Arboricultural Appraisal Report

Impact Assessment & Method Statement to Inform Development

BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to Design, demolition and construction – Recommendations

Land to the rear of
20 Norcot Road,
Reading
RG30 6BU

CLIENT:	The Keen Partnership
MWA REF:	DEV241126-1251
MWA CONSULTANT:	Mark Bisley BSc Hons
REPORT DATE:	06/01/2025

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Technical Summary

Proposal summary: demolition & rebuilding of workshop to rear of 20 Norcot Road, RG30 6BU.

See supervision statement regarding direct supervision of works and monitoring.

Table 1: Summary of Tree works Summary

Vegetation Works Summary	Vegetation Affected by Category			
	Cat A	Cat B	Cat C	Cat U
Removal under sound arboricultural management	0	0	0	0
Removal due to development	0	0	0	0
Pruning (Enabling Works)	0	1	3	0

Table 2: Mitigation Requirements Summary

Mitigation Requirements Summary	Vegetation Affected by Category			
	Cat A	Cat B	Cat C	Cat U
Protective Fencing	0	0	0	0
Ground Protection	0	0	0	0
Excavation within RPAs	0	1	3	0
No Dig Installation	0	0	0	0

Table 3: List of Vegetation Works and Mitigation

Works / Mitigation	Vegetation Affected
Removal	None
Pruning	T1, T2, T3, TG1
Protective Fencing	None
Ground Protection	None
Excavation within RPAs	T1, T3, T4, TG1
No Dig Installation	None

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Introduction

1 Scope

1.1 The scope of this report is limited to an appraisal of the existing significant vegetation on (and/or adjoining) the site and identification of the implications of development on retained vegetation in accordance with our instruction. The assessment is to be made with reference to BS 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations'. This report is based on conditions found at the time of our survey.

1.2 To prepare clear recommendations supported by relevant plans and data in order to facilitate consideration of the arboricultural implications by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

1.3 To consider the development proposals, identify areas where there are arboricultural issues and to recommend possible solutions.

1.4 To consider additional information supplied, to identify arboricultural issues arising from this information and to recommend possible solutions.

1.5 No responsibility is assumed by MWA Arboriculture Ltd for legal matters that may arise from this report, and the consultant shall not be required to give testimony or to attend court unless additional contractual arrangements are made.

1.6 This report is not a Tree Risk Management Report or a Hazard Analysis Report and its use as such is invalid.

1.7 The vegetation has been assessed from ground level only. Assessment of condition is based on a visual tree assessment (VTA). No detailed inspection of the upper crown has been carried out. No decay detection equipment (destructive or non-destructive) has been used to further assess the condition of the vegetation, which is beyond the scope of the survey. Any dangerous trees requiring further assessment on safety grounds will be identified.

1.8 Due to the changing nature of trees and other site circumstances this report and any recommendations made are limited to a 3-year period. Any alteration to the application site or any development proposals could change the current circumstances and may invalidate this report and any recommendations made. Should this be the case this report will require revision to reflect the development proposals.

1.9 A lack of recommended work does not imply that a tree is safe and likewise it should not be implied that a tree will be made safe following the completion of any recommended work.

1.10 All measuring instruments were used in accordance with appropriate user guides.

1.11 No site investigations to identify underlying soils and geology have been undertaken. This information may have a bearing upon existing and proposed foundations and landscape design. The project engineer is to be consulted regarding impacts from the recommendations contained within this report.

1.12 Any legal description or information given to MWA Arboriculture Ltd is believed to be accurate.

1.13 Where solutions to arboricultural problems are specified which require the usage of a third-party product e.g., no dig roadway construction, no liability is assumed for the performance or suitability of the product and specialist advice as to the suitability or installation of the product should be sought from the manufacturer or other specialist.

1.14 No responsibility is assumed by MWA Arboriculture Ltd for legal matters that may arise from this report, and the consultant shall not be required to give testimony or to attend court unless additional contractual arrangements are made.

1.15 Any alteration or deletion from this report shall invalidate it as a whole.

2 Supporting Documents

2.1 We have been supplied with .pdf files showing the existing situation and the proposals. Tree locations were plotted using on-site features at the time of survey and the existing site plan.

