Bellway Home Limited (Thames Valley)

Former Dee Road Fire Station
Reading

Arboricultural Method Statement

May 2024
11394 _AMS.001 Rev A

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Aspect Arboriculture are instructed by Bellway Homes Limited (Thames Valley) to prepare an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan (hereafter the AMS and TPP) to inform the proposed residential development of the former Dee Road Fire Station, Reading.

1.1.2 This AMS and TPP have been prepared to supplement arboricultural detail logged under application number 221130; they seek to clearly identify trees which are to be removed and those which are to be retained tree, with appropriate protection measures, including construction mitigation and phasing of work. An auditable scheme of site supervision is also provided with details of subsequent reporting to Reading Borough Council's Arboricultural Officer.

1.1.3 It is our understanding that this work will be submitted to, and approved by, Reading Borough Council, prior to the commencement of any development works occurring on site. Once approved, the safeguarding measures and works should be implemented as specified and maintained to the Council's satisfaction until completion of the development.

1.1.4 The confident protection of retained trees will be achieved through the use of the appended TPP (appendix A) and Works Auditing Schedule (appendix B), alongside other supporting documents included within appendix C.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This work relates to arboriculture therefore reliance should not be given to comments made in respect of other disciplines i.e., civil engineering or construction phasing, without first referencing an appropriate expert.

1.3 Limitations

1.3.1 This document has been prepared to inform safeguarding measures during development and should not be interpreted as a report on tree health and safety. Reasonable effort has been made to identify visible defects whilst carrying out the tree survey, however trees are prone to natural failure without warning; no guarantee can be made as to the absolute safety of any of the trees surveyed.

1.3.2 Aspect's opinion of tree condition and structural potential is valid for limited period from the date of survey. Validity is assumed in the absence of inclement weather and no change to the tree's existing context. A copy of the site's tree survey information is provided within appendix C.

2 ESSENTIAL WORK

2.1 Tree Protection Plan

2.1.1 The TPP provided in appendix A will be relied upon during the construction of the development. It must be read in conjunction with the entirety of this document.

2.1.2 To prevent avoidable damage occurring to retained trees or erroneous tree loss, a scaled A1 copy of the TPP, accompanied by a copy of this document will be provided to the Site Manager. This will ensure they are able to:

- Clearly identify all retained trees;
- Identify the correct locations for tree protection barriers and trunk hoarding;
- Identify features of the site that must be prepared/installed under an arboricultural watching brief;
- Request attendance of the Project Arboriculturist on site for site monitoring and to provide advice in case of any emerging issues;
- Demonstrate compliance with the Council's consent for the development by safeguarding trees which are to be retained and enable the Project Arboriculturist to evidence this by completing the Works Auditing Schedule (appendix B).

2.2 Tree Removals

2.2.1 To implement the scheme of development it will be necessary to remove the trees detailed within Table 1 overleaf.

2.2.2 Note: proposed tree removals have been updated following a site audit dated 1st May 2024, to include T8-T10, accounting for the need to accommodate a c.1m level change between trees and the adjacent carriageway. Whilst details submitted previously acknowledged that excavation will be required within their RPAs, in practice, the effect is considered to be beyond the trees' capacity to tolerate. Rather than retaining low quality trees of reduced physiological function, it is preferred from the arboricultural perspective to secure replacement trees as part of the scheme's soft landscape strategy (which will be updated and submitted separately).

2.2.3 Trees to be removed will be spray marked with a red flash by the project arboriculturist. The presence of the appointed arboricultural contractor is also recommended during this process to safeguard against erroneous felling.

2.2.4 Felling works should be timed to avoid the main nesting season for birds between 1st March and 31st August. If scheduled within this period an ecologist must be present to advise on any necessary protective measures, and to confirm that tree works are not likely to cause disturbance to nesting birds.

2.2.5 This work will be undertaken in accordance with the principles within BS3998:2010 by a qualified and competent contractor to ensure cuts are performed correctly and positioned to avoid damage/harm to surrounding retained trees.

2.2.6 **Table 1:** Net Tree Removals by BS5837 Category.

