Development tree report for Mr & Mrs Taylor

Site Address:

1 St. Peters Hill,

Caversham,

Reading,

Berkshire,

RG4 7AX

This report is an arboricultural assessment to cover the requirements under B.S.5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction.

Prepared By

SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd

Prepared by Steve Wood (O.N.D. Arboriculture M.Arbor.A.) for and behalf of SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd. on 10th October 2024

Summary

1. The report proposes hard landscaping of the garden by lowering a section of existing retaining walls by 1.5m, reorientating steps, adding other retaining walls, and infilling existing metal railings. The site is terraced on multiple levels, with the property on the lowest level and the garden initially raising towards St Peters Avenue. The only possible tree impact is to T1, where the present retaining wall is slightly lowered to 600mm above ground level to match with the existing walls. This will not involve any root disturbance and does not require further mitigation. Looking at the time line history of the area, the physical amount of works within the tress RPA is low and taking into consideration the trees low environmental benefit and category, these works are highly unlikely to affect its health or life expectancy.
2. The area of railing to be infilled will likely be attached to the existing retaining wall, requiring no foundations. If a new post is required, it will be excavated by hand using hand tools. The post hole will be lined with 250-micron gauge polythene membrane to prevent leaching into the soil, and the fence post hole will be placed in the hole and surrounded by concrete.
3. The granite strip across the present parking area is an established hostile root growth environment, As a precaution these minimal excavations should be conducted using hand tools. and the infill fencing can be mitigated by mounting the post on the existing retaining wall.
4. Tree protection fencing will consist of an extruded plastic barrier of 1m height installed as per the blue line on the Tree Protection Plan [TPP]: SMW/1 St Peters Hill/TPP/002 drawing. This must not be moved without prior approval from the Arboricultural consultant and the Tree officer. No materials must be stored within the area sectioned off by the barriers.

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The accompanying documents and appendices for this report are as follows:
Tree survey plan [TSP]: SMW/1 St Peters Hill/TSP/001 (on pg. 16), Tree protection plan [TPP]: SMW/1 St Peters Hill/TPP/002 (on pg. 17)
Appendix 1: guidance for tree protective barriers, Appendix 2: site guidance for working in root protection areas (RPA), Appendix 3: special surface constructions under tree's RPA Appendix 4: key, Appendix 5: cascade chart for tree quality assessment, Appendix 6: references

Introduction

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This arboricultural method statement is a document that provides information on tree protection and management on a site. It is required for site managers to have a copy before development begins and to be available on site throughout the process. The statement assumes that the minimum general standards

for development issues are those set out in the British Standards Institution, B.S.5837:2012, and National Joint Utilities Group's publication. It is based on a ground-level tree assessment and examination of external features, using the 'Visual Tree Assessment' method by Mattheck and Breloer.

Survey extent and site description:

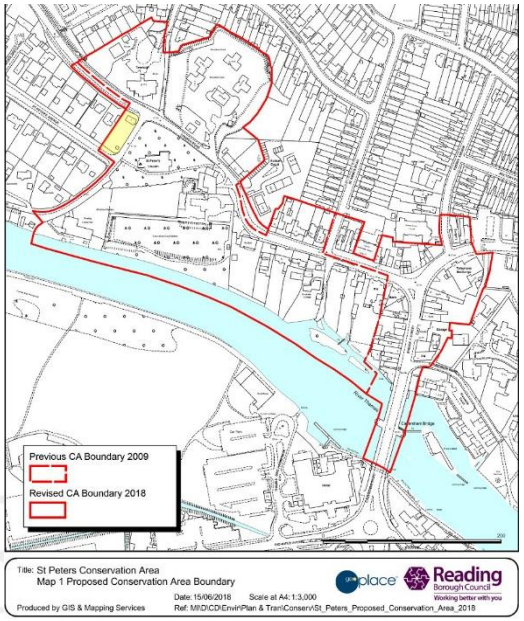
Site description: detached property located on a corner plot with terraced garden.
Survey extent: our survey covered the indicated area in the satellite mapping image overleaf.

Soil type:

An online soil analysis search was conducted, and the findings are that the soil is composed of freely draining, slightly acidic, but base-rich soils.
This information was sourced from: http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/. This should not be used as a definitive determination, and other sources should be used, i.e., geological survey maps or a full soil analysis, where reactive soils have a high probability.