3 Components of Report

3.1 This report comprises the following elements:

Site Assessment

- Baseline tree survey of vegetation that may be impacted by proposals
- Description of the site
- Assessment of existing vegetation / tree stock
- Tree Survey Schedule (TS)

Development Appraisal

- Description of proposed development
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Arboricultural Method Statement

- Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) - preliminary
- Tree Protection Plan (TPP)

Site Assessment

4 Statutory Controls, Policy and other Constraints

4.1 A check with Reading Borough Council returned that no trees on the site are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and that the site is not located within a Conservation Area (CA).

4.2 It would not therefore be necessary to inform the Local Planning Authority (LPA) before working on trees within or adjacent to the site.

4.3 National planning policy is set out in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and trees on this site should be considered against the information contained in Section 15 "Conserving and enhancing the natural environment". Trees can also contribute to historical character and settings and where this is the case Section 16 "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment" would also be relevant.

5 Tree Survey

5.1 The survey was conducted on 03/01/2025. The weather was cold and bright. A total of four individual trees, one tree collection and one hedge were recorded during the survey.

5.2 This type of survey is not expected to include all vegetation, but all trees with a stem diameter in excess of 75mm at 1.5m from the ground should be included. Substantial hedges and similar large collections should also be included, but areas such as planting beds with annual or herbaceous species would not be relevant to the survey. The terms 'tree' and 'vegetation' are used interchangeably in this document.

5.3 Vegetation was assessed in accordance with Sections 4.4 and 4.5 of BS 5837:2012. Under this system trees are allocated a retention category based upon their quality and value in the existing context. These are:

- Category A – trees of high quality with long term future potential;
- Category B – trees of moderate quality with medium term future potential;
- Category C – trees of low quality with short term future potential;
- Category U – trees in such a condition that they cannot be realistically be retained as living trees for longer than 10 years.

5.4 Category U trees may be upgraded if they have identifiable conservation, heritage or landscape value, but only where this does not compromise safety.

5.5 TG1 was assigned category B for its landscape contribution. All of the remaining surveyed vegetation was considered to be worthy category C.

5.6 Tree locations were plotted from the existing site plan and onsite features at the time of survey.

5.7 The survey information is provided in tabular form in the associated document MWA TS 01 survey schedule.

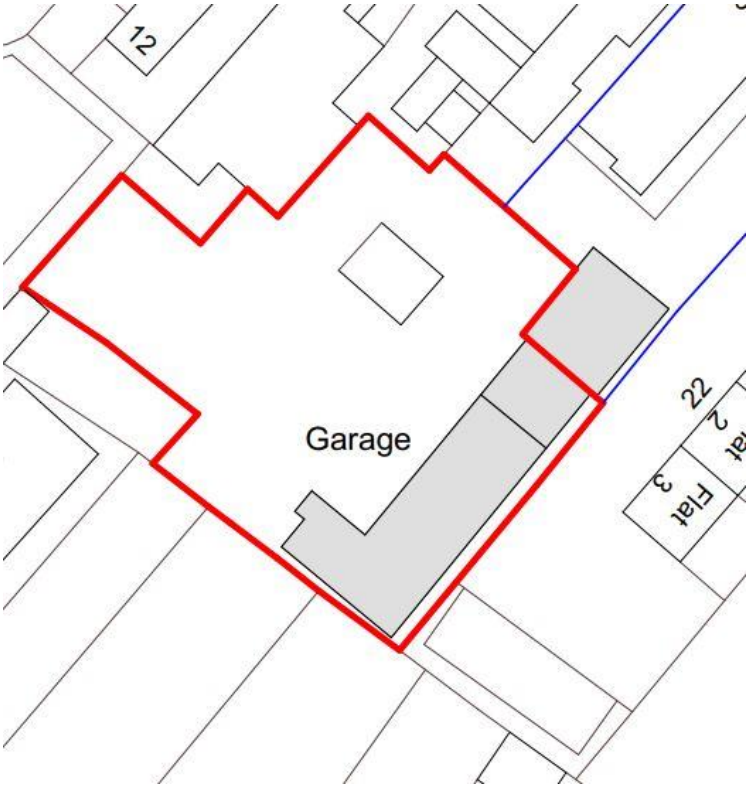
6 Site Description

6.1 The site a plot to the rear of 20 Norcot Road an is currently occupied by an automotive workshop. This includes several single-storey buildings and a canopy providing cover for a large part of the site.

