

ARBORICULTURAL SURVEY REPORT

In relation to development proposals at:

Upper Culham Farm
Henley on Thames
Berkshire, RG10 8NR

DSE/WLA/-V3-XX-DR-Y-TSR
30 April 2025

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Validation statement

This report contains supporting information to describe trees on and near Upper Culham Farm, Henley (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). For validation purposes, this report includes:

- An assessment of tree and tree group quality in accordance with Table 1 of the British Standard.
- Annexed tree survey plan (1 of) and tree constraints plans (3 of), giving graphical representation of trees relative to nearby structures and their calculated root protection areas relative to the proposal.

1 Copyright

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2 Qualifications and experience

2.1 Margaret Wright is director of Wright Landscape and Arboriculture Ltd with 20 years industry experience both as an arboricultural consultant and Local Authority Tree Officer. Margaret has presented research at a national conference and has been awarded an arboricultural MSc (first) with the University of Central Lancashire.

2.2 Margaret is Bond Solon trained, a former executive committee member of the London Tree Officer's Association and professional member of the Arboricultural Association. Published works, qualifications and details of forthcoming publications provided on request.



CONTENTS

	PAGE
3 Introduction	4
4 Documents supplied	4
5 Statutory designations	4
6 Caveats	5
7 Use of this document	5
8 Technical references	6
9 Site description	6
10 Tree stock assessment	6
11 Preliminary recommendations	8
12 Site specific risks	8
13 Development appraisal	10
14 Tree constraints	10
15 Above ground constraints	11
16 Below ground constraints	11
17 Impact from development	11
18 Tree protection	12
19 Summary	12

Appendices

- i Table 1 Tree quality assessment cascade chart of BS 5837:2012

Annexed plans

- Annex A. Tree Survey Plan ref DSE/WLA-V3-XX-DR-Y-TSP Rev A
Annex B Tree Constraints Plans ref DSE/WLA-V3-XX-DR-Y-TCP 1 of 3 Rev B
Annex C Tree Constraints Plans ref DSE/WLA-V3-XX-DR-Y-TCP 2 of 3 Rev B
Annex D Tree Constraints Plans ref DSE/WLA-V3-XX-DR-Y-TCP 3 of 3 Rev A



3 Introduction

3.1 This report provides a preliminary description of trees on and adjacent to the application site. Advice is given with the aim of providing sufficient arboricultural information for the Local Planning Authorities to assist in their decision-making process.

4 Documents supplied

4.1 In order to assist with the formation of this report, Wright Landscape and Arboriculture have been provided with the following plans: **Topographical Survey Upper Culham Farm.**

5 Statutory designations

5.1 It is understood that an area tree preservation order covers trees to the west of the site. These trees grow on the other side of Culham Lane, in Conway Park (fig 1).

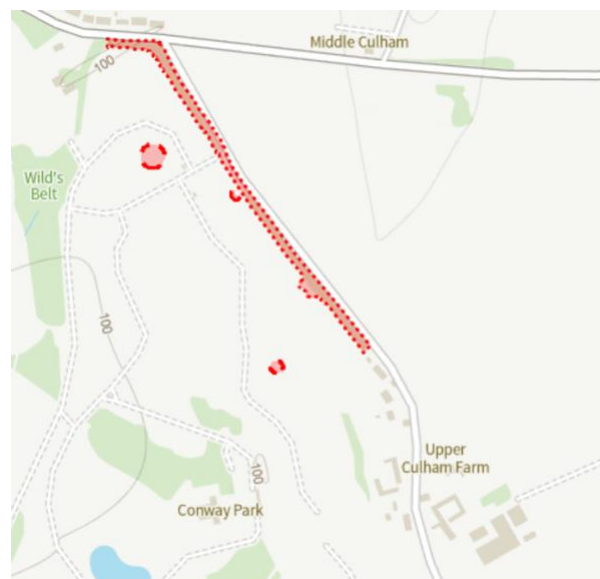


Figure 1; Red hatching denotes position of confirmed TPO on Conway Pk.

5.2 The root protection area (RPA) of these trees extends under the road and into the site by up to 1m. The proposal is remote from this area of the site and should not affect the roots of these trees.

5.3 The site is not within a conservation area.



5.4 Rose Hill Wood grows to the north of Henley Road (A4130), near the north-east corner of the site. This woodland is designated ancient woodland, therefore future development proposals should consider a 15m buffer in this corner, in accordance with national policy guidance¹.

