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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2020

**by N Holdsworth MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 28 October 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/W/20/3252813**

**Black Bushes, White Hill Lane, Bletchingley, RH1 4QY**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr D Bradley of Southgold Limited against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
  - The application Ref TA/2019/2065, dated 26 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 April 2020
  - The development proposed is retention of and extension to access track.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Reasons

2. The partially built tarmacked access track encroaches into Ancient Woodland<sup>1</sup> and the protected semi-natural buffer around it. The evidence before me does not demonstrate with certainty that a similar track has always existed in this position, and the encroachment appears to be greater than that authorised by previous planning permissions. Activity on the track would be likely to disturb the ecology in this irreplaceable habitat, to the detriment of trees and wildlife, potentially including protected species.
3. Planning conditions could secure the various suggested ecological compensation and enhancement measures, and arboricultural maintenance, resulting in improvements to biodiversity. The track would support agricultural activity by improving vehicular access to the site, improving safety and supporting economic activity. However these benefits do not outweigh the harm identified. They do not, even cumulatively, amount to the wholly exceptional reasons required by the National Planning Policy Framework where development involving the loss of or deterioration of ancient woodland is proposed.
4. The proposal therefore conflicts with the development plan, particularly policies DP19 of the Tandridge Local Plan (2014) and CSP17 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy (2008) which seek to sustain wildlife and avoid harm to Ancient Woodland. There are no other considerations that outweigh this finding and the appeal should be dismissed.

*Neil Holdsworth*

INSPECTOR

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<sup>1</sup> As shown hatched in green on plans numbered 19/54/01 and 19/54/02