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Arboricultural Implications Report

Proposed development at

Early East

Thames Valley Park Drive

Reading



October 2022

Ref. SJA air 22472-01

SUMMARY

S1. On the basis of our assessment, we conclude that the arboricultural impact of this scheme is of low magnitude, as defined according to the categories set out in **Table 1** of this report.

S2. Our assessment of the impacts of the proposals on the existing trees concludes that no mature, veteran or ancient trees, no category 'A' / 'B' trees, and no trees of high landscape or biodiversity value are to be removed. The proposed removal of individual trees will represent only a minor alteration to the main arboricultural features of the site, only a minor alteration to the overall arboricultural character of the site and will not have a significant adverse impact on the arboricultural character and appearance of the local landscape.

S3. As no pruning is to take place, none of the trees to be retained will be altered in a way that would diminish their landscape value.

S4. The incursions into the Root Protection Areas of trees to be retained are minor, and subject to implementation of the measures recommended on the Tree Protection Plan and set out at **Appendix 3**, no significant or long-term damage to their root systems or rooting environments will occur.

S5. As the proposed development serves to “**protect the borough’s green infrastructure.**”, it complies with Policies CP7 and CC03 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Development Delivery Document (local plan) respectively.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Instructions

1.1.1. SJAtrees has been instructed by Cushman & Wakefield to visit Early East, Thames Valley Park Drive and to survey the trees growing on or immediately adjacent to this site.

1.1.2. We are further asked to identify which trees are worthy of retention within a proposed development of the site; to assess the implications of the development proposals on these specimens, and to advise how they should be protected from unacceptable damage during construction.

1.2. Scope of report

1.2.1. This report and its appendices reflect the scope of our instructions, as set out above. It is intended to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council (the LPA).

1.2.2. It complies also with the recommendations of British Standard BS 5837:2012, *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations* ('BS 5837'). However, the British Standard is not a Code of Practice that consists of written rules outlining how actions or decision must be taken and it "should not be quoted as if it were a specification"¹; it is a set of recommendations intended to "assist decision-making with regard to existing and proposed trees in the context of design, demolition and construction"². It doesn't form part of planning policy; but it is a material consideration to which weight is likely to be given.

1.2.3. The proposed development comprises the construction of a new ramped footpath within the footprint of the existing footpath.

¹ British Standard BS 5837:2012. *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations*; Foreword. *The British Standards Institution*.

² *Ibid.*, p.1, Introduction.

1.2.4. This report summarises and sets out the main conclusions of the baseline data collected during the tree survey and identifies those trees or groups of trees whose removal could result in a significant adverse impact on the character or appearance of the local area (Section 3). It then details and assesses the impacts of the proposed development on individual trees and groups of trees, including those to be removed (Section 4), those to be pruned (Section 5) and those which might incur root damage that might threaten their viability (Section 6). A summary and conclusions, with regard to local planning policy, are presented in Section 7.

1.3. Site inspection

1.3.1. A site visit and tree inspection were undertaken by Will Hovell of SJAtrees on 11th October 2022. Weather conditions at the time were clear, dry and bright. Deciduous trees were in full leaf.

1.4. Site description

1.4.1. The site is 1.9ha in size but the area to be developed is a small section along the western boundary which is approximately 745m² in size. The site is located on the south side of Thames Valley Park Drive, between Early West and Microsoft Campus, as shown at **Figure 1** below. The north boundary adjoins Thames Valley Park Drive. The east and west boundaries adjoin adjacent office complexes, and the south boundary adjoins National Rail land.



Figure 1: Site location shown on Google Earth image

1.4.2. The site currently comprises a large office complex with associated soft landscaping and parking area. The area to be developed consists of access footpaths to both Early East and Early West and planted soft landscaping.

1.5. Soil type

1.5.1. The British Geological Survey Solid and Drift Geology map of the area indicates the site lies on superficial deposits of Kempton Park Gravel above a bedrock of Seaford Chalk Formation.

1.5.2. Whilst no site investigation or soil analysis has been undertaken, the British Geological Survey map suggests that the soil is unlikely to be particularly susceptible to compaction.

1.6. Statutory controls

1.6.1. At the time of writing none of these trees are covered by a tree preservation order (TPO).

1.6.2. The site is not within a conservation area, and therefore there are no constraints relating to existing trees in this regard.

1.7. Non-statutory designations

1.7.1. There are no woodlands within or abutting the site that are classified as 'Ancient'. Ancient woodland is defined as "any area that's been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD" and is considered an important and irreplaceable habitat.

1.7.2. There are no trees within or abutting the site that can be classified as 'Ancient' or 'Veteran'. Ancient and veteran trees are also considered to be irreplaceable habitats, and contribute to a site's biodiversity, cultural and heritage value, and the National Planning Policy Framework (see below) states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient or veteran trees should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. National policy context

2.1.1. Under Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, local authorities have a statutory duty to consider the protection and planting of trees when considering planning applications. The effects of proposed development on trees are therefore a material consideration, and this is normally reflected in local planning policies.

2.1.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied in both plan and decision-making. Paragraph 2 makes it clear that the NPPF is itself a material consideration in the determination of planning application. Paragraph 11 states that **"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."**

2.1.3. In paragraph 130, within Section 12 "Achieving well-designed places" the NPPF states: **"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:**

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;**
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;**
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);**
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;**
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and**

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

2.1.4. Paragraph 131 in this section states: “Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”

2.1.5. The section titled Planning for climate change states at paragraph 153: “Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.”

2.1.6. In paragraph 174, within Section 15 “Conserving and enhancing the natural environment” the NPPF states: “Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;...

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans;

2.1.7. In paragraph 180, under the 'Habitats and biodiversity' section, the NPPF states: **"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:**

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists...."

2.2. Local policy context

2.2.1. Local planning policies are contained in the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy adopted January 2010.