Tree protection status

On the 18th of June 2024 we assessed the local authority's website for information on tree preservation orders and conservation areas. We found that the LPA does not have interactive mapping for its tree orders thus separate searched were made for conservation areas and Tree Preservation Orders. However, the LPA website has a TPO directory, on which 1 St. Peters Hill was not listed. According to an email received from Ethne Humphreys to Shaun Tanner Architecture dated 2nd October 2024 stated that "*1 St Peters Hill is not listed, one can definitively say there is no TPO there*".
The site is covered by St Peter's conservation area, which is illustrated on the screenshot (right) taken from the Reading Borough Council Conservation area list:
The site may be covered by other tree restrictive orders (such as AONB or green belt), and confirmation in writing should be sought from your local authority of all tree restrictions before proceeding with any works.



Tree survey:

Scope and limitations of the survey

This survey and report focus on arboricultural aspects related to a proposed development and should not be interpreted as a health and safety report. It is based on a ground-level tree assessment and examination of external features, using the 'Visual Tree Assessment' method. The survey and report are valid for one year from the date stated on the cover page for planning submission. Trees of significant stature were surveyed, and no plant tissue samples were taken. The risk of tree-related subsidence to structures was not

assessed. The report is based on present ground levels and does not include knowledge of existing or proposed underground services. The positions of trees were plotted using GPS, and the report is based on the trees on site or within potential influencing distance at the time of the survey. If changes to the site post-site survey occur, the report becomes invalid, and a new survey, subsequent drawings, and report will be required.

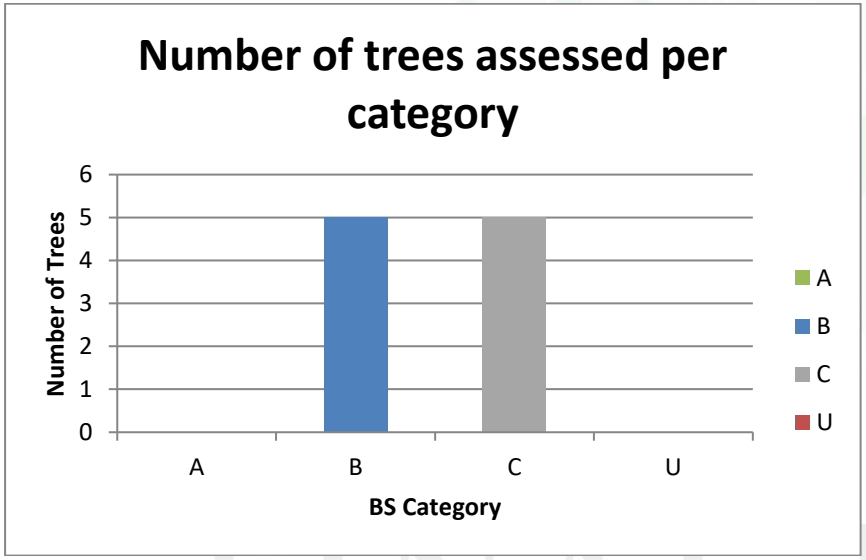
General exclusions

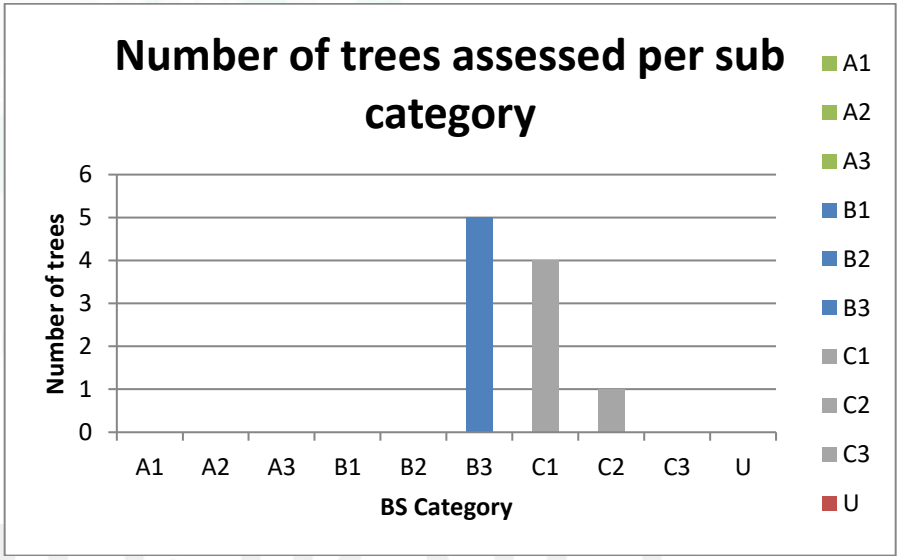
The report focuses on above-ground inspections and should not be interpreted as a health and safety assessment. The report's validity and accuracy depend on the information available before and during the inspection process. SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd. is not responsible for recommendations if essential data is unavailable or inaccurate. The report is valid for one year for planning submission but becomes invalid if building works, soil levels are altered, or tree work is conducted without local authority permission. If these changes occur, a new tree inspection is strongly recommended.

