

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 18 December 2025
My ref: TF/TPO/1259/2008/252593



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Ben Partner
Ben Partner Trees
11 Westcotts Green
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG42 3SG

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Partner,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 1259/2008

APPLICATION NUMBER: 252593

SITE ADDRESS: 526 READING ROAD, WINNERSH, WOKINGHAM, RG41 5EX

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received and validated on the 23 October 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 2 of TPO 1259/2008:

T2, Oak: Reduce over extended branches around whole canopy by 1.5 to 2 meters.

Reasons stated for works:

To create a more natural form of the 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 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 seeks to reduce overextended branches around the entire canopy "to create a more natural form of the tree". This reasoning is not supported by arboricultural evidence and does not demonstrate a sound justification for the proposed lateral reduction. No defects, structural weaknesses, abnormal loading, or site-specific constraints have been identified that would necessitate such works.

The subject Oak is a mature specimen of high amenity value. A lateral reduction of 1.5 to 2.0m around the whole canopy would result in the unnecessary removal of a significant proportion of functional leaf area. This would be detrimental to the tree's physiological health, reducing photosynthetic capacity and increasing the likelihood of stress-related decline. Furthermore, such works are likely to stimulate excessive epicormic growth, leading to a denser, less stable crown structure that will require repeated management, contrary to the long-term interests of the tree.

The justification that the proposed works would create a "more natural form" is not accepted. A natural tree form is one that develops in response to its environment with minimal human intervention. By contrast, a laterally reduced and artificially balanced crown represents a pruned form rather than a natural one. Oaks characteristically develop broad, irregular canopies with extended lateral limbs. The proposed reduction would erode this natural architecture, resulting in a contrived and diminished appearance that would harm the visual amenity value of the tree and the wider streetscape.

The proposed lateral reduction does not align with best practice guidance (including BS 3998:2010), which advises that pruning should be limited to what is necessary to address specific, clearly defined issues. In this instance, the proposed works are generalised and aesthetic in nature rather than remedial or preventative.

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 reduction of overextended branches around whole canopy by 1.5 to 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 2 of TPO 1259/2008:

T2, Oak:

- Prune back from telephone lines and power lines to give a 2-meter clearance and a crown lift to no more than 4 meters above the ground. All cuts for the telephone clearance and crown lift will only be secondary branches no more than 50 mm in diameter.

The consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The above works must be completed before **18 December 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'. The crown lift must only involve the tip reduction of minor tertiary and secondary branch ends to create some vertical lift of the tree canopy above ground level

and must avoid the removal of main structural branches and branches more than 40mm in diameter back to the main stem.

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,



Chris Hannington
Trees and Landscape Team Manager

cc. Applicant - 526 Reading Road, Winnersh, Wokingham, RG41 5EX

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