6.2 The site is approximately level and adjacent land generally matches the onsite topography.

6.3 The site itself is almost entirely covered in concrete. There was some evidence of small trees having been removed from the boundaries, but these are likely to be self-seeded trees growing at the edge of the concrete slab. These appear to have been felled in the past as multiple small stems would have been present.

Figure 1: Existing Situation



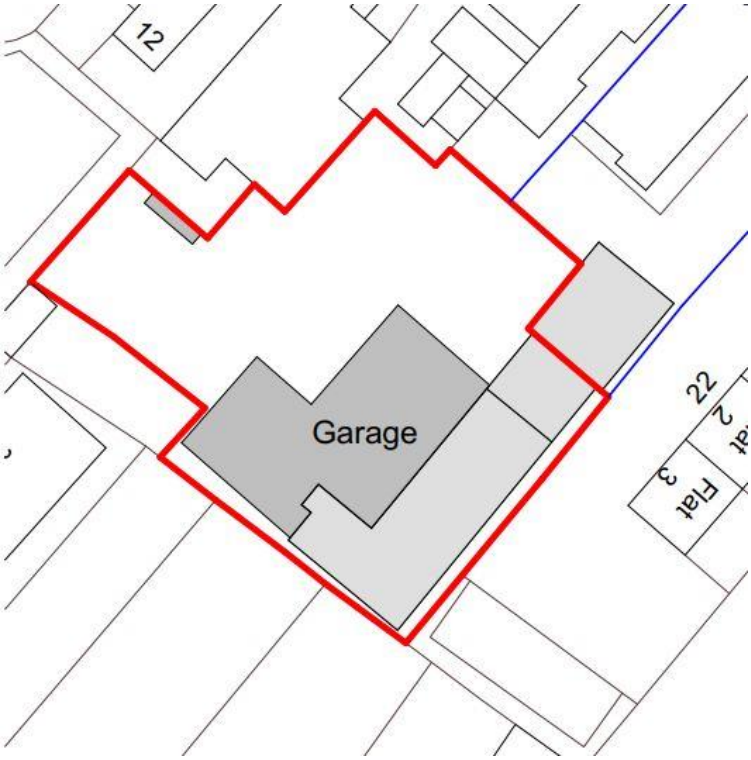
6.1 Off site trees are present to the south-west. These are generally small and have been subject to regular past management, limiting their size and visibility. TG1 is however composed of larger trees which run along a fence line perpendicular to the site. These have some landscape value but have been lifted over the site in the past.

Development Appraisal

7 Development Proposal

7.1 The proposed development will entail the demolition & rebuilding of workshop to rear of 20 Norcot Road, RG30 6BU.

Figure 2: Proposed Situation



8 Arboricultural Impact Assessment

8.1 This appraisal is made in the context of a potential development. It therefore seeks to identify vegetation that would form a constraint to development, that vegetation that would need to be removed, assess impacts from the proposals and define measures to assist in the long-term retention of retained tree stock. The assessment does not consider the requirements of other disciplines such as highways or drainage.

8.2 Our assessment of the arboricultural component of the site is presented in the associated documents MWA Tree Survey Schedule MWA TS 01. Our assessment of the proposed scheme is shown in associated plan MWA TPP 01. The assessments consider tree location, ground conditions, likely root morphology, current dimensions, future growth and the proposed setting. The tolerance of the trees to disturbance based on species, age, condition and the presence of surrounding trees and / or built form is also considered.

8.3 **Tree/hedge works:**

8.4 Three category C trees will be cut back to the boundary to ensure an offset from the new building. One tree in Category B group TG1 will need to be subject to a crown lift over the site to provide construction room. This is likely to involve only light pruning to one or two branches and is close to previous works.

