Merewood
Arboricultural Consultancy Services

Arboricultural Implications Assessment for a proposed development at The Old Thatch Lower Sandhurst Road Finchampstead RG40 3TH Rev B

Client: Robert & Lucy Westell
The Old Thatch
Lower Sandhurst Road
Finchampstead
RG40 3TH

Prepared by
Simon Hawkins Dip Arb L6 (ABC) N.D Arbor M. Arbor. A.

Date
14/01/2026



Merewood.
Gregory Road, Hedgerley, Bucks. SL2 3XW
M. 07784 915944 T. 01753 647236
E. s_imon.hawkins@hotmail.co.uk
VAT No: 990 9313 9

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Instruction

1.1.1 I am instructed by Robert and Lucy Westell to undertake an Arboricultural Survey at The Old Thatch Lower Sandhurst Road Finchampstead. I am also instructed to assess the likely impact of development proposals and produce an Arboricultural Method Statement detailing how trees shall be protected from the proposed construction activity.

1.1.2 The proposals are for the development of the site including the demolition of the existing house and outbuildings and the erection of a new detached dwelling.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Old Thatch is a detached house accessed by a single entrance drive, reached by an access road (Drift Lane) leading off Lower Sandhurst Road. The property has a front garden partly given over to parking, a side garden and a rear garden. The plot is irregular in shape and is bordered by mature trees to the west.

1.2.2 The site is located to the southeast of the village of Finchampstead to the south of Wokingham. The plot is surrounded by fields and woodland with adjacent properties being widely dispersed.

1.2.3 The topography of the site is irregular with a general slope downward from . north to south and from east to west.

1.2.4 It has been established at the time of the survey that the trees on the site are not covered by a Tree Preservation Order nor are they located within a designated Conservation Area (search conducted on the Wokingham Council website – 07/05/25).

1.3 Survey date

1.3.1 The trees at The Old Thatch Lower Sandhurst Road Finchampstead were surveyed on Tuesday, February 11th, 2025.

1.4 Scope and Purpose of the report

1.4.1 The tree survey and assessment of existing trees has been carried out in accordance with guidance contained within British Standard B.S. 5837:2012 ‘Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations’ (hereafter referred to as B.S. 5837). The guidelines set out a structured assessment methodology to assist in determining which trees would be deemed either as being suitable or unsuitable for retention.

1.4.2 The purpose of this report therefore is therefore to firstly present the results of an assessment of the existing trees' arboricultural value, based on their current condition and quality and to secondly, provide an assessment of impact arising from the development of the site.

1.4.3 The report is designed to support a planning application for development proposals at the above site. The survey has therefore focused on any trees present within or bordering the site that may potentially be affected by the future proposals or will pose a constraint to any proposed development

1.5 Documents referred to

1.5.1 The tree survey and this report have been prepared with reference to the following documents:

The proposed site layout plan
The schedule of tree constraints (appendix 1)
The plan of tree constraints (appendix 2)
Impact Assessment Plan (appendix 3)
The Arboricultural Method Statement

2.0 Results

2.1 Results summary

2.1.1 Appendix 1 presents details of the individual trees and groups found during the assessment including heights, stem diameters and root protection areas (RPA's), crown spread (normally measured to cardinal points unless otherwise indicated), an indication of physiological and structural condition, age class, any appropriate management recommendations, estimated life expectancy and a BS5837 category of quality.

2.1.2 The survey has revealed that that of the 64 trees and 3 groups of trees surveyed, 5 are category 'A'; 23 are category 'B' plus 3 category 'B' groups; 30 are category 'C' and 6 are category 'U'.

