

North Hertfordshire Council

Tree Officer comments

File Ref: 26/01503/FPH
Date: 31/07/2026
Planning Officer: Vicki Wood
Address: 17 Hodwell, Ashwell, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5QQ
Subject: Full Permission Householder : Two storey side/rear extension and single storey side extension following demolition of existing garage/workshop and removal of chimney. Covered front porch and alterations to fenestration. Installation of vehicular and pedestrian gates, brick piers, brick boundary walls and timber fencing. Erection of detached shed, external rendering and cladding. Soft and hard landscaping works.

1.0 Policy position: NPPF / Local Plan / Supplementary Planning Document

- 1.1 Paragraph 136 of the Achieving well-designed places chapter in the current Framework, addresses the integration of trees within new development. Draft NPPF Policy N3 (December 2025) proposes that trees in new development is included within the natural environment section to ensure consistency and alignment with wider environmental objectives.
- 1.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Chapter 11 deals with the natural environment.

Policy NE2: Landscape Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that: a) Respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management; b) Do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this; c) Are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and d) Have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping

2.0 Observations

Trees

- 2.1 No tree survey has been submitted with the application, but there appears to be trees both within the curtilage of the site and on third party properties that could be potentially negatively impacted by the proposed development.

“Construction works often exert pressures on existing trees, as do changes in their immediate environment following the construction. A tree that has taken many decades to reach maturity can be damaged irreparably in a few minutes by actions that might be unwitting, negligent or wilful. The early provision of physical protection from damage is therefore critical”(BS5837:2012)

- 2.2 The submitted plan locates two trees within the site close to the north-western boundary corner, where the new proposed 1.75m Boundary Wall and Potting Shed are located. Construction of these structures is likely to negatively impact the root systems of nearby trees as excavations for footings will potentially encounter large roots which will then be subject to severance or damage. The proposed Potting Shed is depicted on the submitted plan as being located directly under and between two trees, so will likely intrude into their Root Protection Areas (RPAs). This intrusion may exceed the maximum 20% unsurfaced ground as recommended in BS5837:2012, which would be detrimental to the trees.
- 2.3 The submitted plan appears to show the replacement garage extension as being slightly offset from the original existing footprint, with the new south-eastern corner set back from what is assumed to be the position of the existing retaining wall mentioned in the neighbours comments. There is also the addition of the Snug extension which intrudes into the area retained by the exiting wall, close to third party trees.
- 2.4 The presence of third party tree roots is anticipated to be minimal to the north side of the retaining wall and beneath the existing garage foot print, however intrusion into the bank behind the retaining wall towards the neighbours boundary to the south, for the new Snug extension, is likely to encounter tree roots. Tree roots may also be affected by the demolition of of the existing garage. If the incursion is minimal and encountered roots are cut back and protected in accordance with recommended arboricultural guidance it may be possible to keep the effect of the works on the third party trees to a minimum and enable their retention without significant harm.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 I have no arboricultural objections to the proposed development however the site is located within a Conservation Area and it appears that some trees will be negatively affected by the proposed development. Without a tree survey it is not possible to fully establish the RPAs or the extent of impact on retained trees, both within the curtilage of the site and in neighbouring properties within influencing distance of construction. However, it is likely consideration will need to be given to appropriate construction methods to ensure impact to retained trees is kept to a minimum and suitable measures should be put in place to protect retained trees prior to the start and for the duration of works.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 If consent is to be granted, to ensure retained trees both within the curtilage of the site and on third party properties are afforded adequate protection during the construction I recommend that prior to the commencement of any works the applicant seeks professional arboricultural advice and submits to the council for approval an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations. This should include details of all relevant tree protection and construction methods to be used in close proximity to retained trees. This can be secured by condition.

Reason:

To prevent damage to or destruction of trees to be retained on the site in the interests of the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality, and to comply with Policy NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031