Assessed trees:

A total of 10 trees have been included in the report as being within the potential influencing distance of the proposed alterations.
5 category B trees were identified, and 5 category C trees were identified. No category A or U trees were assessed on site.

BAR CHART SHOWING THE NUMBER OF TREES SURVEYED WITHIN EACH BRITISH STANDARD ASSIGNED CATEGORY.





Development proposal:

The proposal does not specify the positioning of new services, but it is assumed no new services will be needed for the project. If necessary, they can be installed outside the surveyed trees RPAs. SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd. must be consulted once positions are finalised. The shading factor has been taken

into consideration as to the effect this will have on the development proposal and is clearly indicated on the Tree Protection Plan [TPP]: SMW/1 St Peters Hill/TPP/002. Shading is not a consideration for this project.

Issues and specifications:

Pre-commencement

Site meeting: Before demolition or construction work begins, a pre-commencement meeting should be held with the site manager, arboricultural consultant, and council representative. All tree protection measures must be thoroughly discussed, and onsite arboricultural supervision is recommended to avoid disagreements with the tree officer. Any clarifications or modifications must be recorded and circulated in writing. The tree surgery contractor may be appropriate to attend this meeting. Failure to authorize the meeting may result in liability for incorrect barrier positioning and construction delays.

Arboricultural implications assessment (AIA):

The primary criterion for arboricultural preservation is the retention of as many appropriate trees as possible. The presence of trees is generally considered beneficial to the environment. The proposed development on existing trees and the future landscape has been assessed, with mitigation solutions provided. The site is terraced on multiple levels, with the property on the lowest level and the garden initially raising towards St Peters Avenue. The only possible tree impact is to T1, where the present retaining wall will be slightly lowered to 600mm above ground level to match with the existing walls. This does not require further mitigation as no foundation alterations are required. The area is an established parking facility with a surface that prevents ground compaction and root damage. The railing area to be infilled will likely be attached to the existing retaining wall, requiring no foundations. If a new post is required, it will be excavated by hand using hand tools only. The post hole will be lined with 250-micron gauge polythene membrane to prevent leaching into the soil, and the fence post hole will be placed in the hole and surrounded by concrete. Great care must be taken to ensure that no concrete contacts any surfaces surrounding the post hole. The proposed alteration has no possible influence on the remaining surveyed trees.

Recommended tree work and management:

To permit the development to proceed, it will NOT be necessary to remove any trees. Some minor trees below 75mm in stem diameter were on the site but not assessed. These may need to be removed as part of the development programme, none of which should have any detrimental effect.
We did note when on site that T1 has a fairly acute lean over 'The Warren' and branches do interfere with large vehicles. The trees stability on the steep slope could be questionable and a recommendation would be to remove the secondary stem leaning over the highway.

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Tree protection measures:

Root Protection Area (RPA):

B.S. 5837:2012 provides guidance for calculating root protection areas (RPAs) for trees to be retained. RPAs should be left undisturbed around each tree to avoid excessive damage to its roots or rooting environment. Open-grown trees with an even radial root distribution should have equidistant boundaries from the tree's trunk. However, the disposition of tree roots can be affected by various factors, and the Arboriculturist must assess these factors and adjust the RPA's sighting.

B.S. 5837:2012 requires the RPA of all retained trees to be protected from development effects by installing protective barriers. The position of these barriers may be influenced by the presence of tree canopies that extend beyond the RPA and could be damaged by construction works or for future tree planting. No machinery should be allowed into the area until this is completed.