Category A	Category B	Category C
None	None	**T5** Ash
		T6 Elder
		T8 Cherry
		T9 Cherry
		T10 Lawson Cypress
		T11 Buddleia
		G3+
		G4+
		G5+

+Denotes mixed assemblage of three or more species (refer to appendix C)

2.3 Pruning Works

2.3.1 To provide construction access and sufficient separation from block 1, it will be necessary to selectively prune the north-eastern crown of T1 by up to c.2m. This work will amount to the shortening of secondary branches only and can be achieved without harming their appearance or health and vitality.

2.3.2 Although not required to facilitate the development, it is recommended that dead branches are removed from the canopies of retained trees. This will help mitigate the risk of future tree related hazards emerging and associated apprehension.

2.3.3 Pruning works should be undertaken in accordance with section 7.3 (for removal of deadwood) and section 7.8 (for selective pruning) of BS3998:2010, by a competent tree contractor. This is necessary to ensure that cuts are performed correctly and positioned to avoid future structural defects or physiological issues, facilitate growth and maintain aesthetic value.

2.3.4 This work should be timed to avoid the main nesting season for birds between 1st March and 31st August. If scheduled within this period an ecologist must be present to advise on any necessary protective measures, and to confirm that tree works are not likely to cause disturbance to nesting birds.

2.4 Protective Barriers

2.4.1 Tree protection barriers are required to safeguard retained trees from damage during construction works. Protective barriers must be installed before works commence as illustrated on the Tree Protection Plan provided at appendix A. The location for protective barriers has been informed by retained trees' canopy extents and root protection areas (RPA) and are shown within appendix A with a dark blue line.

2.4.2 The Site Manager will be responsible for arranging attendance of the Project Arboriculturist, for the purpose of setting out barriers and for their monitoring at appropriate intervals for the duration of the development; issues will be resolved on site and reported to the Council's Arboricultural Officer by the Project Arboriculturist.

2.5 Demolition of Existing Buildings

2.5.1 The demolition of the extant built form is not expected to cause harm to any retained trees. The only building to be demolished within proximity of retained trees is within the western extent of the site adjacent to tree T. Where adjacent to T7, external walls and footings must be pulled away from the boundaries and any machinery only be operated from the footprint of existing hard surfaces. Debris must also be moved away from T7 and processed within the interior of the site.

2.6 Removal of Existing Hard Surfaces

2.6.1 To implement the scheme of development, it will be necessary to remove existing hard surfacing from within the RPA of T1. Where existing hard surfacing is to be removed and converted to soft landscape, the existing wearing course must be lifted sensitively under arboricultural supervision and broke out manually (where possible) or lifted carefully by a lightweight machine (less than 5 tonnes) operating outside of the tree's RPA or from the footprint of existing hard surfaces. The existing sub-base will be left undisturbed and in-situ, then capped with screened topsoil. This approach will minimise ground disturbance and the potential for harm to occur should the sub-base be occupied by tree roots; it is illustrated with a green wash within the TPP (appendix A).

2.7 Supervised Excavation

2.7.1 To implement the scheme of development, it will be necessary to undertake excavation works within the periphery of T1's RPA in order to accommodate a proposed drainage and new hard surfacing. To avoid detriment occurring to T1, the excavation works must be carried out sensitively and under arboricultural supervision, adopting the principles within section 7.2 of BS5837:2012. The extent of excavation works which must be carried out under arboricultural supervision are illustrated with an orange wash within the Tree Protection Plan provided within appendix A.

2.7.2 During supervised excavation works within the RPAs of retained trees, the following procedure will be adopted:

i. The breaking up and clearance of the existing soils must be undertaken under arboricultural supervision, using a low impact method of excavation, utilising hand tools, an air-spade, or a vacuum excavator.

ii. If necessary, roots that are less than 25mm diameter will be pruned back, preferably to a side branch, using sharp cutting tools in accordance with best practice i.e. using secateurs or pruning saw.

iii. During the works the protective bark of larger roots is not to be damaged, until the project arboriculturist has judged whether they can be retained or not.

iv. No roots over 25mm will be pruned without approval of the appointed Project Arboriculturist as they may be integral to tree health and stability. If it becomes necessary to prune roots over 25mm diameter to accommodate site features, the Project Arboriculturist will provide the Developer and the Council's Arboricultural Officer with appropriate recommendations for remedial action/ management.

v. Any exposed roots which can be retained will be covered in hessian or clean topsoil to protect from dehydration and temperature flux. Hessian is to be removed prior to backfilling.