6 Caveats

6.1 With regards to the General Data Protection Regulations [GDPR] (EU) 2016/679 in force as of May 2018, Wright Landscape and Arboriculture's records of the site and the management advice contained within this report will be kept for 12 months. Within this 12-month period (beginning on completion of our commission) data gathered on behalf of the client will not be shared unless the express consent of the client has been given in writing. After that 12 month period, all records will be deleted unless otherwise advised by the client.

6.2 Birds and bats (including nests and roosts of a temporary nature) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way act 2000) and under European legislation by the Conservation of Habitats Regulations 2010. It is therefore essential that any future works to tree are timed considerably to avoid disturbance of any protected species.

6.3 Predictions on the future growth of trees and significant bodies of vegetation are made on the assumption of average environmental conditions over the next decade in the absence of extreme weather events and unforeseen changes in the availability of soil water. Predictions should be considered with the view that trees may grow considerably more or less dependent on environment.

7 Use of this document

7.1 British Standards are guidelines produced by the British Standards Institute Group, the National Standards body for the UK. British Standards are best practice documents, following formal consensus of opinion from arboricultural industry peer review.

7.2 British Standard BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – recommendations [BS5837] provides guidance on the assessment

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions>



of trees in the context of development and sets minimum standards for protection of retained trees on development sites.

7.3 Recommendations within British Standard documents are not law. However, for planning applications that have the potential to impact trees, the majority of Local Planning Authorities [LPAs] require submission of an arboricultural report compliant with the recommendations of this standard. This report is designed to provide scoping and tree quality advice and will need amending in order to satisfy LPA validation requirements.

8 Technical references

8.1 This report is based on the following technical references (where applicable):

- British Standards Institution (2010) BS 3998: Tree works – recommendations.
- British Standards Institution (2012) BS 5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction- recommendations.

9 Site description

9.1 The site is described as an attractive rural equestrian property with paddocks and arable farmland. The site is bordered by native species hedging, planted approximately ten years ago. An outdoor arena is bordered by a windbreak of mature balsam poplar with a collection of bank-planted ash, pine and lime edging arable land to the south. The site comprises an area which was formerly the RAF Henley base during WWII.

10 Tree assessment

Trees edging the barns and arena:

10.1 A row of mature pear form an avenue from the site entrance at Culham Lane.

Four of these trees have been planted close to the flank wall of the barn and some pruning will be needed within the next five years to address contact with the structure.

10.2 A row of mature balsam poplars edge an access road to the fields, separating the yard and arena from paddocks to the north. These poplars have been heavily pruned in the past and whilst the regrowth is healthy, these trees should not be



allowed to grow full and open canopies; the regrowth will have weak attachment points and will be prone to branch failure if left unmanaged.

10.3 Future management should include pruning every five years. This won't affect the tree's lifespan but will reduce the risk of tree or branch failure, ensuring safety irrespective of future development plans.

10.4 A soil bank separates the arena from the arable land to the south, hosting healthy semi-mature native trees. These trees appear to have been planted approximately 10 years ago. Despite being on raised ground, the trees show no drought stress, provide a valuable windbreak for the arena, and offer habitat for local wildlife. Given the presence of the mature hedge on Culham Lane, these trees are not visible from the public highway.

10.5 A 2m high clipped privet hedge borders the northern edge of the arena, separating it from the access road and paddocks. This is not native privet, but it is attractive in its clipped form, nonetheless.

Trees edging the paddocks:

10.6 A row of early-mature trees separates the paddocks from arable land to the east. These trees have been planted approximately 10-15 years ago and are generally in good health with the exception of the ash; these trees appear to be suffering from environmental stress, most likely a combination of drought and wind damage. No signs of ash dieback disease were noted.

10.7 The paddocks are bordered by neatly clipped native hedging. Hedging is mainly hawthorn, with some field maple and dog rose.

Fields bordering Culham Lane:

10.8 The triangular field bordering Culham Lane benefits from a collection of mature oak in its southern corner. These trees have large stem diameters and will have large RPAs; any development of the site should consider access from the north, outside the RPAs and existing field gate access. Whilst not noted during survey, it is expected this area is host to wildflowers and bluebells.



Trees and hedging along the Henley Road (A4130) boundary:

10.9 Mature native hedging forms the site's northernmost boundary along Henley Road. This hedging is a mix of native species, including hazel, maple, hawthorn and elm. The dense hedgerow provides valuable wildlife corridor and foraging habitat.

