

Memo

To: Louise Fuller, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 2nd May 2025

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/25/0491

Application Type: Full planning permission

Address: 47 Parkside Road, Reading, RG30 2BT

Proposal: Erection of 1no. five-bedroom detached dwelling comprising two storeys, together with on-site car parking, secure cycle parking and refuse storage, together with landscaping. Vehicular and pedestrian access via Wingrove Road, following the demolition of all structures on the Site.

The Site of 47 Parkside Road is located in an AQMA and on a tree lined street. In such areas, trees are particularly valuable and tree retention and planting are a high priority alongside any development.

The site has been subject to pre-application in 2023 and an application for 2 houses in 2024. On both occasions, the need for a net gain in tree numbers (given some felling was inevitable) was emphasised, along with the inclusion of tree planting on the Wingrove Road boundary.

After assessing the Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement, 20th February 2025, Ref: jwmb/rpt2/47parkside/AIAAMS, I have the following comments:

I note the 2no. Apple trees (both C category) are to be removed. In section 1.3.2, the justification for the loss of 2no. trees is as follows: *'The loss of these trees is a low and acceptable impact. Replacement planting is policy compliant, i.e. on a 3:1 basis. Two trees are proposed for removal, and six trees are proposed for replacement.'* I note that the proposed garden space is relatively small and already populated with trees. The replacement replanting may hinder the usable garden space hence inclusion of additional tree in the rear garden may not be prudent. The Design and Access Statement, March 2025, Ref: 18034 DA01A, states *'To mitigate their loss we propose to plant two trees within the new development'*. This conflicts what is suggested in the AIA. The Proposed Site Plan, February 2025, Project No. 18034, shows the inclusion of 6no. replacement trees. The assurance of replanting 6no. replacement trees, rather than 2no., is to be

demonstrated in a Landscape Plan, which in the DAS has been stated that the developer is happy to provide, in order to demonstrate the feasibility of planting this number of trees. If the DAS is to be an approved document, it is necessary to update this to be consistent with tree planting on this landscape plan.

I have also noted from the AIA 1.4.4 that '*Site works will take place beyond the root protection area (RPA) of retained trees and canopies.*' - the development of the footpath falls underneath T24's canopy (and on edge of its RPA) and the proposed fence also falls underneath T25's canopy - making this statement inaccurate. In addition, the existing wall to be demolished is within the RPAs of T24 & 25 hence needs consideration.

3.2.1 states '*The RPAs will lie within the TPZ and, therefore, be fully fenced off unless appropriate ground protection is offered or if the impact on the RPA is deemed very low and acceptable.*' T24 has its RPA exposed to the development of the proposed footpath, with a small section of it being unprotected. However, this is a small impingement, and the fencing proposed will force works to take place outside the majority of the RPA.

The AIA also does not acknowledge treatment recommendations, specific to the BS5837 2012 recommendations, when discovering tree roots. We would expect to be demonstrated, especially when working in close proximity to an exposed RPA, and before concluding whether the impact is acceptable. There is a mention of root treatment within 3.4.1, however it only covers '*Routing & Installation of Services*' – not all aspects of the development. Any peripheral roots of T24 on the edge of the footpath and roots of T25 for fencing should be considered.

The details of '*appropriate ground protection*' (3.2.1) to justify the exposure, is not demonstrated and therefore, not acceptable.

As stated, '*New service runs should avoid RPAs of retained trees where possible.*' It should be ensured that these are considered at an early stage to avoid both RPAs and the location of new trees.

The proposed footpath is located underneath T24's canopy, which currently only has 1.5m ground clearance, which is not enough clearance to walk or work underneath and may require more facilitation pruning (none is specified). Similarly, the new fence is proposed under the canopy of T25 Holly, which currently has 0m ground clearance.

Not all elements of the proposal have been considered in the AIA.

As indicated above, the specifications for the installation of the proposed fencing have not been submitted. Fence posts and foundations, which intrude into soil, can have a negative impact on trees. The TPP shows the proposed fence being developed within the RPA of T25 and potentially other trees, if new posts or foundations are needed. This is generally acceptable as intrusions for fence posts are minimal, however the AMS needs to show the construction method of the fencing and how the impact to the trees would be mitigated, specifically dealing with the installation of fence posts.

Ecology will need to comment on the fencing design, specifically as to whether mammal gaps will be required.

A concern is the potential future impact this development may have on the trees. The proposed development is in close proximity to the canopy of several trees, which will put pressure on the trees to be pruned in the future to provide adequate clearance. It may

also increase the pressure to remove these trees as the BS5837 2012 states “*The relationship of buildings to large trees can cause apprehension to occupiers or users of nearby buildings or spaces, resulting in pressure for the removal of the trees*” As mentioned above, the proposed ‘useable’ rear garden space will be limited due to the retained and replanted trees, which includes 1 young & 1 early-mature Maple and one young Oak, all with potential for significant growth. This may also increase the pressure to remove or prune the trees in the future. The AIA states ‘*Removal of the hazel branch (tree 16), shown at Appendix E, will improve the quality of the rear garden space*’. I would be concerned that future pruning or removal of trees would be justified on the same grounds, as it is in this instance.

The impact to the street scene will be detrimental. The demolition of a wall and the removal of a tree, and other soft landscaping, to facilitate the construction of a large house will change the character of that section of the Wingrove Road. No doubt you will be considering this. It is unclear from submissions what, if any boundary treatment is included on this frontage – if you are unclear, you may wish to clarify this.

To conclude, the proposed development is not currently supported on tree and landscape terms. The tree issues relate primarily to the limited ‘useable’ garden space unimpacted by trees hence the future pressure for pruning or felling. Prior to a decision, if it is to be approved, a landscape plan should be submitted confirming the number and location of proposed trees and other landscaping (which could include a hedge on the Wingrove Road frontage). If approved, Condition L2 is applicable. Condition L3 (boundary treatment) is applicable regarding the proposed fencing and any front boundary treatment. The current AMS that is submitted does not include all aspects of the proposal and is not considered an adequate AMS, hence Condition L7 is applicable.

I note in 1.3.2 of the Arb document that the soil type is identified as clay type. As such the soil is vulnerable to seasonal volume changes, exacerbated by nearby vegetation and trees. I25 Advice about foundations in relation to tree related subsidence would therefore be appropriate.