2.2.2. The relevant section of Policy CP7 of the core strategy states:

"CP7- Biodiversity

Sites designated as of importance for nature conservation at an international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. The degree of protection given will be appropriate to the status of the site in terms of its international or national importance.

Development:

A) Which may harm county designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites in Berkshire), whether directly or indirectly, or

B) Which may harm habitats or, species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), whether directly or indirectly, or

C) That compromises the implementation of the national, regional, county and local biodiversity action plans will be only permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and:

i) Mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts;

or

ii) Appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided.”

2.2.3. The relevant section of Policy CC03 of the Managing Development Delivery Document (local plan) adopted February 2014 states:

“Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

1. Green Routes and Green Route Enhancement Areas are defined on the Policies Map.

2. Development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieved the following criteria within scheme proposals: a) Provide new or protect and enhance the Borough’s Green Infrastructure networks, including the need to mitigate potential impacts of new development b) Promote accessibility, linkages and permeability between and within existing green corridors including public rights of way such as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways c) Promote the integration of the scheme with any adjoining public open space or countryside d) Protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features e) Incorporate high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.

3. Development proposals which would result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of areas of green infrastructure will not be acceptable.

4. Development proposals within the River Valley areas shall improve or contribute toward: a) The establishment of a Loddon/ Blackwater riverside footpath and bridleway, as defined on the Policies Map, to accommodate dual use b) The establishment of a riverside footpath and cycleway to accommodate dual use along the Emm Brook c) Opportunities for improvements to green infrastructure to help minimise flood risk.”

2.3. Neighbourhood policy context

2.3.1. At the time of writing there is no Neighbourhood Plan covering the area within which the site is found.

2.4. Tree survey and baseline information

2.4.1. We surveyed individual trees with trunk diameters of 75mm and above³, trees with trunk diameters of 150mm and above growing in groups or woodlands, and shrub masses, hedges and hedgerows⁴ growing within or immediately adjacent to the site; and recorded their locations, species, dimensions, ages, condition, and visual importance in accordance with BS 5837 recommendations.

2.4.2. The baseline information collected during the site survey was recorded on site using a hand-held digital device. This information was then imported into an Excel spreadsheet and used to produce the tree survey schedule at **Appendix 2**. The numbers assigned to the trees in the tree survey schedule correspond with those shown on the appended tree protection plan.

2.4.3. We surveyed trees as groups where they have grown together to form cohesive arboricultural features, either aerodynamically (trees that provide companion shelter), visually (e.g., avenues or screens) or culturally⁵. However, where it might be necessary to differentiate between specific trees within these groups, we also surveyed these individually.

2.4.4. We inspected the trees from the ground only, aided by binoculars as appropriate, but did not climb them. We did not undertake a full hazard or risk assessment of the trees, and therefore can give no guarantee, either expressed or implied, of their safety or stability.

³ BS 5837, paragraph 4.2.4 b), recommends that all trees over 75mm stem diameter should be included in a pre-planning land and tree survey.

⁴ Ibid, 4.4.2.7

⁵ Ibid, 4.4.2.3

2.4.5. We have categorised the trees in accordance with BS 5837, and details of the criteria used for this process can be found in the notes that accompany the tree survey schedule.

2.4.6. We have applied this methodology in line with the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development, giving greater weighting to the contribution of a tree to the character and appearance of the local landscape, to amenity, or to biodiversity, where its removal might have a significant adverse impact on these factors.

2.5. Tree constraints

2.5.1. In line with the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development, we have assessed whether any trees should be retained in the context of a proposed development. To do this, we identified the main arboricultural features within or immediately adjacent to the site, whose removal we considered could have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the local landscape, on amenity or on biodiversity.

2.5.2. Whilst BS 5837 states that trees in categories 'A', 'B' and 'C' are all a material consideration in the development process, the retention of category 'C' trees, being of low quality or of only limited or short-term potential, will not normally be considered necessary should they impose a significant constraint on development.

2.5.3. Furthermore, BS 5837 makes it clear that young trees, even those of good form and vitality, which have the potential to develop into quality specimens when mature **"need not necessarily be a significant constraint on the site's potential"**⁶.

2.5.4. Moreover, BS 5837 states that **".... care should be taken to avoid misplaced tree retention; attempts to retain too many or unsuitable trees on a site can result in excessive pressure on the trees during demolition or construction work, or post-completion demands for their removal"**⁷.

⁶ Ibid. 4.5.10.

⁷ Ibid. 5.1.1.

2.5.5. The 'Root Protection Areas' (RPAs)⁸ of the trees identified for retention were calculated in accordance with Section 4.6 of BS 5837; and were assessed taking account of factors such as the likely tolerance of a tree to root disturbance or damage, the morphology and disposition of roots as influenced by existing site conditions (including the presence of existing roads or structures), as well as soil type, topography and drainage.

2.6. Arboricultural impact assessment and tree protection plan

2.6.1. Once finalised, we assessed the arboricultural impacts of the proposed layout, and produced the tree protection plan (TPP) presented at **Appendix 3**. This is based on the proposed site layout by Fabric Architects, drawing no. 632 - FAB - XX - 00 - DR - A - 08100.

2.6.2. The TPP identifies the trees which will be removed to accommodate the proposed development, either because they are situated within the footprints of proposed structures or surfaces, or because in our judgment they are too close to these structures or surfaces to enable them to be retained. These are shown by means of **red crosses** on the TPP.

2.6.3. The TPP also shows how trees to be retained will be protected from damage during construction, and the measures identified are set out and described at **Appendix 1** to this report. The implementation of, and adherence to, these measures can readily be secured by the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

2.6.4. For the trees shown to be retained, all measurements for pruning specifications, percentage estimates of RPA incursions and shading issues have been calculated using AutoCAD software.