Protection barriers must be installed prior to construction works, including clearance or demolition, and weather notices must be erected on them. Work should not be conducted within the area without the prior approval of the Arboricultural Consultant or Local Authority Tree Officer. **All tree protection measures must be retained in the position indicated on the Tree Protection Plan [TPP]: SMW/1 St Peters Hill/TPP/002, unless their position is superseded by agreement at the pre-start meeting with the Arboricultural consultant and local authority's Arboricultural officer.**

Protective barriers and root protection areas (RPAs)

The Tree Protection Plan (TPP) for SMW/1 St Peters Hill/TPP/002 outlines the position of protective barriers and the boundary of the CEZ. Due to the proximity of some trees to the construction area, the standard guidelines have not been followed. Alternative methods of protection have been suggested. The project will use an extruded plastic barrier of 1m height, secured by metal pins every 1.5m and driven in to the ground to a depth of 0.5m. The boundary fence will act as tree protection fencing for most measures. The precise location of the barriers must be agreed at the pre-start meeting before any development activity starts.

The erection of all fencing must be a single operation.

No materials can be stored in areas sectioned off by tree protection fencing.

Ground protection measures:

We have not specified any ground protection due to the steeply sloping ground.

Fires:

The burning of materials is prohibited, and no fires shall take place on site, with no exceptions.

Guidance for working within RPAs:

Removal of existing surfacing and replacement of new surfacing:

Trees that have existing surfacing and structures to be removed and replaced within their RPAs and may be adversely affected by this activity. Any work within a tree's root protection area must be done with care, as set out in APPENDIX 2: SITE GUIDANCE FOR WORKING IN ROOT PROTECTION AREAS (RPAs).

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Any adverse impact must be minimised by following the general guidance set out in APPENDIX 2: SITE GUIDANCE FOR WORKING IN ROOT PROTECTION AREAS (RPAs). Any work must be carried out without the use of machinery and by hand tools unless under Arboricultural supervision and on anti-compaction surfaces.

Installation of new surfacing:

Any adverse impact must be minimised by following the general guidance set out in APPENDIX 3: SPECIAL SURFACE CONSTRUCTIONS UNDER TREE'S RPAS document.

The present footpaths are to be retained as shown on the architects drawing, there are some new flower beds to be designed, these again are outside any trees RPA.

Installation of new structure:

The building of any new structures (such as retaining walls) required close to the RPAs may adversely impact the trees. Any adverse impact must be minimised by following the general guidance set out in APPENDIX 2: SITE GUIDANCE FOR WORKING IN ROOT PROTECTION AREAS (RPAs) document.

Site storage, cement mixing and washing points:

The Tree Protection Plan (TPP) requires all site storage areas, cement mixing, and washing points for equipment and vehicles to be outside. If there is a risk of polluted water run-off, heavy-duty plastic sheeting and sandbags must be used to contain spillages and prevent contamination. Facilities for oil, fuel, or chemical storage must be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The bund compound must be at least equivalent to the tank's capacity plus 10%, and all filling points, vents, gauges, and sight glasses must be located within the bund. The drainage system must be sealed and protected from accidental damage.

Services:

We have no knowledge of any existing or proposed services for the site, unless shown on the Tree Protection Plan [TPP]: SMW/1 St Peters Hill/TPP/002. If services need to be installed within RPAs, great care must be taken to minimise any disturbance. It is unlikely that new services will be required for the landscaping project. However, if services are required these must be positioned outside of the surveyed trees' RPA. APPENDIX 2: SITE GUIDANCE FOR WORKING IN ROOT PROTECTION AREAS (RPAs) document will be followed. If services do need to be installed within RPAs, written approval must be obtained from the council before any works are conducted.

Tree protection during demolition:

No site work of any nature will be conducted until the protective fencing has been constructed and approved by the Tree Officer. Where this must be conducted within the RPA this should be conducted by hand tools of if not practical under full Arboricultural supervision and machinery on anti-compaction surfaces.

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Specialist engineered foundations within RPAs:

There are no foundation considerations for this project.

We are aware of the granite strip across the present parking area, as this area is established hostile root growth environment and although partially within the RPA of T1 its highly unlikely that any root activity will be present and consequently not made any specific mitigation. As a precaution these minimal excavations should be conducted using hand tools. The infill fencing can be mitigated by mounting the post on the existing retaining wall.

Scheduling of works that may affect protected trees:

Construction, excavation, and site operations will not begin until tree protection measures are in place and agreed upon in writing by the Local Authorities Tree Officer. If approved, recommended remedial works will be authorized, and any additional work will require an application to the local authority due to the site being within a conservation area. Confirmation from the relevant Local Authority is necessary if there are restrictive orders affecting the trees on the site. Before commencing any works, discussions with an arboricultural contractor should be held to ensure both parties are fully conversant with the nature of the work to be undertaken.