3.0 Arboricultural Impact Assessment

3.1 Overview

Development activity	Potential impact	Consequence	Mitigation
Delivery of materials to the site Plant machinery accessing the site	Soil compaction and erosion	Root damage and die back limiting the ability of the tree to take up water and nutrients	Create construction exclusion zones (CEZ's) by the erection of barrier fencing Provide viable ground protection to prevent compaction and erosion of soil
Storage of materials on the site	Leachate from chemical based products contaminating soil	Roots die back and soil becomes contaminated inhibiting future root	Provide a dedicated area for the storage of materials following delivery away from

		recovery	root protection areas.
Distribution of materials about the site	Damage to branches or bark due to careless handling	Wounding of the bark can lead to infection from wood decay pathogens	Ensure protective fencing takes account of the crown spreads of trees. Preventative pruning of low branches
Foundation excavations Provision of services requiring excavation	Severing of roots	Root damage and die back limiting the ability of the tree to take up water and nutrients. Crown die back Death of the tree	Use specialized foundation techniques that minimise soil disturbance and leaching of chemicals into the surrounding soil. Use trenchless boring method for services
Mixing of cement, plaster, etc.	Leachate from chemical based products contaminating soil	Roots die back and soil becomes contaminated inhibiting future root recovery	Provide a dedicated area for mortar mixing (etc.) with a suitably thick plastic (impermeable) membrane to prevent chemicals contaminating the surrounding soil Provide a spare reservoir of water close by to wash away spillages
Contractor parking	Soil compaction and erosion	Root damage and die back limiting the ability of the tree to take up water and nutrients	Provide dedicated area for contractor parking away from RPA's Cover the ground with suitable ground protection mats to distribute weight

3.2 Proposed tree works

3.2.1 The proposals require the removal of a total of 5 category 'C' trees. These are T16, T17, T18, T38 and T40.

3.2.2 In addition, dead and diseased trees with a limited life expectancy (category U) are to be removed in the interests of sound arboricultural management.

3.3 The Impact of Demolition

3.3.1 The proposals require the demolition of the existing house and the outbuildings before other works can begin on the site. The movement of plant machinery around this building and the movement of hardcore arisings to a suitable holding area has the potential to cause soil compaction and branch damage.

3.3.2 The tree protection plans show that there is enough space for machinery to be able to manoeuvre without coming into contact with the crown spreads of trees. Where it is not practicable to maintain tree protection measures for the demolition of a structure (in whole or in part), the protective fencing shall be temporarily dismantled and the demolition undertaken by hand as far as possible or using a machine working with a long arm to enable the machine to remain outside of the RPA of the trees.

3.3.3 The tree protection plan illustrates where fencing shall be erected before demolition begins, prior to the commencement of the main build.

The demolition of the existing structure is addressed in the Arboricultural Method Statement – section 3.4.

3.4 Changes to soil levels

3.4.1 There are no changes to soil levels proposed within the RPA's of retained trees to be retained.

3.5 The Impact of Movement around the Site

3.5.1 The tree protection plans are in two phases (see method statement) and show where fencing is to be erected prior to the commencement of works on the site (some fencing will need to be installed following the demolition of the outbuildings). The fencing in places is distal to the RPA's, exceeding the requirements of B.S. 5837.

The erection of protective fencing barriers and the recommended type of barrier is addressed in the Arboricultural Method Statement – section 3.3.

3.5.2 In addition to protective fencing, the existing driveway and the access road is to be covered by ground protection mats to create a protective layer preventing soil compaction and erosion during the building, prior to the laying of the no-dig driveway (see section 3.6.2).

The installation of ground protection mats is addressed in the Arboricultural Method Statement – section 3.5.

3.5.3 The tree protection plan (see method statement) shows that there is plenty of room for the delivery and temporary storage of materials about the site, particularly to the rear of the house.

3.6 The Impact of Excavations

3.6.1 The proposed driveway takes a different shape and position to the existing driveway but would create only a very minimal impact on the RPA of the oak (T34). This conclusion is reached taking into account the existing driveway and the existing building, the footprint of which will be partly occupied by the new driveway following demolition.

3.6.2 In order to further protect the roots of the oak (T34), a cellular confinement product is to be used to create a permeable layer onto which the final driveway can be laid, following completion of the construction work to the house.

The installation of the cellular confinement product is addressed in the Arboricultural Method Statement – section 4.2.

