



SILVER STREET, READING

ARBORICULTURAL METHOD STATEMENT

APRIL 2017

ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Site Description

Tree Preservation Orders

Tree Survey Analysis

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Scheme Proposal

Landscape Proposals

Ecological Proposals

ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT – RETENTION AND PROTECTION MEASURES

Reasons for Removal

Landscape Mitigation

Planning and Development Justification

CONCLUSIONS

APPENDIX 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The trees were originally assessed in April 2016 by PJC arboriculturalists and recorded in a report and tree survey drawing. The assessment was carried out by a qualified arboriculturalist to BS 5837 – 2012. The purpose of the report was to assess the quality and condition of trees on a development site in Reading and to support an application for the redevelopment of the site for residential development.

Site Description

The proposal site is located to the south of Reading centre off Silver Street. The site is located within 15 minutes from the railway station and close to local amenities. The location is an urban setting, which includes residential properties and industrial buildings, with the proposal; site bounded by development to all four boundaries. The existing site pre-proposals consists of an existing commercial building with a shop front on Silver Street and offices above. There is a small commercial parking area at the eastern end of the site, behind the building. The surrounding land use is comprised of office buildings on Windsor square to the north, residential garage blocks to the east and residential dwellings to the south and west.

Tree Preservation Orders

Following initial contact with Reading Council the trees were noted as not protected through TPO order but protected by virtue of their being within a Conservation Area. T1 falls outside of this area T2 appears to fall within the Conservation Area boundary (see fig 2)

Tree Survey Analysis

Below is a summary of the tree survey schedule, for more detailed information on individual trees please refer to the schedule in the original tree survey and summary table in Appendix 1.

The existing trees surveyed as part of this report are considered to be B grade quality.

Un-surveyed vegetation lies of site to the south in neighbouring properties.

T1-2 are located directly outside the eastern boundary of the site consisting of a Sycamore and Lime.

2.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application is for a student housing development to include residential/community space supported by a series of private and public amenity spaces.

As part of an iterative design development which was informed by both the tree survey and ecological assessments of the site it was determined that the surveyed existing trees could be retained but that some crown reduction would be required to minimise damage during construction of the proposals and to leave a sustainable form to the trees for the future use of the site.

Landscape Proposals

As part of the proposal for the redevelopment of the site a substantial landscape scheme has been devised for both an internal courtyard and streetscape/public realm areas. This is a comprehensive design which seeks to address not only the amenity and quality of external space for residents and users of the new building but also looks to enhance the environment of Silver Street.

Ecological Proposals

From an ecological perspective the existing site is of very limited value being covered entirely by office building and concrete car park surface. The existing trees have local value for both ecology and the appearance of the area but are not part of the proposal site.

The scheme will bring forward ecological enhancements which will increase the overall biodiversity value of the site. These features include:

- A landscaped courtyard with lawn and planting areas;
- Landscape garden areas to the rear of the development; and
- Tree planting on the frontage of Silver Street and an additional tree to the rear of the proposals.

3.0 ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT – RETENTION AND PROTECTION MEASURES

The two trees immediately adjacent to the sites eastern boundary will be retained and T2 will be crown reduced by careful pruning carried out by a suitably qualified arborist.

Reasons for Crown Reduction

Although the proposed building does not intersect with the existing canopies of the T2, the construction of the building will require access around the site and this is likely to generate conflicts with tree branches that would lead to damage of the trees. In addition the space to the east of the new building is proposed as outdoor amenity space, and the reduction of tree crowns over this area will encourage more light into the space and its usability.

The crown canopies have been surveyed and measured and shown in Appendix 1 alongside the proposed building structure. A working area of 3M has been advised from the eastern wall of the new building and the proposals are to reduce the crowns of both trees to this extent. A detailed consideration of how this can be done while maintaining the integrity and form of the trees is shown in Appendix 1.

It has been suggested by the council that pressure for the removal of the trees would increase with the introduction of the proposed building and these tree management techniques. Appendix 1 illustrates the intended end result of the works and demonstrates that both the outdoor spaces and retained trees remain viable with the crown shapes shown being manageable in the long term through regular maintenance and crown pruning.

Landscape Mitigation

New tree planting is proposed along the frontage of Silver Street offering the potential of real improvement to the street scene and a single tree is also proposed to the rear of the proposals.

Private Areas – Level -1 courtyard

The courtyard will provide amenity services for the academic tenant and its students. The courtyard will provide light access and natural ventilation into the lower levels of the building. The design is simple and elegant and delivers a space that can be adapted to multiple uses and that is easy to maintain. The courtyard has small private lawn areas separated by planting bays with amenity shrub planting to create screening and an attractive environment.