2.6.5. Details of the impacts identified within these categories, and our assessment of their respective significance, are analysed in Sections 4 to 6 below.

⁸ The minimum area around a retained tree "deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability, and where the protection of the roots and soil structure is treated as a priority." BS 5837, paragraph 3.7.

2.6.6. Based on these findings, we have assessed the magnitude of the overall arboricultural impact of the proposals according to the categories defined in Table 1 below.

Impact	Description
High	Total loss of or major alteration to main elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline, post-development situation fundamentally different
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to main elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline, post-development situation will be partially changed
Low	Minor loss of or alteration to main elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline, post-development changes will be discernible but the underlying situation will remain similar to the baseline
Negligible	Very minor loss of or alteration to main elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline, post-development changes will be barely discernible, approximating to the 'no change' situation

Table 1: Magnitude of impacts⁹

⁹ Determination of magnitude based on DETR (2000) Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies, as modified and extended.

3. THE TREES

3.1. Survey findings

3.1.1. We surveyed a total of 19 individual trees and one group of trees growing within or immediately adjacent to the area within the site to be developed. Their details can be found in the tree survey schedule at **Appendix 2**.

3.1.2. The area of the site to be developed consists of small ornamental birch trees between the Early East and Early West buildings, these have been planted as part of the soft landscaping of the area. On the southern edge of the development area is a belt of trees situated between the office buildings and the car park; this belt is entirely made up of planted native broadleaf specimens.

3.1.3. The most commonly found and most dominant species is English oak which forms the majority of the belt of trees separating the buildings and car park. These specimens are all small, semi-mature specimens which were planted simultaneously. The planted specimens are consistent with the self-seeded trees found around the periphery of the larger site.

3.2. Assessment of suitability for retention

3.2.1. As noted above in Section 2.3, local planning policies require the retention of trees that “**protect the borough’s green infrastructure.**” The individuals and groups of trees within or adjacent to the site, whose attributes we consider meet these criteria, are as follows:

- The belt of trees (nos. 7-19) situated between office buildings and the car park.

3.2.2. All 19 of the surveyed trees have been assessed as category 'C' trees, being either of low quality, very limited merit, only low landscape benefits, no material cultural or conservation value, or only limited or short-term potential; or young trees with trunk diameters below 150mm; or a combination of these.

3.2.3. The only group surveyed has been assessed as category 'C'.

4. TREES TO BE REMOVED

4.1. Details

4.1.1. To accommodate the proposed development, as shown on the proposed layout plan, seven individual trees (nos. 3, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15) are to be removed, either because they are situated within the footprints of proposed structures or surfaces, or because they are too close to these to enable them to be retained.

4.1.2. Details of the trees to be removed, including their dimensions, age class and British Standard categorisation, are shown and listed on the TPP and at **Table 2** below.

Tree no.	Species	Height	Trunk diameter	Age class	BS category
3	Himalayan birch	10m	155mm 130mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
5	Silver birch	10m	135mm 135mm 140mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
6	Silver birch	7m	100mm 110mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
10	English oak	12m	195mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
12	English oak	12m	185mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
13	Hazel	8m	5 stems@ 60mm 4 stems @ 40mm 3 stems @ 85mm All est.	Semi-mature	C (1)
14	English oak	14m	205mm 260mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
15	English oak	10m	180mm	Semi-mature	C (1)

Table 2: Trees to be removed

4.1.3. G1 is to be partially removed as part of the proposals.

4.2. Assessment

4.2.1. Whilst four of the trees that constitute the main arboricultural feature are to be removed, due to the present density of the belt, the removal of these specimens will have only a minor impact of the visual impact of the feature, particularly when viewed from the south. As such, this feature will continue to contribute to the character and appearance of the local landscape.

4.2.2. Furthermore, as the specimens within the tree belt (nos. 7-19) are densely spaced and are currently small, semi-mature specimens predominantly of a species of large ultimate size. As a result, the removal of some specimens will allow those remaining to spread outwards and better reach their potential which serves to increase their long-term viability.

4.2.3. Trees nos. 3, 5 and 6 are all small ornamental specimens with negligible contribution to the wider landscape. Additionally, all three trees are multi-stemmed specimens which further reduces their long-term potential when combined with the narrow space in which they are situated. As a result, removing these specimens and re-planting trees with a smaller ultimate size would, in the long-term, improve the overall arboricultural quality of the site.

4.2.4. All of the trees to be removed have been assessed as category 'C': these are either of low quality, low value, or short-term potential. For these reasons, their removal will have no significant impact on the character or appearance of the area.

4.2.5. In the light of these considerations, and taking account of the numbers, sizes and locations of the trees to be retained, the felling of the trees and groups identified for removal will represent only a minor alteration to the main arboricultural feature of the site.

5. TREES TO BE PRUNED

5.1. Details

5.1.1. No pruning is required to facilitate implementation of the proposals.

5.2. Assessment

5.2.1. As the proposals do not alter the current use or layout of the area and there is currently adequate workspace and no trees impede pedestrian movement, no pruning works are necessary.

6. ROOT PROTECTION AREA INCURSIONS

6.1. Details

6.1.1. Parts of the proposed footpath and associated soil batter will encroach within the RPA of one of the trees to be retained. This is shown in **Table 3** below. The remainder of the soil batter is outside the RPAs of retained trees.

Tree no.	Species	Incursion	Extent of incursion	% of RPA
16	English oak	Proposed footpath	1.8m ²	8.2%

Table 3: Proposed incursions within RPAs

6.2. Assessment

6.2.1. Any potential adverse impacts caused by the proposed footpath can be satisfactorily mitigated as set out below and shown at **Table 4**.