8.5 **Above ground impacts**:

8.6 The proposed pruning is similar to previous works as the trees in question have been cut back to the boundary or lifted over adjacent structures in the past. AS such, while the absolute degree of works would be slightly greater, the overall impacts would be similar to past management and no significant change is therefore excepted to visual amenity, ecosystem services nor to the long-term potential of the trees.

8.7 Tree works are to be agreed at the pre-start meeting.

8.8 Issues surrounding shading and the pressure for future tree works/removals are not judged to be significant as the proposed situation does not significantly differ from the existing.

8.9 **Below ground impacts:**

8.10 The proposed development does infringe the root protection areas of retained trees thus requiring the use of manual excavation of proposed footings. The area affected is already below existing hard surfaces, but we are not aware of the depth of the slab and cannot therefore state that no roots would be present below it.

8.11 The area of the RPA likely to be affected by the proposed development is small for all of the trees, even if rooting below the slab has not be restricted, which may be the case. We therefore consider that manual excavation would be sufficient to minimise damage to and losses of roots.

8.12 Threat from indirect damage and impacts on the rooting environment of retained trees is best addressed, where practicable, by retention of existing hard surfaces during construction. If these cannot be retained, new hard surfaces would provide similar protection, but these should not be founded deeper than the existing sub base if possible.

8.13 It is important to protect the ground within the RPAs from damage and compaction as a result of vehicular and pedestrian movements during development if hard surfaces are roved and not immediately replaced. Should this be required it will require the installation of temporary ground protection.

8.14 **Other Impacts:**

8.15 We currently have no information relating to the provision of services to the new buildings. In order to safeguard retained vegetation we advise that any excavation undertaken within the RPA of retained trees is supervised by a competent arboriculturist and that any root pruning which way be necessary is undertaken in accordance with NJUG10.

Arboricultural Method Statement

9 Arboricultural Method Statement (subject to revision if planning conditions are imposed)

9.1 Our assessment identifies that the proposed development will require works to be conducted within the RPAs of retained trees based on the current information. Extra care is therefore required to prevent damage to retained trees.

9.2 The following sections provide information relating to the order of implementation and proposed works. This assessment is based upon the plans available at the time of writing. As such the recommendations below may be subject to revision in response to additional information or revisions required to discharge planning conditions.

9.3 **Restrictions to operations within RPAs**

9.4 Where development activities occur within the RPAs of retained vegetation the following shall apply within the RPA:

- All excavation will be by hand and completed under direct arboricultural supervision of the project arboriculturist, following a written method statement that has first been approved by the local planning authority.
- No mechanical excavation is to take place within the RPA. In some circumstances it may be permissible under strict arboricultural site supervision and with a site-specific method statement.
- No lowering of levels for any purpose (except removal of grass sward using hand tools).
- No storage of plant or materials.
- No storage or handling of any chemical including cement washings.
- No vehicular access unless specified when those needed for construction works such as light diggers, mini dumper mini piling machinery shall advance only over ground protection or existing hard surfaces (if present) subject to loads.
- No substances injurious to tree health, including fuels, oil, bitumen, cement (including cement washings), builders' sand, concrete mixing and other chemicals shall be stored or used within or directly adjacent to the protection area of retained trees.
- No fire is permitted at any time.
- Whacker plates will not be used within the RPAs of retained trees. Non vibrating rollers will be used to compact materials if required. Hand tampers should be avoided as they can also damage roots, but these may be employed if access prevents the use of a roller.

9.5 Care shall be taken when planning site operations in proximity of retained trees to ensure that wide or tall loads, or plant with booms, jibs and counterweights, can operate without coming into contact with retained trees. Such contact can result in serious injury to them and might make their safe retention impossible. Consequently, any transit or traverse of plant in proximity of trees shall be conducted under the supervision of a banksman, to ensure that adequate clearance from trees is at all times maintained.

9.6 **Enabling works**

9.7 A pre-commencement meeting will be held to discuss phasing of works and appropriate practices where works are to be conducted within RPAs. This meeting will include the site agent and project arboriculturist.

9.8 Works to vegetation detailed in the Tree Protection Plan MWA TPP 01 will be completed before any other activity is conducted on the site.