3.6.3 The proposed building and patio do encroach onto the RPA of the group of beech trees (G2), but it is considered that it will still be possible to retain these trees. In coming to this conclusion the following factors are taken into account.

a) The total encroachment amounts to 15m^2 out of the total RPA amounting to just 6.5%, well within the tolerance limits of normally growing healthy trees.
b) The encroachment is largely from the patio element, that requires a shallower foundation than the main house. Deeper roots will remain beneath the patio.
c) The remaining rooting area available to the trees extends unhindered in all other directions, so a substantially larger than minimum soil volume will still be available to the trees to continue to support normal vitality.

3.6.4 The existing service routes currently connected to the existing house will be reconnected to the new house (standard building practice). Here will therefore not be any impact on surrounding trees arising from service installation.

3.7 The Impact of Construction Site Activities

3.7.1 Deliveries will be made by means of the existing access road (Drift Road).

3.7.2 Materials are to be set down in the designated area at the front of the new house where they can either remain in situ until needed, moved to a more appropriate area (i.e. to the rear) or be brought under cover if necessary.

3.7.3 A specifically designated area is to be used for the storage of cement and plaster bags, hazardous chemicals and petrochemical products and will also provide a suitable area for mortar mixing in line with COSHH regulations to ensure there is no detrimental effect on trees.

The mixing of cement and cleaning of tools is addressed in the Arboricultural Method Statement – section 3.7.

3.8 Issues to be addressed by the Method Statement

3.8.1 The Method Statement will address the following issues

- Tree removal
- Installation of protective fencing
- Demolition of the existing structure
- Building site activities
- Cement mixing

3.9 Summary

3.9.1 The proposed construction works can be undertaken with minimal impact to the retained trees. Provided the trees are fenced off in accordance with the tree protection plan (see method statement) there is no reason the proposals would harm the trees. Full provision can be made for the protection of all trees to remain in order to ensure their continued viability following the completion of construction.

Simon Hawkins Dip Arb L6 (ABC), ND Arb, MArborA

Appendix 1 - Tree Survey Methodology

1. The ground level survey of the trees has been carried out in accordance with the criteria set out in Chapter 4 of B.S 5837. The survey has recorded information relating to all those trees within the site and those adjacent to the site which may be of influence on the proposals.
2. The purpose of this report is to modify the recommendation found in the tree constraints schedule for the future use of this site. Where applicable, trees with significant defects have been highlighted and appropriate remedial works have been recommended. However, this report should not be seen as a substitute for a full *Safety Survey* or *Management Plan* which are specifically designed to minimise risk and liability associated with the responsibility for trees. No climbed inspections or specialist decay detection were undertaken.
3. Evaluation of tree condition within the assessment applies to the date of survey and cannot be assumed to remain unchanged. It may be necessary to review these within 12 months in accordance with sound arboricultural practice as recommended by the National Trees Safety Group guidance 'Common Sense Risk Management for Trees'.
4. Trees have been divided into one of four categories based on Table 1 of B.S.5837, '*Cascade chart for tree quality assessment'*. For a tree to qualify under any given category it should fall within the scope of that category's definition.

Category U - Red	Trees in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years.
Category A - Green	**Those trees of the highest quality and value**: in such a condition as to be able to make a substantial contribution (a minimum of 40 years is suggested).
Category B - Blue	**Trees of moderate to high quality and value**: in such a condition as to be able to make a significant contribution (a minimum of 20 years is suggested).
Category C - Grey	**Trees of low quality and value**: currently in adequate condition to remain until new planting could be established (a minimum of 10 years is suggested), or young trees with a stem diameter of below 150mm
Subcategory 1 concerns mainly arboricultural values, how good a specimen is in terms of form and physiological condition; the value of a tree as a component in a group or in a formal or semi-formal arboricultural feature such as an avenue.	
Subcategory 2 concerns mainly landscape values and considers the importance of a tree or group of trees as an arboricultural or landscape feature. Trees present in larger numbers, such as woodlands for example may attract a higher rating than they would as individuals because of their collective value.	
Subcategory 3 concerns mainly cultural values including conservation, historical, commemorative, or other value such as veteran or wood pasture.	