10.10 The Henley Road boundary benefits from a wide grass verge with native wildflower planting. There is a scattering of mature trees along this boundary, including several ash approximately 150 years old, two oaks between 200-250 years old and one oak approximately 300-350 years old.

11 Preliminary recommendations

11.1 Oak and ash trees along the northern boundary should be given a precautionary 15m RPA, in accordance with national guidelines on ancient and veteran specimens. Whilst these trees are not veteran in age, they retain many veteran features valuable for wildlife.

11.2 Any proposals that require the removal of hedgerow on the northern boundary or boundary with Culham Lane should seek replanting compensation in the immediate area to continue that wildlife corridor effect.

11.3 From an ecological perspective, the non-native privet hedgerow bordering the arena provides little valuable foraging habitat.

11.4 The balsam poplars, trees along the bank and trees edging the eastern boundary of the paddocks will act as valuable windbreaks. The site occupies an area of flat ground and is exposed to east winds.

12 Site specific risks

12.1 Tree species known to be poisonous to horses include;

- Yew
- Field maple
- Sycamore
- Cherry
- Oak



12.2 Yew has been found growing on the bank behind the barn. This area is not accessible to horses and no risk is identified. If the arable fields east of the site are to be turned to grassland, then these trees should be removed if they cannot be fenced off.

12.3 Field maple grows in the tree belt separating the paddocks from arable land to the east. It is also present in hedging around the paddock. There is one large, mature sycamore near the paddock gates. Both species contain hypoglycin-A, which is harmful to horses. However, field maple only contains trace amounts of this chemical and is not considered to be a foreseeable or significant risk whereas sycamore is highly toxic.

12.4 There is only one sycamore on site, growing in a hedge adjacent to one of the smaller paddocks. The leaves, bark and seeds of this tree can be poisonous and the client is advised to fence the tree off. A relatively small amount of seeds or bark can be fatal, and so exclusion is advised.

12.5 Cherry is present in the shelter-belt bordering the paddocks. However, the tree is only likely to be poisonous when the fruit is eaten in large quantities. Toxins are also present in the leaves and these can be poisonous in large quantities. Grown in this position amongst suppressing tree cover it is not thought that these trees will produce large quantities of fruit or leaves.

12.6 The bark, leaves and acorns of oak all contain tannins and chemicals toxic to horses. Oak poisoning is rare, and given the high quality of paddock grazing it is not expected to be of interest to horses. However, the client is advised to consider fencing off the trees and regular removal of acorns in mast years (heavy acorn cropping years, approximately every 10-12 years).



Arboricultural Impact Assessment

13 Development appraisal

13.1 The application proposes development of a polo/equestrian centre with American barns, polo paddocks, a pavilion, new access roads and parking and a reservoir to support the new landscape.

13.2 The root protection areas (RPA) of TG3 will be affected by the new estate track. Privet hedging and a small section of native hedging will need to be removed and TG15 will also need to be removed.

14 Tree constraints

14.1 The data collected on trees forms the basis for calculating above and below ground constraints to development. Above ground constraints would include canopy spread and shading whereas below ground constraints are indicated by the RPA calculated in accordance with BS5837 (fig. 2).

14.2 The RPA as defined by BS5837 is a design tool or (theoretical) model which represents the minimum soil volume to sustain healthy life of a tree. This is detailed as a magenta dashed line on the annexed plans.

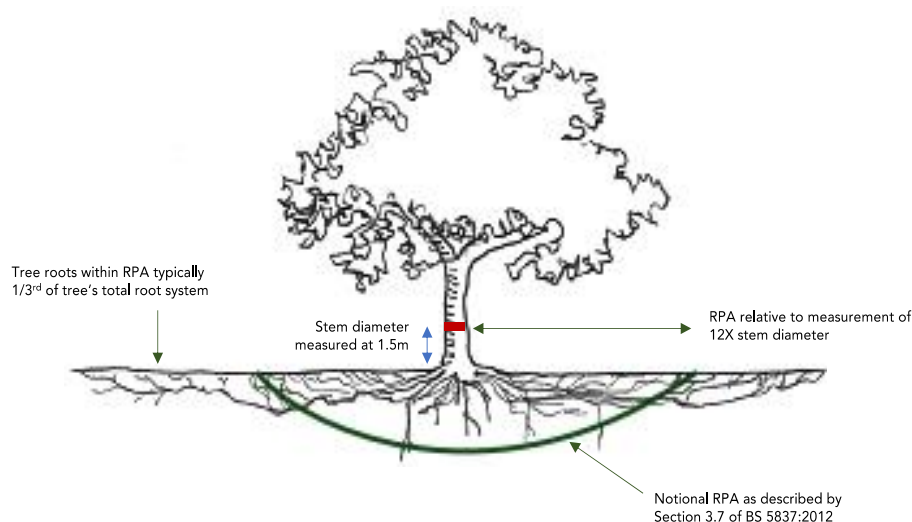


Fig 2; Notional root protection area as described by the British Standard BS 5837:2012

14.3 Where proposed structures affect the RPA of retained trees, the impact has been calculated using the standard model, accounting for the possibility that roots



have grown in every direction. No offset model has been offered. Enhanced RPAs have been offered for veteran trees wherever possible.