9.9 Noi protective fencing has been stipulated due to the proximity of the build to the boundary and the presence of existing hard surface to the edges of the site. As noted above, ground protection may be required if existing / proposed hard surfaces are not present, but fencing could not be used. Ground protection should be designed for specific loads, but a generic example of boarding suitable for pedestrian access is shown below. This should be tailored to expected loads.

Figure 3: Ground Protection Schematic

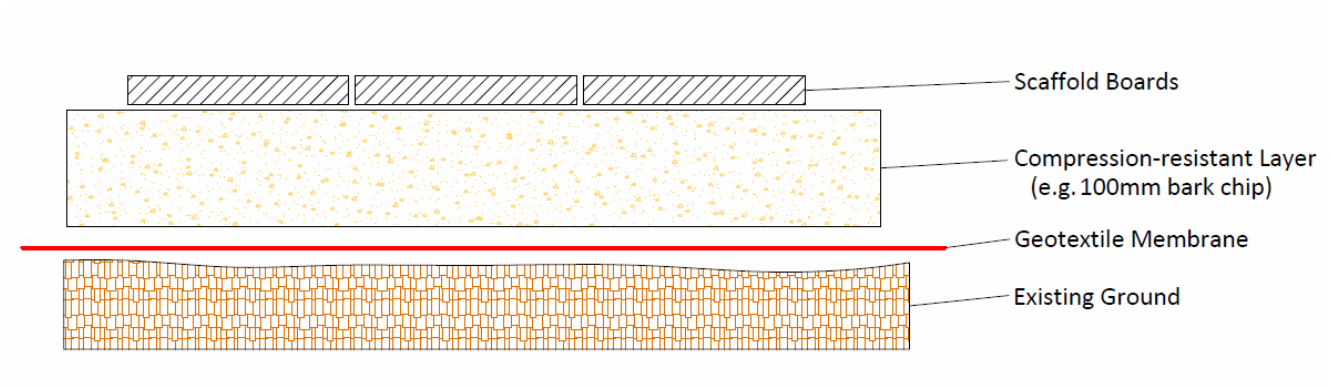


Figure 4: Ground Protection Example

10 Demolition Phase

10.1 Above ground structures will be demolished within their own footprint as far as possible. Existing hard surfaces provide the best protection to roots which extend below the surface. Where possible these will be left in place until the final stage of the demolition process.

10.2 Demolition of above ground structures will be ordered to minimise potential impacts on trees with particular attention given to access routes adjacent to retained vegetation. Plant may be used to conduct these works subject to the use of a banksman to safeguard tree canopies.

10.3 Footings, sub bases and existing services within RPAs should be left in place wherever possible. Should this not be possible they will be removed using only hand tools (if practicable). If necessary, plant may be used but methodology will need to be agreed in advance with the project arboriculturist in advance as these works may need to be supervised.

10.4 Existing hard surfaces within RPAs may be broken out using machines located outside the RPAs or on existing surfaces capable of supporting the loads required. All material will to be removed manually if possible. No plant is permitted within unprotected RPAs at any time, but spoil may be loaded into the buckets of machines located outside the RPA and reaching in.

10.5 Exposed surfaces will be protected as soon as possible once demolition material has been removed. Where exposed roots are present that cannot be immediately covered damp hessian will be used to wrap the roots (hessian will not be wetted if there is a chance of frost). Wrappings will be removed before burying the roots. If possible exposed areas will be covered with at least 100mm of topsoil or with ground boarding if specified.

10.6 Should the level of dust build-up on the tree become significant, the advice of an arboriculturist will be sought. If considered appropriate by the attending arboriculturist the affected trees will be hosed down immediately.

10.7 A pre-commencement meeting will be held to discuss phasing of works and appropriate practices where works are to be conducted within RPAs. This meeting will include the site agent and project arboriculturist.

11 Construction Phase

11.1 Protective fencing and other measures shown will be maintained in accordance with agreed plans for the duration of each particular phase / operation or until construction is complete (as applicable). No changes are permitted without consultation with the project arboriculturist and agreement of the Tree Officer.

11.2 **Excavations within the RPA**

11.3 Excavation will be required within the RPA of retained trees which will require the following methodology to be adhered to where shown in MWA TPP 01.