5. RPA's of single stemmed trees are calculated according to the following formula:
   RPA radius = 12 x stem diameter (measured at 1.5m above ground level)
6. Where a tree has more than one stem, the equivalent single stem diameter is usually recorded. This is calculated by adding the squares of the stems and then finding the square root of the total. The radius of the RPA is then calculated by multiplying the equivalent stem diameter by 12 (ref B.S. 5837:2012 para 4.6.1). Where access is restricted an estimate of the stem diameter is provided and this is indicated in the appropriate column.

Appendix 2
Schedule of tree constraints

Tree no	Species	Height	Stem diameter	Crown spread				Height to1st main branch	Height of canopy	Age	General observations	Life expectancy	Category
				North	South	East	West						
T1	Oak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Dead. Retain as an eco-feature	-	U
T2	Sycamore	20	570	6	5	5	3	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2
T3	Oak	20	660	6	6	6	9	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2
T4	Indian bean tree	11	410 310	5	6	5	4	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2
T5	Oak	12	230	3	3	3	1	G	G	M		40+	C
T6	Oak	11	270	4	4	3	3	G	G	M		40+	C
T7	Blackthorn	6	200	0.5	2	2	1	G	G	M		40+	C
T8	Silver birch	20	360 210	4	5	2	3	G	G	M		40+	B2
T9	Goat willow	10	240	6	0	2	2	G	F	M	Leaning to the north	20 - 40	C
T10	Goat willow	9	220	0	5	1	3	G	F	M	Leaning to the south	20 - 40	C
T11	Goat willow	9	240	8	0	8	0	G	F	M	Leaning to the north east	20 - 40	C
T12	Silver birch	18	410	3	2	3	2	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2

Tree no	Species	Height	Stem diameter	Crown spread				Physiological condition	Structural condition	Age	Observations/ Management recommendations	Life expectancy	Category
				North	South	East	West						
T13	Silver birch	17	340	1	3	2	3	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2
T14	Oak	9	440	3	5	5	4	F	P	M	Main stem torn by storm damage leaving inner wood exposed and weakened	<10	U
T15	Oak	10	230	3	3	3	3	G	G	M	A young mature tree with good form	40+	B2
T16	Beech	12	340 270	3	2	2	4	F	F	M	Tree has been topped	40+	C
T17	Apple	4	150	0.5	1	0.5	1	F	F	M	Decay developing in main stem	40+	C
T18	Fig	4	200 120 70	3	3	4	1	G	F	M		40+	C
T19	Norway spruce	13	220	2	2	1	1	G	G	M		40+	C
T20	Weeping willow	13	290	2	6	5	2	G	G	M		40+	C
T21	Holly	12	520	4	2	3	3	G	G	M		40+	C
T22	Oak	16	1210	7	6	5	7	F	F	M	Major deadwood and ivy smothered. Crown dieback and pruning wounds. Retrenching.	40+	A3
T23	Oak	10	240	0.5	3	1	1	F	F	M		40+	C
T24	Oak	10	480	0.5	5	1	2	F	F	M	Old hedgerow tree that has been lopped back off the road	40+	C