Tree no.	Species	Incursion	Proposed mitigation
16	English oak	Proposed footpath	To be constructed no deeper than the sub-base of the existing footpath and to include a cellular confinement system to minimise soil compaction

Table 4: Proposed mitigation of RPA incursions

6.2.2. The area lost to encroachment within the RPA of the English oak tree no. 16 can be compensated for in the area to the north of the tree, where there is an area of soft landscaping suitable for root growth, contiguous to the RPA. There is likely to already be significant rooting within this area, and as it is to remain as soft landscape, root growth can continue in the future. Therefore, there will be no net loss of suitable rooting area, and no foreseeable risk of future cumulative impacts, so there is no reason to suggest that it will not be able to tolerate the cutting of roots within this small section of its RPA or that it will not remain viable.

6.2.3. Furthermore, within the site boundary the opportunity exists for the soil used by the tree for root growth to be improved. Subject to proposed landscaping, the soil and rooting environments within the RPAs of these specimens could be enhanced to promote improved root growth by de-compaction, aeration fertilisation or mulching, as appropriate, and this can be ensured by condition. As this tree can remain viable by

being able to root in other areas, contiguous to its RPA, and the soil environment in which they are rooting can be improved, these incursions comply with paragraph 5.3.1 of BS5837.

6.2.4. The incursions into the RPAs of tree no. 16 extends to no more than 8.2% of individual RPAs, and do not exceed the 20% maximum incursion into currently unsurfaced ground recommended in BS 5837¹⁰.

6.2.5. Taking account of existing ground levels and likely proposed levels of these areas these will allow for design and construction of the replacement footpath to be entirely above the level of the sub-base of the existing footpath, and accordingly no excavation will be required. Furthermore, where appropriate, the replacement surface could incorporate an appropriate cellular confinement system, filled and finished with suitable porous materials, to minimise soil compaction. To ensure no damage occurs to the roots or rooting environments of the relevant trees, installation will be undertaken under the control and supervision of the arboricultural consultant.

6.2.6. Furthermore, a small soil batter will be required contiguous to the footpath to eliminate a step from the footpath to the adjacent landscaping. Where the batter intersects with the RPA of tree no. 16, it will have a depth no greater than 150mm and will extend no closer than 1m from the trunk so to not impede gaseous exchange to the roots below. Additionally, within the RPA, this batter will be formed and compacted by the use of hand tools only.

6.2.7. As noted at Section 1.5 above, the site overlies a sand and gravel soil. This means it will tolerate compaction better than a clay soil, and so compaction caused by the installation of the footpath is less likely to be severe or damaging to the tree in the long-term.

6.2.8. Implementation of measures to prevent other incursions into the RPAs of retained trees and to protect them during construction can be assured by the erection of appropriate protective fencing, as shown on the TPP at **Appendix 3**.

¹⁰ BS 5837, paragraph 7.4.2.3.

6.2.9. Accordingly, subject to implementation of the above measures, and considering the ages, current physiological condition and tolerance of disturbance of these retained trees, no significant or long-term damage to their root systems or environments will occur as a result of the proposed development.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Summary

7.1.1. Our assessment of the impacts of the proposals on the existing trees concludes that no mature, veteran or ancient trees, no category 'A' / 'B' trees, and no trees of high landscape or biodiversity value are to be removed. The proposed removal of individual trees will represent only a minor alteration to the main arboricultural features of the site, only a minor alteration to the overall arboricultural character of the site and will not have a significant adverse impact on the arboricultural character and appearance of the local landscape.

7.1.2. As no pruning is to take place, none of the trees to be retained will be altered in a way that would diminish their landscape value.

7.1.3. The incursions into the Root Protection Areas of trees to be retained are minor, and subject to implementation of the measures recommended on the Tree Protection Plan and set out at **Appendix 3**, no significant or long-term damage to their root systems or rooting environments will occur.

7.2. Compliance with national planning policy

7.2.1. As the proposals will retain all of the main arboricultural features of the site, its arboricultural attractiveness, history and landscape character and setting will be maintained, thereby complying with Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.2.2. Whilst some trees are to be removed, there is no duty in planning policy to retain all existing trees in all circumstances. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states (*italics added for emphasis*): “**Planning policies and decisions should ensure... that existing trees are retained *wherever possible***”; and thereby recognises circumstances in which it might not be possible to retain every tree. Accordingly, the proposed removal of trees does not mean that this application must thereby be refused; and does not mean it conflicts with Paragraph 131 of the NPPF.

7.2.3. The proposals do not necessitate the removal of any mature trees of large ultimate size, which make the greatest contribution to carbon sequestration and storage, surface water run-off, biodiversity and landscape and air temperature and cleanliness; for all of which, appropriate space for their retention is provided. Accordingly, insofar as this relates to existing trees, the scheme can be seen to have taken a proactive approach to mitigating climate change and thereby complies with Paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.2.4. As the proposals will not result in the loss or deterioration of any ancient woodland or any ancient or veteran trees, they comply with paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

7.3. Compliance with local planning policy

7.3.1. As the proposed development serves to “**protect the borough’s green infrastructure.**”, it complies with Policies CP7 and CC03 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Development Delivery Document (local plan) respectively.

7.4. Conclusion

7.4.1. On the basis of our assessment, we conclude that the arboricultural impact of this scheme is of low magnitude, as defined according to the categories set out in **Table 1** of this report.

APPENDIX 1

Outline Arboricultural Method Statement

Outline arboricultural method statement

A1.1. Tree Protection Plan

A1.1.1. The TPP at **Appendix 4** shows the general and specific provisions to be taken during construction of the proposed development, to ensure that no unacceptable damage is caused to the root systems, trunks or crowns of the trees identified for retention. These measures are indicated by coloured notations in areas where construction activities are to occur either within, or in proximity to, retained trees, as described in the relevant panels on the drawing.

