

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
222321	30/09/2022	Woodley	Coronation

Applicant	Mr J Southwell
Site Address	52 Mannock Way Woodley RG5 4XW
Proposal	Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension, single storey rear extension, two storey side extension, and change of use of amenity land to residential.
Type	Full
Officer	Baldeep Pulahi
Reason for determination by committee	<p>Listed by Councillor Keith Baker for the following reasons if minded to refuse the application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land is owned by the developer and is not nature reserve • The area is not defined as woodland • No detrimental impact upon trees • The settlement boundary movement to accommodate this application would be minor • There is precedent in Cody Close

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday 12 th October 2022
REPORT PREPARED BY	Operational Lead Development Management
RECOMMENDATION	Refusal

<p>SUMMARY</p> <p>The application is for the erection of a two-storey side extension and single-storey front and rear extension and accompanied by the change of use of adjoining land to residential to accommodate the extension.</p> <p>The adjoining land to the northwest is classified as Ancient Woodland and Aldermoor's Local Nature Reserve. The proposed extension would extend into the buffer zone of this woodland and nature reserve.</p> <p>Ancient woodland is an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD and is an irreplaceable habitat as noted in NPPF paragraph 180 (c):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;”</i> <p>This proposal is likely to result in adverse deterioration of ancient woodland and it does not meet the test for exceptional reasons. This would have measurable adverse landscape and ecological impacts. On this basis the proposal is being recommended for refusal.</p>
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RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
08308	Outline Application	Conditionally Approved 30/10/1979
23796	Outline Application – Phase 4	Conditionally Approved 25/07/1985
31807	Terraced housing and parking	Conditionally Approved 18/01/1989
151733	Proposed erection of a two-storey side extension to dwelling	Not proceeded with
221128	Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension, single storey rear extension, two storey side extension, and change of use of amenity land to residential	Withdrawn 27/07/2022

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION	
CONSTRAINTS	Major Development Location Countryside Ancient Woodlands Contaminated Land Consultation Zone Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Local Nature Reserves Local Wildlife Site Nuclear Consultation Zone Public Open Space SSSI Impact Risk Zones Adjacent to TPO 38-1971

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Highways – No objections WBC Landscape and Trees – Recommend Refusal due to impact upon Ancient Woodland and Insufficient Tree Information. See Reason for Refusal 1 and 2. WBC Ecology – Recommend Refusal due to impact upon Ancient Woodland. See Reason for Refusal 3.
External
Woodland Trust – No comments received under this application (<i>comments received under 221128 with a recommendation for refusal see below in Landscape and Trees section</i>) Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust – No comments received Forestry Commission – As a Non-Ministerial Government Department, the Forestry Commission provide no opinion supporting or objecting to an application.

REPRESENTATIONS	
Woodley Town Council	<p>Do not recommend the application is refused however note the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development may not provide sufficient on-site/ off-road parking provisions <p><i>Officer comment: The Council's Highways Officer has raised no objections on the parking provision.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether this land was amenity land; regardless of whether the land forms part of the nature reserve, it was not built on during the initial development. The Committee reasoned that, if the land was originally intended to be amenity land and not to be built on, then the application should be refused, and the land remain as amenity land <p><i>Officer comment: These approved plans in the original approval (ref: 31807) appear to indicate that the land was allocated as amenity land. However, through the passage of time, this is no longer reflected on the ground as there is restricted public access and growth of the woodland.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst the land may not officially form part of the nature reserve, the area is home to wildlife and any development will impact negatively on this <p><i>Officer comment: The Council's Ecology Officer has recommended refusal on the proposal, and this is covered in the Ecology section of the report.</i></p>
Ward Member(s)	<p><u>Comments received by Councillor Keith Baker listed below:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the application The adjoining land is owned by Taylor Wimpey and would not be built on part of the Aldermoor's Nature Reserve. <p><i>Officer comment: Regardless of land ownership this part of land is part of woodland and is within the Ancient Woodland buffer zone.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adjoining land does not meet the definition of Woodland as defined by the UK Forestry Standard <p><i>Officer comment: The Council's Trees Officer has confirmed that the land is classified as Ancient Woodland, and this is confirmed on the Natural England Ancient Woodland register.</i></p>

	<p><i>See 'Landscape and Trees' section of the report for further consideration.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tree report confirms it has no detrimental effect on any tree as they are all too far away. <p><i>Officer comment: See 'Landscape and Trees' section of the report for further explanation of the anticipated impacts of the proposal.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The settlement boundary movement to accommodate this application would be quite minor and therefore on balance should be approved on a case-specific basis <p><i>Officer comment: This is discussed in the main body of the report.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a precedence where a resident of Cody Close has removed trees which were clearly in Aldermoor Nature Reserve in order to extend their boundary. This has been reported over the last few years to enforcement, but little has been done on it. <p><i>Officer comment: Whilst no address has been provided, each proposal is assessed on a case-by-case basis.</i></p>
Neighbours	<p><u>One neighbour comment of support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension would be appropriate addition to existing property and in keeping with local properties • The loss of land is minimal • Additional parking is provided

