

MEMORANDUM

From:	Catherine Brimble Senior Landscape Officer		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	252535
Address:	71 Dorset Way, Wokingham, RG41 3AL.		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed erection of a detached double garage with a dual-pitched concrete tiled roof, incorporating facing brickwork to match the existing dwelling, with aluminium double garage doors to the front elevation, a UPVC window and pedestrian door to the side elevation, and reinstatement of boundary hedging to the north and west boundaries, following the demolition of the existing single garage, shed, garden wall and gate.		
Type of Development:	Other Householder		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☒ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

The site is at the end of a cul-de-sac on a maturing housing estate. The land to the west of the site is designated Countryside, and the woodland across Fox Hill is protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 20/1973, W1 as well as being identified as an Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW). The woodland forms a significant green backdrop to the housing which can be seen from the public realm and access into this woodland is provided by a footpath between numbers 71 & 62 Dorset Way.

An Arboricultural Report by Certhia Consulting Ltd and dated October 2025 has been submitted with the application.

It is noted that the location of the proposed garage has been slightly amended to that shown on an earlier application (251503) but was then removed. The garage is now positioned 0.8m from the western boundary with the woodland and 0.8m from the adjacent footpath. However, this still does not prevent the removal of the existing hedgerow to the front of the dwelling alongside the footpath in order to construct the proposed garage.

The other issue related to this site is the close proximity of the site to the ASNW where the relevant government advice states that:

You should refuse planning permission if development will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees unless both of the following applies: there are wholly exceptional reasons (and) there's a suitable compensation strategy in place.

A minimum 15m buffer (exclusion) zone is recommended in the government advice.

There are no exceptional reasons given in the scheme as to why the new detached double garage is required, when there is an existing garage (although permission has been granted for its conversion), and no compensation strategy is provided.

The Arboricultural Report indicates the proposed double garage will be outside the RPA's of the adjacent protected trees. This isn't in dispute, however what is of concern is the cumulative impact of the proposed new development within the 15m buffer zone to the ancient woodland. The original dwelling was constructed approximately 11m from the edge of the woodland with the garage to the front of the dwelling rather than to the side (however permission has now been granted to increase the size of the dwelling). Although it is understood that the housing development including gardens adjoin the woodland edge, actual built development did not originally abutting this edge leaving an informal green buffer. The proposed application includes a new double garage, increasing the size of the drive and the removal of mature hedgerow adjacent to a pedestrian access into the woodland. I consider the cumulative impact of all these changes will have a significant detrimental impact on buffer zone of the ancient woodland especially where the majority of these areas currently consist of soft landscaping so there will be deterioration of the soil, light and landscape character of the area.

The location, height, bulk and size of the new garage will permanently obscure direct public views of the protected woodland at lower levels which will have a detrimental effect on the local character by creating a hard edge to the settlement boundary rather than integrating the proposals with the wooded context beyond the site boundary. This is contrary to Core Strategy Policy CP3, Local Plan policy CC03 and the Wokingham Borough Design Guide principle R23. I am concerned that green infrastructure (including a hedge) directly adjacent to the public realm and footpaths is to be removed with no mitigation provided.

In conclusion I cannot support this application due to the potential harm to the ancient woodland that is likely to occur by significantly increasing built development in the 15m buffer zone. The proposals will also have a detrimental impact on the verdant character of the of the existing development by creating a hard edge to the settlement boundary with no attempt to provide any integration with the woodland setting of the countryside beyond. This is contrary to Core Strategy policy CP3 and Local Plan policy CC03 and Wokingham Borough Design Guide principle R23.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

N/A

Date:

6th November 2025

Signed:

C. Brimble