A1.2. Pre-start meeting

A1.2.1. Prior to the commencement of any site clearance or construction works the developer will convene a pre-start site meeting. This shall be attended by the developer's contract manager or site manager, the fencing/boarding contractor, the groundwork contractor(s) and the arboricultural consultant. The LPA tree officer will be invited to attend. At that meeting contact numbers will be exchanged, and the methods of tree protection shall be fully discussed, so that all aspects of their implementation and sequencing are made clear to all parties. Any clarifications or modifications to the TPP required as a result of the meeting shall be circulated to all attendees.

A1.3. Site clearance

A1.3.1. No clearance of trees or other vegetation shall be undertaken until after the pre-start meeting and after the erection of the tree protection fencing (see below). If any vegetation clearance is required behind the line of the protection fencing this will be made clear at the pre-start meeting and arrangements will be made to do this prior to the fencing's erection, under the supervision of the arboricultural consultant, who will ensure it doesn't cause any soil compaction or damage to the roots of trees to be retained.

A1.3.2. Except where within the RPAs of trees to be retained, all trees and other vegetation to be removed may be cut down or grubbed out as appropriate; but within the RPAs of trees to be retained, trees and vegetation will be cut by hand to ground

level and stumps will be either left in place or ground out with a lightweight self-powered stump grinding machine. No excavators, tractors or other vehicles will enter the RPAs.

A1.4. Ground preparation

A1.4.1. No ground preparation or excavation of any kind, including topsoil stripping or ground levelling, shall be undertaken until after the pre-start meeting and after the erection of the tree protection fencing (see below).

A1.5. Tree protection fencing

A1.5.1. Construction exclusion zones (CEZs) will be formed by erecting protective fencing around the RPAs of all on-site trees to the specification recommended in BS 5837, Section 6.2, prior to the commencement of construction. This will be at least 2.1m in height, comprising welded mesh panels; every other one braced with a 45° strut that is pinned to the ground; and seated in concrete or plastic bases pinned to the ground by scaffold uprights sunk to a minimum depth of 600mm, as shown in **Figure 3** of that document. Individual panels will be fixed to each other with at least two clamps, one of which will be a security clamp. "**TREE PROTECTION ZONE - KEEP OUT**" or similar notices will be attached with cable ties to every third panel.

A1.5.2. The RPAs of the off-site trees will also be enforced by the erection of protective fencing to the same specification, prior to the commencement of construction, thereby safeguarding them from incursions by plant or machinery, storage and mixing of materials, or other construction-related activities which could have a detrimental effect on their root systems.

A1.5.3. The recommended positions of the protective fencing are shown by **bold blue lines** on the TPP. The precise positioning of the fencing around the trees will be considered in conjunction with any other protective hoarding/fencing which may be required around the site boundary.

A1.5.4. Within the CEZs safeguarded by the protective fencing, there will be no changes in ground levels, **no soil stripping**, and no plant, equipment, or materials will be stored. Oil, bitumen, diesel, and cement will not be stored or discharged within 10m of any trees. Areas for the storage or mixing of such materials will be agreed in

advance and be clearly marked. No notice boards, or power or telephone cables, will be attached to any of the trees. No fires will be lit within 10m of any part of any tree.

A1.6. Proposed surfaces within RPAs

A1.6.1. Unacceptable damage to the roots and rooting environments of the trees to be retained during the construction of proposed hard surfaces that encroach within RPAs will be avoided by building them no deeper than the sub-base of the exiting footpath, to avoid digging and thus severing of roots; and an appropriate ground covering will be used beneath the sub-base, to prevent or minimise compaction of the soil. This will be done in accordance with Section 7.4 of BS 5837. The locations where these measures will be required are marked by **orange cross-hatching** on the TPP.

A1.6.2. Within RPAs, the soil batter that will accompany the footpath will be formed and compacted entirely by the use of hand tools and will extend no closer than 1m from the trunks of retained trees.

A1.6.3. Within the RPA of tree no. 16, the soil batter will be no deeper than 150mm.

APPENDIX 2

Tree Survey Schedule



ARBORICULTURAL PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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(Operations)

Preliminary Tree Survey Schedule

Early East, Thames Valley Park Drive, Reading

October 2022

SJA Ref: 22472

Tree Survey Schedule: Explanatory Notes

Early East, Thames Valley Park Drive, Reading

This schedule is based on a tree inspection undertaken by Will Hovell of SJAtrees (the trading name of Simon Jones Associates Ltd.), on Tuesday the 11th October 2022. Weather conditions at the time were clear, dry and bright. Deciduous trees were in full leaf.

The information contained in this schedule covers only those trees that were examined, and reflects the condition of these specimens at the time of inspection. We did not have access to the trees from any adjacent properties; observations are thus confined to what was visible from within the site and from surrounding public areas.

The trees were inspected from the ground only and were not climbed, and no samples of wood, roots or fungi were taken. A full hazard or risk assessment of the trees was not undertaken, and therefore no guarantee, either expressed or implied, of their safety or stability can be given.

Trees are dynamic organisms and are subject to continual growth and change; therefore the dimensions and assessments presented in this schedule should not be relied upon in relation to any development of the site for more than twelve months from the survey date.

1. Tree no.

Given in sequential order, commencing at "1".

2. Species.

'Common names' are given, taken from MITCHELL, A. (1978) A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe.

3. Height.

Estimated with the aid of a hypsometer, given in metres.

4. Trunk diameter.

Trunk diameter measured at approx. 1.5m above ground level; or where the trunk forks into separate stems between ground level and 1.5m, measured at the narrowest point beneath the fork. Given in millimetres.

5. Radial crown spread.

The linear extent of branches from the base of the trunk to the main cardinal points, rounded up to the closest half metre, unless shown otherwise. For small trees with reasonably symmetrical crowns, a single averaged figure is quoted.

6. Crown break.

Height above ground and direction of growth of first significant live branch.

7. Crown clearance.

Distance from adjacent ground level to lowest part of lowest branch, in metres.

