

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 13 January 2026
My ref: TF/TPO/1282/2008/252840



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Keith Evans
Tall Oaks Ltd
The Old Rose Garden
Orchard Road
Hurst
Reading
RG10 0SD

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Evans,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 1282/2008
APPLICATION NUMBER: 252840
SITE ADDRESS: 12 AUSTIN ROAD, WOODLEY, WOKINGHAM, RG5 4EJ

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received on 18 November 2025 and validated on the 20 November 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 1282/2008:

T1, Oak: Crown reduction by 2m, to approx. 15m height and 17m spread

Reasons stated for works:

We are proposing a plan to remove several branches over the highway and footpath to ensure compliance with highway regulations. This action may result in a slight imbalance in the tree; therefore, we intend to perform an overall reduction to maintain proper balance throughout the tree canopy. This reduction will also provide support to several overextended branches by alleviating weight, as many currently exhibit signs of compression due to their extended reach and weight-bearing. We anticipate that the process will involve approximately 45 cuts throughout the canopy, with the size of the resulting wounds varying based on the dimensions of the branches being removed. Our objective is to reduce the overall canopy height by approximately 1.5 to 2 meters. The primary aim of this operation is to mitigate risks to properties and individuals, as we believe that, if the tree is not properly maintained, it may shed several branches due to its size, condition, and location

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 work is in the interests of health and safety or based on any arboricultural need and no overriding reason for the proposed work was apparent.

The application states that several branches are "overextended", and showing "signs of compression", and that without the proposed works the tree may shed branches, posing a risk to people and property. However, no arboricultural evidence has been submitted to substantiate these claims.

In particular, the application is not supported by:

- An arboricultural report prepared by a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant
- Identification of specific defects (e.g. cracks, decay, weak unions or failed attachments)
- Photographic evidence or diagnostic assessment demonstrating structural instability or imminent failure.

In the absence of such evidence, the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that the tree presents an unacceptable level of risk or that the proposed extent of works is justified on safety grounds.

The stated concern relates primarily to branches encroaching over the highway and footpath, and proximity to the applicant's dwelling. These issues can be adequately and proportionately addressed through targeted pruning to provide statutory clearance, without the need for an overall crown reduction of 1.5–2 meters.

An overall crown reduction is a broad and non-specific intervention which does not directly address the identified problem areas and would result in unnecessary pruning throughout the canopy, including sections that do not interact with the highway or building.

The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed overall crown reduction would be detrimental to the physiological health and structural condition of this protected oak tree. Overall crown reduction should only be considered where a significant structural defect has been clearly demonstrated, or where no lesser form of pruning would adequately mitigate a proven risk. This threshold has not been met in this instance.

The oak tree makes a significant positive contribution to the character and visual amenity of the street scene. The proposed overall reduction would result in an unnecessary loss of canopy volume and a change to the tree's natural form, which would be contrary to the purpose of the Tree Preservation Order.

If there are concerns about the trees structural integrity, the Council would welcome a further Tree Work Application supported by appropriate levels of arboricultural evidence i.e. full VTA, climbing inspection (with photographs of all bio-mechanical defects that require remedial pruning) and results of any secondary investigations (i.e. resistograph etc.) to justify the proposed works.

Due to the reasons stated above the proposed overall reduction of the subject Oak tree by 1.5-2m has 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 1282/2008:

T1, Oak:

- Tip reduce branches to give a 5.5m height clearance from ground level above the road and a 3m height clearance from ground level elsewhere.
- Tip reduce branches to provide a 2m clearance to the adjacent house.

The consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The above works must be completed before **13 January 2028** 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'.
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>

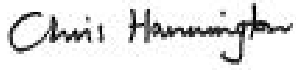
Telephone: 0303 444 5570 or e-mail it to: treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

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 may 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Hannington". The script is cursive and fluid.

Chris Hannington
Trees and Landscape Team Manager

cc. Applicant - 12 Austin Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4EJ

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