

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 23 December 2025
My ref: TF/TPO/1471/2014/252598



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: 1471/2014

APPLICATION NUMBER: 252598

SITE ADDRESS: BEARWOOD PARK TRAINING GROUND, MOLE ROAD, SINDLESHAM, WOKINGHAM, RG41 5DB

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received on 24 October 2025 and validated on the 28 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 1471/2014:

T1, Oak - Cut back branches overhanging gas cylinders by 3-5m.

Reasons stated for works:

1 x Mature Oak tree - several lower limbs are overhanging the gas cylinders, which are top-heavy and in danger of snapping off and falling. This is a potential health and safety risk to anyone working below. We propose to prune back all the overhanging/dangerous limbs to a safe position. The pruning work will also help benefit the trees as they're all one-sided with poor symmetry due to being part of or the edge of a woodland area, so all of these trees are more dominant on the side facing the gas cylinder area. Our customer has been advised by the FLO Gas company to deal with these issues, as they feel this affects the health and safety of their workers when they attend the site. Please see the letter received from the FLO Gass attached to this application.

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 to T1 Oak 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 proposed pruning specification for T1 Oak seeks to cut back overhanging limbs by 3–5 metres, which would result in the removal of a significant proportion of the tree's live crown. The application does not quantify the percentage of crown to be removed, nor does it demonstrate that the extent of pruning proposed would be compatible with the long-term health, structural integrity, or amenity value of the tree.

Oak is a high-amenity, long-lived species, and the proposed works would constitute an excessive intrusion in to the crown likely to create large pruning wounds, Increase the risk of decay and dysfunction and lead to increased future management pressure. As such, the proposal conflicts with the statutory duty to ensure that protected trees are not subjected to unnecessary or harmful works.

While the application cites general health and safety concerns, including the overhanging of LPG gas cylinders and reference to advice from FLO Gas, it does not provide:

- Arboricultural evidence that the oak limbs are structurally unsound or imminently hazardous,
- Evidence of defects such as decay, cracking, or failed unions,
- A tree risk assessment demonstrating that pruning of this magnitude is necessary rather than precautionary.

The assertion that limbs are “top-heavy” and “in danger of snapping” is not verified by supporting technical evidence. In the absence of demonstrable defects or imminent failure, the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that the scale of pruning proposed is justified.

The application does not demonstrate that lesser works have been considered or discounted. In particular:

- No alternative pruning specification (e.g. selective reduction of individual limbs, staged reductions, or minor clearance pruning) has been explored,
- No consideration has been given to whether a smaller clearance distance could achieve an acceptable level of separation without significant crown loss,
- No arboricultural justification is provided explaining why pruning of up to 5 metres is the minimum necessary intervention.

Best practice guidance requires that works to protected trees follow the principle of minimum intervention, which has not been demonstrated in this case.

The Authority acknowledges that the removal of the two ash trees has been justified on the basis of poor physiological condition, evidence of decline consistent with ash dieback, Increased propensity for branch shedding and a clear duty to replant within the TPO area.

By contrast, T1 (Oak) is not demonstrated to be in poor condition, nor is its heavy pruning supported by comparable evidence. The works proposed for the oak therefore do not meet the same evidential threshold as those approved for the ash trees.

However, 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 works to T1 Oak have been refused.

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

Approved Tree Work to A1 of TPO 1471/2014:

G1, Ash x 2 - Fell.

The consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The above works must be completed before **23 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’.
3. Replacement planting: Following the removal of G1 x2 Ash as authorised by this consent, a minimum of two replacement trees must be planted within the boundary of the Area TPO. The replacement trees must be chosen from the following: *Quercus robur* (English Oak), *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech), *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut), *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots Pine), *Tilia cordata* (Small-leaved Lime)

The replacement trees must be planted during the planting season (Nov-March) following or at the time of the felling of the original trees, whichever is soonest following the permitted tree works.

The new tree(s) should be a minimum of 2m tall. Planting should be carried out in accordance with clause 10 (Planting) of BS 8545:2014 ‘Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations’.

Should the replacement trees be removed, die, or become severely damaged or seriously diseased, all within 5 years of planting, they shall be replaced by trees of a similar size and species to that originally planted. Modifications to the requirements of this condition must be agreed in writing with Wokingham Borough Council Tree and Landscape Team.

PLEASE NOTE: The requirement to replant is the responsibility of the tree owner even if the application was submitted by another person.

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. To maintain canopy cover in the Borough for the benefit of the local environment and amenity.

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

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

Application Reference:

TF/TPO/1471/2014/252598



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Please return this form to confirm that you have planted the replacement tree/s required under a tree replacement duty or planning condition.

Please post to:

or email to: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk

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

Application Number: 252598

I (*state your name*)

of (*state your address*)

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Location of trees (*if different from the address above*)

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Telephone number.....

Email address.....

Confirm that (*state number of trees planted*) were planted

on (*state date*) in accordance with either the duty to replace tree/s or a
planning condition as imposed under the Town and Country Planning Act.

The tree/s planted are (*state species e.g. Oak*)

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Signed: Date:

If you need any help filling out this form please contact the Tree Officer on: (0118) 974 6000

Important Note:

If you do not return this form then the land charges register may not hold up to date records on the tree preservation order/s covering your property, which could cause difficulties if you come to sell your house in the future.

Any further comments:

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