

Parking the Ferret

A Ferret (or any vehicle with a fluid flywheel) will not hold in gear unless the engine is running. The Ferret does not have a mechanical clutch: the transmission drive-train is not locked up when the engine is not ticking over.

You *must* use the handbrake/parking brake if you're at rest without the engine running.

Even a seemingly 'flat' surface - a 2% slope - is sufficient for the vehicle to roll. This is not because of the Wilson pre-select gearbox, it is a result of having a fluid flywheel, so 'leaving it in gear' for stopping or parking purposes does nothing. The fluid needs to be in motion to engage.

If you leave the Ferret in gear without the handbrake on, the vehicle *will* roll away because the fluid in the flywheel does not initially turn fast enough for the gearbox to resist the roll.

I use military chocks, NSN 2540-99-5082646 (The no handle design NSN 2540-99-2127006 is also suitable) and home-made chocks cut from English Oak. The oak was chosen because it is a dense hardwood: very heavy and long-lasting. The slope on the grey oak wooden chock shown below is 45°. This is too steep to hold the wheel optimally. The opportunity came to make some longer chocks from wood offcuts for ceiling joists, with a shallower 30° slope to trap the wheel better. Three offcuts were glued and bolted together, primed and painted as shown in the fourth far right-hand picture. These 4 lb softwood pine chocks were four times lighter than the oak chocks, so are ideal for keeping as a pair in the vehicle. The width of these wooden chocks is 5-¾ inches, allowing them to be stored in the long side-bin. The galvanised steel MOD chocks are and are kept in the garage. I've primed and painted these chocks yellow so they are visible and less likely to be forgotten when in place.



Leaving the parking brake on and the Ferret in gear

Some people advise not using the parking brake when stationary on the flat. They say the handbrake/parking brake (or more precisely, the actual wheel slave cylinders and brake shoes) might seize. This is only likely to happen after a considerable time has elapsed.

The same people also advise leaving the Ferret when parked with a gear engaged to prevent the main spring in the gearbox from becoming weak. It is true that with the gear change pedal left down, in neutral, for a long time, then the GCP pedal actuating spring becomes weakened, but this will take a very long time to happen: e.g. over-winter storage, not parking up while at a show or down at the shops.