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Date: 05 December 2025  
My ref: TF/TPO/781/1996/252459



## WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Ian Rai  
Shire Tree Care  
8 Castor Ct  
Yateley  
GU46 7RL

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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 Rai,

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 781/1996**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 252459**

**SITE ADDRESS: 84 HEATHERMOUNT DRIVE, CROWTHORNE, WOKINGHAM, RG45 6HN**

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received on 11 October 2025 and validated on the 13 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 A1 of TPO 781/1996:**

T1, Oak:

- Reduce limbs overhanging no. 86 Heathermount Drive on the southeast side by 4m.

**Reasons stated for works:**

*The tree is approx. 20m high with a 20m spread. The tree owner is concerned about the proximity to her property and her neighbours property. The tree also has a significant lean towards the S/E, with very few limbs balancing the weight on the N/W side. Requesting permission to reduce limbs overhanging the neighbouring property on the S/E side by 4m back to suitable growing points. Requesting permission to reduce limbs overhanging applicants property on the S side by 2m back to suitable growing points. We feel this will rebalance the overall crown whilst giving clearance of buildings and reducing possible limb failure in the future.*

**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 requested 4-metre reduction of the laterals overhanging the neighbouring property represents a substantial removal of live, healthy crown material from a protected tree. Based on the dimensions provided (20 m height and 20 m crown spread), a 4 m cutback would equate to reducing these laterals by approximately 20–25% of their entire length. Such an extensive reduction would require cutting back to large-diameter wood to locate viable growing points, resulting in significant pruning wounds well above the threshold recommended in current best practice.

These large wounds would increase the risk of decay formation at the pruning points, structural weakening at key branch unions, and the development of vigorous but weakly attached regrowth, which in time may create greater future risk than the current limb structure. The proposed works therefore constitute unsympathetic and excessive pruning and fail to meet accepted arboricultural standards.

Inspection of the tree indicates that there is sufficient vertical and lateral clearance from the neighbouring property at present. While branches extend over the boundary, the degree of encroachment is not excessive and does not justify a 4m reduction. A modest, carefully targeted reduction less than 4m would be adequate to maintain clearance from built structures, provide a lighter crown profile on the S/E side, reduce end-weight and associated mechanical loading, and achieve the applicant's stated objective of maintaining good neighbourly boundaries. Because a lesser intervention would successfully address these concerns, the more drastic 4m reduction is considered unnecessary and disproportionate.

Although the applicant asserts that the works would "rebalance the overall crown", the proposed 4 m reduction on one side would, in fact, create a visually and structurally unbalanced crown, removing a disproportionate amount of leaf-bearing area on the S/E aspect. The tree presents a natural, typical oak form, with a broad, even lateral spread above both properties. Removing 4m of limb length on one side would result in a flattened and uneven profile, a marked reduction in the tree's amenity value, and increased mechanical asymmetry, particularly given the stated existing lean. The works would therefore be contrary to the objectives of the Tree Preservation Order.

The reasons provided, concerns about lean, perceived imbalance, and proximity to buildings, do not justify the proposed level of pruning. The tree appears to be in an outwardly sound and healthy condition. A lean, in itself, does not constitute a defect, particularly where it appears long-established and naturally counterbalanced by growth on the opposite side. Overhang of branches across property boundaries is not grounds for severe reduction, particularly when more moderate works would achieve the same practical objectives. Therefore, the justification falls short of supporting major crown reduction of this magnitude.

The subject tree makes a significant positive contribution to the local streetscape and to the character of the residential setting, as evidenced by its prominent position near the frontage and its large, mature crown. A 4m reduction on one side would result in an obvious and permanent alteration to its natural form, a reduction in canopy density and landscape presence, and a measurable loss of visual amenity to the public. This outcome would conflict with the TPO's purpose of protecting trees of high public value.

If there are concerns about the tree's 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 4m on the southeast side 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 A1 of TPO 781/1996:**

T1, Oak:

- Reduce limbs overhanging no. 86 Heathermount Drive on the southeast side by 2m
- Reduce limbs overhanging no. 84 Heathermount Drive on the south side by 2m, back to suitable growing points.

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

1. The above works must be completed before **05 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'. 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,

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

cc. Applicant - Mrs Linda Evans, 84 Heathermount Drive, Crowthorne, Wokingham, RG45 6HN

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)