

Sylva Consultancy
expert arboricultural advice

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Land at The Abbey School
(Kensington & Abbey Gardens)
Reading
Berkshire
RG2 7AR

May 2018

Ref: 1856/AIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instructions

1.1.1 This arboricultural impact report has been prepared by Sylva Consultancy on behalf of The Abbey School, Reading in support of an application for planning permission with regard to the construction of a single storey and a two storey extension at Kensington, with the re-arrangement of the front courtyard. In addition the application details new boundary treatments for both Kensington and Abbey Gardens.

1.1.2 This appraisal assesses the impact of the potential to re-develop the site in relation to the trees and discusses mitigation measures that may have to be adopted. The following plans are from a document bundle received from Kendall Kingscott Limited:

- 170184 P(0)121 A-Proposed Site Context Plan
- 170184 P(0)122 Prop Site Plan Abbey Gardens
- 170184 P(0)126 Prop Netball Courts Plan

1.2. Arboricultural Survey

1.2.1 During August 2017 and May 2018 a tree survey was carried out in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction-Recommendations' and good arboricultural practice. This is a basic data collection exercise and a record of the trees' condition at the time of surveying. The tree survey data, tree survey plan and arboricultural constraints plans are included in the 'Arboricultural Survey' and has been forwarded to the client.

1.2.2 Information received from Reading Borough Council (RBC) details that select trees within the grounds of Kensington and Abbey Gardens are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) 84/04 and 63/05 (Appendix 2).

1.2.3 A TPO '*prohibits the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction to protected trees or woodlands unless permission has been granted by the LPA*'.

1.2.4 In addition to the above TPO's trees located at Kensington are situated within Christchurch Road Conservation Area. Trees in a Conservation Area that are not protected by a TPO are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

1.3 Site Description

1.3.1 Only select trees at Kensington and Abbey Gardens have been surveyed for the purpose of this report. At Kensington the main school building is set back from Christchurch Road with the majority of the trees surveyed located adjacent to the northern and western boundaries. In front of the main building is an area of existing hard standing with modest soft ground areas located adjacent to Christchurch Road and Vicarage Road. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and flat.

1.3.2 At Abbey Gardens the trees that have been surveyed are adjacent to northern boundary (Christchurch Gardens) and eastern boundary (Northumberland Avenue). The trees provide a welcome green screen to the site and contribute both to the visual amenity of the school and wider landscape.

2. ARBORICULTURAL SURVEY

- 2.1 A total of 35 trees and 2 groups have been recorded. The tree quality is assessed as follows:

U: Trees that are considered to be of such condition that any existing value would be lost within 10 years and which should, in the current context, be removed for reasons of sound arboriculture management. However, if category 'U' trees are placed in an inaccessible location such that concerns over public safety are reduced to an acceptable level, it may be preferable or possible to defer this recommendation.

A: Trees of the highest quality and value and are considered to be of such a condition as to be able to make a substantial contribution (e.g. 40 years +).

B: Trees of moderate to high value and are considered to be of such a condition as to be able to make a significant contribution (e.g. 20 years +).

C: Trees of low quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 10 years. Unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories. Young trees with a stem diameter of less than 150mm should be considered for relocation or replacement through mitigation (e.g. 10 years).

Category A, B & C trees are further divided into sub-categories. These sub-categories carry equal weight and are selected for either arboricultural values, landscape values or cultural values, including conservation. Within the British Standard 5837:2012 it is recommended to record hedge and shrub masses, however in the context of the standard it is not necessary to assess the quality of these or to provide a category classification.

The numbers of trees falling under each classification within the arboricultural survey are as follows:

U: 1 tree

A: 2 trees

B: 20 trees

C: 12 trees & 2 groups

3. PRINCIPLE ARBORICULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 It is proposed to re-develop land at The Abbey School with landscape provision. The scheme is to comprise of a single storey and a two storey extension at Kensington, with the re-arrangement of the front courtyard. In addition the application details new boundary treatments for both Kensington and Abbey Gardens.
- 3.1.2 Consideration is given to the significance of the trees identified in the arboricultural tree survey, the constraints that they are likely to pose to any development that may occur, post development implications (if any) and work requirements to trees for reasons of sound arboricultural management in support of the development (BS5837:2012 Section 5.4).