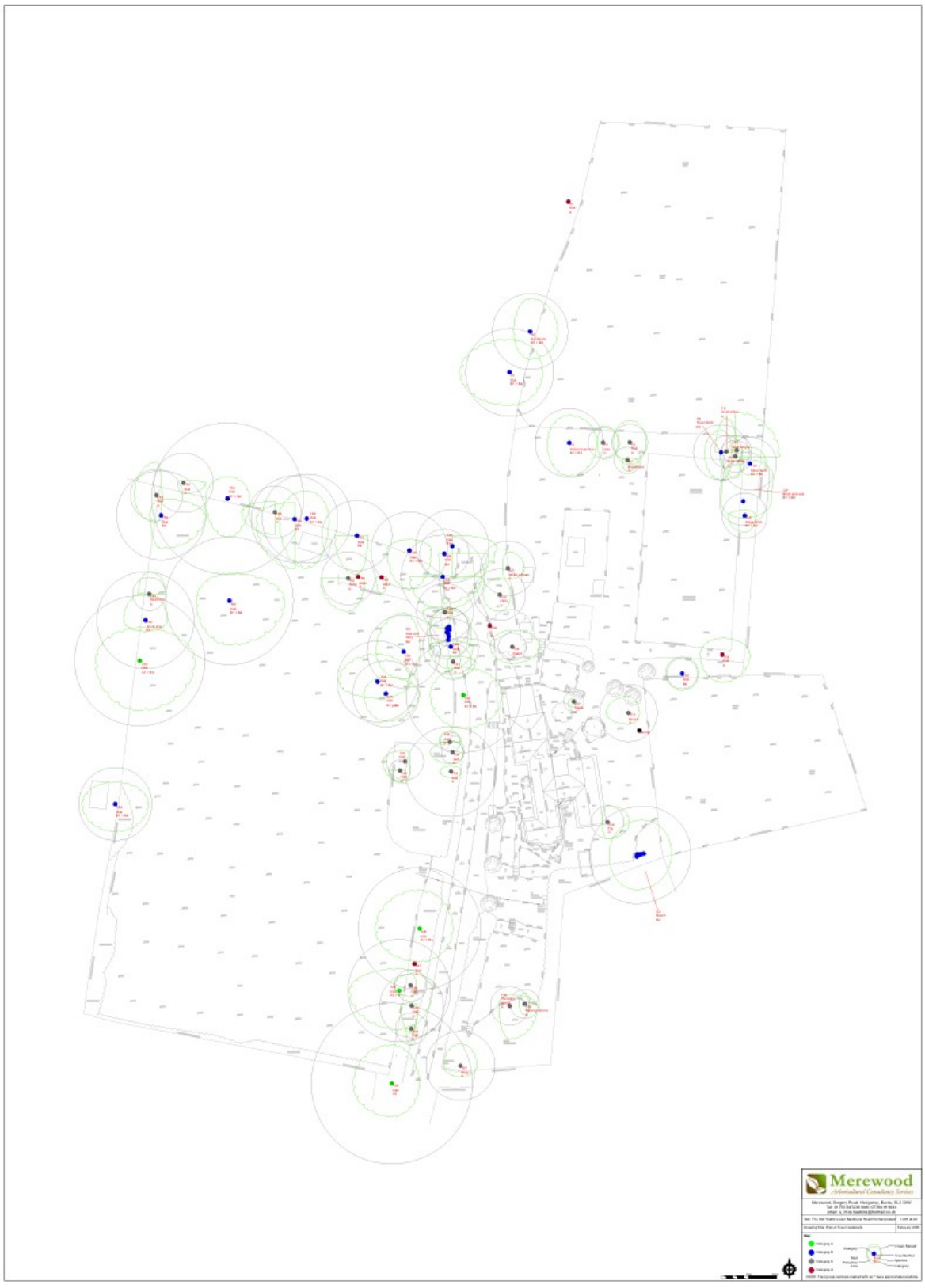
Tree no	Species	Height	Stem diameter	Crown spread				Physiological condition	Structural condition	Age	Observations/ Management recommendations	Life expectancy	Category
				North	South	East	West						
T25	Oak	22	770	4	7	6	9	G	G	M		40+	B1 + A2
T26	Oak	11	240	2	2	1	3	G	G	M		40+	C
T27	Oak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Dead	-	U
T28	Oak	19	920	7	6	6	8	G	G	M		40+	A1 + B2
T29	Oak	12	680	1	1	2	2	P	P	M	Stem dying back with some retrenchment of the stem	10 - 20	C
T30	Oak	8	160	0	2	1	2	G	G	Y		40+	C
T31	Oak	9	280	2	4	1	4	G	F	M/A		40+	C
T32	Ash	12	170	2	2	2	4	G	G	Y	Unable to check for Chalara die back at present time	40+	C
T33	Ash	12	150	2	0	2	2	G	G	Y	Unable to check for Chalara die back at present time	40+	C
T34	Oak	17	860	5	6	7	6	G	G	M		40+	A1 + B2
T35	Oak	17	500	3	5	6	4	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2
T36	Oak	17	610	5	3	6	7	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2

