

Lisa

Following receipt of further information from the agent, and my subsequent site visit on 18/09/2024, I have supplementary comments on this application as follows:

Summary: previous objections have now been overcome, and there would be no loss of or deterioration of Ancient Woodland and no significant adverse impact on existing important trees, whilst enhancements to the Ancient Woodland buffer zone could be secured through appropriate conditions.

The agent sent with his e-mail on 16/09/2024 a sketch plan indicating a potential slight re-positioning of the proposed new outbuilding/car port, approximately 2.5m further to the west than shown on the application plans originally submitted.

I have attached with this e-mail my own sketch plan showing the approximate potential new position of the outbuilding along with existing outbuildings/remaining floorslabs and my observations of the extent of existing areas of tarmac/concrete hardstanding and long-compacted unmade ground. While my sketch plan is not precisely measured/to scale, I am confident it gives a realistic and reasonably accurate representation of these features/structures, enabling the relationship between the proposed new building and the existing buildings/hard surfaced areas to be assessed. This sketch plan may be usefully viewed in conjunction with the earlier sketch plan attached with my e-mail of 16/09/2024 showing the extent of Ancient Woodland, its advised minimum 15m buffer zone, and Root Protection Areas of nearby significant trees T1 – T4 inclusive.

From the sketch plan attached with this present e-mail, it can be seen that the northern part of the proposed new outbuilding would be within the footprint of the remaining floorslab and base walls of existing “Building A”, the south-west corner of the proposed new outbuilding would be within the footprint of the remaining floorslab of “Building D”, and the main central part of the proposed new outbuilding would be on existing intervening concrete slab. A very narrow sliver of the footprint of the proposed new outbuilding would lie to the east of the existing hardsurfaced area, and whilst this sliver is also partly within the RPA of tree T4 it is such a small proportion of the RPA and immediately adjacent to the edges of existing structures and slabs. I consider that in practice there would be negligible adverse impact on the roots system of T4 arising from the installation of a new slab for the proposed outbuilding in the position now indicated.

The outer north-east corner of the proposed outbuilding footprint position would just lie within the identified Ancient Woodland, but this part of the footprint is anyway within the substantial slab footprint of existing Building A.

As noted in my previous e-mail of 16/09/2024, the proposed extensions and alterations to the existing dwelling would have no impact on existing trees, would be completely outside the Ancient Woodland boundary, and (apart from a fraction at the north-east corner of the proposed rear extension which is anyway on existing hardsurfacing) would be outside the Ancient Woodland buffer zone.

In conclusion, I consider that there would after all be negligible or no direct harmful impact on any of these 4 mature Oak trees, and there is no semi-natural vegetation/habitat structure beneath or around these trees in the immediate vicinity of the proposed developments. Therefore I am satisfied there would be no loss of or deterioration of Ancient Woodland arising from the proposed development and therefore no direct conflict with national or local policy relating to development and Ancient Woodland.

In terms of guidance for development and Ancient Woodland, the proposed outbuilding would still be located within the advised 15m buffer zone, and by implication would introduce (or technically reinforce, as the “introduction” arguably occurred many years ago) domestic curtilage within the buffer zone which is in conflict with the guidance for protecting and managing the buffer zone. However, looking at the actual effects in this instance, the part of the buffer zone which the proposed outbuilding footprint would occupy is anyway almost totally occupied by existing buildings/slabs/hardstandings and otherwise by a narrow sliver of lawn grass, so the outbuilding would be no worse impact on buffer zone than the existing situation. Furthermore, if the proposed development proceeds the applicant would remove larger total footprint of existing buildings from within the buffer zone and this, together with subsequent planting of semi-natural vegetation, could be secured by condition in the event that planning permission is granted, thereby actually resulting in more and better semi-natural habitat within the buffer zone than under current circumstances.

I therefore confirm that as a result of on-site investigation and subject to revised positioning of the proposed outbuilding and the imposition of suitable conditions to secure temporary tree protection measures during construction and implementation and subsequent management of a landscaping scheme sensitive and sympathetic to the aims of Ancient Woodland buffer zone guidance, I no longer object to this application.

Requested Conditions in the event of the granting of planning permission

1. Before the commencement of development (including any demolition, site clearance, site stripping, site establishment, and formation/improvement of temporary/permanent access) full details of all tree protection measures shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA. Such details shall include specification and positions for temporary tree protection barriers, full construction specification and installation method for a no-dig cellular confinement system (EcoCell or similar, as noted in the Arboricultural Impact Report submitted in support of the application) for areas of vehicle access to the proposed new outbuilding hereby approved where these are within the Root Protection Areas of existing trees, together with an arboricultural method statement setting out working methods and special protection measures for the avoidance of harm to existing trees on and adjacent to the application site arising from demolition and construction operations. Such method statement and protection measures shall specifically include details and timeline sequences to ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to protect trees and in particular their root systems from the initial outset of any demolition or construction activity. Thereafter, the development shall be constructed only in full accordance with details approved under this condition.
2. Before the development hereby approved is first brought into use, the four existing outbuildings shall be fully and permanently removed from site, including all constructed bases, foundations and compacted hardcore sub-bases supporting these buildings, and their footprint areas restored to unmade ground suitable for establishment of vegetation in accordance with a landscaping scheme to be submitted, approved and implemented under this planning permission, other than where any such areas are to accommodate extensions, new buildings and hardsurfaced areas in accordance with the plans approved under this planning permission.
3. Within 2 months after the commencement of development (including any demolition, site clearance, site stripping, site establishment, and formation or improvement of site access) a comprehensive landscaping scheme shall be submitted to the LPA for approval. Such a scheme shall in particular make provision for the establishment and development of complementary semi-natural habitat within a minimum 15m wide buffer strip to the existing Ancient Woodland lying along the north-east and east edge of the application site. The submitted landscaping scheme shall include full details of all proposed new trees, shrubs and other planting, giving specification for species, positions, planting sizes and numbers/densities of all new planting, along with an outline of establishment maintenance and future habitat management. The landscaping scheme once approved shall be fully implemented before the end of the first available dormant season (November to February inclusive) following completion of the development hereby approved. The trees and shrubs etc planted in accordance with this landscaping scheme shall be properly maintained for a period of 5 years following planting. Any plants which within this period are damaged, become diseased, die, are removed or otherwise fail to establish shall be replaced during the next suitable season.

Steve Massey Arboricultural Officer

Development Services

High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

www.highpeak.gov.uk | Follow HPBC on [X \(Formerly Twitter\)](#) | [Facebook](#)

www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk | Follow SMDC on [X \(Formerly Twitter\)](#) | [Facebook](#)

