

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 08 November 2024
My ref: TF/TPO/900/1997/251528



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr David Cook
Webb and Cook Arboricultural Specialists Ltd
Itchel Corner
Itchel Lane
Crondall
Farnham
GU10 5PT

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Cook,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 900/1997

APPLICATION NUMBER: 251528

SITE ADDRESS: 16 LEITH CLOSE, CROWTHORNE, WOKINGHAM, RG45 6TD

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was validated on the 29 June 2024. Please accept my apologies for this late reply due to an administrative error.

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 16 of TPO 900/1997:

T16 Oak:

- Reduce in height by 2m to leave a final height of 16m. Reduce lateral spread by 2m to create a natural canopy. Using suitable growth points to help encourage healthy growth.

Reasons stated for works:

Tree is dropping debris onto garden house and footpath.

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 proposed works have been assessed and found to lack sufficient arboricultural justification. The stated reason that the tree is dropping debris (such as leaves, acorns or twigs) onto the garden, house, and footpath is not considered a valid reason for carrying out works on a protected tree. Debris from trees is a natural and seasonal occurrence and does not constitute grounds for intervention under current arboricultural or planning guidance.

Crown reduction is a significant operation and should only be considered where there is a demonstrable structural defect, health concern, or other justifiable hazard-related issue. No such evidence has been provided in this case. The tree appears to be in good physiological and structural condition and is contributing positively to the visual amenity and ecological value of the area.

Even when carried out to appropriate growth points, crown reduction can have detrimental effects on a mature tree's health, stability, and longevity. It can lead to stress, decay entry points, and compromised structure over time. In the absence of a sound arboricultural need, the proposed pruning would constitute unnecessary harm to the tree and diminish its natural form and public amenity value.

The proposed works are not supported by current industry best practice as set out in British Standard BS3998:2010 - *Tree Work - Recommendations*. The guidance emphasises that crown reduction should only be used where there is a clear need to reduce mechanical loading or manage a structural defect, neither of which applies in this instance.

Considering the above, consent for the proposed crown reduction works to the subject Oak is refused. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure the long-term protection of trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders and must ensure that any works carried out are in the interests of tree health, public safety, and visual amenity.

If there are concerns over the trees structural integrity the Council would welcome a further Tree Work Application supported by appropriate levels of arboricultural evidence i.e. full VTA, aerial inspection (with photographs of all bio-mechanical defects) and results of any internal decay detection investigations of the lower main stem and/or scaffold branches (i.e. Sonic Tomograph and/or Resistograph Drill) to justify the proposed reduction works.

Due to the reasons stated above the proposed crown reduction has been refused.

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

Approved Tree Work to Single 16 of TPO 900/1997:

T16 Oak:

- Crown clean removing any dead, significantly decayed/dysfunctional branches back to suitable reduction points.

The consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The above works must be completed before **26 August 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 branches are taken back to a suitable growth points.
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.
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 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

cc. Applicant: Mr John Trentini, 16 Leith Close, Crowthorne, Wokingham, RG45 6TD

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