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework
National Design Guide
National Planning Practice Guidance

Core Strategy (CS)

CP1 – Sustainable Development
CP3 – General Principles for Development
CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
CP7 – Biodiversity
CP11 – Development in the Countryside

MDD Local Plan (MDD)

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
CC07 – Parking
CC09 – Development and Flood Risk
CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
TB21 – Landscape Character
TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING ISSUES

Site Description

1. The existing application site comprises of an end of terrace property within an existing housing development dating from the late 1980s within settlement limits (Woodley). The site benefits from landscaping at the front. The surrounding properties are of a similar scale and design. The additional land that is included as part of the application adjoins to the northwest. It falls within designated countryside. It is heavily wooded to the west.

Proposal

2. The proposal seeks permission for change of use of amenity land to residential to facilitate the erection of a single storey front extension, single storey rear extension and two storey side extension at 52 Mannock Way.
3. The dimensions of the proposed extensions are presented in the below table.

	Depth (Metres)	Width (Metres)	Height (Metres)
Front extension	0.70m	2m	3m
Rear extension	1.1m	4.3m	3.3m
Two storey side extension	9.4m	4.4m	7.3m

Principle of Development

4. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5. In this case, the property itself is located within settlement limits however the proposed extension would be location in designated countryside and therefore is subject to policy CP11 of the Core Strategy, which seeks to maintain the high quality of the rural environments as well as to protect the separate identity of settlements.
6. Policy CP11 states proposals outside of development limits are not normally permitted where they result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form, or footprint of the original building. In principle the proposed extensions to the existing property are considered acceptable in terms of mass and scale such that it would not have an adverse impact upon the openness of the countryside.
7. Part of the submitted proposal seeks permission for the change of use of amenity land to residential, whilst it is a relatively narrow part of land, the area of land is Ancient Woodland. The impact arising from the incursion into the Ancient Woodland forms the basis for refusal of the application, as detailed in the 'Landscaping' and 'Ecology' sections of the report.

Character of the Area

8. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design.
9. In this case the additional built form is not unacceptable on wider character grounds, which is discussed in further detail below.

Extensions

10. The Borough Design Guide states that any alteration and extension to an existing building should be well designed, respond positively to the original building, contribute positively to the local character, and relate well to neighbouring properties. Materials should maintain a coherent street character.
11. *Two storey side extension* - The Borough Design Guide states that two storey extensions should appear subordinate to the original dwelling house by having a ridge height substantially lower than that of the original dwelling and that for properties in formal suburbia, whether detached, semi-detached, or short terraces, the rhythm of buildings and the gaps between them along the street frontage is often important to the character of the area.
12. The proposed two storey side extension would project forward of the existing frontage by 80cm to align with the proposed porch. This is contrary to the guidelines in the Borough Design Guide which aims to ensure that it is setback behind the front elevation. However, it would be set down from the ridge of the main roof and set in from the boundary which adjoins the woodland by 1m, this would adhere with the minimum requirement in the Borough Design Guide. The width of the extension measures 4m, which is relatively consistent and not appreciably different from the width of the existing terrace (4.4m). Accordingly, it would remain subordinate to the main dwellinghouse without disrupting the consistency and rhythm in the row of terraces, there is no detrimental harm to the character and appearance of the wider street scene.

13. *Single storey front extension* - The proposed single storey front extension has a depth of 0.7m and height of 3m. It is a modest addition to the front of the dwellinghouse. Due to its design, location, and appropriate height, it would not result in detrimental harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the wider streetscene.
14. *Single storey rear extension* - The proposed single storey rear extension would be 1.1 metres deep and 3.3m high, it is considered this would be a modest addition to the property and would not be readily visible from the public realm. Therefore, the extension would not result in detrimental harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the wider streetscene.
15. The proposal would include the extension of car parking to the front of the site. This would result in additional hardstanding to the street, however the majority of this section of Mannock Way is heavily paved with modest pockets of greenery to the front driveways and as such there would not be a detrimental impact upon the streetscene.

Neighbour Amenity

16. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity.

Overlooking

17. R15 of the Borough Design Guide requires retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms with separation of 10m to the street and 22m to the rear. R23 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that the side walls must not contain windows especially on first floor level.
18. The proposed extensions will maintain the recommended separation distances to the street and to the rear, therefore no loss of privacy is to occur to the properties across the road or to the rear. A new first floor side window will be installed, this will serve an en-suite bathroom. As it would look onto the woodland, no issue is raised.