3.2 Trees

- 3.2.1 From the information provided it has been assessed that tree T17, Copper Beech, located at Kensington is subject to TPO 84/04, with the following trees at Abbey Gardens also interpreted as being subject to TPO 63/05: T21, T22 & T23 Holm Oak x 3, T34 Horse Chestnut & T35 Yew.
- 3.2.2 Please note that comments regarding the Tree Preservation Order are only interpreted from the document received for the purpose of this report. As such to ensure that the interpretation of the information is reliable it is advised that Reading Borough Council are contacted for clarification of which trees are subject to TPO's.
- 3.2.3 The tree stock is predominantly confined to the boundaries of Kensington and Abbey Gardens, with only one offsite tree and one offsite group being recorded adjacent to the Netball Courts. It is considered that the most significant trees within the potentially developable area are the category 'A' and 'B' trees. Notwithstanding this merit must also be given to the contribution that the lower grade trees and groups provide to the site. As such it is recommended that due consideration regarding their retention, should development occur is undertaken as they have the potential to provide useful softening and screening to the sites.
- 3.2.4 The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, provides statutory protection to birds, bats and other species that inhabit trees. These have the potential to pose additional constraints on the use and timings of works that may occur to trees located at The Abbey School. These issues are beyond my expertise and it is strongly recommended that appropriate advice is sort prior to the implementation of any works considered within this report.

3.3 Overview

- 3.3.1 The tree survey concluded that the most noteworthy trees within influencing distance of the potentially developable area are the category 'A' and 'B' trees. These trees are deemed to form pleasant features within the landscape with the trees contributing to the visual amenity of the school, Conservation Area and wider landscape.
- 3.3.2 The arboricultural impact plans (Appendices 3, 4 & 5) illustrate the proposals in relation to the tree stock. In addition to pre-development concerns, post development matters such as shading, debris and concerns of the trees proximity and juxtaposition to the proposal have also be considered during the design process.

- 3.3.3 The proposals at Kensington and Abbey Gardens have undergone a rigorous design process to ensure an efficient use of the site with the proposals carefully developed to fit sensitively into the existing settings. The design further includes a detailed landscape plan developed by Cambuim – Landscape Architecture.
- 3.3.4 An assessment of the design on the tree stock reveal that 4 trees will require removal. It is considered that the arboricultural impact of the scheme on the tree stock will not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the site or wider landscape.

3.4 Impact of the proposal on the tree stock

Overview

- 3.4.1 A total of 35 trees and 2 groups have been surveyed for the purposes of this report with one offsite tree (T18 Cherry) and one offsite group (G1 Mixed species) also recorded within the survey. Tree T28 (Fastigate Yew) has a landscape value of less than 10 years in accordance with BS5837:2012 and as such it is recommended to remove this tree regardless of any development occurring.
- 3.4.2 Whilst 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 where they impose a significant constraint on development. Furthermore, BS 5837:2012 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*".

3.5 Kensington

- 3.5.1 It is proposed to construct a single storey and a two storey extension including a new vehicle and pedestrian access onto Vicarage Road as part of the re-arrangement works for the front courtyard.
- 3.5.2 The arboricultural survey identified that existing site constraints have influenced the root protection area of tree T2, Copper Beech. As such the RPA has been plotted as a polygon to reflect the constraints to the rooting area of this tree. The modified RPA has taken into account the expected morphology and disposition of roots, site topography, including drainage, the soil type and the likely tolerance of the tree to root disturbance based on factors such as age, condition and past management (BS5837:2012 Section 4.6.3).
- 3.5.3 Tree T2 is growing in an area comprising of compacted ground and hard standing which currently provides parking and access for the school. In addition the tree is located within close proximity to an existing single storey classroom facility. To implement the two storey extension it is proposed to remove this facility (and the adjacent outdoor storage shed) and to utilise the majority of the buildings' footprint.
- 3.5.4 An assessment of the encroachment of the extension calculates there will be 25m² incursion into the projected RPA of T2 (which equates to 10% of the total area of the RPA). Further encroachments into the RPA will occur as a result of the reconfiguration of the courtyard which includes a new vehicle and pedestrian access onto Vicarage Road.