8. Age class.

Young: Seedling, sapling or recently planted tree; not yet producing flowers or seeds; strong apical dominance.

Semi-mature: Trunk often still smooth-barked; producing flowers and/or seeds; strong apical dominance, not yet achieved ultimate height.

Mature: Apical dominance lost, tree close to ultimate height.

Over-mature: Mature, but in decline, no crown retrenchment

Veteran: Mature, with a large trunk diameter for species; but showing signs of veteranisation, irrespective of actual age, with decay or hollowing, and a crown showing retrenchment and a structure characteristic of the latter stages of life.

Ancient: Beyond the typical age range and with a very large trunk diameter for species; with extensive decay or hollowing; and a crown that has undergone retrenchment and has a structure characteristic of the latter stages of life.

9. Physiology.

Health, condition and function of the tree, in comparison to a normal specimen of its species and age.

10. Structure.

Structural condition of the tree – based on both the structure of its roots, trunk and major stems and branches, and on the presence of any structural defects or decay.

Good: No significant morphological or structural defects, and an upright and reasonably symmetrical structure.

Moderate: No significant pathological defects, but a slightly impaired morphological structure; however, not to the extent that the tree is at immediate or early risk of collapse.

Indifferent: Significant morphological or pathological defects; but these are either remediable or do not put the tree at immediate or early risk of collapse.

Poor: Significant and irreparable morphological or pathological defects, such that there may be a risk of failure or collapse.

Hazardous: Significant and irreparable morphological or pathological defects, with a risk of imminent collapse.

11. Comments.

Where appropriate comments have been made relating to:

- Health and condition
- Safety, particularly close to areas of public access
- Structure and form
- Estimated life expectancy or potential
- Visibility and impact in the local landscape

12. Category.

Based on the British Standard "Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations", BS 5837: 2012; adjusted to give a greater weighting to trees that contribute to the character and appearance of the local landscape, to amenity, or to arboricultural biodiversity.

Category U: 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.

- (1) Trees that have a serious, irreparable, structural defect, such that their early loss is expected due to collapse, including those that will become unviable after removal of other category 'U' trees (e.g. where, for whatever reason, the loss of companion shelter cannot be mitigated by pruning).
- (2) Trees that are dead or are showing signs of significant, immediate, and irreversible overall decline.
- (3) Trees infected with pathogens of significance to the health and/or safety of other trees nearby, or very low quality trees suppressing adjacent trees of better quality.

Category A: Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years.

- (1) Trees that are particularly good examples of their species, especially if rare or unusual.
- (2) Trees, groups or woodlands of particular visual importance as arboricultural and/or landscape features.
- (3) Trees, groups or woodlands of significant conservation, historical, commemorative or other value.

Category B: Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years.

- (1) Trees that might be included in category 'A', but are downgraded because of impaired condition (e.g. presence of significant though remediable defects including unsympathetic past management and minor storm damage) such that they are unlikely to be suitable for retention for beyond 40 years; or trees lacking the special quality necessary to merit the category 'A' designation.
- (2) Trees present in numbers, usually growing as groups or woodlands, such that they form distinct landscape features, thereby attracting a higher collective rating than they might as individuals; or trees present in numbers but situated so as to make little visual contribution to the wider locality.
- (3) Trees with material conservation or other cultural value.

Category C: Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150mm.

- (1) Unremarkable trees of very limited merit or of such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories.
- (2) Trees present in groups or woodlands, but without this conferring on them significantly greater collective landscape value, and/or trees offering low or only temporary landscape benefits.
- (3) Trees with no material limited conservation or other cultural value.

TREE SURVEY SCHEDULE

Early East, Thames Valley Park Drive, Reading

No.	Species	Height	Trunk diameter	Radial crown spread	Crown break	Crown clearance	Age class	Physio -logy	Structure	Comments	Category
1	Dogwood	5m	190mm	N 4.25m E 5m S 4.5m W 2.25m	1.5m	1.75m	Semi-mature	Average	Moderate	Situated in small planting area between buildings; small ornamental tree; of moderate quality, but currently of low value due to small size; of short-term potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)
2-3	Himalayan birch	10m	#T2 2 stems @ 110mm #T3 155mm 130mm	N 3m E 4.5m S 2.75m W 4m	3m	E 3m	Semi-mature	Average	Indifferent	Situated in small planting area between buildings; small ornamental trees; twin-stemmed from bases showing acute unions with no bark to bark contact; multiple historic pruning wounds on lower trunk consistent with crown raising showing moderate occlusion; of short-term potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)
4	Himalayan birch	8m	75mm 70mm 100mm	2.75m	2m	2.25m	Young	Average	Indifferent	Situated in small planting area between buildings; small ornamental tree; multi-stemmed from base; of short-term potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)
5-6	Silver birch	#T5 10m #T6 7m	#T5 135mm 135mm 140mm #T6 100mm 110mm	N 3.5m E 3.75m S 3m W 3.75m	2.5m	E 2.25m	Semi-mature	Average	Indifferent	Situated in small planting area between buildings; multi-stemmed from bases showing acute unions with no bark to bark contact; multiple historic pruning wounds on lower trunk consistent with crown raising showing minor occlusion; small ornamental trees; of short-term potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)
7-9	English oak	11m	#T7 185mm #T8 265mm #T9 200mm	N 3.5m E 2m S 4m W 2.75m	2.5m	3m	Semi-mature	Average	Moderate	Part of planted belt adjacent to car park; single trunks; tensile main unions; minor deadwood throughout crown consistent with setting; part of aerodynamic group with meshing crowns providing companion shelter; of moderate quality, but currently of low value due to small size; of moderate potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)
10-12	English oak	12m	#T10 195mm #T11 170mm #T12 185mm	N 4.5m E 3.5m S 3m W 3m	2.75m	E 2.75m	Semi-mature	Average	Moderate	Part of planted belt adjacent to car park; single trunks; drawn-up and mutually suppressed; multiple historic pruning wounds on lower trunk consistent with crown raising showing full occlusion; deadwood up to 25mm diameter in lower canopies; acute main unions with no bark to bark contact; part of aerodynamic group with meshing crowns providing companion shelter; of moderate potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)

