

LAND WEST OF KINGFISHER GROVE THREE MILE CROSS

ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT & METHOD STATEMENT

for

SOVEREIGN
NETWORK
GROUP (SNG).



Ecology
Archaeology
Arboriculture
Landscape Architecture

Written By:	A Bigg
Checked By:	H Pinn
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. ACD Environmental was instructed in June 2024 to prepare the following Arboricultural Report by Sovereign Network Group (SNG). Reference should be made to the appended Tree Protection Plan (PRI24594-03).
- 1.2. This report has been compiled to support a Reserved Matters Planning Application (RM) for the construction of 49 dwellings, with all units to be classed as affordable housing. With new publicly accessible open space, and access from Grazeley Road. The original Outline Planning Application included for means of access, with all other matters reserved, to be dealt with by RM Application package.

- 1.3. The report has been compiled to discharge Arboricultural Planning Condition

13) No development shall take place until an Arboricultural Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, this shall include details of existing trees and hedges to be retained in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment, in line with BS5837:2012, and shall include details of;

(a) any proposed topping or lopping of any retained tree, or of any tree on land adjacent to the sub-phase;

(b) any proposed alterations to ground levels within the Root Protection Area or Crown Spread (whichever is the greater) of any retained tree, including trees on land adjacent to the site;

(c) the specification and position of fencing and of any other measures to be taken for the protection of any retained tree from damage before or during the course of development.

(d) the erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and particulars before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made without the written consent of the local planning authority.

(e) Prior to occupation of the first dwelling, a Veteran Tree Management Plan shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority. This Plan shall include:

Appeal Decision APP/X0360/W/22/3304042 <https://www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate> 17

- Specialist Survey Method assessment of the trees;

- Individual tree management programme geared towards maximising longevity;

- Provision and maintenance of knee-rail style fencing beyond crown driplines, enclosing access-deterrent planting; and

- Regular review by a competent person of veteran trees' condition, with follow-up management works being implemented as recommended.

The first three elements of the Plan shall be implemented also prior to first occupancy.

- 1.4. This report has been amended (February 2025) to address consultation responses from both the Ecology Officer and Tree Officer. These elements have been addressed at Sections 2.6 (Ecology) and Section 2.7 (Arboriculture)

- 1.5. This Arboricultural Report should be made available to all interested parties on site during the construction phase, so that they understand the scope and importance of the measures set out for tree protection. Implementation of the protection methods and other details within this report are integral to ensuring protection for the retained trees.
- 1.6. For details of trees to be retained, and locations and types of special protection methods, reference should be made to the latest revision of Tree Protection Plan (ref: PRI24594-03), which should be displayed prominently on site for all staff to see.
- 1.7. To ensure accuracy and avoid future costly adjustments, the Tree Protection Fencing must be set out by a surveyor/engineer with all node points being marked clearly on site for the fencing contractor to work to.
- 1.8. This report is based on the recommendations given in BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations'.
- 1.9. No TPO's or Conservation Areas are affecting this site according to Wokingham Borough Council's online mapping.
- 1.10. The controlling authority is Wokingham Borough Council who can be contacted at:
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Office 01189746000
Address: Planning Services
PO Box 157
Civic Offices
Wokingham, Berkshire
RG40 1BN
- 1.11. Any questions relating to the content of this report should be directed in the first instance to: ACD Environmental, Unit 7 Godalming Business Centre, Woolsack Way, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1XW, 01483 425 714, quoting the site address and report reference number.
- 1.12. The following abbreviations have been used throughout this document:
 - Root Protection Area – RPA
 - Construction Exclusion Zone- CEZ
 - Tree Protection Plan – TPP
 - Tree Protection Fencing – TPF

2. Arboricultural Impact Assessment

- 2.1. The site currently comprises an open field with a number of 'A' category trees located within the interior, established trees and dense vegetation on the boundaries. Built form is restricted to a small business yard with ancillary warehouse to the North.
- 2.2. The proposed development is for a new residential build of forty-nine affordable dwellings with new publicly accessible open space and access. This impact assessment is intended to evaluate the direct and indirect impacts on the trees on the site in relation to the proposed development. Any potential tree impacts are identified as per BS5837:2012 section 5.4, together with proposed mitigation.
- 2.3. Any potentially damaging activities proposed in the vicinity of retained trees are identified, such that mitigation to significantly reduce or avoid this impact can be detailed in the AMS and TPP as recommended in BS5837:2012 section 5.4.2.
- 2.4. The development proposals are in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations'. Adequate protection can be provided to ensure all retained trees are protected.
- 2.5. The tree survey for the site is at Appendix 2 of the Tree Report for the site ACD reference PRI24594trA.
- 2.6. **Ecology Consultation Response.**

