

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 19 September 2025
My ref: TF/TPO/1455/2012/251789



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Stuart Webster
Webster's Arboricultural Services Ltd
13 Nightingale Gardens
Sandhurst
Berkshire
GU479DQ

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Webster,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 1455/2012

APPLICATION NUMBER: 251789

SITE ADDRESS: 25 STEPHENSON ROAD, ARBORFIELD, WOKINGHAM, RG2 9NP

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received and validated on the 25 July 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 Single 19 of TPO 1455/2012:

T19, Ash:

- Dismantle to ground level.

Reasons stated for works:

This is a mature tree at approximately 18 metres in height with a crown spread of 10 metres. The tree has had significant dead wood removed and is continuing to shed limbs. There is evidence of Ash dieback that is prevalent in this area. Due to the size and location of the tree, the tree presents a risk to the adjacent properties and the residents. I advise the tree to be dismantled to ground level. This action will remove the risk.

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 removal is in the interests of health and safety or based on any arboricultural need and no overriding reason for the proposed work was apparent.

While it is acknowledged that some deadwood has been removed and that limb failure has occurred, no arboricultural report or photographic evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the remaining tree is structurally unsound or presents an imminent risk of failure. In its current condition, the tree exhibits typical signs of age and maturity, but not to a degree that warrants removal. Deadwood and minor limb failure, while undesirable, are manageable through appropriate and routine crown inspection and maintenance rather than full removal.

Your application references symptoms of Ash Dieback. It is important to note that the presence of Ash Dieback alone is not sufficient to justify tree removal. As per the Forestry Commission and Tree Council guidance, the decision to fell an Ash tree should be based on the extent of canopy dieback (e.g., more than 50% crown decline), signs of structural instability, significant bark necrosis, or severe cracking.

The assessment from ground level found that while some dieback may be present, the tree still retains a substantial and functional crown with an outwardly sound lower main stem and buttress roots and no visual signs of any significant defects or decay were identified. Based on current best practice, the tree does not meet the threshold for removal due to Ash Dieback.

The subject Ash tree is a mature specimen contributing positively to the landscape character and environmental quality of the area. Its removal would have a significant visual and ecological impact.

If there are concerns over 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, 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 removal of T19 Ash has been refused.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Hannington". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Chris" and last name "Hannington" clearly legible.

Chris Hannington
Trees and Landscape Team Manager

cc. Applicant: Mr Zachary Ford, Romans, Crowthorne House, Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham,
RG40 3GZ