

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 07 May 2026
My ref: TF/TPO/714/1995/260550



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Paul Lewis
46 Arthur Road
Wokingham
RG41 2SY

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Lewis,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 714/1995
APPLICATION NUMBER: 260550
SITE ADDRESS: 46 ARTHUR ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG41 2SY

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received and validated on the 04 March 2026.

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 1 of TPO 714/1995:

T1, Blue Atlas Cedar - Fell.

Reasons stated for works:

The tree has a Tree Preservation Order 714/1995 and is a Blue Atlas Cedar (Cedrus atlantica var glauca). The tree is located at the top of the entrance driveway and is approx. 8 metres away from the edge of the building. The tree is currently just over 20 meters high, this tree does have the potential to grow to over 30 metres. The crown width of a Blue Atlas Cedar is often 8-12 metres wide when fully mature. Currently the canopy of the tree is once again beginning to overhang the building (approx. 8 metres away). In the previous 10 years, with previously agreed Planning permission, the tree has twice been cut back, however these were very minimal and only allowed to cut back a few metres to stop the canopy overhanging the building. Whilst there is no fixed "maximum root spread" for this tree, typically they extend to 8-12 metres as large cedars develop extensive lateral roots that often spread at least as widely as the canopy. This could lead to the root system ultimately being up to 4 metres under the building. Therefore, from the above, it would seem that the tree is around 2/3rds of its potential height and width. The driveway is constructed from block paving and there are multiple areas which are showing signs of damage from below, assumed to be caused by roots of this tree as there are no other trees near enough to cause this damage. The block paving first showed signs of being damaged in 2023, although slight disturbances had been noticed before then. Since that time, over the last 3 years, more and more damage has occurred to the driveway and can be seen from the photographs attached. The driveway cannot be repaired or replaced due to the root damage. What is now especially concerning, although there is no noticeable damage thus far to the

building, is that recently there seems to be disturbance caused by roots to the block paving less than 50cm from the building (again shown in the photos). It is important to note that the canopy also extends to cover the driveways of nos 48, 48a and 50 Arthur Rd, all within 8 metres of the trunk. I am concerned there may be potential for further damage to adjacent properties. Given the nature of the damage so far, there being no way to repair the driveway, to prevent further damage to the driveway and potentially to prevent damage to the building, it now has come to a point where the request is for the tree to be felled. This is unfortunate as we had hoped to keep the tree manageable, but it is no longer possible. Should the permission be granted we will replace the tree with another tree more manageable and suitable for the location. As both our neighbours have magnolia trees at the top of their gardens (one of which is under TPO 653/1994), our initial choice would be to have a magnolia tree planted there to add to the vista of the road. Lastly, I would like to add since we have owned the property (2005), we have planted seven trees in the back garden when before there was only one.

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 removal of such a prominent tree is in the interests of health and safety or based on any arboricultural need.

The Council has carefully considered the application to remove the subject Cedar tree and whilst the concerns raised by the applicant regarding the relationship of the tree to the driveway and dwelling are acknowledged, the evidence submitted is insufficient to justify the loss of a tree of such significant public amenity value.

The Blue Atlas Cedar is a prominent and highly visible landscape feature within Arthur Road, making a substantial contribution to the character, appearance, and established treed skyline of the surrounding street scene. The tree is mature, visually striking, and of significant public amenity value, particularly due to its size, form and its visibility from public vantage points. The removal of the tree would result in a considerable and irreversible loss to local visual amenity and would materially diminish the verdant character of the area.

The applicant's proposal to undertake replacement planting with a magnolia tree is noted and welcomed in principle; however, a replacement tree of comparatively modest stature and longevity would not adequately mitigate for the immediate or long-term loss of the existing Cedar tree. The contribution made by the current tree could not reasonably be replicated within the foreseeable future.

The applicant has raised concerns regarding alleged root-related displacement to sections of block paving within the driveway and possible future implications for nearby buildings. Whilst the submitted photographs indicate localised distortion and lifting of the driveway surface, the Council does not consider the evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the tree is causing significant or irreparable structural damage that warrants felling.

No arboricultural report, structural engineer's assessment, root investigation, level survey, or subsidence evidence has been submitted to conclusively establish that:

- the cedar roots are directly responsible for all observed displacement;
- the damage cannot be reasonably repaired through alternative engineering or surfacing solutions;
- the integrity of the dwelling or neighbouring properties is presently affected; or that future structural damage is likely on the balance of probability.

The concerns expressed regarding the possibility of roots extending beneath the dwelling are largely speculative and based on generalised assumptions regarding potential root spread rather than site-specific technical evidence. It is recognised that large trees can develop extensive root systems; however, root presence beneath hard surfaces or in proximity to structures does not in itself justify removal unless demonstrable and unacceptable damage is occurring.

The Council acknowledges that sections of the block paved driveway exhibit unevenness and localised heave. However, such impacts are commonly associated with mature trees in constrained urban settings and do not automatically justify the removal of a protected tree, particularly where the affected surface is non-structural and repair or redesign options may remain available.

The statement that the driveway “cannot be repaired or replaced” has not been substantiated with technical evidence. Alternative solutions may include:

- localised lifting and relaying;
- use of flexible or no-dig surfacing systems;
- sympathetic regrading;
- root-friendly construction methods; or
- selective root pruning subject to arboricultural supervision and feasibility assessment.

In the absence of evidence demonstrating that all reasonable engineering alternatives have been exhausted, the complete removal of the tree is considered disproportionate.

The tree’s proximity to the dwelling and canopy spread are longstanding site characteristics that have existed for many years. The Council notes that previous applications for localised lateral reduction works have been approved in order to appropriately manage canopy encroachment toward the building. This demonstrates that less harmful management options remain available and that the tree can continue to coexist with the site through ongoing arboricultural maintenance. The fact that the tree may continue to grow in height and spread over time is not sufficient justification for removal.

The applicant expresses concern regarding possible future impacts to neighbouring driveways and properties. However, no evidence has been provided to indicate that neighbouring structures have sustained damage attributable to the tree, nor that there is a foreseeable risk requiring immediate intervention. The Council must determine the application based on demonstrable harm rather than hypothetical future scenarios.

On balance, it is concluded that the evidence presented does not demonstrate sufficient arboricultural, structural, or safety justification to outweigh the significant public interest in retaining the tree. Accordingly, the proposed removal of the Blue Atlas Cedar is considered unjustified and contrary to the objectives of the Tree Preservation Order, which seeks to protect trees that provide important amenity value to the local environment.

Due to the reasons stated above the proposed removal of T1 Blue Atlas Cedar 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 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Hannington". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Chris Hannington
Trees and Landscape Team Manager