Ecological Mitigation Measures/Bat Roosting Potential Data

- **MM6 ~ Dormouse Licensing;** Removal of hedgerow vegetation will be carried out under EPS license. Instructed contractors will utilise methodology as compiled within Updated Ecological Appraisal. BS5837:2012 expects interested parties to reference third party submission documents, no arboricultural input expected.
 - **MM7 ~ Safeguarding measures during vegetation clearance;** As MM6 safeguarding measures to be implemented by appropriately qualified project ecologist. No arboricultural input expected.
 - **MM10 ~ Hedgehog Safeguards;** Outside the remit of retained arboricultural consultant. BS5837:2012 expects interested parties to reference third party submission documents, no arboricultural input expected.
 - **MM11 ~ Timing of Works;** Whilst the project arboricultural consultant can attend site to review trees for nesting birds, this work is routinely carried out by the instructed tree surgeon under the supervision of the project ecologist.
- 2.6.1. Bat roosting potential data has been added to the Tree Protection Plan as detailed on Aspect Ecology 'Habitats & Ecological Features Plan (reference 5796/UECO2, dated July 2024.)

2.7. Arboricultural Consultation Response

Veteran Tree Management Plan and Buffer Zones

- 2.7.1. The VTMP is required prior to occupation of plots. It has been agreed with the LPA that this supporting arboricultural document will be compiled at a later date. (No requirement within this document.)
- 2.7.2. The buffer zones afforded to the trees as shown on the TPP have been amended to visualise the correct buffer zone calculations.
- 2.7.3. Detailed management methodology for the area beneath the Veteran trees will be recorded within the VTMP. In short; a combination of both fencing and lack of mowing will limit access to the area until the hedgerow has established. The fence line will be retained to avoid impact to the hedgerow and RPA afforded to the trees. A timber based product will ultimately breakdown without detriment to the tree.
- 2.7.4. The RPA for boundary groups nos. G72 and G73 have been included on the TPP to demonstrate the proposed protection fence line is suitable to ensure the continued protection of the RPAs.

2.8. Evaluation of impact of proposed tree losses

- 2.8.1. No tree removals are necessary to implement the development design proposals. A section of boundary vegetation is proposed for removal to create the access arrangement. The section is comprised of low level scrub surveyed and recorded as 'C' category that are not of a quality that should present any constraint to development of the site.
- 2.8.2. Replacement trees are proposed through supporting landscape design and will more than mitigate for their removal by providing robust long-term tree cover in keeping with the proposal and surrounding properties.

2.9. Trees to be pruned

- 2.9.1. At this time tree surgery works are not anticipated (excluding removals). Should any become necessary it should comply with BS3998:2010 Tree Work or more recently accepted arboricultural good practice, and be approved by Wokingham Borough Council prior to any commencement.

2.10. Protection for retained trees

- 2.10.1. All retained trees can be BS5837:2012 figure 2 recommends a default specification for protective barrier. This is a weld mesh panel design, mounted upon a well braced scaffold framework. This is perfectly adequate for this site where there are to be areas of high intensity development. Given the scale of the site, where it is likely there will be much lower pressure in terms of construction activity (such as future rear gardens), it is suggested that 1.2m chestnut pale fencing (or similar) clearly indicated as Tree Protection Fencing by signage would be entirely adequate. All tree protection fence should be erected before any works start on site whatsoever.

2.11. New Hard Surfacing and Construction Footprint within RPAs

- 2.11.1. There are no instances of new hard surfacing or construction footprint within the RPAs of trees identified for retention.

2.12. Shade and future pressure to prune

- 2.12.1. The site layout has been assessed in terms of shading and future pressure to prune. Given the orientation of the site, and the relationship between the proposed buildings and the retained trees, the juxtaposition is viable for long-term tree retention, and it is considered that shading by trees is unlikely to be a concern to future residents. As a result, it is considered unlikely that there would be any undue pressure to remove trees, or excessively prune from any future occupants.

2.13. Services

It is fundamental to tree protection that infrastructure design is sensitively approached, as trenching close to trees may damage roots and affect tree health and stability. Details of services have not been provided at the time of writing. The Tree Protection Plan, showing the constraints posed by retained trees will be passed to the infrastructure engineers to inform their design, ensuring that all services avoid areas of potential conflict. As per BS5837:2012 Figure 1, once further details become available as part of the detailed/technical design for the site, the TPP and AMS will be revised to incorporate these details for services for inclusion in the Tender documentation.

2.14. Levels and Landscaping

Landscaping operations within the RPAs of retained trees must be carried out in a sensitive manner and be subject to a detailed method statement and arboricultural supervision.

2.15. Boundaries

All plot boundaries will need to be designed, positioned and installed to avoid damage to retained trees. When within RPAs, this will include hand excavation of all post holes, and the lining of any post holes with a non-porous membrane to stop leachates from the concrete damaging tree roots.