Developer's responsibilities, initial site visit and subsequent procedures for reporting:

The developer is responsible for ensuring all site personnel understand the arboricultural method statement, keeping a copy on site and briefing them on tree protection requirements. This should be part of site induction procedures and documented in site management documents. The developer must instruct an arboricultural consultant to ensure compliance with supervision requirements before any work begins on site.

Tree protection awareness

The developer must display tree protection signs on all protective barriers for the whole construction period. The signs to be used are contained within the appendix's documentation called "tree protection signs for fencing."

The site manager is responsible for ensuring tree protection fencing and ground protection is not loose, dilapidated, or disintegrated during daily site opening checks. All site workers must be informed of the procedures, construction, and locations of these measures and must not move, adjust, or remove them without consulting SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd. Any revised position must be documented on a drawing produced by SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd and submitted to the local authority for approval. Tree protection must be maintained daily, with no materials stored within or on it, and no washing/mixing or fires within 1.5m of it.

The site manager is responsible for ensuring all site personnel sign a table confirming their understanding of the tree protection awareness statement and their responsibility to protect all trees and shrubs on the site, thereby demonstrating their responsibility to the site.

Name	Company	Date	Signature

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Name	Company	Date	Signature

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Supervision visits:

To ensure that the tree protection is installed correctly, and ensure that it is maintained, a schedule of arboricultural visits will take place throughout the construction period. This will include the following:

- A pre-start meeting. – This shall be attended by an arboricultural consultant, the constructor, and the local authority tree officer. The aim of the meeting is to ensure that the tree protection measures are set up in accordance with the Tree Protection Plan, or if required, explain why adjustments have been made and if they are acceptable. If they are not acceptable, then this meeting will aim to rectify the tree protection measures to a standard that is approved by the arboricultural consultant and the local authority tree officer.
- Once the tree protection is installed to the correct standards, tree protection photographs will then be sent to SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd. and forwarded to the LPA Arboricultural officer for approval, with the intention of starting the build 5 days after submitting the photographs to the Arboricultural officer, unless the Arboricultural officer responds with a negative comment.
- A site visit by an arboriculturist at no more than one-month intervals (responsibility of the client or contractor to organise).
- A report to be prepared after every site visit by the arboricultural consultant and submitted to the local authority.

The client must inform SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd. one month before the intended start date, so that the pre-start meeting can be arranged with the attending parties. The pre-start meeting will take place two weeks prior to the intended start date to allow sufficient time for any adjustments to the tree protection.

The supervising arboricultural consultant may also be required to supervise the following on site actions within RPAs:

- Any demolition works.
- Any foundation excavations – including conventional strip excavations, AirSpade excavations, pile installations and hand dug excavations.
- Any service installations
- Access drive construction
- Landscaping – including tree planting.

Reporting:

The Arboriculturist must advise the site manager on any relevant tree issues at the time of the visit, followed by a formal letter of confirmation circulated to all parties, including the Local Authority. These site visit reports will form the mechanism for confirming that the tree related planning conditions have been complied with for the duration of the development activity.

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Conclusion:

1. The proposal is to hard landscape the garden by lowering a section of the existing retaining walls by 1.5m, reorientate steps, add other retaining walls and infill existing metal railings.
   Please see the architectural drawings for more details on the proposed alterations.
2. Our visual assessment is that the site is terraced on multiple levels with the property on the lowest level and the garden, initially raising towards St Peters Avenue., then descending.
3. The only possible tree impact is to T1. This is where the present retaining wall is to be slightly lowered to 600mm above ground level to match in with the existing walls. As this will not involve any root disturbance this doesn't require any further mitigation. The area which is an established parking facility has a surface which will prevent any ground compaction/root damage.
4. The only possible tree impact is to T1. This is where the present retaining wall is to be slightly lowered to 600mm above ground level to match in with the existing walls. As this will not involve any root disturbance this doesn't require any further mitigation. The area which is an established parking facility has a surface which will prevent any ground compaction/root damage.
5. The area of railing to be infilled, will likely be able to be attached to the existing retaining wall and thus requiring no foundations. However, if a new post is required it will be excavated by hand, solely utilising hand tools. Post hole will be lined with 250-micron gauge polythene membrane to prevent leaching into the soil and then the fence post hole place in the hole and surrounded by concrete. Great care must be taken to ensure that no concrete contacts any surfaces surrounding the post hole. There is no possible influence from the proposed alteration on the remaining surveyed trees.
6. Tree protection fencing will consist of a type of barrier we consider appropriate for the project. This will be an extruded plastic barrier of 1m in height installed as per the blue line on the Tree Protection Plan [TPP]: SMW/1 St Peters Hill/TPP/002 drawing and secured by metal pins every 1.5m and driven in to the ground to a depth of 0.5m where possible. This must not be moved under any circumstances without prior approval from the Arboricultural consultant and the Tree officer. No materials must be stored within the area sectioned off by the barriers. The boundary fence will act as tree protection fencing for most of the tree protection measures. The natural very steep slope of the garden will prevent normal access into this area and although not shown on the drawings there is a summer house and garage all further preventing any access to this area.
7. We are aware of the granite strip across the present parking area, as this area is established hostile root growth environment and although partially within the RPA of T1 its highly unlikely that any root activity will be present and consequently not made any specific mitigation. The infill fencing can be mitigated by mounting the post on the existing retaining wall.
8. The project has very limited tree impacts, this is clearly demonstrated in the report and with the mitigation see no reason why the application should not be approved.

