

For the attention of Wokingham Borough Council Development and Control

01/09/2026

Comments Re: Planning Application: 261863 Mallards, School Road, Hurst, Wokingham RG10 0DR

No objection to the proposed fenestration changes detailed on submitted document **PLANNING PLANS PROPOSED ELEVATIONS 261863 07/08/2026**, subject to clarification. The previous design for 3 dormer windows was actually approved by the Planning Inspectorate (Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/A/08/2065511).

(1) Probably simply a mistake, in which case we have no comment, but the wording on WBC's Planning Application Neighbour Notification we received states "including the installation of a conservation-style rooflight to the rear roofslope..." conflicting with both the Application's wording and the submitted drawing details (to which there is no objection).

(2) **Object** to answers provided in the Applicant's Planning Application Form Redacted, ApplicationFormRedacted. Pdf 261863 07/08/2026, see screenshot below:

Trees and Hedges

Are there any trees or hedges on the property or on adjoining properties which are within falling distance of the proposed development?

☐ Yes
☒ No

Will any trees or hedges need to be removed or pruned in order to carry out your proposal?

☐ Yes
☒ No

There **are** trees both on the property and on adjoining property (Cherry Trees/Cranford Drive) which are within falling distance of the proposed development. There are no hedges; the original School Road and Cherry Trees/Cranford Drive boundary hedges (appearing clearly in Google Street View March 2009 and earlier photos), were completely removed by Peacock's owners in 2012 (despite the "NO" box being ticked for the question "Are any of the trees on site to be felled?").

The tick for App:261863 needs to be in the **"Yes"** box.

Regarding pruning, is it not likely at some stage the Applicant will want to prune or remove trees blocking light to the proposed upstairs gable end windows? If yes, then the **"Yes"** box needs to be ticked.

(3) A recent August 2026 photo of Mallards indicates trees south and west of the property currently growing nearby and also within the property, and within falling distance.

Starting on the left:

- 1) Hollyoaks to the side access path,
- 2) A conifer “Golden Rider” in line with the ridge,
- 3) An unruly Ash towering above the ridge to the left of the dormer windows,
- 4) Tips of the veteran oak T1 just visible above the ridge,
- 5) And to the right to the left of the telegraph pole beyond the garage, a younger oak.

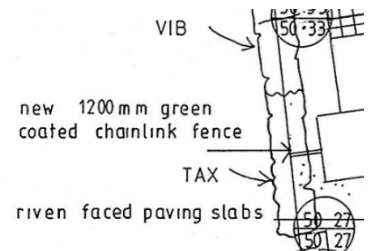


And off to the right (not pictured) a substantial willow growing in Peacocks.

It might be helpful to briefly describe the situation involving each tree as follows:

(3.1) It is likely and reasonable that Mallard’s owners will want Hollyoak branches overhanging Mallards southwest side access path, pruned or trimmed.

A screenshot (right) from App: C/2011/2396 09/2011 BOUNDARY TREATMENT Dwg COND 1/A, proposes a new fence on an agreed boundary line. Rather than the specified chainlink fence between the sidegate post and the School Road pavement, a rustic post and rail fence was erected. This has since been removed with rails currently stored against veteran oak T1. It would be both helpful and neighbourly to reinstate Mallards’ boundary fence to avoid any confusion as to what vegetation is overhanging and what is not.



(3.2) The conifer (Golden Rider), growing more than 1m inside Cherry Trees/Cranford Drive boundary, and currently hiding the visually intrusive higher-built gable end of Mallards, helps to enhance the leafy, open, rural amenity value of Cranford Drive. This tree will block any views from the proposed southwest windows across private Cranford Drive and as owners we have no wish to either remove it or reduce it in height. Obviously, any trimming or pruning would need to be seasonal and sympathetic to wildlife with collared doves previously discovered nesting in this tree resulting in aborting work.