- 3.5.5 The report acknowledges that T2 is a noteworthy feature and that the general principle is that 'A' category trees should be regarded as a constraint to development and should be retained in accordance with the recommendations of BS5837:2012. In order to achieve the construction of the extension and to carry out works to create both safe pedestrian and vehicular movements across the site (with the formalisation of parking) it has been assessed that tree T2 will not survive the development process.
- 3.5.6 As it is the intention to retain all the category 'B' trees and the majority of the category 'C' trees with post development tree planting mitigation it is concluded that the proposal to remove T2 is justified. It is considered that in the long term the scheme and the ability to provide a site wide tree and landscape strategy will make a positive contribution to the site at Kensington, the Christchurch Conservation Area and the wider landscape.
- 3.5.7 The proposed footprint of the rear single storey extension falls outside the root protection areas of the adjacent trees. As such the trees can be appropriately protected during the development. In order to provide access to facilitate the works the existing hard standing will act as ground protection where access is required across the RPA's of trees.
- 3.5.8 As part of the works it is anticipated minor facilitative pruning works will be required to trees T10 (Yew), T11 (Sycamore) & T12 (Yew). It is considered that the trees can be pruned to acceptable standards in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 'Tree Works - Recommendations' in order to provide the necessary working space to facilitate the work.
- 3.5.9 In order to implement the courtyard re-arrangement, including the new vehicle and pedestrian access onto Vicarage Road it is proposed to remove 3 Category 'C' trees (T1, Norway Maple, T3 Yew & T7 Holly). The British Standard highlights that Category 'C' trees are assessed as being either of low quality, limited merit, low landscape benefits, no material cultural or conservation value, or only limited or short-term potential; or young trees with trunk diameter below 150mm; or a combination of these. As such the proposed removals should not be considered as a significant constraint to the redevelopment of the site.
- 3.6 New Boundary Treatments, Kensington & Abbey Gardens
- 3.6.1 It is proposed to construct new boundary treatments at Kensington & Abbey Gardens and it is acknowledged that part of the works will occur with the RPA's of the boundary trees. However it is not proposed to remove trees with regard to this element of the scheme.
- 3.6.2 To ensure no damage occurs to trees, where appropriate the use of lintels and or pile style foundations will be used in order to bridge over significant tree roots. Due to the sensitivity of working within close proximity to the trees it is further proposed that all works will be carried out using hand tools. In addition ground protection measures will also be installed so as to avoid localised compaction when working within the RPA's of the boundary trees.
- 3.6.3 As part of the works it is anticipated minor facilitative pruning works will be required to the trees T19 Lime, T20, Lime and T33 Yew. It is considered that the trees can be pruned to acceptable standards in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 'Tree Works - Recommendations' in order to provide the necessary working space to facilitate the work.

- 3.6.4 In addition to the pruning works a further assessment, in the event of planning permission being granted the suitability to retain T30, a 'C' category Hawthorn tree as it is currently in direct contact with the existing boundary close boarded fence.

3.7 General

- 3.7.1 New service runs have yet to be confirmed, however it is anticipated that all new services will connect to existing.
- 3.7.2 Careful planning of site operations are required in order to safeguard the retained trees. It is recommended that a site specific Arboricultural Method Statement, is drawn up and implemented with appropriate site supervision also carried out.