vi. Areas adjacent to roots that are to be filled with concrete will be lined with an impermeable membrane to prevent concrete leachate coming into contact with tree roots.

vii. Any use of an excavator to complete excavations will occur from outside the trees' RPA (which will be spray-marked on the ground in advance of the works taking place). A toothless bucket will be utilised at all times.

viii. A record of exposed roots will be made and accompanied by a photographic log.

ix. Should any issues be raised during the works then the Project Arboriculturist will inform the Developer and the Council's Arboricultural Officer, indicating the nature of the problem and recommendations for remedial action (if required).

x. Upon request, written confirmation of the works being undertaken to a satisfactory standard can be provided to the Developer and the Council's Arboricultural Officer by the Project Arboriculturist.

2.8 Proposed Order of Works

i. Site meeting to be held between the Project Arboriculturist, Site Manager and the Council's Arboricultural Officer. Stages of arboricultural auditing/monitoring requirements will be identified/agreed.

ii. Necessary tree removals to be carried out prior to installation of tree protection barriers and commencement of development works in the vicinity.

iii. Tree protection barriers are to be installed following removals and prior to construction works commencing in the vicinity. Upon request, barrier positions can be set out by the Project Arboriculturist, as detailed within this document.

iv. The Council's Arboricultural Officer shall be informed of the proposed commencement date as soon as possible, to allow the inspection of protection measures.

v. The Site Manager will assume responsibility for arranging the attendance of the Project Arboriculturist to oversee, relocation of barriers and for the supervision of works within retained trees' RPAs, as detailed with the Works Auditing Schedule (appendix B).

vi. The Site Manager will also assume responsibility for arranging attendance of the Project Arboriculturist for the monitoring of barriers at appropriate intervals for the duration of the development works. Erection of barriers and monitoring is included within the Works Auditing Schedule (appendix B).

2.9 **Site Manager's Point of Contact for Arboricultural Input:**

A. Justin Hodges (Aspect Arboriculture)
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3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 This document has been prepared to supplement the Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared in support of development proposals for the redevelopment of the Former Dee Road Fire Station, Reading. The document has been informed by guidance provided in BS5837:2012 including details of the site's existing trees.

3.2 Pursuant to the instruction, this document and its supporting work (Appendices A - C) identifies all aspects of the development that must be managed to facilitate the confident protection of retained trees during demolition and construction.

3.3 To ensure confident tree retention, siting of tree protection barriers and the specified construction works must be audited by the Project Arboriculturist; the outcome of these works will be reported to the Council's Arboricultural Officer on completion. These elements are specified within the Works Auditing Schedule (appendix B).

3.4 It is Aspect's opinion that, subject to strict adherence to this document, the development can be implemented without incurring harm to retained trees.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TREE PROTECTION PLAN - 11394 TPP 01 Rev E

1:500 @ A3

0m 5m 10m 20m

KEY:

- Site Boundary
- Tree Numbers (15)
- Tree Canopies
- Category 'B' RPA
- Category 'C' RPA
- Trees to be Removed (8)
- Tree Protection Barrier
- Tree Protection Barrier (2nd Position)
- Hard Surface Removal
- Supervised Excavation
- Pruning Works

Note: Trees 2-4, 6, 7 and group G12 have been plotted using measurements onsite in conjunction with aerial imagery. Their locations were not recorded on the topographical survey of the site (drawing ref: 15879-1.dwg).

Note: The RPA footprint for group G3 has been displaced to allow for the effect of the existing building foundations. The surface area of the RPA has not been reduced.

Cited from Google Earth

T1: Gradual 300m reduction in levels within RPA to be manually excavated under arboricultural supervision.

Tree protection barriers to be temporarily relocated to allow to completion of external works.

T1: Proposed surface water drainage route within RPA to be excavated under arboricultural supervision.

T1: Existing hard surface within RPA to be removed and converted to soft landscape under arboricultural supervision.

T8, T9 & T10: 11394 TPP 01 Rev D amended to account for the effect of adjacent retaining wall and excavation which is likely to incur substantial root severance. Rather than retain low quality trees for the sake of retention, it is preferred, from the arboricultural prospective, to seek their removal and replacement as part of the scheme's soft landscaping strategy.

