



FAO Arboricultural Officer
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge St
Reading
RG1 2LU

Your reference: 181640

10 June 2019

Arboricultural monitoring report

5-9 BERKELEY AVENUE, READING, RG1 6EL

Site visits undertaken on the 02/05/2019 and the 08/05/19

General/summary

- Construction works are progressing across the site.
- First occupation in the northern part of the site is due around June and attention is turning to the preparation of the parking court (lower level on the north side of the site).
- In addition, landscaping works on the embankment adjacent the parking court and up to Berkeley Avenue is also being undertaken.
- Some of this approved work is within the CEZ around London Plane (T1).

Contacts

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- Project Manager: Sean Buckley sean.buckley@weston-homes.com
- Reading Borough Council Tree Officer: Sarah Hanson Sarah.Hanson@reading.gov.uk
- Client: Weston Homes.

Site visit

- Date: 02.05.19 and 08.05.19
- Attendees: R Hyett (BHA). Sean Buckley (WH)

General Observations

The soft landscaping works in the north east corner of the site has been completed and is establishing well.



Photo 1 and 2: The image on the left shows the area south of the northern access to Berkeley Avenue. The image on the right shows the condition of landscape area beneath London Plane T7 - NB this is the same as proposed beneath T1.

The exterior scaffold has been installed on the southern part of the site. It was noted in discussion with the site manager that the crowns of the offsite silver birch trees (not identified on the original SJ Stephens tree survey) are in contact with scaffold (see photo 3 below). The branches are small and flexible and have been moved to one side during the scaffold installation. It is not proposed to prune these branches as the conflict with the scaffold is only temporary and the final build line is some 2-3m back from the crown edge.



Photo 3: showing the minor contact between scaffolding and offsite silver birch trees.

The same issue was noted with regards to the crown of T1 (See photo 4 below). This is in part due to the growth of T1 since the temporary scaffold access stairs were installed. Again, no pruning is required as the final offset between the crown and the building elevation is circa 3m.



Photo 4: showing the minor contact between temporary access stairs and the crown of T1.

Northern embankment works

As part of the approved works it is necessary to regrade the north embankment where it leads down the under-croft parking court. In reality the extent of the work is minimal and primarily involves the removal of vegetation and the re-distribution of topsoil in order to cover the existing retaining wall.

However, in order to carry out this work it is necessary for a small excavator to create a working platform at the base of the slope. Site access restrictions prevent a large excavator being used and the platform is required for the safe operation of the machine. The approach can be seen in photo 5, overleaf. The embankment works extend in to the CEZ beneath T1.



Photo 5: showing the regrading work required to the embankment down to the edge of the parking bays and over the existing retaining wall. Note, this is not within the CEZ of T1.

Given that some excavation in to the bank was required to establish the working platform concerns were raised about the potential on the roots of T1. Two trial holes were recommended to confirm the presence or absence of roots. The trial holes were excavated on the 08/05/19 with the Project Arboriculturist and Project Manager present. The trial holes can be seen in photos 6 and 7 below.



Photo 6 and 7: showing the trial pits excavated in the CEZ of T1. Photo 6 was excavated approximately 3m south of the stem of T1 and to a depth of circa 400mm. Photo 7 was excavated approximately 1m north of the existing retaining wall to a depth of circa 600mm on the alignment of the platform required for machine access (similar location to that shown in photo 5).



The trial hole on the alignment of the work platform was excavated to 100mm below the required depth of the platform. Approximately 300mm of topsoil/humus was discovered and this did not contain any roots emanating from T1. Beneath this was approximately 300mm of made ground comprised of a gravel type material which contained no roots at all.

The trial hole excavated 3m south of T1 revealed 300mm of topsoil/humus and a dark coloured sub soil below; possibly made ground. A small number (3 in total) of fine roots up to 2mm diameter were observed at a minimum depth of 200mm. These are believed (although not confirmed with laboratory identification) to emanate from T1. The maximum required depth of regarding at this location on the slope is 100mm. Based on the trial holes the fine root layer is beneath the depth of regrading.

On the basis of the trial hole excavations the Project Manager was advised that works could continue using the same methodology to regrade the bank within the CEZ of T1. A buffer of 3m from the stem where no regrading work should be carried out was also recommended. Once the regrading work is completed the remaining vegetation will be sprayed off using a systemic contact herbicide and the area soft landscaped in line with the approved landscape drawings (as per photo 2 - including mulching).



Photo 8: showing the base of T1 with the area recommended for retention left in situ and the bank regraded. Note, the soil disturbance close to the stem was only for vegetation clearance and the upper slope was not regraded.



Points for action

I recommend that the following actions are carried out:

- The installation of the soft landscape beneath T1 is undertaken by the landscape contractor in discussion with the project arboriculturist.
- At an appropriate time the external scaffold and access stairs are removed with care to avoid damage to the crowns of the offsite birch and T1.
- That a further site monitoring inspection is undertaken in July 2019 with an interim call to the site manager to discuss any issues or queries that may have arisen.

Should you have any questions regarding the contents of this site monitoring report, please feel free to contact me.

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