11.4 Manual excavation seeks to avoid this damage by exposing roots before severance and cutting them cleanly using appropriate tools when necessary. Exposed root ends are minimised and can be better protected from incidental damage.

11.5 Typically, 82% of the roots of broadleaved trees and 70% of conifer roots are found in the top 500mm of soil, with root networks usually decreasing rapidly below this depth. Excavations below 500mm may require trenches to be shuttered to protect operatives from injury if the walls collapse. Shuttering is likely to preclude retention of roots.

11.6 Proposed excavation within the RPA will be conducted by hand and under direct arboricultural supervision. Ideally an air spade should be used but this is often not possible in heavy soils when hand tools will be used instead.

11.7 Spoil should be removed from the RPA by hand. Motorised barrows may be used over ground boarding. Spoil may be loaded into the bucket of a digger as long as the digger itself is located outside the RPA and the bucket does not bear on the ground.

11.8 A trench will be dug in the positions shown in the MWA tree protection plan. Once exposed roots below 25mm diameter will be severed and the now isolated soil on the far side of the trench may be removed in the usual manner as any roots within this soil would no longer be attached to the tree.

11.9 Exposed roots will be severed by the project arboriculturist using secateurs or a hand saw to leave a wound of the lowest cross section possible. Exposed roots / cut faces will be protected by damp hessian (dry if frost is likely) and recovered with topsoil at the earliest opportunity. Hessian wraps should be dampened periodically in hot weather.

11.10 Protective materials will be removed and backfilling completed as soon as possible once operations are complete. Plastic sheeting will be used to prevent contamination by cement if this is required for adjacent construction.

11.11 If roots over 25mm are found the arboriculturist will determine if these may be severed in consultation with the Tree Officer. A record of the works, including photographs and the size and number of roots over 10mm diameter should be produced.

11.12 **Installation of Services (underground and above ground services)**

11.13 Since trenching for the installation of underground services severs any roots present and may change the local soil hydrology in a way that adversely affects the health of the tree, in the event of works being required, particular care will be taken in the routeing and methods of installation of all underground services.

11.14 If required, the project arboriculturist will discuss the routing of underground services as soon as the requirement is identified. Guidance offered in NJUG will act as reference for working methods.

11.15 Extra precautions will be taken if it is necessary to use concrete near to or within the RPAs of retained trees. This is necessary to prevent potential soil contamination in areas where roots are likely to be present either directly (spillage) or leaching. These include:

- Holes will be excavated by hand;
- An impermeable membrane will be used to line the hole to protect surrounding soil before pouring concrete;
- No concrete is to be mixed within an RPA;
- Excess/spilt concrete will be removed upon completion of works.

11.16 **Additional precautions outside the exclusion zone**

11.17 Planning of site operations will take sufficient account of wide loads, tall loads and plant with booms, jibs and counterweights (including drilling rigs), in order that they can operate without coming into contact with retained trees.

11.18 Such contact can result in serious damage to the trees and might make their safe retention impossible. Consequently, any transit or traverse of plant in proximity to trees will be conducted under the supervision of a banks man, to ensure that adequate clearance from trees is maintained at all times. Access facilitation pruning will be undertaken where necessary to maintain this clearance. NOTE: In some instances LPA consent for pruning may be required.

11.19 Fires are prohibited due to the likely proximity of retained vegetation. NOTE: Local environmental health authorities might also have specific restrictions relating to fires.

11.20 Any materials whose accidental spillage would cause damage to a tree will be stored and handled well away from the outer edge of its RPA. It is essential that allowance will be made for the slope of the ground so that damaging materials such as concrete washings, mortar or diesel oil cannot run towards trees.

12 Sequencing of works & supervision

12.1 Phase 1a – Pre start – relevant stakeholders to be made aware of AMS and sequencing of works. These include:

- Site Manager (TBC)
- Arboriculturist (M Bisley – MWA Arboriculture Ltd)
- LPA tree officer
- Engineer
- Appointed tree works contractor

12.2 The agenda of this meeting will cover installation of tree protection mitigation, operating rules, scope of tree works, phasing and landscape operations if information available.

