



28th November, 2023
Our Ref: AR/4090-L4/jq

Ms O. Jones,
Planning Officer,
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By e-mail only

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Copy to: Mr S Kifle [REDACTED]

Woodbury, 28 Sandhurst Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire RG45 7HS
Re-positioned garage - BFC Ref: 21/00249/FUL

Dear Olivia,

I visited the site at Mr Kifle's invitation following the installation of the garage base in a position which differs from that which has consent. I have attached a plan showing the current site layout, along with vehicle tracking and the modified gating arrangement at Appendix A.

The entire planning process (primarily to extend the house) and commencement of construction was fraught with difficulties and the impact upon Mr Kifle and his family was a source of considerable worry and stress - he is a householder who had no prior familiarity with the planning process. (The initial consent was put at risk by the drive construction method proposed by another, the cost of which was wholly disproportionate and would have stymied the project.) I was instructed to assist and with the co-operation of your colleagues a satisfactory scheme was agreed.

This situation arose following a discussion with the builder in which the vehicle manoeuvring geometry of the garage and car port was re-evaluated given that there was insufficient space to allow for a three-point turn enabling entrance to and exit from the site in forward gear. (Sandhurst Road is the High Street and main through-road for the town). He discussed the practicalities of this with his builder and they agreed that the garage and car port footprints be moved further forward toward the road frontage so as to provide three-point turning space, and their footprints combined to provide a single coherent structure.

At this stage the prospect of making an application was daunting and he and his family desperately needed a break to collect their thoughts. As a consequence to the discussions his builder understood that this alteration was to proceed. Mr Kifle wants to make it perfectly clear that this was not the fault of his builder. He does not recall *verbatim* a conversation that amounted to an instruction, but clearly and entirely in good faith the builder went ahead with it.

On Mr Kifle and his family's return the base and side walls had been installed in the position they discussed, as shown at Appendix A attached. He immediately ceased the work.

This is a situation where the only course of action is to submit a retrospective planning application for the amendment to the garage and drive design.

In the meantime Mr Kifle asked that I advise him as to whether or not the modified layout would be acceptable in arboricultural terms. In preparation for my site visit I asked that trial holes be dug to investigate the rooting depth of the subject oaks.

The trial holes' positions are marked at Appendix A and photographs I took of them are at Appendix B. These show the friable coarse-grained soil (Camberley Sand Formation) and very few roots. This suggests that the root systems extend relatively deep. This is consistent with the intense surfacing and construction in the trees' immediate vicinity, and it is clear that the soil has been disturbed in the upper horizons. This is evident from the two (redundant) perforated plastic pipes present, and the build-up of the soil level as indicated in photographs 2 and 3 (Appendix B) of Trial Hole 2. Photograph 3 in particular shows old tie bars in the soil and a horizontal root below.

Photograph 1 (Appendix B) shows fibrous roots below the upper soil about halfway down the hole.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the front garden soil level has been raised or replaced in the past and allied with the historical use for parking, the oaks' root systems are lower in the soil than one might expect in an open-grown, undisturbed site.

I understand that the floor slab that has been installed is about 65 centimetres in thickness and is proud of the adjacent soil surface by some 8 centimetres (photograph 1 Appendix B) - this is to allow for the No-Dig drive surface level to match that of the garage floor (allowing for a surface scrape to clear loose material). If one takes account of the surface build-up (photographs 2 and 3 Appendix B) of approximately 25 centimetres, then the intrusion of the slab into the original underlying soil is some 30-35 centimetres. These can only be approximations, but the conclusion is that the oaks will not be subjected to any significantly detrimental harm.

I doubt that this analysis was considered when the floor slab was laid, but fortunately one can say colloquially that they "*have got away with it*".

