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Date: 09 December 2025
My ref: TF/TPO/4/1961/252509



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Neil Wilson
Beechwood Tree Care Ltd
2 Playhatch Farm Cottages
Playhatch
RG4 9QX

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Wilson,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 4/1961
APPLICATION NUMBER: 252509
SITE ADDRESS: 66 ANTRIM ROAD, WOODLEY, WOKINGHAM, RG5 3NY

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received and validated on the 15 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 1 of TPO 4/1961:

T1, Oak:

- Crown reduction by approx. 2m of the radial crown spread and up to approx. 2m of the height.

Reasons stated for works:

Reasons for the proposed works are listed and numbered within the Beechwood Tree Care Specification Document submitted with the application.

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 such an extensive reduction is in the interests of health and safety or based on any arboricultural need.

While the applicant/agent has expressed concern about a swollen section on a southern limb, the information provided does not demonstrate that the limb presents an imminent or unacceptable risk of failure. A reactive growth swelling does not automatically indicate a structurally significant defect. Such growth is common in mature oaks as they adapt to load distribution. A blanket 2m crown reduction across the entire tree, based on a single limb feature,

is disproportionate to the presented arboricultural concern. Local planning authorities must ensure that pruning is the minimum necessary. In this case, a targeted inspection or minor selective pruning may be more appropriate than a full crown reduction.

A 2m reduction represents a substantial percentage loss of leaf area, particularly for a maturing oak. Removing this volume of live canopy will reduce the tree's energy reserves and its ability to photosynthesise, potentially impairing long-term vitality. BS3998 emphasises that crown reduction should be used sparingly and only where there is a clear need. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the tree is physiologically or structurally unable to maintain its current size.

The subject tree forms a prominent, mature feature visible above neighbouring boundaries, contributing both to the vertical structure of the wider landscape and to local character. Although located toward the rear of the applicant's garden, the crown rises above domestic boundaries and is clearly appreciable from public viewpoints. Reducing its height and spread by 2 metres would noticeably alter the silhouette and reduce its amenity value, contrary to the purpose of its TPO protection.

The tree is positioned over 10 metres from the applicant's dwelling and to the north, so it does not materially restrict light to living spaces or create a statutory nuisance. Its location is therefore unlikely to justify pruning works on the grounds of excessive shade, looming presence, or direct conflict with adjacent dwellings. Where a protected tree is not demonstrably affecting reasonable residential use, the authority must prioritise its long-term structural and amenity value.

Neighbour concerns, while acknowledged, do not override the TPO's statutory purpose. Generalised neighbour dissatisfaction, such as the tree "upsetting neighbours" is not an arboricultural reason to prune a protected tree. The Council must balance private preferences against the public benefit of retaining mature tree cover. In the absence of direct damage or safety issues affecting nearby properties, such concerns cannot justify significant crown reduction.

The subject oak is an established mature specimen. Mature oaks are not typically managed by cyclical reduction, as such practices increase the likelihood of decay entering pruning wounds, trigger vigorous regrowth that worsens future size issues, and generate a need for ongoing management, contrary to good practice for TPO trees. Allowing a substantial reduction for size-containment would set an undesirable precedent for other TPO trees in the area.

Claims that visual impact would be minimal are not accepted. Even when performed to BS3998, a 2m crown reduction of a mature oak inevitably causes noticeable alteration of the crown outline, loss of the layered branching structure characteristic of oaks, and a reduction in canopy density. Because this tree rises above the level of surrounding vegetation, these changes would be visible from public vantage points. Therefore, the works would have an appreciable and negative impact on amenity.

Target area risk is typical of large garden trees and does not amount to unacceptable hazard. While the garden and patio are used areas, they do not constitute a high-risk target such as a busy highway. The authority requires evidence of demonstrable, not hypothetical hazard. No arboricultural report has been submitted showing quantifiable risk beyond normal levels associated with mature garden trees.

Overall, the reasons provided by the applicant/agent do not demonstrate a need for such extensive works, nor do they outweigh the public benefits of retaining the tree at its current size and form. However If there are concerns over the trees 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 works to T1 Oak 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 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

cc. Applicant – Mr Paul Cooper, 66 Antrim Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3NY