

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 05 December 2025
My ref: TF/TPO/927/1998/252428



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr John Bates
98 Hatch Ride
Crowthorne
RG45 6LD

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Bates,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 927/1998
APPLICATION NUMBER: 252428
SITE ADDRESS: 6 LUPIN RIDE, CROWTHORNE, WOKINGHAM, RG45 6UR

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received on 08 October 2025 and validated on the 09 October 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 3 of TPO 927/1998:

T3, Oak:

- Crown lift to approx. 8m by removing 2 no. lower branches overhanging no. 98 Hatch Ride.

Reasons stated for works:

The lowest branches now extend to within 1.5 meters of the eaves of the house. Raising the canopy will reduce the risk of squirrels jumping from the tree onto the roof, potentially causing property damage. Removal of these lower branches will not cause loss of amenity, as the tree is part of a group of adjacent oak trees and there is additional planting in the garden.

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 two scaffold branches proposed for removal are large-diameter, primary structural limbs arising from the main stem at approximately 4 m and 6 m above ground level. These limbs form an integral part of the tree's primary load-bearing framework, contributing to trunk taper,

mechanical balance, and the dissipation of wind loading. The complete removal of such substantial limbs back to the main stem would create large pruning wounds, increase the probability of decay development and compromising the long-term structural integrity of the tree. The loss of major branches on one side of the crown would also result in a significant imbalance of canopy mass, predisposing the tree to future mechanical failure. For these reasons, the proposed works are considered unsympathetic and not in accordance with accepted arboricultural best practice.

The concerns raised by the applicant can be adequately addressed through lighter, more proportionate works, such as tip-reduction pruning of the relevant scaffold branches. A modest reduction of branch ends, rather than complete removal back to the trunk, would provide increased clearance from the property, reduce the potential for wildlife access, and avoid the creation of large wounds while retaining the structural contribution of the limbs. As such, complete removal is not justified when a lower-impact arboricultural solution is available.

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 tip reduction of lateral spread, address the proximity concerns without requiring unnecessary intervention into the functional crown.

The reasons provided, namely proximity of branches to the roof and concerns regarding squirrels accessing the property, do not constitute sufficient justification for the removal of major structural limbs from a protected tree. Squirrels are agile and can utilise multiple routes within the surrounding tree group; the removal of these two branches would not reasonably prevent such access. Minor encroachment toward the house can be effectively managed through selective branch tip reduction. The applicant's statement that the works would not reduce amenity is not accepted. The tree forms part of an important group of mature oaks contributing significantly to public amenity and local landscape character. The removal of two substantial scaffold limbs would cause a material and visible alteration to the crown form, resulting in a noticeable loss of amenity value.

As a protected tree forming part of a recognised group, its collective visual contribution is a primary factor in its designation. Removal of major lower limbs would create an unbalanced crown, disrupt the tree's natural form, and diminish the amenity of the group as viewed from surrounding properties and public vantage points. The proposed works are therefore considered excessive and contrary to the objectives of the TPO.

On balance the information submitted for the proposed works is not sufficient justification for the detrimental pruning of a prominent landscape tree, 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 complete removal of two major branches 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 Single 3 of TPO 927/1998:

T3, 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 2m
- 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 **05 December 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