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Tree survey data

Tree ID	In Conservation Area/TPO	Species & Maturity	Likely Bat Habitat	Measurements estimated	Height (m)	Height and direction of first significant branch (m)	Number of Stems	Stem 1 (mm) or average diameter for trees with more than 5 stems	Stem 2 (mm)	Stem 3 (mm)	Crown Spread (m) N	E	S	W	Crown height (average)	Crown, Stem, Basal Area	B.S. Category	Life Expectancy	Physical Condition	Build Stage	Recommended action	Date	Comment
T1	Yes	**Species:** Pissards Plum **Latin:** Prunus atropurpurea **Maturity:** Mature	Unknown	No	5	S2	1	475			6	4	3	2	3	**Crown -** Fair, **Stem -** Fair, **Basal Area -** Poor	C1	10 to 20 yrs.	Fair	Pre-construction	Recommended action: No action	17.06.24	Tree is located on the eastern boundary by highway. Approx 2.5m from car parking area retaining wall.
T2	Yes	**Species:** Common Holly **Latin:** Ilex aquifolium **Maturity:** Mature	No	No	7	4e	1	365			4	4	2	2	3	**Crown -** Poor, **Stem -** Fair, **Basal Area -** Poor	C1	10 to 20 yrs.	Fair	Pre-construction	Recommended action: No action	17.06.24	T2 previously reduced at 7m with up to 1m of regrowth. Tree is poor form with lots of major deadwood throughout the crown.
T3	Yes	**Species:** Common Holly **Latin:** Ilex aquifolium **Maturity:** Mature	No	No	8	4.5n	3	275	260	260	3	4	3	4	4	**Crown -** Good, **Stem -** Fair, **Basal Area -** Poor	C1	10 to 20 yrs.	Fair	Pre-construction	Recommended action: No action	17.06.24	Tree is located on the upper side of the steeply sloping bank. Tree is triple stemmed at 0.5m.
T4	Yes	**Species:** Common Holly **Latin:** Ilex aquifolium **Maturity:** Mature	No	No	8	4w	2	340	280		2	4	2	4	4	**Crown -** Declining, **Stem -** Poor, **Basal Area -** Poor	C2	<10 yrs.	Declining	Pre-construction	Recommended action: No action	17.06.24	Tree located to the east of a garden shed at the top of a steeply sloping bank. Stem has weak included bifurcation at 0.3m.
T5	Yes	**Species:** Common Holly **Latin:** Ilex aquifolium **Maturity:** Mature	No	No	9	4w	1	410			1	3	5	5	4	**Crown -** Fair, **Stem -** Fair, **Basal Area -** Poor	B3	10 to 20 yrs.	Fair	Pre-construction	Recommended action: No action	17.06.24	Tree located mid-bank. Main stem bifurcates at 3m.
T6	Yes	**Species:** Sycamore **Latin:** Acer pseudoplatanus **Maturity:** Mature	No	No	11	4e	2	320	305		4	5	5	3	6	**Crown -** Good, **Stem -** Fair, **Basal Area -** Poor	B3	20 to 40 yrs.	Fair	Pre-construction	Recommended action: Remove the secondary stem leaning over the highway	17.06.24	Tree located by eastern boundary fence. Main stem bifurcates at 1m.
T7	Yes	**Species:** Sycamore **Latin:** Acer pseudoplatanus **Maturity:** Mature	No	No	15	7w	1	520			5	5	5	5	8	**Crown -** Good, **Stem -** Fair, **Basal Area -** Poor	B3	20 to 40 yrs.	Fair	Pre-construction	Recommended action: No action	17.06.24	Located to the south of existing shed and north of existing garage. Main stem bifurcates at 5m.
T8	Yes	**Species**: Sycamore **Latin:** Acer pseudoplatanus **Maturity:** Mature	No	No	12	3e	1	330			5	5	2	5	4	**Crown -** Fair, **Stem -** Fair, **Basal Area-** Poor	C1	20 to 40 yrs.	Fair	Pre-construction	Recommended action: No action	17.06.24	Located 4m from the south-east boundary and 3m south of garage.