12.3 Phase 1b – Enabling works prior to practical start to be inspected by arboriculturist to include:

- Tree works as per MWA TPP
- Trouble shooting

12.4 Phase 2 – Demolition phase - monitoring visit(s)

- Supervision of works (if required)
- Trouble shooting with site manager

12.5 Phase 3 – Construction phase - monitoring visit(s)

- Supervision of works (if required)
- Trouble shooting with site manager

12.6 Phase 4 – Practical completion and Landscaping (hard and soft)

- Arboriculturist to meet with site manager
- Final monitoring report to be completed

12.7 **SUPERVISION VISITS WILL BE RECORDED USING MWA SITE MONITORING FORM TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY PHOTOGRAPHS. THIS INFORMATION CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE LPA UPON THEIR REQUEST.**

13 Conclusions

13.1 There is significant vegetation adjacent to the site which falls within the constraints of BS 5837:2012.

13.2 A total of four individual trees and one collection were recorded during the survey. Three category C trees will need to be cut back and one tree within a Category B collection will need to be subject to a crown lift in order to accommodate development.

13.3 Provided that development works take place in accordance with the method statements specified in this report, the works will not be detrimental to the retained vegetation.

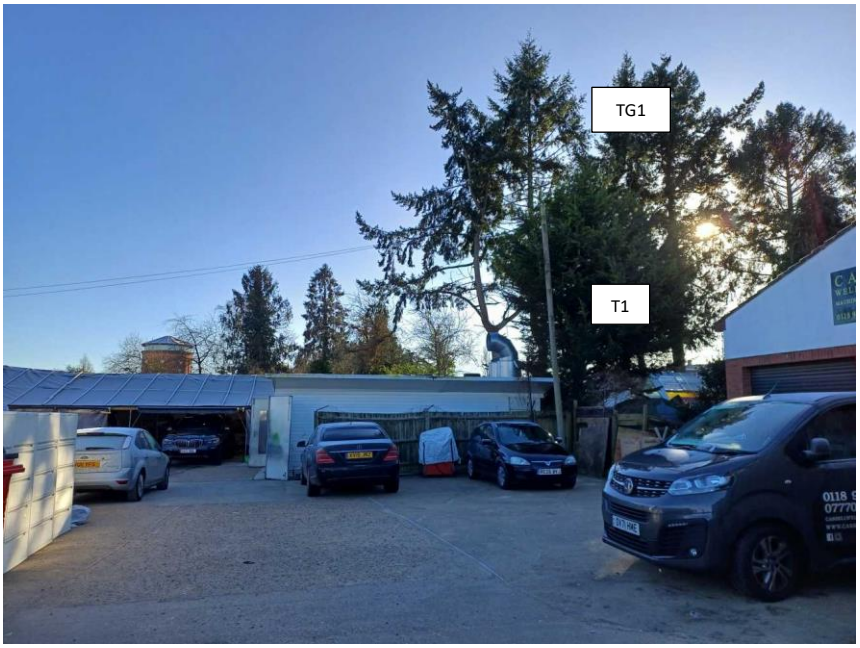
13.4 All technical issues relating to arboriculture should be addressed to MWA Arboriculture Ltd in the first instance. MWA Arboriculture Ltd will liaise between the Local Planning Authority and any interested parties.

13.5 It is suggested that the development proceeds in accordance with the above recommendations with the use of condition(s) to ensure the appropriate methods of working are agreed and any necessary site supervision/enabling works are correctly sequenced prior to the commencement of construction work.