Loss of Light

19. R18 of the Borough Design Guide aims to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties, with no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties.
20. Due to the position of the proposed two storey side extension and single storey rear extension no loss of light is to occur upon the habitable rooms of the neighbouring sites at nos. 51 and 53 Mannock Way.
21. The proposal will maintain a 12-metre separation distance to the rear boundary and as such no loss of light to property at the rear no.35 Mannock Way is envisaged.

Overbearing and Sense of Enclosure

22. R16 of the Borough Design Guide requires separation distances of 1.0 metre to the side boundaries and 11 metres from rear boundaries.

23. The proposal will comply with the minimum 11 metre set back from the rear boundary and no objections are raised on this aspect. The proposed single storey rear extension will be set in by 4 metres from the side boundary with no.51 Mannock Way therefore no overbearing impact will occur to the adjoining site.
24. Due to the orientation of the two-storey side extension and its relationship with the adjoining properties at nos. 51 and 53 Mannock Way there would be no significant overbearing impact upon these occupiers.

Amenity Space

25. R16 of the SPD requires a minimum depth of 11m for rear gardens and a 1m setback from the site boundary to allow access thereto.
26. The proposal will comply with this requirement with the remaining amenity space being 12 metres in depth. Although the proposal fails to achieve a 1 metre set back from the site boundary for access purposes the property is set along a row terraces where the properties typically access the gardens via the rear.

Landscape and Trees

27. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local aims to protect green infrastructure networks, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping. Policy TB21 states that proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape. Proposals must also demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment including landscape quality, sensitivity, and key issues.
28. The site is located adjacent to the large woodland of Alder Moors which is protected by a TPO (38/1971). This is also designated as Ancient Woodland, Local Wildlife Site and Local Nature Reserve. The woodland contributes a significant character to the Alder Moor Local Wildlife Site and Nature Reserve.
29. Government Standing Advice states that Ancient and Veteran trees should have a buffer zone of a minimum of 15m from the development proposed. This application brings development further into the buffer zone between 7-9 metres and therefore is contrary to the Government Standing Advice
30. The site is located between Woodley Settlement Area and falls partly within the countryside. It is located in Landscape Character Area J4 Woodley – Earley Settled and Farmed Clay. The Landscape Strategy is;
- *to conserve and enhance the open areas within the urban conurbation and character of the landscape between settlements; the rural interface and buffer to the more rural area of the Thames floodplain to the north, and the River Loddon to the east'*
 - *The key aspects to be enhanced and restored are the wildlife habitats and areas of remnant historic parkland. In particular there are opportunities for creation of woodland habitats to link and connect existing woodlands...'*

31. The strategy is clearly focussed on the enhancement of landscape buffers between settlements and the creation of new woodland habitats to link with the existing.
32. The proposals will result in reducing the gap between built form and the edge of the Ancient Woodland.
33. The proposed extension extends beyond the settlement edge and beyond the existing common boundary of houses on Mannock Way with the Alder Moor a Local Nature Reserve and Wildlife Site. The houses along this common edge mostly have their rear gardens backing onto the Nature Reserve, although some are side onto the boundary such as the site itself. The nature of the established common boundary is that it is stepped forwards and backward from the edge of the Nature Reserve.
34. Mannock Way seems to be constructed on a slight ridge that drops down into a small, wooded valley (into Alder Moor Nature Reserve) to the north-west with a stream at its low point. Alder Moor and the ASNW therein represents a high-quality landscape both for biodiversity and recreation.
35. The settlement edge / common boundary against the Nature Reserve and Ancient Woodland is for the most part inaccessible from the woodland side and the wooded character extends right up against the boundary in varying degrees of density and age structure signifying a successional woodland character and priority habitat.

Arboricultural Information

36. A Tree Survey has been submitted with the application – which includes a Tree Survey and Schedule, a Tree Roots Constraints Plan and a Shade Constraints Plan. The report relates to Stage A Feasibility Studies.
37. The Tree Report does not include the proposed development in relation to the trees and their root protection areas. This information would normally be expected within a wider Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) which expands on the Tree Report including Stages B, C, D which identify the site constraints/development in relation to root protection areas, and tree retention and removal, and tree protection information.
38. The Tree Report indicates there are protected trees nearby but there is no mention of the character of the vegetation covering the rest of the survey area in the Tree Report. It is possible there are level changes that may affect the development and the positioning of scaffolding for the construction phase in relation to trees – although this may possibly be covered by a condition, the Council's Landscape Officer states this would be required prior to a decision to know that the development can be built with no additional impacts on trees or vegetation in the event that the proposals met with policy.
39. The proposals will result in the loss of a proportion of the herbaceous, scrub layer as well as changes to the soil horizon and potential seedbank of the Ancient Woodland which is not shown in the submitted information. The development is located in the ancient woodland 'buffer zone' which is protected area 15 metres from the edge woodland canopy.