Tree no	Species	Height	Stem diameter	Crown spread				Physiological condition	Structural condition	Age	Observations/ Management recommendations	Life expectancy	Category
				North	South	East	West						
T37	Oak	17	550	7	5	3	5	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2
T38	Hazel	10	12 x 60	3	3	5	4	G	G	M	Multiple stemmed cluster	20 - 40	C
T39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Dead	-	U
T40	Holly	14	390	3	3	2	3	G	G	M		40+	C
T41	White willow	7	310 270	3	2	3	1	F	F	M		20 - 40	C
T42	Oak	18	270	1	3	4	1	G	G	M	An old hedgerow tree	40+	C
T43	Oak	18	420	1	4	4	4	G	G	M	An old hedgerow tree	40+	B2
T44	Oak	18	430	1	3	1	4	G	G	M	An old hedgerow tree	40+	C
T45	Oak	20	450 440	0	6	7	6	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2
T46	Oak	19	370	0	9	8	1	G	G	M	Tree leans to the south east	40+	B2
T47	Oak	19	550	2	6	8	0	G	G	M	Tree inclined to the east	40+	B2
T48	Oak	21	580	2	7	4	4	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2

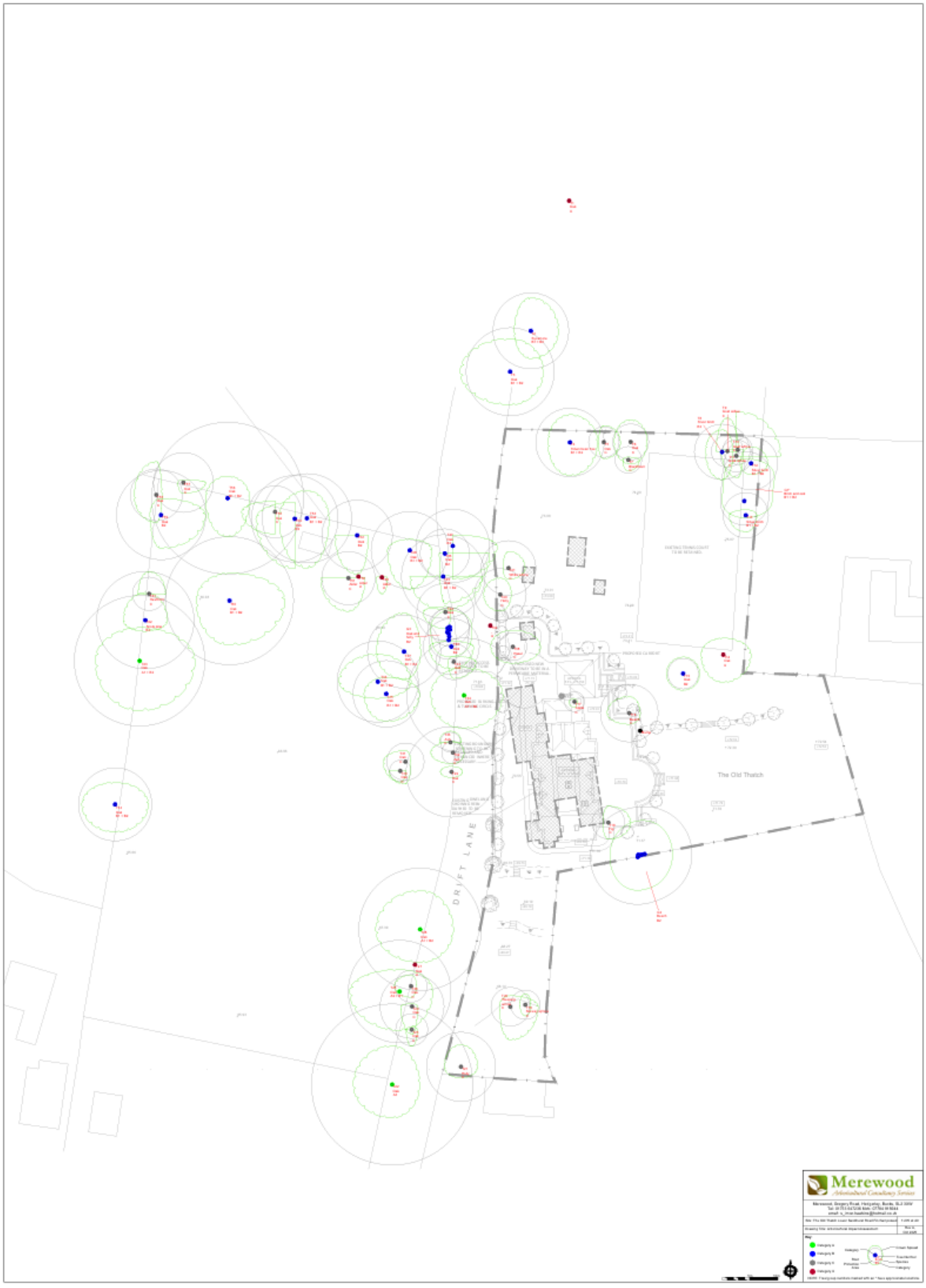
Tree no	Species	Height	Stem diameter	Crown spread				Physiological condition	Structural condition	Age	Observations/ Management recommendations	Life expectancy	Category
				North	South	East	West						
T49	Alder	10	380	0	3	1	1	P	P	M	Dying	<10	U
T50	Alder	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Dead	-	U
T51	Alder	11	400	0	6	3	5	G	G	M		40+	C
T52	Oak	19	530	0	7	2	4	G	G	M		40+	B2
T53	Oak	23	670	5	9	4	5	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2
T54	Oak	21	650	3	9	0	7	G	G	M		40+	B2
T55	Oak	19	390	2	4	0	6	G	G	M		40+	C
T56	Oak	17	1140	4	7	4	4	G	G	M	Ivy smothering stem	40+	B1 + B2
T57	Oak	17	450	0.5	2	4	1	F	F	M		40+	C
T58	Oak	16	390	6	5	1	4	G	F	M	Leading stem has died back	40+	C
T59	Oak	17	670	3	6	8	2	G	F	M		40+	B2
T60	Oak	19	590 760	5	8	10	6	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2