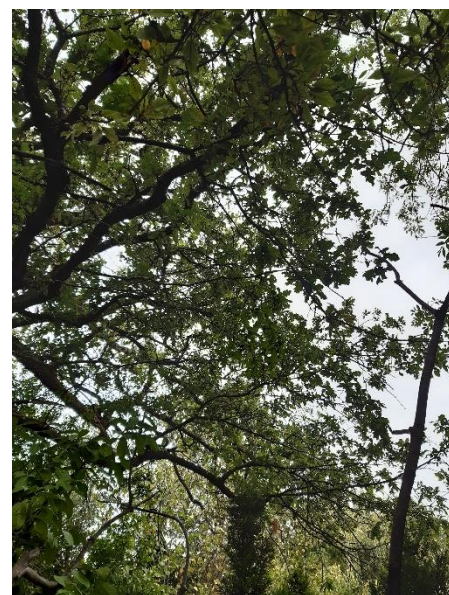
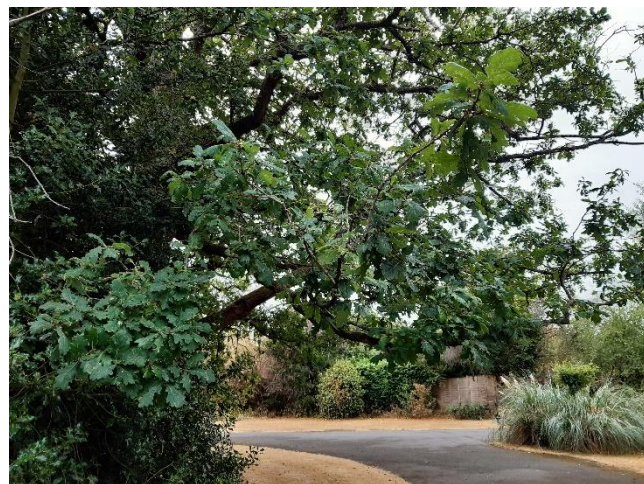
(3.3) An unruly Ash growing close to, or even partly on the boundary somehow escaped the 2012 destruction. We have no objection to this untidy tree, which is growing inclined away from veteran oak T1, along the boundary, and encroaching on Mallards, being heavily pruned or trimmed.

(3.4) Marking the “corner” of Mallard’s boundary with Cherry Trees/Cranford Drive, is veteran oak T1 with approximately 1/3 of its base within Mallards and 2/3 of its base in Cherry Trees/Cranford Drive. This veteran tree, Tree Reference T1 TPO Number 1141/2006, has grown towards the light with its crown mainly over our neighbouring property. Providing welcome mottled summer shade and being a

significant amenity feature of Cranford Drive, we wish to retain this oak tree and would object to any proposals for significant pruning or unbalancing of the present crown.

In 30 years of living with this tree, there has never cause to carry out work on the tree, or have work carried out. The tree drops all sorts of debris all year, leaves, catkins, and last year 2025, a huge mast crop of acorns. The ongoing decay has looked after itself with squirrels, pigeons and other wildlife dislodging loose material, usually in small pieces, which by the time it comes down is normally light, soft and the density of balsa wood with evidence of insect activity including stag beetles. This of course does not mean there are instances when it would be sensible to remove obviously loose and potentially hazardous dead material, but there has been no need to do that yet over our property.

This year's drought has been particularly hard for Hurst's trees but the veteran oak T1 pictured 18/08/2026 appears to have coped well - not dropping its green leaves but sensibly producing next to no acorns this year. The views below show the overall tree taken from within our property (left) looking towards Mallards, a close -up of the condition of the leaves (19/08/2026) and a view up through the crown over Mallards showing no major dead branches without leaves. It will be well into next year before it can be judged how well individual trees in Hurst have survived the 2026 drought.





