and removal of primary stems will result in a noticeable loss of natural crown architecture and diminish the tree's contribution to the local landscape.

While it is claimed that the visual changes would be hard to perceive, the scale of the proposed works is such that the visual prominence of the tree would be noticeably altered contrary to the purpose of the Tree Preservation Order.

The local authority appreciates the applicant's desire to maintain a harmonious relationship with this mature Oak and to manage perceived nuisances. However, the scale and nature of the proposed works are not considered to be proportionate or justified from an arboricultural or risk-management perspective.

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

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

**Approved Tree Work to Single 1 of TPO 1657/2018:**

T1 Oak:

- Tip reduce branches to provide a lower crown clearance above ground level of 3.5m
- Remove 1 no. stem with serious inclusion/rubbing defect back to source including the small stem that has caused the inclusion.
- Crown clean to remove deadwood, defective limbs and any unwanted epicormic flushing.

**The consent is granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. The above works must be completed before **11 August 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 pruning is taken back to a suitable growth point.
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. Ensuring all pruning cuts are made back to suitable growth points.
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](mailto: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](mailto:development.control@wokingham.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely,



Chris Hannington  
Trees and Landscape Team Manager

cc. Applicant - Lisa Alder, 153 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4HY

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](mailto:helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.defra.gov.uk/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/)

Natural England  
Tel: 0845 600 3078 or by email at [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)  
Website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

Bat Conservation Trust  
Tel: 0845 1300 228 or by email at [enquiries@bats.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bats.org.uk)  
Website: [www.bats.org.uk](http://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](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)