REV	DATE	NOTE	Drawn	Chk'd

REVISIONS

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TITLE

Former Dee Road Fire Station, Reading
Tree Protection Plan

CLIENT

Bellway Homes Limited (Thames Valley)

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN
1:500 @ A3	MAY 2024	JH / TR / GW

DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
11394 TPP 01 Rev E	E

Based on: 092103-BEL-TV-01-D - 17.04.23.dwg
2107331-011 Plot Drainage General Arrangement.dwg
2107331-010 S104 Adoption Plan.dwg
2107331-032 - Utilities Margin.dwg

APPENDIX B

WORKS AUDITING SCHEDULE

Works Auditing Schedule

Works Requiring Auditing	Tree No.	Date Undertaken	Date Reported to LPA
1. Pre-commencement meeting identifying tree removals, tree protection barrier locations and safeguarding measures, as specified within 11394_AMS.001 Rev A and illustrated on drawing no. 11394_TPP.01 Rev E Tree Protection plan.	As drawn	1.5.24	1.5.24
2: Inspection of tree protection barriers prior to commencement of development works by Project Arboriculturist.	As drawn	1.5.24	1.5.24
3: Demolition of Existing Hard Surfaces.	T7		
4: Removal of Existing Hard Surfaces.	T1		
5: Supervised Excavation.	T1		1.5.24
6: Inspection of installed tree protection barriers as specified within 11394_AMS.001 Rev A and illustrated on drawing no. 11394_TPP.01 Rev E Tree Protection plan, on an appropriate basis.	As drawn	1.5.24	1.5.24

This schedule will be completed as evidence that works have been undertaken as per the approved methodology.

APPENDIX C

TREE SURVEY SCHEDULE – 11394 TS 01

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BS 5837:2012 Tree Schedule: Former Dee Road Fire Station, Reading

11394 TS 01

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BS5837:2012 Tree Survey: Explanation of Survey Criteria

*Area around tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability, and where the protection of roots and soil structure is a priority. *The RPA has been manipulated to allow for various site features, i.e. roads, structures or changes in levels. Please refer to the Tree Constraints Plan for these changes.*

e.g.: young, semi-mature, early-mature, mature or over-mature

Sequential reference number cited on all aspect drawing.

Category prefix A-C denotes arboricultural quality, decreasing from A (high) to C (low); Subcategories 1, 2 and 3 highlight associated arboricultural (1), landscape (2) and ecological (3) qualities.

Height and Crown spread measured to the nearest half meter; # denotes where this is estimated.

Category U trees are those in such a condition that they cannot be realistically retained as living trees in the current context for the long term.

Tree Number	Common Species Name	Trunk Diameter (mm)	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m)					Crown Clearance (m)	Life Stage	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Comments	BS5837 Category	RPA Radius (m)
				N	E	S	W	radial							

Measured to the nearest 10mm; # denotes estimated diameter where access is not possible.

e.g.: above-average, average, below average or dead

General observations, i.e. defects, preliminary management recommendation, presence of pests/disease, perceived significance.

Height of first significant branch and/or canopy

e.g.: good, indifferent, poor, or hazardous

Colour band key:

Category A
Category B
Category C
Category U

The following survey should not be interpreted as a report on tree health and safety. Aspect's opinion of tree condition and structural potential is valid for a limited period of 12 months from the date of inspection. Validity is assumed in the absence of inclement weather and no change to the trees existing setting.