However there is another factor in that the physiological condition of oak c is very poor. I have included four photographs at Appendix C, showing that it is a subservient specimen (photograph 4) with a heavily asymmetric crown with sparse foliage (photographs 5, 6 and 7). The tree has very little landscape presence and in terms of the Tree Preservation Order has little public amenity value. In fact if it were removed the impact upon the street scene would be negligible.

The advantage of removing it (with the stump killed with 'eco-plugs') would be to remove such root competition as there is, with a minor, but beneficial nutrient release from the composting roots.

In conclusion, although the altered garage position will need to be the subject of a retrospective planning application, this position will have little material change to the visual impact of the consented scheme. The impact of the garage slab installation in its revised position upon the nearby oaks will for the reasons I have explained not cause any significant negative effects. The removal of the ailing subservient oak c will not have any appreciable visual impact and will provide a minor benefit to the rooting environment of the other oaks.

In terms of road safety, the revised position of the garage will provide the turning geometry within the site to enable the entrance to and exit from the site in forward gear. This is without doubt a desirable factor on the busy main road.

On this basis a retrospective planning application is to be made, including the removal of oak c under the Tree Preservation Order.

This letter will be included in that application, but if you have any questions in the meantime I would be happy to answer them.

Regards,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Jim Quaife

Attachments:

Appendix A - Site Plan and tree protection details (one page A4)

Appendix B - Photographs - Trial Pits (one page A4)

Appendix C - Photographs - The oak trees (one page A4)

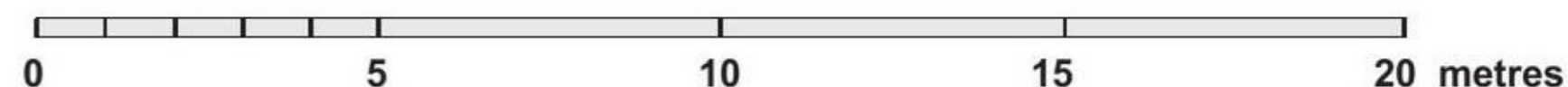
Quaife Woodlands Arboricultural Survey AR/4090g-m/jq

Woodbury, 28 Sandhurst Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire RG45 7HS