'Right Tree - Right Place' Checklist

What is the existing value of the space, and would the impact of trees be positive?	Yes – the impact of new trees as part of considered landscape and public realm design proposal would make a positive contribution to Silver Street
Existing habitat and landscape value: establish the habitat and landscape type of the site - shade cast by trees, and their demands on soil, water and nutrients, mean that they can kill or damage valuable wildlife habitats such as wetlands, heathlands, flower rich grasslands and brownfields so check for existing value before committing to planting.	The existing trees are both retained with minimal pruning works required. A sustainable crown shape is proposed for both trees that can work with the proposed use for the new development.
Tree cover history: check historical records to see if the site is in an area where there have been trees in the past, to establish whether the creation of new woodland or tree cover would be appropriate.	The street scene south of Reading is very urban with a low level of tree cover. Any additional trees within this environment should be viewed as a positive.
Development design: trees should not be located where they will experience inappropriate growing conditions e.g. in the shadow of tall buildings.	The tree species will be chosen to be appropriate to the location and proximity to the new building. The street allows for good light levels for new tree planting.
Local character: check if there is a history in the area for the use of particular species that could be reflected in the planned planting.	Refer to recent new landscape schemes within Reading.
Work with nature: in natural areas, employ stock of locally native origin. Best of all, work with natural colonisation.	Given the urban nature of the site and the significant role that the architectural and public realm design have in place-making and the creation of legibility – the

	natural processes for developing tree cover will not deliver a quality landscape or public realm and are therefore not considered appropriate
Great trees of the future: where the setting allows, take opportunities to plant large species of trees with a long lifespan.	Long term consideration of the species and its management has been a key selection criterion in the planting design.
Accessibility: new trees and woodlands are most needed where they can provide people with access to nature and natural landscape in areas presently lacking in such access.	New trees on Silver Street which is highly urbanised will provide the local community with public access to trees where there are currently is none. The extant trees are on private land with no public access.
Infrastructure: consider existing and future infrastructure requirements – do not plant too close to over/underground infrastructure. Replace removed trees in the same pit if appropriate.	Tree locations will be carefully considered to avoid services.
Highways: meet the statutory safety requirements to maintain a clear route along roads (consider heights of buses, HGVs, cars, cycles and horses).	The trees are proposed outside of the highway boundary.
Space: check available space against the final height and spread of the proposed species with a view to minimising frequency and amount of pruning required	Spatial considerations have been key in the selection of species both for diameter spread and canopy shape/volume.
Soil condition: the soil in hard landscaped areas is often poor. Soil compaction needs to be limited in the tree pit and adequate nutrients supplied. Use species known to be robust to these limitations.	Soil in Reading appears to be able to support a wide variety of British native trees. Soil check on tree pits will need to be carried out prior to planting.

4.0 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT JUSTIFICATION

The first application was refused for reasons which included the following which relates to the two retained trees:

The proposed canopy reduction works to the Lime and Sycamore tree adjacent to the rear boundary and regular ongoing maintenance required to address nuisance will lead to pressure for heavier reduction of removal in the future. This is contrary to Policy CS38 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015) and also to Objective 2 of the adopted Tree Strategy for Reading which seeks to protect trees as important landscape features that preserve the character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

The relevant policies quoted are Core Strategy 38 which simply states that:

CS38 TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS

Individual Trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended.

And the Tree Strategy for Reading Objective 2 reads:

OBJECTIVE 2 PROTECTING AND ENHANCING IMPORTANT LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The Council will seek to prioritise the protection, maintenance and planting of trees that contribute to:

- Maintaining the important landscape characteristics of Reading, namely the river valleys, wooded ridges, woodlands, open spaces and public spaces of the town;
- Preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the environment of areas of the town, particularly designated Conservation Areas and the amenity of other areas where trees are notable and important characteristic of the local environment;
- Enhancing the appearance of the Central Area of Reading, particularly its various public realm;
- Enhancing the appearance of important transport routes and corridors;
- Maintaining and increasing canopy cover in the Borough by 10% in the period up to 2030,

With reference to these policies and to the findings and proposals in this report, the proposals are fully compliant with these policies in a) satisfactorily retaining existing trees; b) adding new ones on a visual prominent route; c) having no effect on the Conservation Area (the small amount of pruning will not be within the CA or visible from that side); and d) offering a net increase in tree canopy cover proposed on the application site.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The proposed redevelopment of the site at Silver Street in Reading can be brought forward with the minimal intervention to one tree to the rear of the development site. The resulting shape and form of the tree, and its long term health will be maintained with a sustainable management of the trees and the proposed use of the site achievable through standard arboricultural practice.

New landscape and tree planting will enhance the existing ecology of the site and offer an attractive new frontage to Silver Street and new street trees which are not prevalent within the area generally.

The proposals are fully compliant with planning policy and offer new tree planting that answers the requirements of tree planting objectives for Reading as set out in Objective 2.