Tree no	Species	Height	Stem diameter	Crown spread				Physiological condition	Structural condition	Age	Observations/ Management recommendations	Life expectancy	Category
				North	South	East	West						
T61	Hawthorn	8	250	4	0	3	2	G	F	M		20 - 40	C
T62	Scots pine	17	730	5	2	4	4	F	F	M	Tree becoming senescent	20 - 40	B2
T63	Oak	20	980	6	9	10	8	G	G	M		40+	A1 + B2
T64	Oak	19	550	4	5	6	6	G	G	M		40+	B1 + B2
G1	Birch and oak	18	360	3	3	5	4	G	G	M	A mixed group of trees	40+	B1 + B2
G2	Beech	17	710	6	6	5	5	G	G	M	Four individual stems	40+	B2
G3	Oak and holly	18	290	3	3	4	3	G	G	M	A linear group of hedgerow trees	40+	B2

Appendix 3
Plan of Tree Constraints



Appendix 4
Impact Assessment Plan



Appendix 5
Qualifications and experience

- I am Simon Hawkins, proprietor of Merewood Arboricultural Consultancy Services.

- I hold the Level 6 Professional Diploma in Arboriculture. This is the highest level of award in the industry.

- I hold the National Diploma in Arboriculture which I attained in 1987. I have studied and practised Arboriculture for over 30 years, during which time I have been involved with both the private and public sector.

- I hold the LANTRA award for professional tree inspections

- I hold professional member status of the Arboricultural Association (M. Arbor A.), recognised as a higher vocational level within the industry.

- I have undertaken an intensive course in the principles and application of VTA Visual Tree Assessment. I have been assessed and found to have attained the advanced level of technical competence of a VTA Practitioner with Elite Training.

- I have over 18 years' experience working in the public sector, during which time I have dealt with all aspects of trees and development in the town planning context, within the inner city; in a greater London Borough; and in the Green Belt. Typically, I have worked with planners, developers, architects and other professionals in the construction industry in which I provide advice and assistance in dealing with arboricultural matters.

- I have appeared at numerous appeals, informal hearings and public enquiries to make formal representations. I have also appeared as an expert witness in court with regard to breaches of a Tree Preservations Order.