3. Arboricultural Method Statement

TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE APPENDED TREE PROTECTION PLAN REFERENCE: PRI24594-03

3.1. Phasing of operations for tree protection

3.1.1. Implementation of tree protection measures on the site must be carried out in the following order

- 1) Tree removals and tree surgery
- 2) Line of tree protection fence to be set out to node points by surveyor
- 3) Accurate erection of tree protection fence
- 4) Site accessible to construction/demolition traffic
- 5) Demolition/site clearance
- 6) Construction
- 7) Removal of tree protection fencing
- 8) Remedial tree surgery (if required)

3.1.2. The above phasing must not be changed without approval from the project arboriculturist and agreement with the Council.

3.2. Restrictions within tree protection areas

3.2.1. Inside the exclusion area of the fencing, the following shall apply:

- No mechanical excavation whatsoever
- No excavation by any other means without arboricultural site supervision
- No hand digging without a written method statement having first been approved by the project arboriculturist.
- No lowering of levels for any purpose (except removal of grass sward using hand tools)
- No storage of plant or materials
- No storage or handling of any chemical including cement washings
- No vehicular access
- No fire lighting

3.2.2. In addition to the above, further precautions are necessary adjacent to trees:

- No substances injurious to tree health, including fuels, oil, bitumen, cement (including cement washings), builders sand, concrete mixing and other chemicals shall be stored or used within or directly adjacent to the protection area of retained trees
- No fire shall be lit such that flames come within 5m of tree foliage.

3.3. Avoiding damage to stems and branches

- 3.3.1. Care shall be taken when planning site operations in proximity of retained trees to ensure that wide or tall loads, or plant with booms, jibs and counterweights, can operate without coming into contact with retained trees. Such contact can result in serious injury to them and might make their safe retention impossible.
- 3.3.2. Consequently, any transit or traverse of plant in proximity of trees shall be conducted under the supervision of a banksman, to ensure that adequate clearance from trees is at all times maintained. In some circumstances, it may be impossible to achieve this without pruning works known as 'access facilitation pruning'.
- 3.3.3. Access facilitation pruning shall be kept to the barest minimum necessary to facilitate development and shall be carried out in strict accordance with the guidance below (Tree Surgery). Under no circumstances shall construction personnel undertake any tree pruning operations.

3.4. Tree protection fencing

- 3.4.1. The Tree Protection Plan (see the latest revision of: PRI24594-03) shows the alignment of Tree Protection Fencing (TPF), which is to be installed prior to any of the following taking place:
 - Demolition
 - Plant and material delivery
 - Soil stripping
 - Utility installation
 - Construction works
 - Landscaping
- 3.4.2. Stages for installation of TPF:
 - 1) Hand clearance of any vegetation to allow clear working access.
 - 2) Setting out of fencing points
 - 3) Fencing erected
 - 4) Site accessible to demolition/construction traffic
- 3.4.3. To ensure accuracy and avoid future costly adjustments, the Tree Protection Fence must be set out by a surveyor with all node points being marked clearly on site for the fencing contractor to work to.
- 3.4.4. Once erected, all TPF will be regarded as sacrosanct, and will not be removed or altered without prior recommendation by the project arboriculturist and approval of the local planning authority.

- 3.4.5. The typical TPF construction is suitable for areas of high intensity development, and shall comprise of interlocking weld-mesh panels, well braced to resist impacts by attachment to a scaffold framework that is set firmly into the ground. A detailed specification can be found on the TPP.
- 3.4.6. Should any alternative method of barrier construction be proposed, consultation with the project arboriculturist will be obtained to clarify the efficacy of the revised design prior to informing the local planning authority and obtaining their consent.
- 3.4.7. Once the exclusion zone has been protected by barriers and/or ground protection, construction work can commence.
- 3.4.8. All weather notices should be erected on the barriers (for example see figure below).



Figure 1: Tree Protection Sign (digital copies available for download at: www.acdenvironmental.co.uk)

3.5. Site storage, parking, welfare facilities

- 3.5.1. The site will require provision for; site storage, contractor parking, welfare facilities, temporary services/drainage, material drop of points, etc.
- 3.5.2. No details of these provisions are available at the time of writing of this report.
- 3.5.3. None of the above provisions will be sited within RPAs of retained trees without the input or the project arboriculturist and the consent of the Local Authority.

3.6. Tree surgery and removal

3.6.1. The following surgery works are to be carried out:

Tree number	Species	Operation
G72	Bramble, Elm, Hawthorn, Blackthorn	Removal of section as identified on TPP to facilitate site access.

