

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	251539
Address:	354 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DE.		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed erection of a first floor upwards extension with new pitched roof and front facing gable, alongside a two storey rear extension with roof lights and associated alterations to front, side and rear fenestration, following removal of existing roof structure.		
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 comprises of a small detached bungalow in a very long plot that is divided into 2 sites, and a woodland copse at the southern end. The site is facing Barkham Road a Green Route as per the Policy Map. The site is located in Barkham Hill 'Limited Development Location' (Policy CP9), and is adjacent to the countryside, Policy CC02 applies.

Adjacent to the west of the site is footpath PROW WOK133 which connects the Barkham Road to Edneys Hill and eventually Barkham Church and Manor which is an 'Area of Special Character'. The site is characterised by trees and being part of an extended area of Natural England *Priority Habitat*; '*broad leaved and semi natural woodland*'.

The redline boundary of the site at its greatest depth is approximately 95m deep x an average of 39m wide (across the centre of the plot). The site has a staggered southern boundary beyond which is another plot of approximately 86m in depth which is beyond the settlement boundary and in the countryside, highlighted in blue on the Block Plan.

The existing site access is almost on the corner of the PROW with Barkham Road where there is an old gate supported by brick piers 2.75m apart. The old driveway is covered by leaf litter but is thought to extend just north of the access and curve round to the centre of the site. (This can also be seen on the Topographic Survey drawing submitted as part of the application)

The site rises from south to north by 6m.

The garden and extended site to the rear of the bungalow was cleared of most of its vegetation in Autumn 2023. A copse of trees protected by a Woodland Tree Preservation Order 1936/2023 is retained at the southern end of the wider site which is not within this application boundary but contributes to the setting and visual amenity from Barkham Road and the PROW, and to the views from within and adjacent to the site. Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 1169/2007 was served on Oaks within the site T5, T6, T8, T9 and Scots pine, T7, and T1 outwith the site.

An Arboricultural Implications Report (Ref. AIR-25088-01 SJA Trees May 2025) is submitted with the application. It identifies the development as having low arboricultural impact. No trees or hedges of significant value are being removed.

The tree survey recorded 41 trees, 3 groups of trees and 3 hedges growing within or immediately adjacent to the site. The Tree Survey Schedule is at Appendix 2.

NB the Tree Schedule includes Black Poplars significant trees in the immediate landscape and wider site – but there is no Tree Survey Plan of the trees in the Tree Survey Schedule.

A 'Tree Protection Plan' SJA Ref. 25088-041 May '24 is included in the AIR and includes trees retained in the application area of the red line boundary As the AIR mentions, the wider setting and the trees outside the site contribute to the visual amenity, it would be useful to see the tree survey plan for context.

The site has a mature arboricultural character and consists of mature Oaks and a Scots Pine. Just 1 Silver Birch T6 will be removed as it conflicts with the rear extension and a Cotoneaster hedge to the western boundary, consequently the arboricultural impact of the scheme is felt to be 'Low', although the impact of the clearances prior to the application have caused high arboricultural impact.

Impact of development on T7 Scots Pine

1. Canopy

There is currently a detached bungalow on the site and these proposals are to extend the dwelling upwards to include a first floor and extend the dwelling to the rear (south) with a ground and first floor extension. The AIR states the height of the rear extension will not conflict with the canopy (crown break) of tree T7 Scots Pine (TPO 1169/2007 T7) which is 5m from ground level. Although I have measured the elevation drawings of the rear of the house and from ground level the height is 7.62m. The height of the main frontage is 7.8m. The extension is barely subservient to the front elevation although there is scope to achieve this and reduce impact on the Scots Pine T7. As it stands T7 will require crown lifting by an 3m to provide clearance. It is possible that this tree may require periodic canopy reduction which can be controlled by the Council, but is it good for the tree, and is the relationship

between the tree and extended dwelling sustainable in the long run in terms of proximity to the dwelling which may result in it being felled ? **Please review building design**

2. Foundations

The existing bungalow measures 10m wide x 8m deep. The extended dwelling measures 10m wide x 15.20m in depth which almost is almost twice the depth of the existing and extends the house closer to the tree. The design of the footprint extending the building on the SE creates more problems with incursions into the RPA of T7 see paragraph 5.3.1 of BS5837:2012

The default position should be that structures are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained. However, where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the trees'

I see no overriding justification for the current proposals to develop within the RPA of important trees on site.

As it stands the proposed layout Drawing No. 'Proposed Extensions – Block Plan' and the AIR 'Tree Protection Plan' shows the rear extension of the house which will represent an incursion into the RPA of T7 of 4.8% as a result of the foundations.

A 'pile and beam' construction is proposed for the foundations for the rear extension. Pile holes will be dug by hand for the first 750mm. If roots over 25mm are encountered the pile/pad will be relocated. All excavation work will be overseen by the appointed Arboricultural Consultant.

The method of construction must also be overseen by the structural engineer. Plans and cross sections of the pile and beam foundations and the surfacing should be included within an Arboricultural Method Statement should planning permission be granted.

The AMS must also include amelioration of the rooting environment of trees affected by development – but also other retained trees and include rainwater runoff redirected to the rooting areas of T7 Scots Pine and the Oaks in the front garden to ensure that trees affected by development are properly compensated in the long term.