3.8 Proposed Landscaping

- 3.8.1 A comprehensive landscape plan that includes site wide tree planting has been developed which provides an enhanced environment, and compliments the development of the site. Please refer to the landscape plan developed by Cambuim – Landscape Architecture (DWG No. 1284 – 01 Rev A dated May 2018) for details of the tree and landscape strategy.

4. SUMMARY

4.1 Conclusions

- 4.1.1 The British Standard 5837:2012 states that there is the need to avoid misplaced tree retention; for example, to attempt to retain too many unsuitable trees on a site may result in excessive pressure on the trees during the development work and subsequent demands for their removal post development. However where design permits, the retention of lower category trees can be beneficial providing screening and softening to a development and a sense of maturity to a scheme.
- 4.1.2 It is acknowledged that consideration for both the direct impact and indirect impact of a development with respect to retained trees needs to be assessed. With respect to the retained tree stock it is considered that their successful integration into the layout can be achieved. It is regarded that adequate space has been allowed within the development to allow for their long-term physical retention and future maintenance requirements. As such it is concluded that there will not be undue pressure to fell or severely prune retained trees.
- 4.1.3 It is concluded that there is an adequate juxtaposition with the retained tree stock and proposal therefore reducing any post development concerns. As such it is regarded that there will not be any future pressure to significantly prune, or to seek permission to remove trees within the site. With further regard to any concerns of debris and seasonal nuisances it is considered that this can be managed by good design and as part of the overall general maintenance of the adjacent property/properties.

4.2 Post development tree management.

- 4.2.1 Tree owners have a duty of care to maintain and manage their tree stock and it is recommended that regular tree inspections are undertaken by a person competent in arboriculture.
- 4.2.2 Section 8.8.2 of the British Standard: 2012 recommends post development aftercare of trees following the completion of development works. It is recommended the following is considered with regard to post development inspection of retained trees:
1. Trees that grow on a site prior to development may, if adversely affected, be in decline over a period of several years before they die. This varies due to age, species, condition prior to development, extent of damage during development, soil conditions and climate. It is recommended that regular inspections are undertaken.
 2. Where trees are protected by planning controls, it is recommended that the LPA is informed and necessary agreements obtained prior to any remedial works.
 3. Following completion of a development it is recommended that the arboricultural consultant inspects the trees for signs of intolerance to the change of conditions and the effect of the development. There may be a need for additional tree works to those originally specified.
 4. Maintenance of newly planted trees is important during the establishment period, of at least two years and it is recommended an appropriate maintenance schedule is included with the Landscaping Scheme.

APPENDIX 1

Site Location Plan



LOCATION PLAN

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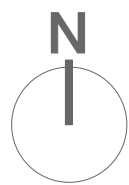
Scale 1:1250 @ A1



BLOCK PLAN

0 25 35 45 55 65 M

Scale 1:1250 @ A1



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Project
Kensington
Remodel and Extension
Client
The Abbey Junior School
Christchurch Road, Reading

Scale
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A 08/05/18 LA CS PLANNING ISSUE

Rev Date By Ap Note

Drawing Title
Existing Location and Block Plan

Project Number Drawing Number Revision

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Date Drawn Checked Status

14/12/17 GW CS PLANNING

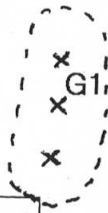
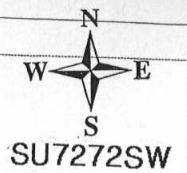
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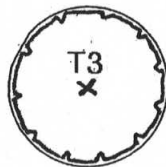
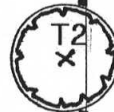
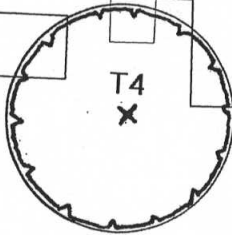
APPENDIX 2