3.6.2. The specified section to be removed is indicated on the Tree Protection Plan.

3.6.3. If any further tree surgery works are required, a proposed specification will be submitted to, and approved by the Wokingham Borough Council before any works are carried out.

3.6.4. All work will be carried out in accordance with BS 3998:2010 Recommendations for Tree Work, industry best practice and in line with any works already agreed with the Council.

3.6.5. The tree surgery contractor is responsible for carrying out any relevant health and safety risk assessment, and insurance, prior to any work being carried out.

3.6.6. The statutory protection afforded by the Wildlife and Countryside Act and Countryside and Rights of Way Act will be adhered to. If further advice is required, particularly if bats are discovered during tree work, it will be obtained from Natural England or other competent persons and recommendations adhered to.

3.6.7. The stumps of any trees removed from within the Construction Exclusion Zone or the RPAs of retained trees will be either; cut flush to ground level and left in situ or ground out using a stump grinder. They will not be winched out.

3.6.8. All operations shall be carefully carried out to avoid damage to the trees being treated or neighbouring trees. No trees to be retained shall be used for anchorage or winching purposes.

3.7. Soft landscaping within RPA

3.7.1. All landscaping and associated ground preparation within exclusion zones will be carried out sensitively to ensure root damage is mitigated as much as is practicable. At no time is any heavy plant to be used within any protected area. Removal of existing vegetation will be carried out by hand, turf may be removed using a mechanical turf stripper or by hand.

3.8. Installation of underground services within RPAs

3.8.1. If for whatever reason installation within RPAs is required the project arboriculturist and local authority must be notified prior to any tree protection barrier removal and the following details adhered to.

3.8.2. Stages for installing services within tree protection areas:

No plant machinery to be used in the area for whatever reason

- 1) Contact project arboriculturist to hold pre-start site meeting and 'toolbox' talk before starting work.
 - 2) Remove just enough tree protection fencing to allow access to area and facilitate trenching.
 - 3) Remove any surface vegetation or existing hard surfaces using hand tools.
 - 4) Excavate the trench using hand tools only, keeping to minimum dimensions required.
 - 5) Roots below 25mm should preferably be retained, however if required can be cut cleanly using secateurs or hand saw.
 - 6) Roots over 25mm diameter will be retained and kept damp by covering with hessian (re-wetted as required).
 - 7) Feed in services.
 - 8) Back fill trench with 200-300mm depth of excavated soil, or a mixture of excavated and imported top-soil (to BS3882:2015), firming down with heels
 - 9) Repeat step 7 until trench is filled.
 - 10) Re-erect tree protection fencing as per approved plan.
- 3.8.3. An alternative to the method of excavation above, for trenching within RPA's, is by using an 'air-spade' or similar. This tool utilises compressed air to remove soil from around tree roots causing minimal damage and can be run off a typical site compressor. ACD can provide details of contractors supplying air-spade services if required.
- 3.8.4. Alternatively, trenchless technology such as thrust boring can be used in some instances and is particularly effective as it can pass directly under the tree, at a depth which is likely to avoid almost all impact on roots of the subject tree. As no access/thrust pits will be located within the RPAs of the subject trees, the need for arboricultural supervision is limited.
- 3.8.5. Reference can be made to National Joint Utilities Group publication Volume 4 (NJUG Vol4) for guidance, but any approach must be approved by the project arboriculturist.

3.9. Installation of boundary fencing within protected areas

3.9.1. Stages for installing wooden fence posts:

No plant machinery to be used in the area for whatever reason

- 1) Contact project arboriculturist to hold pre-start site meeting and 'toolbox' talk before starting work.
- 2) Remove TPF to allow access to area.
- 3) Dig post holes using hand tools, avoiding damage to the protective bark covering larger roots. Roots smaller than 25mm diameter may be pruned back using either secateurs or a hand saw, leaving a clean cut.
- 4) Damage or severance of roots above 25mm diameter must be avoided. If roots of this size are discovered, the hole should be relocated. If there are a large number of such roots it may be necessary to relocate the hole by half a fence panels length and adjust the fence panels accordingly.
- 5) Line hole with non-porous lining, for example durable polythene bag.
- 6) Insert post and fill post hole with concrete to ground level.
- 7) Trim polythene to ground level

Andrew Bigg CertArb (RFS)

Head of Arboriculture

03 July 2024

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Head Office

Rodbourn Rail Business Centre
Grange Lane
Malmesbury
SN16 0ES
Tel: 01666 825646

Surrey Office

Unit 7 Godalming Business Centre
Woolsack Way
Godalming
GU7 1XW
Tel: 01483 425714

Hampshire Office

Crescent House
Yonge Close
Eastleigh
SO50 9SX
Tel: 02382 026300

Email: mail@acdenv.co.uk

Website: www.acdenvironmental.co.uk

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