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Date: 22 September 2026
My ref: TF/TPO/1395/2011/261758



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mrs Ngaire McKeown
13A Milton Road
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1DE

Place and Growth
Development Management Team
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mrs McKeown,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 1395/2011
APPLICATION NUMBER: 261758
SITE ADDRESS: 13A MILTON ROAD, WOKINGHAM, BERKSHIRE, RG40 1DE

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received and validated on the 28 July 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 2 of TPO 1395/2011:

T2, Horse Chestnut - Fell.

Reasons stated for works:

SUMMARY The tree is a mature Horse Chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum) which is understood to have been planted approximately 50 years ago from a conker. Over the past 20 years the tree has grown significantly in both height and canopy spread, extending across the driveway and access route serving Bedwyn Lodge and Foster Cottage at 13A Milton Road. The tree is now of substantial size and occupies a constrained position between two residential properties (13 and 13A Milton Road) and immediately adjacent to the sole vehicular access route serving Bedwyn Lodge. The tree is also showing signs of disease and decline, as demonstrated in the accompanying photographs. The applicants are concerned that the condition of the tree may continue to deteriorate, increasing maintenance requirements and the risk of branch failure. Photographs are attached in support of this application. PROPOSED WORKS Complete felling of the Horse Chestnut tree identified as T2 under TPO 1395/2011. No pruning, crown reduction or other works are proposed. The application relates solely to the removal of the tree in its entirety. REASONS FOR WORKS The principal reason for the proposed felling is the restriction the tree now places on safe vehicular access to Bedwyn Lodge. The position and size of the tree have progressively reduced the available access width to the property. The distance between the tree trunk and the opposite boundary is now approximately 2.5 metres at its narrowest point. This restricted width presents an ongoing concern for emergency vehicle access. Earlier this year an ambulance attended the property during a medical emergency. Although the vehicle was able to gain access to the first half of the drive, its movement further along the driveway was significantly impeded by the restricted clearance created by the position of the tree. The attached photograph shows the ambulance unable to move further into the property through this

constrained section of the access route. The tree is also showing signs of disease and decline, as evidenced by the accompanying photographs. The applicants are concerned about its long-term health and the increasing risk associated with its continued growth and deterioration. REPLACEMENT TREES The applicants recognise the importance of maintaining tree cover and biodiversity and have already undertaken significant replacement planting within the grounds of Bedwyn Lodge. In recent years the following trees have been planted: • Three Apple trees (Malus domestica) • One Silver Birch (Betula pendula) • One Acer species • One Flowering Cherry (Prunus species) These replacement trees have been planted in locations more suitable to their expected mature size and will continue to provide amenity value, biodiversity benefits and landscape enhancement.

Officer comments:

The application has been carefully assessed, including the supporting statement and photographs submitted in support of the proposed felling of T2, a mature Horse Chestnut protected by Tree Preservation Order 1395/2011. Having regard to the amenity contribution made by the tree, the evidence submitted, and the Council's statutory duty to protect trees of public amenity value, consent is refused.

The principal justification advanced for removal is that the tree restricts vehicular access to Bedwyn Lodge and may impede access by emergency vehicles. Whilst the concerns raised are noted, the evidence submitted does not demonstrate that the tree is the primary constraint affecting access. The photograph provided of the ambulance attending the site shows the vehicle negotiating a narrow section of driveway formed between existing buildings. The available clearance appears to be significantly influenced by the position and overhanging elements of the adjoining-built structures rather than solely by the presence of the tree.

The application states that the distance between the tree stem and the opposing boundary is approximately 2.5 metres at its narrowest point. This width exceeds the minimum clear width commonly required for pedestrian access and is comparable to, or greater than, the width of many domestic driveways. Furthermore, no evidence has been submitted from the ambulance service, fire and rescue service, highway authority, building control authority or other suitably qualified professional demonstrating that the existing access arrangements are unacceptable, non-compliant, or that the tree alone prevents emergency access. The Council must determine applications based on objective evidence rather than perceived future inconvenience.

It is also noted that the boundary opposite the tree comprises a relatively lightweight timber fence. Such structures are capable of being altered, relocated or replaced should additional clearance ever be required, whereas the removal of a mature, protected tree would result in the permanent loss of an important landscape feature. The applicant has not demonstrated that alternative and less harmful measures have been properly explored before seeking the irreversible removal of the tree.

In relation to the tree's condition, the photographs submitted show foliage symptoms consistent with Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner (*Cameraria ohridella*), a widespread insect pest now common throughout much of England. Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner is not a disease but the larval stage of a moth that feeds within the leaf tissue, causing premature browning and discolouration of leaves later in the growing season. Whilst the pest can affect the tree's appearance, it is not generally regarded as an indicator of structural instability, imminent failure, or dangerous condition. No arboricultural report, decay investigation, pathology assessment or other technical evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the tree is suffering from a significant disease, structural defect or physiological condition that would justify its removal on arboricultural grounds.

The Council's site assessment found no evidence that the tree is in such decline that retention is no longer appropriate. The tree remains a visually important feature within the locality, making a significant contribution to the character of the area, the verdant appearance of the access drive, local biodiversity, and wider public amenity. The fact that replacement trees have been

planted elsewhere within the grounds is welcomed; however, newly planted trees cannot reasonably compensate for the immediate loss of the subject Horse Chestnut.

On balance, insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the alleged access restrictions, emergency access concerns, or claimed decline in the tree's condition are of such severity as to outweigh the amenity benefits afforded by the continued retention of the subject tree. The proposed felling would therefore result in an unjustified and unnecessary loss of amenity and is contrary to the purpose of the Tree Preservation Order.

Should concerns remain regarding the tree's structural integrity, the Council would welcome the submission of a further Tree Works Application supported by an appropriate level of arboricultural investigation and evidence. Such evidence may include, but is not limited to, a comprehensive Visual Tree Assessment (VTA), aerial inspection with clear photographs identifying all relevant biomechanical defects, and the results of any internal decay detection investigations of the lower main stem and/or principal scaffold branches, such as Sonic Tomography and/or Resistograph testing. This information would enable the Council to make a more informed assessment of the tree's condition and the necessity of any future proposed works.

Due to the reasons stated above the proposed works to the subject Horse Chestnut tree have 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,



Chris Hannington
Trees and Landscape Team Manager