No.	Species	Height	Trunk diameter	Radial crown spread	Crown break	Crown clearance	Age class	Physio - logy	Structure	Comments	Category
13	Hazel	8m	5 stems @ 60mm 4 stems @ 40mm 3 stems @ 85mm all est.	N 2.5m E 2.75m S 4.25m W 2.5m	2m	E 2m	Semi-mature	Average	Poor	Situated in planted belt adjacent to car park; historically coppiced; many tight unions; unremarkable tree of very limited merit; of short-term potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)
14	English oak	14m	205mm 260mm	N 5.5m E 4.5m S 5m W 5.5m	3m	N 3m	Semi-mature	Average	Indifferent	Part of planted belt adjacent to car park; twin-stemmed from base showing acute union with bark to bark contact; deadwood up to 25mm in lower canopy; acute main unions with no bark to bark contact; part of aerodynamic group with meshing crowns providing companion shelter; of short-term potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)
15-16	English oak	10m	#T15 180mm #T16 220mm	N 3.25m E 3m S 4.75m W 4.75m	2.25m	W 2.5m	Semi-mature	Average	Moderate	Situated in planted belt adjacent to car park; single trunks; #15 minor surface wound on S side of trunk at 0.5m, no evidence of internal decay, significant reaction wood present; multiple historic pruning wounds on lower trunks consistent with crown raising showing full occlusion; tensile main unions; minor deadwood throughout crown consistent with setting; part of aerodynamic group with meshing crowns providing companion shelter; of moderate potential; of moderate quality, but currently of low value due to small size; obscured from public view.	C (1)
17	Flowering cherry	11m	185mm	N 2.5m E 2.5m S 4.75m W 4.5m	2.25m	W 2.5m	Semi-mature	Below average	Indifferent	Situated in planted belt adjacent to car park; single trunk; tensile main unions; above average dead wood in crown; sparsely foliated; part of aerodynamic group with meshing crowns providing companion shelter; of short-term potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)
18-19	English oak	13m	#T18 265mm #T19 205mm	N 2.75m E 4m S 4.75m W 3.25m	1.75m	S 2.5m	Semi-mature	Average	Moderate	Situated in planted belt adjacent to car park; single trunks; tensile main unions; minimal deadwood; of moderate quality, but currently of low value due to small size; of moderate potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)
G1	Various	Max 1.75m Avg 1m	Max 75mm	0.5m	0m	0m	Young	Average	Indifferent	Group consisting of dogwood, hazel, field maple and mixed low level exotic shrubs; situated in small planting area between buildings; forms understory to larger trees; maintained to compact form; of limited arboricultural value; of short-term potential; obscured from public view.	C (1)

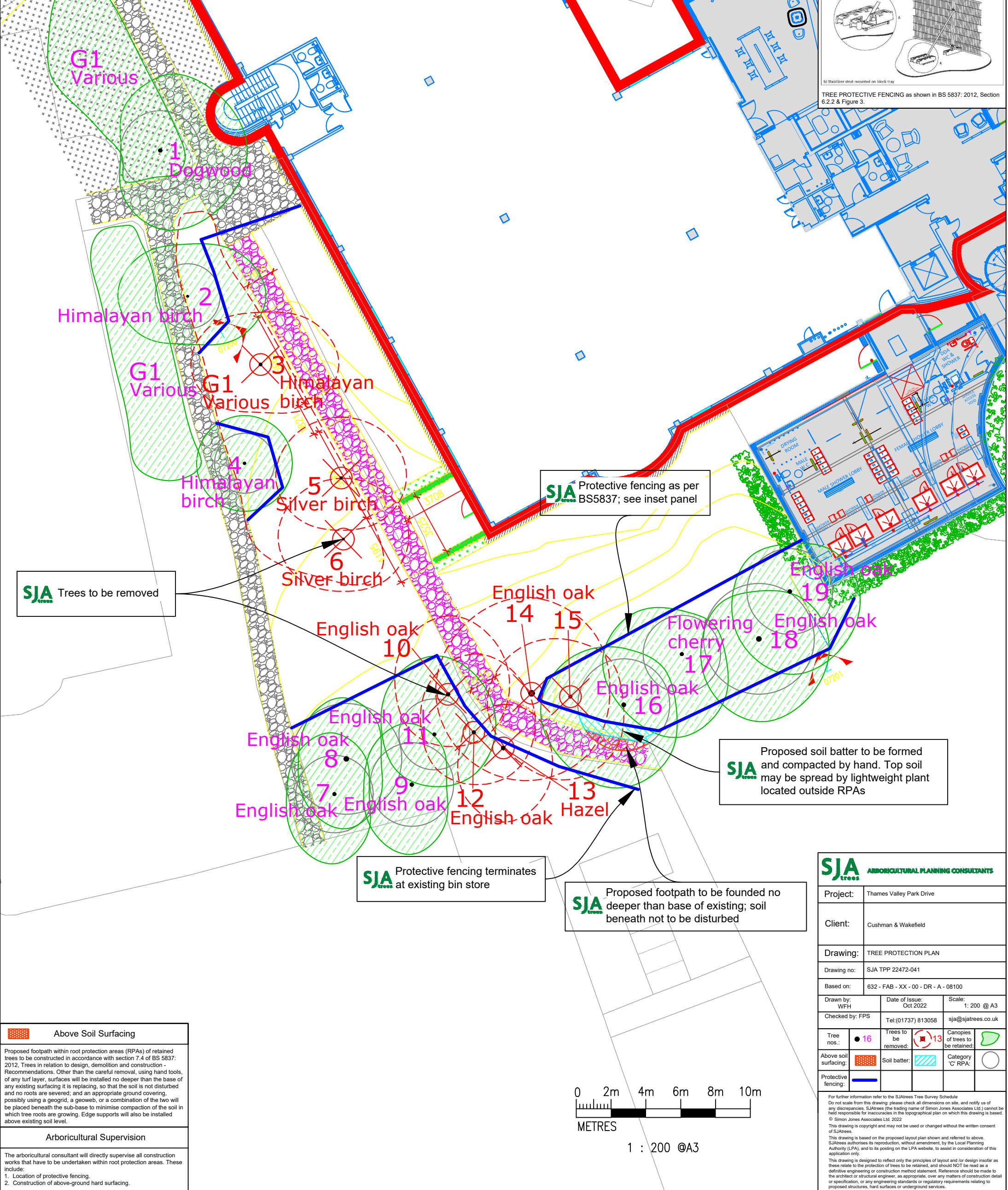
Root Protection Areas (RPAs)

