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Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 18 November 2025
My ref: TF/TPO/325/1987/252278



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Doug Cleary
14 Little Fryth
Crowthorne
Wokingham
RG40 3RN

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Cleary,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 325/1987

APPLICATION NUMBER: 252278

SITE ADDRESS: 14 LITTLE FRYTH, CROWTHORNE, WOKINGHAM, RG40 3RN

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received and validated on the 23 September 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 W1 of TPO 325/1987:

T1 & T2, 4 x Silver Birch and 1 x Scots Pine (W1 on TPO) - Thinning and reduction of canopy by up to 30%

T4, 1 x Oak (W1 on TPO) - Thinning and reduction of canopy by up to 30% Reason for Works: Primarily to eliminate any potential for falling branches.

Reasons stated for works:

Primarily to eliminate any potential for falling branches.

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 Council is not satisfied that the proposed 30% crown thinning, and crown reduction works are justified, proportionate, or in accordance with good arboricultural practice.

The application states that the works are “primarily to eliminate any potential for falling branches”, but no supporting information, photographs, or arboricultural report has been provided to demonstrate that any branches are defective, decayed, splitting, or carrying an elevated likelihood of failure. The visual inspection indicates normal, healthy branch structure, with no clear signs of imminent limb failure. Potential future branch drop is not in itself a justification for large-scale pruning works, and no evidence has been supplied to indicate that the trees pose an unacceptable level of risk.

A reduction and thinning of this magnitude would require the removal of a substantial proportion of the trees’ functional leaf area, which may disrupt the trees’ natural physiological processes, reduce photosynthetic capacity and stored energy reserves, increase vulnerability to environmental stress and pathogens, and stimulate excessive reactive growth that may worsen branch density over time. For the Scots pine, heavy thinning is not appropriate, as pines do not respond well to removal of internal or structural material and may suffer long-term decline following such works.

The Silver birch and Scots pine in the front garden have naturally open, pendulous crowns typical of their species. The crowns do not exhibit excessive congestion, nor do they appear to be suppressing one another. Likewise, the rear garden Oak shows a broad, healthy crown with normal density for its age and species. No structural conflicts, overly heavy limbs, or indicators of biomechanical instability are evident from the supplied imagery.

The trees are standing at a reasonable distance from nearby houses. There is no evidence of direct building contact, canopy dominance creating unreasonable shade, or risk of mechanical damage to structures. The retained tree forms are consistent with what would normally be expected in a mature, verdant residential setting.

The stated aim, preventing future limb fall, can typically be achieved through much lighter, targeted works, such as the removal of deadwood (which is already permitted), or selective pruning of specific defective limbs if such defects can be demonstrated. A blanket 30% thin and reduction across multiple species is disproportionate to the issues described.

The requested 30% canopy reduction and thinning works are unsupported by evidence, excessive for the issues described, and likely to be detrimental to the long-term vitality and structural form of the protected trees. Accordingly, those elements of the application are refused, while the removal of the dead birch is approved as reasonable and necessary.

On balance the information submitted for the proposed works is not sufficient justification for the detrimental pruning of prominent landscape 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 crown thin and reduction of 30% 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 W1 of TPO 325/1987:

T3, Silver Birch (W1 on TPO) - Removal of dead Silver Birch.

The consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The above works must be completed before **18 November 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'.

Reasons for conditions 1-2...

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.

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 would 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