Site Plan - Proposed Garage and Drive Extension

Scale 1:200 approximately @ A4

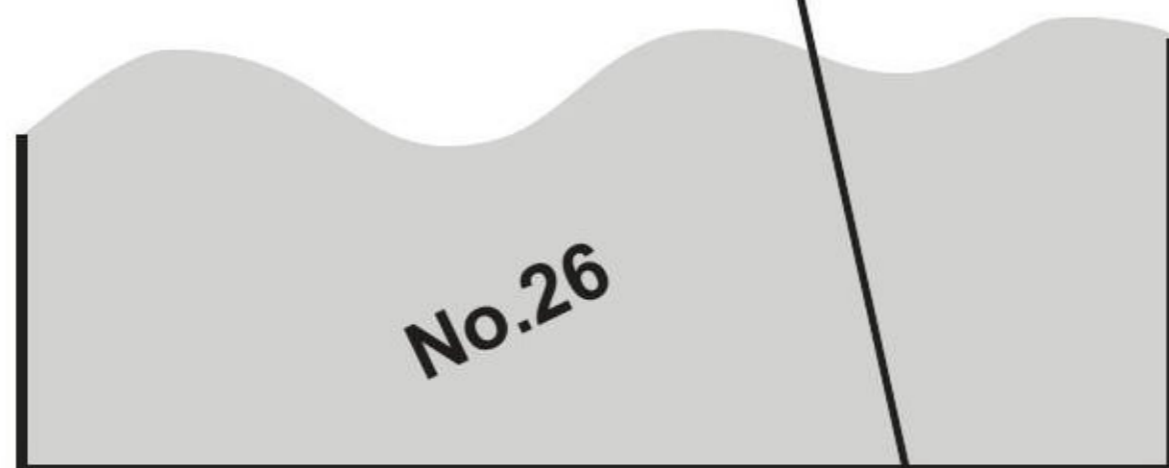
28th November 2023



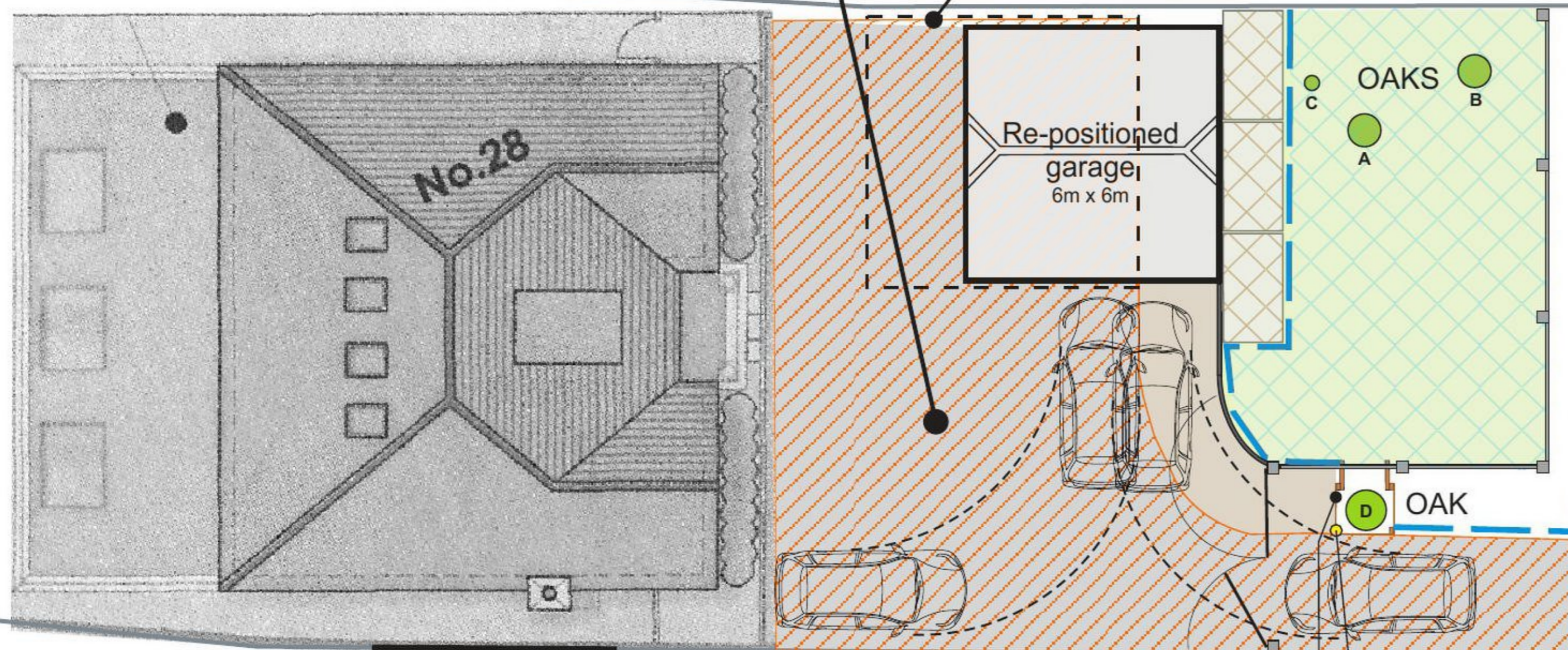
Scaling accuracy is sufficient for planning purposes but this drawing should not be used for construction
This plan is drawn in colour so monochrome reproduction may be unreliable



