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Date: 06 August 2026
My ref: TF/TPO/4/1961/261320



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Mark Clive
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 Clive,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 4/1961
APPLICATION NUMBER: 261320
SITE ADDRESS: 58 ANTRIM ROAD, WOODLEY, WOKINGHAM, RG5 3NT

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received and validated on the 03 June 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 A1 of TPO 4/1961:

T1 - 1 x Pine: Section fell in safe and controlled manner to just above ground level.

Reasons stated for works:

1. The location of the tree means it is exposed to significant wind stresses which are likely to lead to branch or total tree failure. 2. The tree is upsetting the client and adjacent neighbours due to safety concerns, and it is hoped that the proposed works will help to prevent future conflict with surrounding residents. 3. The area has plenty of tree cover and therefore any loss of visual amenity will be minimal. 4. There are several surrounding Pine trees of a similar age with much better shape and form that are better suited for a TPO. 5. The target area should the tree or a portion of it fail is the neighbour's outhouse, garden and bungalow. The garden is heavily used in the Spring, Summer and Autumn months. Any failure has the potential to lead to significant damage to property and/or serious injuries. 6. Client is happy to re-plant if necessary. Summary The proposed works will make significant difference to Mrs Fishlock and her neighbours use and enjoyment of his garden and will prevent risk of failure and conflicts between the trees and other residents. The reasons 1.-5. are all credible reasons, to justify the works, in their own right and all far out way the any loss of any visual amenity.

Officer comments:

The Council acknowledges that the tree has recently become more exposed following the removal of an adjacent dead tree. However, no detailed arboricultural assessment, structural evaluation, decay detection report, or quantified risk assessment has been submitted to demonstrate that the subject tree is suffering from defects that would make it unsafe or predisposed to whole-tree or branch failure.

While the applicant states that the tree is exposed to significant wind loading, this assertion is unsupported by technical evidence. Increased exposure following neighbouring tree removal does not automatically render a tree hazardous. Trees commonly adapt to changing growing conditions, and there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the subject pine is incapable of accommodating the altered wind environment.

The tree exhibits a lean and asymmetric crown form. These characteristics are typical of trees that have developed within a group or woodland setting where competition for light influences crown architecture. Such growth characteristics, in themselves, do not constitute evidence of structural weakness or imminent failure. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate the presence of significant defects such as extensive decay, root plate instability, stem cracking, included bark unions, excessive deadwood, or other structural conditions that would justify remedial works on safety grounds.

The application relies heavily on perceived risk and concerns expressed by the owner and neighbouring residents. Whilst such concerns are acknowledged, subjective fears alone cannot justify works to a protected tree in the absence of evidence demonstrating an unacceptable level of risk. The presence of potential targets, including gardens, outbuildings and residential property, does not in itself indicate that the tree presents a foreseeable danger requiring remedial works.

Furthermore, the application does not adequately demonstrate that alternative management options have been explored. No evidence has been submitted to show consideration of less harmful measures such as periodic inspection, monitoring following the change in exposure, removal of isolated deadwood, selective pruning where arboriculturally appropriate, or implementation of a risk management regime. As a result, it has not been established that the proposed removal represents the minimum works necessary.

The applicant's assertion that there is abundant surrounding tree cover and that the loss of amenity would therefore be minimal is not accepted. The subject tree is a mature and prominent landscape feature that contributes significantly to local character, visual amenity, and the collective value of the protected tree group. The existence of other trees nearby does not diminish the individual contribution made by this specimen.

Similarly, the suggestion that neighbouring pine trees possess superior form and are therefore more deserving of protection is not a material consideration. Tree Preservation Orders are not restricted to specimens of perfect form. Trees may be protected because of their collective landscape contribution, prominence, maturity, screening function, wildlife value, or contribution to local character.

The offer to undertake replacement planting is noted. However, replacement planting would not adequately compensate for the loss or significant alteration of a mature, protected tree. The amenity, landscape presence, and ecological value of a mature pine cannot be replicated within a reasonable timescale by newly planted trees.

Consequently, the Council is not satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated a sound arboricultural justification for the proposed works. Insufficient evidence has been provided to establish that the tree presents an unacceptable risk, that the proposed works are necessary, or that less harmful management options would be ineffective. The proposed works would result in an unjustified loss of amenity and would be contrary to the objectives of the Tree Preservation Order.

On balance, the reasons and supporting information submitted with the application are not considered sufficient to justify the proposed works to the subject tree. Whilst the concerns regarding the tree's condition and potential for failure are acknowledged, the application is not supported by adequate arboricultural evidence demonstrating that the tree presents an unacceptable level of risk or that the proposed works are necessary and proportionate. Accordingly, consent cannot be granted on the information currently available.

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. Where considered appropriate by the inspecting arboriculturist, the submission of static load or pull-testing data may also assist in determining the tree's structural condition and residual risk. 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 removal of the subject Pine tree 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,



Chris Hannington
Trees and Landscape Team Manager

cc. Applicant - Mrs Fishlock, 58 Antrim Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3NT