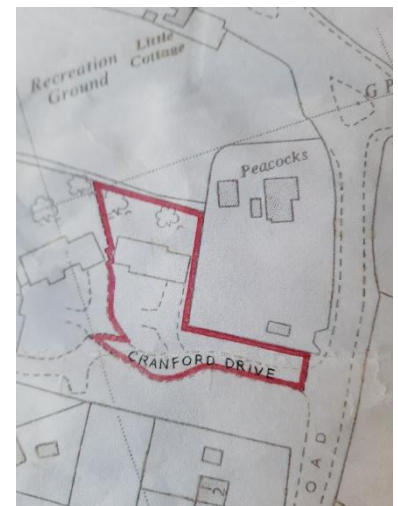
(3.5) The only portion of boundary “hedge” to survive the 2012 destruction is a section on the northwest boundary continuing roughly south in line with the rustic brick boundary wall, see photo (left). This vegetation appears to have been retained specifically to screen neighbouring Cherry Trees house from Mallards’ view. This vegetation is beyond Cherry Trees/Cranford Drive registered property boundary, and this relatively young healthy oak has grown up on Mallards’ land, now perhaps 12m high and potentially within falling distance of the house.

As this tree is rooted within 3m of our garage wall, and presents potential structural risk to our property, we can have no objection to it being trimmed, pruned or removed. Fortunately, no cracks have yet appeared, which is perhaps due to Mallards being built with ground and paved levels approaching 1m higher, and the root system has developed mainly within Mallards. If this oak is 12m high on the Mallard’s side, it will be nearer 13m measured on our side.

The green fence pictured is erected on BK 129438 property and belongs to Cherry Trees as does all the green wooden lattice screening and plant support beyond Mallards’ boundary, erected in 2012 following hedge destruction. At this point beyond the wall’s end, lattice was changed to close boarded with substantial barge boards to provide privacy, deter trespass, and to try to limit increased storm surface water run-off risk from the newer higher built and newly paved neighbouring property.

Referring to NEIGHBOURING H.M. LAND REGISTRY Title Number BK129438 overall detail pictured (right) the detailed marked-up title plan shows the actual Cranford Drive/Mallards boundary south of the rustic brick wall end, positioned slightly west of the overall approximate red boundary indicated on the small general plan (right). The previous owner fenced off this strip in line with the wall, which became effectively a no-man’s land, and it is in this strip the “12m/13m” oak is growing.

We have no objection to the new owners of Mallards moving their chain link fence on the western boundary closer to Cherry Trees green, wooden, plant support lattice and fence to recover, and take proper ownership of this strip – strictly in accordance with boundary details specified in BK129438 (dating from 1974).



The photo of the BK129438 Registered extent of Cherry Trees/Cranford Drive also highlights the annoying way authorities who should know better, like Ordnance Survey, variously and incorrectly show random property limits and drive arrangements for the three houses accessed via Cranford Drive. The Applicant’s Location Plan is no different showing Cranford Drive separately and wrongly as if it were an adopted road, and not private freehold garden, together with annotating a non-applicable house number.

(4) We can confirm Cranford Drive/Cherry Trees are current, regular, bat flight paths. It is understood that bats frequently live and roost in veteran oak trees and mature trees and hedge lines should be retained to preserve the flight lines.

The Applicant's PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL states in section 6. Evaluation: "The bat roost potential of the features within the site have been assessed with reference to the following criteria and include seasonal variation where increased or decreased probability may arise. Where features are present, they are highlighted in **bold**. The likelihood of bat roosts being present will be higher where structures: have **woodland, mature trees, species-rich grassland and/or water nearby;**"

We have a mature tree veteran oak T1 on the Cranford Drive bat flight line, not included in the bat survey, and Townsend Pond nearby. If no significant work is to be carried out on this tree, then there is clearly no need to extend the bat survey. Should any work on T1 be proposed by the Applicant, should the bat survey be extended to include veteran oak T1? What is the view of WBC's tree and ecological experts?

A A Butler 01/09/2026