15 Above ground constraints

15.1 The proposed development respects the canopy spread of retained trees and no pruning is required to facilitate construction or access.

16 Below ground constraints

16.1 New services connecting the paddock pumphouse and reservoir can be positioned between RPAs of TG2 without need for excavation into the RPA.

16.2 TG15 will need to be removed to facilitate development. However, these trees are not visible from the public highway and replacements on site can adequately mitigate this loss.

16.3 The new estate road generally follows the path of the existing farm track and where it is proposed to fall across the RPA of TG3, the surface can be positioned above ground level (e.g. using a cellular confinement system) to ensure no lasting harm to retained trees.

16.4 The privet hedge by the arena will need to be removed. This is a non-native hedge spanning approximately 64.5m in length. It is feasible to replace this with a native hedge elsewhere on site.

16.5 A new access entrance from Henley Road will be required – this will necessitate the removal of approximately 2.7m of native hedgerow. There is sufficient space on site for this hedge to be replaced with no net loss resulting from development.

16.6 Overall, the impact on retained trees is minimal and likely to be tolerated without adverse effects on the health of retained trees or their future rooting capacity.

17 Impact from development

17.1 Development has been carefully positioned to minimise harm to retain trees and construction is likely to be tolerated by trees without lasting effects on tree health. The proposal requires only the loss of 28 semi-mature grade trees which are not visible from the public highway.



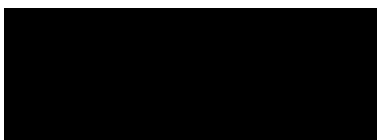
17.2 The hedgerow along Henley Road contributes positively to the verdant character of the area and forms a strong visual boundary. Only a small section of this hedge needs to be removed and it is unlikely that the proposal would alter the public perception of the landscape or diminish the character of the local area. The loss of hedgerow necessitated by the proposed development, is therefore unlikely to be of material consequence in visual or arboricultural terms.

18 Tree protection

18.1 Providing construction methods adhere to precautions as set out in BS 5837:2012 there should be no detrimental impact on retained trees.

19 Summary

- The loss of semi-mature trees will not be visible from the public highway.
- New hedging will replace the small amount of hedging lost for the new entrance on Henley Road/A4130
- Any new surfacing within the RPA of retained trees will be placed over the existing farm track network, leading to no new impact on trees.



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Appendix i TREE REPORT – CASCADE CHART FOR TREE QUALITY ASSESSMENT

(extracted from British Standard BS 5837:2012 Table 1)

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Table 1 Cascade chart for tree quality assessment

Category and definition	Criteria (including subcategories where appropriate)			Identification on plan
Trees unsuitable for retention (see Note)				
Category U Those 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	- Trees that have a serious, irremediable, 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) - Trees that are dead or are showing signs of significant, immediate, and irreversible overall decline - 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 <i>NOTE Category U trees can have existing or potential conservation value which it might be desirable to preserve; see 4.5.7.</i>			See Table 2
	1 Mainly arboricultural qualities	2 Mainly landscape qualities	3 Mainly cultural values, including conservation	
Trees to be considered for retention				
Category A Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years	Trees that are particularly good examples of their species, especially if rare or unusual; or those that are essential components of groups or formal or semi-formal arboricultural features (e.g. the dominant and/or principal trees within an avenue)	Trees, groups or woodlands of particular visual importance as arboricultural and/or landscape features	Trees, groups or woodlands of significant conservation, historical, commemorative or other value (e.g. veteran trees or wood-pasture)	See Table 2
Category B Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years	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 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	Trees present in numbers, usually growing as groups or woodlands, such that they attract a higher collective rating than they might as individuals; or trees occurring as collectives but situated so as to make little visual contribution to the wider locality	Trees with material conservation or other cultural value	See Table 2
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 150 mm	Unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories	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/transient landscape benefits	Trees with no material conservation or other cultural value	See Table 2