Tree Number	Common Species Name	Trunk Diameter (mm)	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m)					First Significant Branch (m)	Crown Clearance (m)	Life Stage	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Comments	BS5837 Category	RPA Radius (m)
				N	E	S	W	Radial								
1	Ash	570#	16.5	7	6.75	6.75	7.5#		3.5	2	Early Mature	Average	Indifferent	Offsite and inaccessible, situated within third party domestic land Balanced radial canopy Average internal deadwood Forks at c.2.75m, union appears sound Habitat box attached to the western aspect of trunk at c.2.75m Prominent within views from the public highway to the north Moderate example of the species whilst maturing	B12	6.9
2	Apple	250#	6	4#	4.5#	3#	5#		1.5#	0.5	Early Mature	Average	Indifferent	Offsite and inaccessible, situated within third party domestic land Unremarkable example of the species	C12	3
3	Cherry	190#	8	5#	4#	4#	3.5#		2.5#	2.5#	Semi Mature	Below Average	Indifferent	Offsite and inaccessible, situated within third party domestic land Sparse canopy at time of the survey Unremarkable example of the species	C12	2.4
4	Ash	250#	12	4#	5.5#	2.5#	2#		5#	5#	Semi Mature	Average	Indifferent	Offsite and inaccessible, situated within third party domestic land Etiolated form Unremarkable example of the species	C1	3
5	Ash	310 oi	12	4.75	6.25	5.75	6.5#		6	5	Early Mature	Below Average	Indifferent	Trunk clad and obscured by Ivy, unable to thoroughly inspect Trunk kinks to east from ground level, corrects at c.0.75m Slightly sparse canopy at time of the survey Unremarkable example of the species	C1	3.6
6	Elder	110#	5.5					2	2.75	3	Semi Mature	Average	Poor	Offsite and inaccessible, situated within third party land Trunk growing flush with and partially enveloping boundary fence Low arboricultural quality	C12	1.2
7	Ash	390#	12.5	5#	6.5	6	4#		5.5	5	Early Mature	Below Average	Indifferent	Offsite and inaccessible, situated within third party domestic land Sparse upper canopy at time of the survey Unsympathetic lower limb removals from the lower crown to crown lift up to c.5m Unremarkable example of the species	C1	4.8
8	Cherry	195 2* 100 oi	6	4#	3.25	3	3#		1.25	2.5	Semi Mature	Below Average	Indifferent	Stems clad and obscured by Ivy, unable to thoroughly inspect Slightly sparse canopy at time of the survey Unremarkable example of the species	C12	3
9	Cherry	130 120 100 70 oi	5.5	2#	3	3.25	4.5#		1.25	1	Semi Mature	Below Average	Indifferent	Stems clad and obscured by Ivy, unable to thoroughly inspect Slightly sparse canopy at time of the survey Unremarkable example of the species	C12	2.7

Tree Number	Common Species Name	Trunk Diameter (mm)	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m) N	E	S	W	Radial	First Significant Branch (m)	Crown Clearance (m)	Life Stage	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Comments	BS5837 Category	RPA Radius (m)
10	Lawson Cypress	160 110 70 #	5.5					2	0.5	0.5	Semi Mature	Average	Indifferent	Stems inaccessible for measurement due to dense lower crown Low arboricultural value, readily replaceable at current size	C12	2.4
11	Buddleia	80 2* 70	5					2.5	0.5	0.25	Semi Mature	Average	Indifferent	Self set specimen situated within tarmac area Low arboricultural quality	C12	1.5
G1	Hazel Purple Plum	4* 150#	6.5 av					3.75 av	1 av #	1 av #	Semi Mature	Average	Indifferent	Offsite and inaccessible, situated within third party domestic land Unremarkable collection	C12	3.6
G2	Elder Ash Lawson Cypress	140 120 av #	6.5 av					2.5 av	2 av	1.75 to the south	Young to Semi Mature	Average	Indifferent	Offsite and inaccessible, situated within third party domestic land Unremarkable collection	C12	2.1
G3	Leyland Cypress Ash Elder	520 220 av	11 av					5.25 av	0.5 to 1 to the east	0.5 to 1 to the east	Semi Mature to Mature	Average	Indifferent	Cohesive linear belt situated adjacent to western boundary Provides partial screen of adjacent dwellings Predominantly clad and obscured by Ivy, unable to thoroughly inspect Previously reduced to c.6.5m height Self set Elder and Ash understory Unremarkable collection	C12	6.9*
G4	Goat Willow Ash Damson Cherry Laurel Dogwood	75 av	1.5 to 4.5					1 av	0.5 av	0.5 av	Semi Mature	Average	Indifferent	Collection of self set specimens and ornamental plantings Low arboricultural value, readily replaceable at current size	C12	0.9
G5	Cherry Laurel Smoke Bush Cotoneaster Dogwood Mahonia Caster oil plant Berberis	75 av	1 to 4.5					1.25 av	0.25 av	0.25 av	Semi Mature	Average	Indifferent	Multiple parcels of maintained ornamental plantings Low arboricultural value, readily replaceable at current size	C12	0.9

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