

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 04 August 2025
My ref: TF/TPO/896/1997/251328



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Tom Cooksey
2 The Conifers
Crowthorne
Wokingham
RG45 6TG

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

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr. Cooksey,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 896/1997
APPLICATION NUMBER: 251328
SITE ADDRESS: 2 THE CONIFERS, CROWTHORNE, WOKINGHAM, RG45 6TG

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received on 04 June 2025 and validated on the 09 June 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 W2 of TPO 896/1997:

T1, Oak:

- Cut back to the boundary line by approx. 7.5m

Reasons stated for works:

In the supporting document, the tree is T1 Oak B1. This overhangs our property significantly with a continuous drop of leaves, bird mess, and sap onto our cars. It also blocks out significant amounts of light. We like to have the tree pruned so that it no longer overhangs our property.

Officer comments:

The application proposes pruning of a mature protected oak tree that would involve removal of a substantial proportion of its crown, to prevent leaf litter, sap, bird droppings, and perceived loss of light. 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.

While it is acknowledged that the tree overhangs the applicant's property, the extent of pruning proposed would be detrimental to the tree's health, structure, and long-term public amenity value.

The subject Oak tree is a mature specimen which is clearly visible from the surrounding public highway contributing significantly to the character and amenities of the local and wider landscape subsequently the tree commands high landscape amenity.

The extent of pruning required to remove all overhanging branches would result in the loss of a significant portion of the tree's crown. This would be biologically inappropriate, likely to cause physiological stress, imbalance, and could lead to long-term decline or structural instability. These types of operation should only be considered where there would otherwise be a risk of failure due to a significant structural defect.

The oak tree contributes significantly to the local landscape and public visual amenity. The proposed works would substantially diminish the tree's natural form and character, undermining the purpose of the Tree Preservation Order.

While issues such as leaf litter, bird droppings, and sap are noted, these are not considered sufficient justification for works of this scale. These are common and natural occurrences associated with living trees and do not override the statutory protection afforded under the TPO. Similarly, light obstruction from overhanging branches, particularly from a deciduous tree, is generally not regarded as a valid reason for extensive crown reduction where no actionable nuisance exists

On balance the reasons and information submitted with the application are not sufficient justification for the significant crown reduction and detrimental pruning of a prominent landscape tree. However, if there are concerns over a 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 works

Due to the reasons stated above the above proposed tree works have 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 W2 of TPO 896/1997:

T1 Oak:

- Tip reduce lateral growth by up to 1.5-2m
- Tip reduce branches to provide a lower crown clearance above ground level of 5m

The consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The above works must be completed before **04 August 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