

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 18 November 2025
My ref: TF/TPO/1336/2010/251882



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Malcolm Rhind
46 Priest Avenue
Wokingham
RG40 2LX

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Rhind,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 1336/2010
APPLICATION NUMBER: 251882
SITE ADDRESS: 46 PRIEST AVENUE WOKINGHAM RG40 2LX

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received on 05 August 2025 and validated on the 28 August 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 1336/2010:

T1, Oak:

- Crown thin by 20%

Reasons stated for works:

The rational for the request is to assess the health and deal with the danger of overhanging branches which encroach, and have fallen into, both our own garden and that of a neighbour. Back in 2014 we applied successfully through the council for authorisation to have maintenance work carried out on the and were granted permission to have our contractors raise the crown by 5m, crown thin by 20% and remove dead wood. Given that over 10yrs has elapsed since that maintenance work I am now reapplying to have the tree surveyed with a view to repeating the exercise, again

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.

Following inspection of the protected Oak tree, the Council does not consider a 20% crown thin to be justified or arboriculturally appropriate at this time.

From an assessment from ground level the tree exhibits a normal, healthy canopy structure for a mature Oak. Branch spacing and internal light levels do not indicate congestion requiring a thinning operation of the scale proposed. Routine removal of deadwood and minor crossing material, already approved as part of the crown clean, along with the removal of epicormic growth and crown lift will in itself achieve an approximate 10-15% reduction in minor woody material, which is considered sufficient.

A 20% crown thin would remove a significant proportion of the tree's photosynthetic area. This may reduce the tree's energy reserves, increase vulnerability to stress, pests and disease, stimulate excessive reactive growth (which can ultimately increase future management needs), and compromise the tree's natural stability by altering wind loading patterns. For mature broadleaved trees such as this Oak, repeated heavy thinning cycles are not considered best practice and can be detrimental to long-term vitality.

The tree stands a good distance from nearby dwellings, and although some branches extend over garden boundaries, such spread is entirely typical of a mature Oak in a residential setting. The approved works, crown lifting, epicormic removal and deadwood removal, address the legitimate concerns regarding low branches and occasional fallen dead branches without requiring unnecessary intervention into the functional crown.

Although consent for a 20% thin was granted in 2014, this does not set a precedent for repeating the same operation. Tree condition, arboricultural guidance, and site context are all assessed afresh for each application. The current condition of the tree does not warrant a repeat of the historic level of thinning.

The proposed 20% crown thin is refused as it is unnecessary, potentially harmful to the tree's physiological function, and not supported by current arboricultural best practice. The approved elements of the specification (epicormic removal, crown lift and crown clean) provide appropriate and proportionate maintenance while retaining the tree's important amenity value.

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 above proposed crown thin of 20% 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 1336/2010:

T1, Oak:

- Remove epicormic growth from the main stem up to crown break area.
- Tip reduce low hanging branches to provide a 5m height clearance from ground level.
- Tip reduce low lateral growth overhanging the residential gardens by no more than 1.5m
- Crown clean to remove all dead, hanging and significantly decayed branches.

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'. 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

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