Area of consented hard surfacing
21/00249/FUL

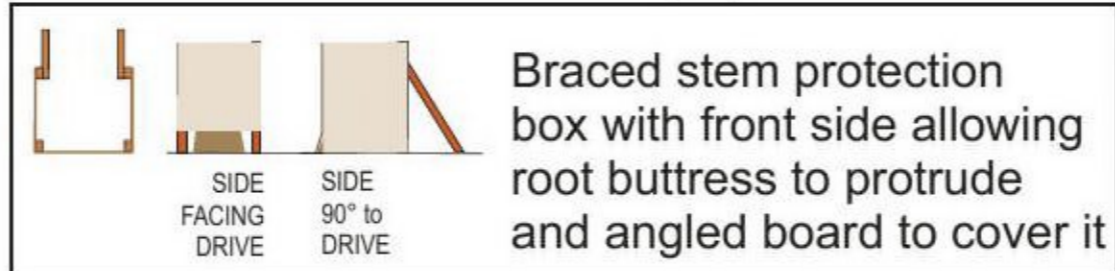
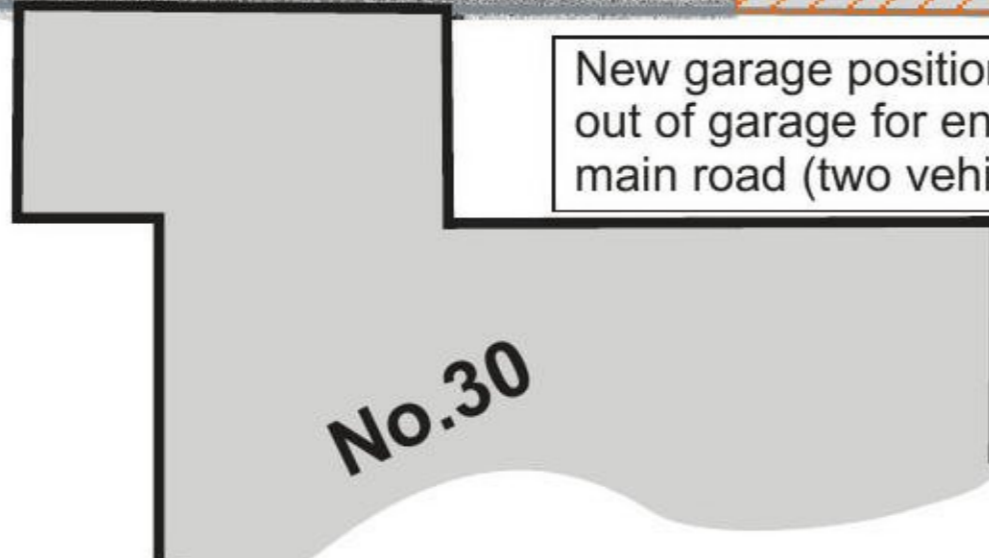


Consented garage footprint



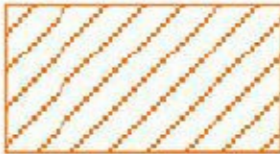
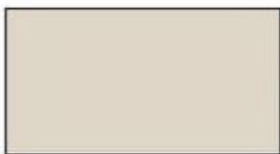

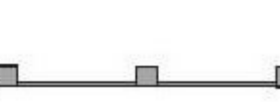




New garage position allows for 3-point turns in and out of garage for entry and exit in forward gear to the main road (two vehicles won't move simultaneously!)

Steel bollard with luminous top to protect the oak



Braced stem protection box with front side allowing root buttress to protrude and angled board to cover it