40. The proposals are also contrary to Policy CC03 d) that requires that existing trees on or close to the site are retained and protected, in that insufficient information has been submitted to fully comprehend the existing site character, extent and type of vegetation other than trees over 75mm stem diameter. There is no information about the levels on the layout drawings
41. On this basis, the Council's Landscape Officer recommends refusal on the proposed development as it would be located within the buffer zone for Ancient woodland contrary to the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and Policies CC03 and TB21.
42. Whilst comments have not been received under this application by the Woodland Trust, comments were provided under the withdrawn application ref: 221128 in which they stated any development resulting in loss or deterioration of Ancient Woodland must consider all possible measures to ensure avoidance of adverse impact and raised objections on the proposal due to the indirect impacts upon ancient woodland. No such measures have been undertaken and this reinforces the reason for refusal.

Ecology

43. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy states sites designated as importance for nature conservation at an international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. Policy TB23 of the MDD required the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider greener infrastructure network.

Bats

44. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats) report (Urban Tree Experts, ref: SPH/ET/PEA-22/03.05, May 2022) has been submitted in support of the application. The Council's Ecology Officer states the survey has been carried out to an appropriate standard to consider the impact of the proposal on protected species.
45. The survey indicates that the existing building has negligible bat roost potential and that there is no evidence to indicate presence of a resting place of a protected species. The Council's Ecology Officer raises no objection as it is unlikely to adversely affect the local conservation status of this protected species group.

Ancient Woodland and Local Nature Reserve

46. The proposed extension would be within 15 metres of an area of ancient woodland within Aldermoor's Local Nature Reserve. Ancient woodland is considered an irreplaceable habitat.
47. The standing advice from the government recognises that buffer zones to ancient woodland could consist of scrub or some other complementary habitat. If the current buffer zone is a mixture of shrubs and bramble, then this is a good transition between existing development and the ancient woodland in ecological terms. In this case the proposal would not result in a good transition due to the built form.
48. The proposal is likely to result in deterioration of ancient woodland irreplaceable habitat and does not meet the test for exceptional reasons. Therefore, the Council's

Ecology Officer recommends the proposal for refusal as it contrary to national and local planning policies.

Highways Access and Parking Provision

49. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off-street car parking standards. The proposal will result in an increase in habitable rooms necessitating an additional car space. The existing driveway is able to accommodate an additional parking space with a total of three spaces compliance with Policy CC07. No objections are raised by the Council's Highways Officer.

Community Infrastructure Levy

50. The proposal is not a CIL liable development because the extension is less than 100m² in area.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

APPENDIX 1 Reasons for refusal

1. Incursion into Ancient Woodland

The proposed development would result in an unacceptable incursion into the buffer zone of the designated Ancient Woodland, Nature Reserve and TPO protected woodland, resulting in a failure to protect or enhance valued landscapes. Therefore, the development is contrary to Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 policies CC03 and TB21.

2. Insufficient Tree Information

In the absence of sufficient Agricultural details, the Council cannot satisfactorily conclude that the proposal would not result in an unreasonable harm to existing trees on or close to the site which are retained and protected. This is contrary to Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Core Strategy 2010 policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

3. Loss of irreplaceable habitat

The proposal is likely to result in deterioration of Ancient Woodland which is defined as an irreplaceable habitat and would not meet the test for exceptional reasons under Paragraph 180c of the National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore, the development is contrary to Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Core Strategy 2010 policy CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 policy TB23.

Informatives:

1. This decision is in respect of the drawings and plans numbered Location Plan, Block Plan, Floor Plans and Elevations received by the Local Planning Authority on 29/07/2022.
2. The Council engages with all applicants in a positive and proactive way through specific pre-application enquiries and the detailed advice available on the Council's website. On this particular application, no pre-application advice was sought before the application was submitted. As the proposal was clearly contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan, it was considered that further discussions would be unnecessary and costly for all parties.

APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Comments

PLANNING REF : 222321
PROPERTY ADDRESS : The Oakwood Centre
: Headley Road, Woodley, Wokingham
: RG5 4JZ
SUBMITTED BY : Woodley Town Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 07/09/2022

COMMENTS:

The Planning & Community Committee have considered the resubmission of this application and, whilst they still did not recommend that the development be refused, they noted the following concerns:

- The development may not provide sufficient on-site / off-road parking provisions; whilst it is noted the family have two small children now, when they grow up, or should the family sell the home and another family move in, the parking provision may be deemed to be insufficient.
- The Committee questioned whether this land was amenity land; regardless of whether the land forms part of the nature reserve, it was not built on during the initial development. The Committee reasoned that, if the land was originally intended to be amenity land and not to be built on, then the application should be refused and the land remain as amenity land.
- Whilst the land may not officially form part of the nature reserve, the area is home to wildlife and any development will impact negatively on this.

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