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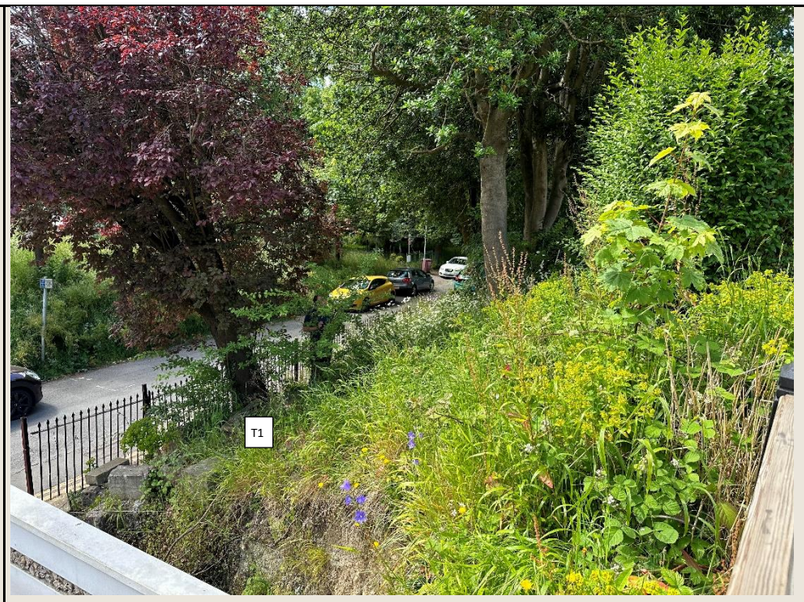
Tree ID	In Conservation Area/TPO	Species & Maturity	Likely Bat Habitat	Measurements estimated	Height (m)	Height and direction of first significant branch (m)	Number of Stems	Stem 1 (mm) or average diameter for trees with more than 5 stems	Stem 2 (mm)	Stem 3 (mm)	Crown Spread (m) N	E	S	W	Crown height (average)	Crown, Stem, Basal Area	B.S. Category	Life Expectancy	Physical Condition	Build Stage	Recommended action	Date	Comment
T9	Yes	**Species:** Sycamore **Latin:** Acer pseudoplatanus **Maturity:** Mature	No	No	13	3s	1	460			2	5	5	5	4	**Crown -** Fair, **Stem -** Fair, **Basal Area -** Poor	B3	20 to 40 yrs.	Fair	Pre-construction	Recommended action: No action	17.06.24	Located 2m from retaining wall on the south-east boundary, 1m from previous tree.
T10	Yes	**Species:** Sycamore **Latin:** Acer pseudoplatanus **Maturity:** Mature	No	No	12	4n	1	550			5	6	4	5	4	**Crown -** Good, **Stem -** Fair, **Basal Area -** Fair	B3	20 to 40 yrs.	Fair	Pre-construction	Recommended action: No action	17.06.24	Located in the south-west corner of the property adjacent to garden shed.

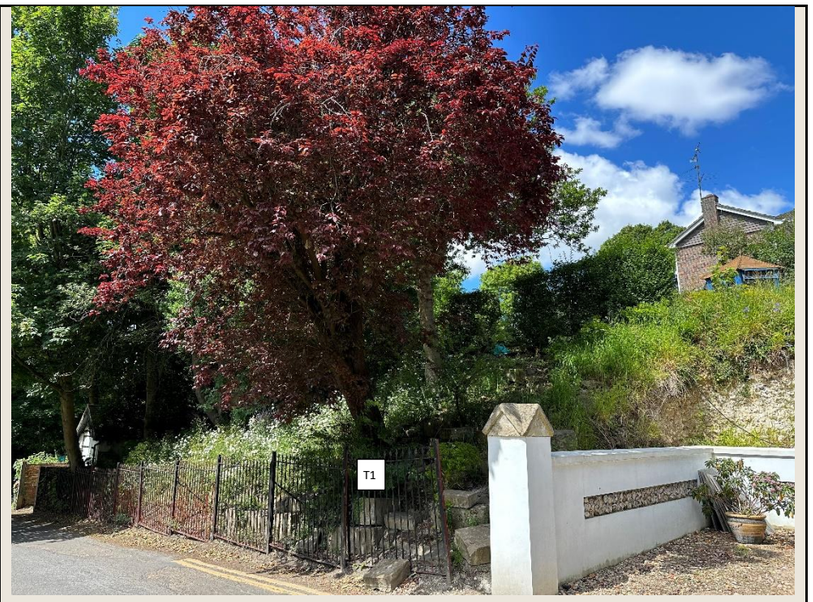
All work should be conducted to the recognised standard B.S.3998:2010 as a minimum.