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ROOT PROTECTION AREA IS THE ENTIRE AREA OF THIS PROPOSAL

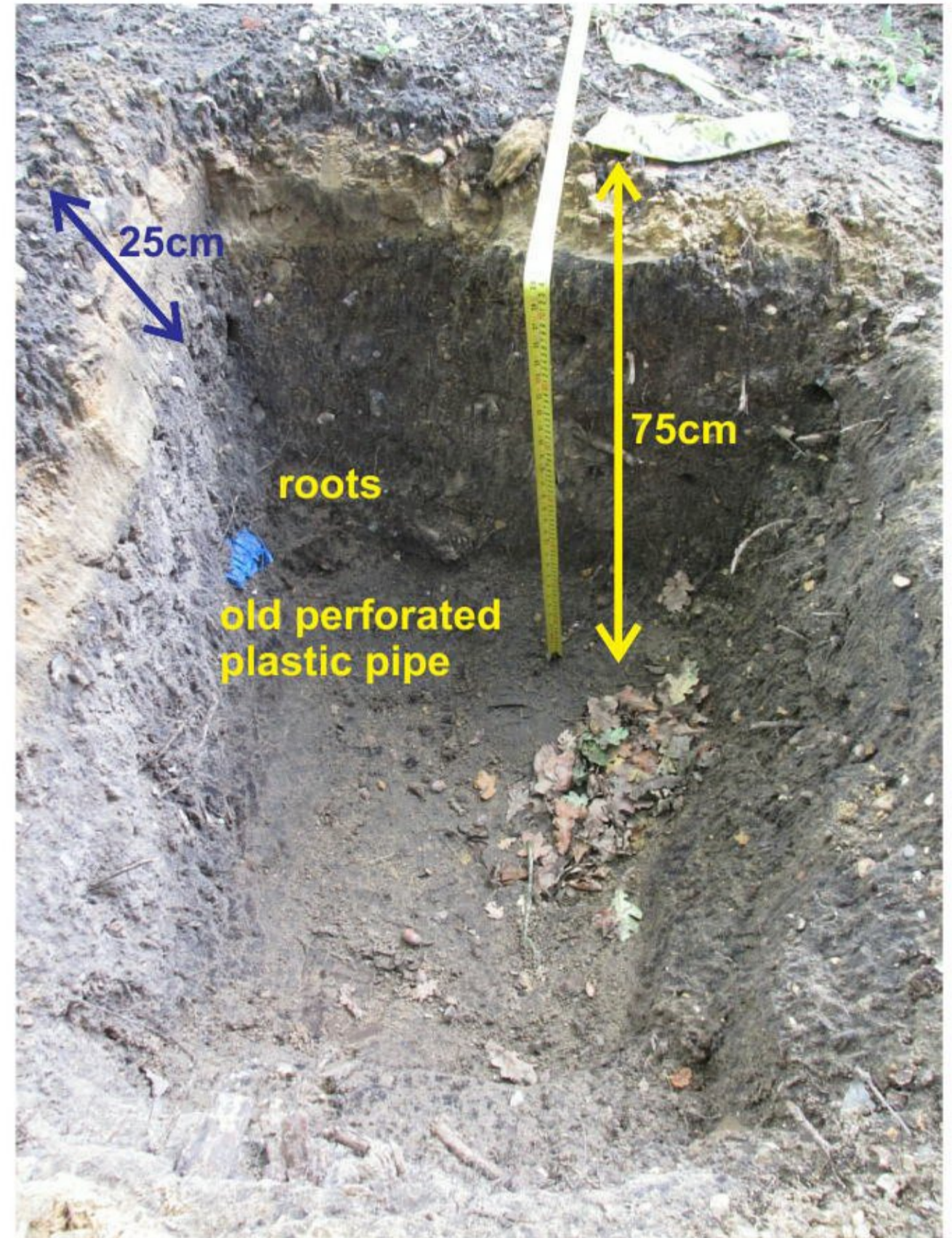
-  Consented No-Dig Surface
-  Proposed No-Dig Drive
-  Proposed Garage
-  Proposed Garden Wall
-  Oak Trees
-  Tree Protection Fence Appendix B
-  Construction Exclusion Zone
-  GRP Ground Protection sheets Appendix D

SANDHURST ROAD

Photographs taken on 29th September 2023



Photograph 1. Trial Hole 1



Photograph 2. Trial Hole 2 looking away from the oaks



Photograph 3. Trial Hole 2 looking toward the oaks