

MEMORANDUM

From:	Catherine Brimble Senior Landscape Officer		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	251503
Address:	71 Dorset Way, Wokingham, RG41 3AL.		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed demolition of existing single storey conservatory and side canopy, erection of two storey side and rear extension of property with conversion of existing garage. Demolition of existing single garage and shed and erection of new double garage and workshop space.		
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

Previous comments were provided by my colleague Coralie Ramsey dated 7th July 2025 and are reiterated below as these still apply. I have provided additional comments in green below following additional information from the Arboricultural Consultant.

The site is at the end of a cul-de-sac on a maturing housing estate. The west of the site bounds Countryside, Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 20/1973, W1, on all hard wood trees of whatever age and an Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW). This area is known as Fox Hill. Greenway Route B Section 2.2 follows close to the property boundary. A green backdrop can be seen from the public realm, this comprising of the ASNW and includes TPO trees.

I refer to submissions and information Arboricultural Report May 25; site survey 1269WK01 Feb 25; location plan SK- 01 3.3.25 and proposed plans, elevations and site plan SK-02 3.3.25.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF), Gov.UK Guidance Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning Decisions (Gov. advice), Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (Adopted 29 January 2010), CP1

– Sustainable development, CP3 - General Principles for development and Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan) – Adopted 21 February 2014, Policy CC02: Development Limits, Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping and Policy TB21: Landscape Character, Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document June 2012 and BS5837:2012: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations refer.

An arboricultural submission is included with the application. It acknowledges the neighbouring trees of the ASNW. The relevant Gov. 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 Gov. advice.

There are no exceptional reasons given in the scheme as to why the new built form is located where it is and no compensation strategy. This is because the arboricultural submission states that there will be not be any impact upon the 15m buffer zone as there are already built forms in the general area. I disagree as new built form will be added in the buffer zone where there is currently none and this is contrary to the Gov. advice, so not supportable.

Further, the proposal seeks to put built forms in the root area and under the canopy of trees which are part of the ASNW and within their buffer zone. Therefore, there will be deterioration of the soil, light and landscape character of the area. These 3 points are specifically noted in the Gov. guidance to be unacceptable as direct and indirect ways to damage ASNW.

The location, height, bulk and mass of the new garage will permanently obscure public views of the protected green back drop, it is also in front of the building line, so contrary to Design Guide point 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.

I note that the Arboricultural Consultant indicates in his email that the new development (double garage and side extension) are both 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 on 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. Although it is understood that the housing development including gardens abuts the woodland edge, which is not how we would approach the relationship of development to ancient woodland today and where a 15m buffer of no development would be required, built development was not abutting this edge leaving an informal buffer. The proposed application includes a new double garage, increasing the size of the drive requiring the removal of mature hedgerow adjacent to a pedestrian access into the woodland, two storey side extension (4.3m wide) and an increased patio (3.70m beyond the extension. I consider the cumulative impact of all these

changes will have a significant detrimental impact on buffer zone of the ancient woodland especially where these currently consist of soft landscaped areas.

There is also the issue of character and how the proposals relate to the adjacent woodland and countryside location. The proposals will create a hard edge to the settlement boundary rather than integrating the proposals with the wooded context beyond the site boundary.

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.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
N/A			
Date:	3 rd September 2025	Signed:	C. Brimble