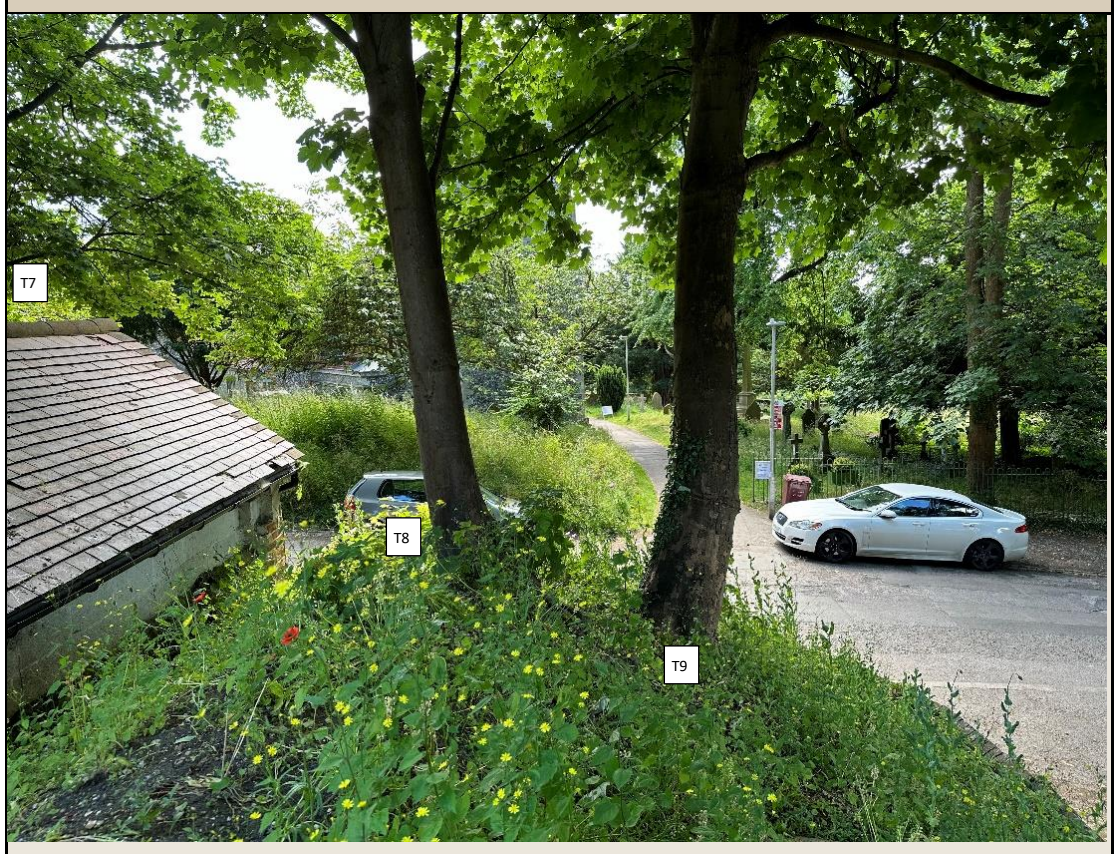
Root protection calculations

Tree number	No. of stems	Stem 1 (or mean diameter for >5 stems)	Stem 2	Stem 3	RPA for 1 stem (m2)	Radius (m)	RPA between 2 and 5 stems (m2)	Radius (m)
T1	1	475			102	5.70		
T2	1	365			60	4.38		
T3	3	275	260	260			95.37	5.51
T4	2	340	280				87.76	5.29
T5	1	410			76	4.92		
T6	2	320	305				88.41	5.30
T7	1	520			122	6.24		
T8	1	330			49	3.96		
T9	1	460			96	5.52		
T10	1	550			137	6.60		

Site photographs







Proposed removal of secondary stem of T1 over highway.