Root Protection Areas have been calculated in accordance with paragraph 4.6.1 of the British Standard 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations', BS 5837:2012. This is the minimum area which should be left undisturbed around each retained tree. RPAs are portrayed initially as a circle of a fixed radius from the centre of the trunk; but where there appear to be restrictions to root growth the circle is modified to reflect more accurately the likely distribution of roots.

<i>Tree No.</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>RPA</i>	<i>RPA Radius</i>
1	Dogwood	16.3m ²	2.3m
2-3	Himalayan birch	10.9m ² 18.5m ²	1.9m 2.4m
4	Himalayan birch	9.3m ²	1.7m
5-6	Silver birch	25.4m ² 10.0m ²	2.8m 1.8m
7-9	English oak	15.5m ² 31.8m ² 18.1m ²	2.2m 3.2m 2.4m
10-12	English oak	17.2m ² 13.1m ² 15.5m ²	2.3m 2.0m 2.2m
13	Hazel	19.3m ²	2.5m
14	English oak	49.6m ²	4.0m
15-16	English oak	14.7m ² 21.9m ²	2.2m 2.6m
17	Flowering cherry	15.5m ²	2.2m
18-19	English oak	31.8m ² 19.0m ²	3.2m 2.5m
G1	Various	2.5m ²	0.9m

APPENDIX 3
Tree Protection Plan

Arboricultural Impacts: Summary		
(For details, see below)		
Impact	No. of Trees	
Trees to be removed	8	
Groups of trees to be removed	0	
Groups to be partially removed	1	
TPO trees to be removed	0	
Trees to be pruned	0	
Trees where manual excavation needed within RPAs	0	
Trees where above soil surfacing needed within RPAs	1	
Trees with proposed underground services within RPAs	0	
Trees to be Removed		
No	Species	Category
3	Himalayan birch	C (1)
5	Silver birch	C (1)
6	Silver birch	C (1)
10	English oak	C (1)
12	English oak	C (1)
13	Hazel	C (1)
14	English oak	C (1)
15	English oak	C (1)



Protective Fencing

To be erected prior to the commencement of all works on site, and retained in place throughout construction. To comprise 2m tall 'Heras' welded mesh panels on rubber or concrete feet. The panels shall be joined together with two anti-tamper couplers, installed so that they can only be removed from inside the fence. Distance between the couplers should be at least 1m and should be uniform throughout the fence. Panels should be supported (where possible) on the inner side by stabilizer struts, which should normally be attached to a base plate secured with ground pins (Figure 3a). Where the fencing is to be erected on retained hard surfacing or it is otherwise unfeasible to use ground pins, e.g. due to the presence of underground services, the stabilizer struts shall be mounted on a block tray (Figure 3b). "TREE PROTECTION ZONE - KEEP OUT" or similar notices to be attached to every fifth panel.

Figure 3 Examples of above-ground stabilizing systems

a) Stabilizer strut with base plate secured with ground pins

b) Stabilizer strut mounted on block tray

TREE PROTECTIVE FENCING as shown in BS 5837: 2012, Section 6.2.2 & Figure 3.

SJA trees ARBORICULTURAL PLANNING CONSULTANTS

Project: Thames Valley Park Drive

Client: Cushman & Wakefield

Drawing: TREE PROTECTION PLAN

Drawing no: SJA TPP 22472-041

Based on: 632 - FAB - XX - 00 - DR - A - 08100

Drawn by: WFF **Date of Issue:** Oct 2022 **Scale:** 1: 200 @ A3

Checked by: FPS **Tel:** (01737) 813058 **sja@sjatrees.co.uk**

Tree nos.: 16	Trees to be removed: 13	Canopies of trees to be retained:
Above soil surfacing:	Soil batter:	Category 'C' RPA:
Protective fencing:		

For further information refer to the SJAtrees Tree Survey Schedule. Do not scale from this drawing: please check all dimensions on site, and notify us of any discrepancies. SJAtrees (the trading name of Simon Jones Associates Ltd.) cannot be held responsible for inaccuracies in the topographical plan on which this drawing is based. © Simon Jones Associates Ltd. 2022. This drawing is copyright and may not be used or changed without the written consent of SJAtrees. This drawing is based on the proposed layout plan shown and referred to above. SJAtrees authorises its reproduction, without amendment, by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), and to its posting on the LPA website, to assist in consideration of this application only. This drawing is designed to reflect only the principles of layout and/or design insofar as these relate to the protection of trees to be retained, and should NOT be read as a definitive engineering or construction method statement. Reference should be made to the architect or structural engineer, as appropriate, over any matters of construction detail or specification, or any engineering standards or regulatory requirements relating to proposed structures, hard surfaces or underground services.