Extract of Tree Preservation Order 63-05

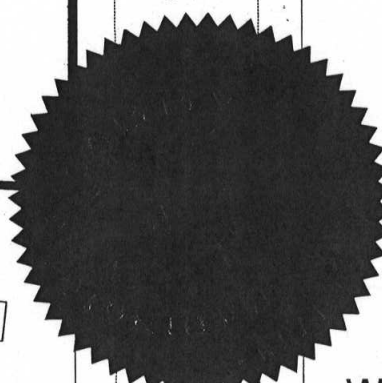
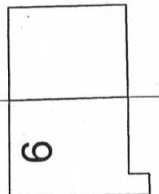
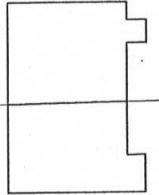
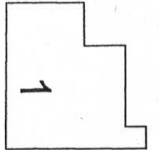
CHRISTCHURCH GARDENS



12



NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE



2a

Warwick House

Court

[Signature]
Authorised Signatory

1 to 10

2

3

- T1 - *Eucalyptus gunnii* (Cider Gum)
- T2 - *Acer platanoides* (Norway Maple)
- T3 - *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Horse Chestnut)
- T4 - *Fagus sylvatica* (Common Beech)
- T5 - *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Horse Chestnut)
- T6 - *Taxus baccata* (Common Yew)

G1 - 3 No. *Quercus ilex* (Holm Oak)

Title: Tree Preservation Order : 12 Christchurch Gardens, Reading

Drg.No.: E2270

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Date: MAY 2005 Scale at A4: 1:500

Ref: 393971



APPENDIX 3

Arboricultural Implication Plan: Kensington

Tree Preservation Order No. 84-24		
Reading Borough Council		
Tree Preservation Order Identification No.	Tree No. on Tree Constraints Plan	Tree Species
Individual Order No: NOT KNOWN	T17	Copper Beech



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Site: Abbey School, Kensington

Drawing Title: Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Key:

- Category A
- Category B
- Category C
- Category U

Category

Root Protection Area

Crown Spread

Tree Number

Tree Proposed for Removal

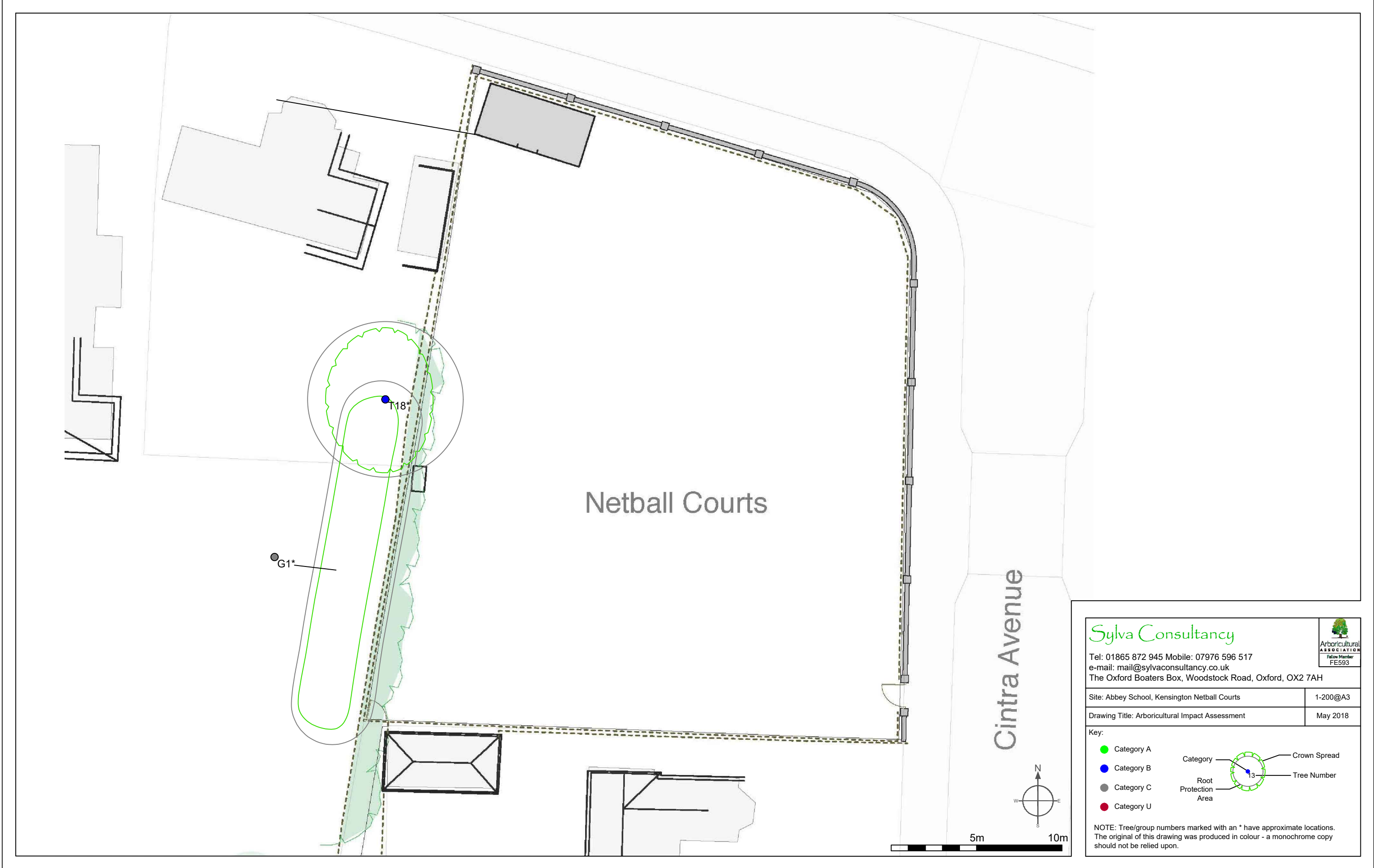
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1-200@A1

Rev A, May 2018

APPENDIX 4

Arboricultural Implication Plan: Netball Courts



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Site: Abbey School, Kensington Netball Courts	1-200@A3
Drawing Title: Arboricultural Impact Assessment	May 2018

Key:

- Category A (Green circle)
- Category B (Blue circle)
- Category C (Grey circle)
- Category U (Red circle)

Category

Crown Spread

Root Protection Area

Tree Number

NOTE: Tree/group numbers marked with an * have approximate locations. The original of this drawing was produced in colour - a monochrome copy should not be relied upon.

APPENDIX 5

Arboricultural Implication Plan: Abbey Gardens

Tree Preservation Order No. 63-05		
Reading Borough Council		
Tree Preservation Order Identification No.	Tree No. on Tree Constraints Plan	Tree Species
Individual Order No. T5	T34	Horse Chestnut
Individual Order No. T6	T35	Yew
Group Order No. G1	T21, T22 & T23	Holm Oak x 3



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Arboricultural Association

FE593

Site: Abbey School, Abbey Gardens	1-200@A2
Drawing Title: Arboricultural Impact Assessment	May 2018

Key:

Category A

Category B

Category C

Category U

Category

Root Protection Area

Crown Spread

Tree Number

NOTE: Tree/group numbers marked with an * have approximate locations.
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APPENDIX 6

Qualifications

Fiona Bradshaw

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I have over 18 years' experience of arboriculture and I am the principal consultant at Sylva Consultancy. I hold the Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma in Arboriculture and the Arboricultural Associations Technicians Certificate. I am a Fellow member of the Arboricultural Association and a professional member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, of which I am also a registered Consultant.

I have the benefit of both a local authority and private practice background and I am frequently instructed to provide advice and assistance relating to trees and the planning process. I am also experienced at compiling expert reports, providing evidence and also appearing as an expert witness at Public Inquires.

I am committed to my continued professional development which is reflected in my regular attendance of seminars and workshops.