3. Paving

There will also be an incursion from flag paving into RPA of T7, although the paving is not shown on the TPP (see para. 6.2.5. which refers to additional parking – but it looks like flag paving to me on plan – please confirm) to the rear of the dwelling – again this could be solved by a redesign which locates the patio *outside* of the RPA. (I also note that the application for the adjacent site (251540) to the south creates further incursion into the RPA of T7 from surfacing).

Mitigation is proposed using manual excavation of the soil in the RPA to accommodate the surfacing in order to meet the levels going into the house. It's unfortunate that the house couldn't be designed in such a way that the level change was accommodated to protect the tree T7 from further incursion.

I can only see the 4.8% amount of incursion into the RPA of T7 from the foundations, and not from paving associated with this application, or the combined % incursion from the 2 developments PAs 251539 and 251540. Comparing the 2 tree protection plans it looks to be half of the RPA with further incursion from a car port proposed in the neighbouring application to the south on T7.

Although mitigation is proposed the total impact on tree T7 from both applications is unacceptable – please review house footprint/design and corresponding location of paving in T7 in tandem with location of Car Port of PA251540.

I understand that the use of a cellular confinement system over the existing surface of the tree roots will create a 'No Dig' surfacing with shingle over, and a tarmac threshold – although permeable tumbled block paving over No Dig would be preferable to tarmac, with shingle elsewhere.

4. Impact on other trees/vegetation from development

Tree T1 an off site Oak tree but with its RPA extending into the site is recognised as 'Notable' in the Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) Reference 45686 and is a possible future Veteran tree. Along with T5 Oak, another 'Notable' tree Ref. 45683 on the ATI. Together with trees T2, T3, T4 also Oaks in the front garden contribute to the status of the Green Route and are typical of the arboreal character along Barkham Road.

Hedge H3 Cotoneaster to the western boundary and visible in the public realm is proposed for removal and as a boundary hedge should be replaced with a native hedge of several different species. – Ensure native hedge replacement on Landscape Strategy

The existing access to the property is buried beneath the leaf litter in the front garden, but the driveway will be reinstated to curve around to the front of the dwelling and provide 2 parking bays, and continue northwards to the west side of the house and a garage (existing). The route of the new driveway may create incursions into trees TPO trees T1 and T5 over and above the existing layout of the drive. Please review existing and new driveway overlaid on TPP to understand additional area of No Dig as appropriate

It is proposed in the TPP 25088-041 the driveway will use a 'No Dig' construction no lower than the existing surface, however the full extent of the driveway extending across the front of the dwelling shown on 'Proposed Extensions / Block Plan Drawing 251532/02 is not shown on the TPP. Please review

Ground protection is proposed to a significant area of the front garden during construction but this will need to be reviewed to ensure consistency with the layout. Review extent of ground protection

5. Pruning

Pruning of a branch of tree T5 Oak ('Notable' on ATI) (T6 on TPO) is required to create a 7m clearance for development. My colleague in her pre-application response to the pre-application states;

T6 of the TPO (T5 in AIR) overhangs this bungalow. The canopy would need to be cut back to allow construction clearance for a replacement dwelling. This might be to a degree that is acceptable if the replacement was no higher in ridge height than the existing. But clearance for a taller structure would result in a lopsided canopy which would be detrimental to the stability and health of the tree, adversely affecting its public amenity as viewed from the Green Route and PROW. This would be unacceptable for a statutorily protected tree. A full application would have to address this.

The AIR proposes to remove a branch of Oak tree T5 to 'Crown lift the canopy over the dwelling to 6m above ground level by removing low limb growing to the south' But with the height of the dwelling at almost 8m I am not clear if this will create sufficient clearance, and if further crown lifting is required then this could result in a lopsided canopy. **Please address**

Site Layout and Visual Impact

The extent of the site clearance in 2023 has opened up the site considerably for development of the existing bungalow and further development to the south. The effect of the clearance has resulted in a sparsely vegetated environment of a few large retained trees, and may be subject to further felling. The current site looks unnatural and is jarring against the wider setting. Consideration of Policies CC03 and TB21 of the Local Plan will be important to restore a sense of place, the landscape character and setting, with particular emphasis on the transition between the site and the countryside and adjacent features such as the PROW and housing beyond the site.

The information regarding the future landscape setting of the site is absent. It is important to understand how the garden areas of the site and importantly the boundaries will be developed which would be best achieved in a **Landscape Strategy** which ideally should have been produced for this site and the site to the south as they relate to each other, and the wider landscape.

It will be important to reinstate hedgerows especially to the western boundary with native hedge plants of at least 6 species. Replacement trees planting should replace trees lost to development not just as a result of the application but prior to the site clearance. The species should consist of native large and medium species trees and smaller flowering trees, fruit trees, hedges etc. In view of the site and its location and character.

Policy CC02 states that development on the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments, is within development limits and respects the transition between built up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape.

I would like to understand how the proposals can meet with the Policy.

In addition the proposals must meet with Policies CC03 2a, c, d, e, and Policy TB21 where proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

As the application stands I have queries relating to the protection of the existing trees and the scale of development proposed. Although mitigation for the foundations is possible, solutions may be available that do not require this approach. A lot of development is proposed in the RPA of tree T7 and the tree stem is within 9m of the building and canopy very close to the extension. Please review.

I would like to see a Landscape Strategy for the site asap to establish landscape enhancements and a structure to meet with the landscape policies.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
See above			
Date:	22.7.25	Signed:	BRC