Appendix 1 – Key Contacts

Position	Organisation	Name	Contact Info
Project Arboriculturist	MWA Arboriculture Ltd	Mark Bisley	0191 432 9560 office@mwaarboriculture.co.uk
LPA Tree Officer	Reading Borough Council	TBC	TBC
Site Manager	TBC	TBC	TBC

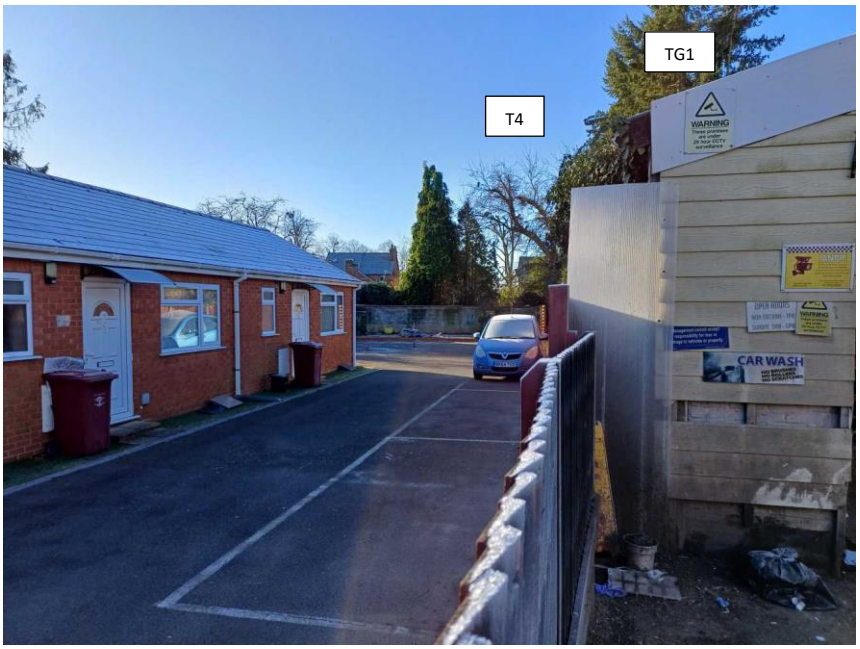
Appendix 2 – Images



View of site from north-west

View of T1 and T2 from south-east

View of T3 from north-west



View of T4 from north-east

Appendix 3 – Site Monitoring Form

Arboricultural Monitoring & Supervision Record			
Site Address			
MWA Consultant			
Date of visit			
Also in attendance			
Purpose of Visit			
Monitoring	Supervision	Spot-Check	Meeting
Observations			
	As per AMS/TPP?	Breach?	S Manager aware?
Protective Fencing			
Ground protection			
Signage			
Storage			
Access/egress			
Tree Works			
Underground services			
Comments			
Signed:			
Dated:			

Appendix 4 – Example handout for site operatives when working with RPAs

Precautions When Working Close to Trees

The following points are designed to prevent damage to both the visible and below ground parts of the tree. Failure to work in line with the points set out below is likely to result in damage to trees and may result in action by the Local Planning Authority such as a stop notice or prosecution.

- Works stipulated in the approved **Tree Protection Plan** and Arboricultural Report will be completed before other works on the site begin. No other tree pruning is permitted without written permission from the Project Arboriculturist.
- If required **Protective Fencing** is to be installed in accordance with the approved Tree Protection Plan before the start of any construction activities, including demolition or placing of site offices.
- **Protective Fencing** will remain in place until the end of the build unless approval for its removal is provided in writing by the Project Arboriculturist.
- If required **Ground Protection** is to be installed in accordance with the approved Tree Protection Plan before the start of any construction activities, including demolition or placing of site offices.
- **Ground Protection will remain in place** until the end of the build unless approval for its removal is provided in writing by the Project Arboriculturist.
- **Excavations within the Root Protection Areas of retained trees (RPAs)** must be conducted in **strict accordance with the AMS** and in accordance with site specific briefing provided by the Project Arboriculturist.
- Only those **underground services** shown in the approved plans will be routed through the RPA of retained trees without consultation with the Project Arboriculturist. (See above regarding excavation within RPAs.)
- **No storage of chemicals or other materials** is allowed within the RPA of retained trees irrespective of ground protection. Materials should not be stored uphill of retained trees or their RPAs.
- **No mixing of concrete or other potentially toxic materials** is permitted within the RPAs of retained trees.
- **No fires are permitted within RPAs or close to retained trees**, irrespective of local Council policy.
- **Banksman** will be used whenever plant is operating close to retained trees.
- **No plant may operate within the RPA of retained trees** without appropriate ground protection in place.
- Details for the **Project Arboriculturist** may be obtained from the Site Agent.