

Memo

To: Louise Fuller, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 4th August 2025

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/25/0425

Application Type: Full planning permission

Address: 92 Albert Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7PL

Proposal: Replacement entrance porch and conversion into 2no. semi-detached dwellings

The site of 92 Albert Road is subject to Tree Preservation Order 40/06. The area is well populated with trees of a variety of species, mostly being semi mature or mature.

With reference to Arboricultural Impact Assessment, 24th July 2025, Ref: PB/AIA-25/07.09, I note the following:

The application positively proposes no facilitation pruning or tree removal is required for the construction of the development. Section 5.1.2 describes that the trees have been recently pruned under TPO consent PL/24/0896. 5.1.3 states *'Site development works will not therefore require any further facilitation pruning works to any retained tree either for site access or erection of scaffolding. There is sufficient clearance such that there will be no impact on tree canopies nor any likelihood of damage to retained tree canopies'*.

Section 5.1.4 then goes on to say that *'Any additional pruning works that are merely desirable and are not necessary for the implementation of the full planning permission should be made the subject of a separate Tree Works application and consent must be granted'*. Which is correct - as no tree work is recommended in the report, no tree work would be consented to TPO'd trees as part of granting planning permission.

Section 5.2.1 states *'There are no proposals for the erection of any new buildings or extensions, with no increase in the footprint of the building. There are no plans for any demolition of existing buildings for this revised development.'* Section 5.4.6 also states *'Two separate timber bin stores will be constructed on the retained concrete base for Houses 1 and 2. It is therefore not anticipated that there will be any RPA incursions for this construction.'* However, with reference to the Landscape Plan, November 2024,

PR11.5-104, Revision D, I note that a new timber bin store has been positioned differently than that within the Tree Protection Plan, July 2025, PB/TPP-25/07.09. There have been re-submissions of documents for the bin storage area (untitled and undated) which for 'house 1' appears to be more acceptable in terms of incursion into RPAs. However, these are not representative of that being constructed on the retained concrete base as mentioned in the AIA. The report will need to reconsider the positioning of the new timber bin store and its potential impact on RPAs, as it not consistent with that in the Landscape Plans. The default position of structures should be outside RPAs as per BS5837 2012 recommendations.

The positioning of the bin store for 'house 2' of the Landscape Plan also seems to be impractical as it is located towards the northern site boundary, which is to the side of the dwelling. For the ease of use for the occupiers, it would be appropriate to consider positioning the bin store closer to the frontage. This would resolve the issue of the bin store being located within an RPA.

Section 5.2.1 states *'There are no plans for any demolition of existing buildings for this revised development.'* However, I note the Landscape Plan, November 2024, PR11.5-104, Revision D states *'Dilapidated garage roof reconstructed with green sedum roof'*. The demolition of the existing garage roof should be recognised within the AIA, particularly given that the garage is in the near vicinity of the trees. Tree protection measures need to be undertaken prior to the commencement of demolition. With reference to the Existing Plans and Elevations, November 2024, PR11.5-102, Revision E, the garage isn't shown on these plans.

Section 5.2.3 states *'There are no changes proposed to the existing hard surfaced driveway access to the existing garage over the RPAs of trees T1 to T4, T25 and T26'*. It also states in section 5.4.5 *'The existing hard tarmac drive to the garage is to be retained with no changes'*. The landscape plan describes the existing driveway as being 'redressed', implying that there will be a change to the driveway which the report has not considered. The existing driveway falls within the RPA of several trees. The report needs to be amended to consider the resurfacing of the driveway, particularly as it may require excavation. It will need to be demonstrated how this can be constructed without impacting the existing trees and their roots. It will also need to consider material choice which can withstand the movement of tree roots, as driveways can be susceptible to damage from the movement/growth of tree roots, as per the advice of the BS5837 2012.

Section 5.3.2 states *'Should grade changes be required within the RPA of retained trees, the contractor must prepare a method statement setting out how the work will be undertaken, and the machinery used in order to minimise disturbance and reduce compaction to the RPA of retained trees. The method statement must be submitted to and approved by the local authority prior to any alterations or changes.'* Changes in ground level within RPAs are not supported by the Natural Environment Team. Any changes in ground level need to be detailed prior to making a decision on the application to assess the acceptability.

Section 5.4.7 states *'The excavation and erection of fence posts within the RPAs of retained trees T14, T15 and T16 will require specific mitigation measures so that disturbance to tree roots can be significantly reduced, to be set out in an AMS.'* This rightly highlights the need to for an AMS.

Section 5.5.3 states *'If there is a need to replace, renew or install underground services close to retained trees the proposals must be considered by the local planning authority'*.

It would be prudent to assess the installation of services prior to granting planning consent. The Natural Environment Team would not support services running through the RPAs of the trees and therefore the installation of services would be required to be detailed in an AMS.

The Planning & Heritage Statement (undated) states in section 5.5 '*These changes include the replacement of a large existing porch with a shallow open style porch*'. As the existing porch is to be removed and the proposed smaller porch is to be erected, it would be more appropriate to describe this as 'the demolition of the existing porch which will be replaced by erecting a swallow style open porch'. I will leave you to consider this as this is not a concern relating to trees and landscaping.

The landscape plans demonstrate a section of new hedging alongside shrub planting, which is positive given there is an increase in hard landscaping and significant vegetation has been removed from this boundary in recent years.

The access arrangements of Chelford Way shown in the TPP is different to those demonstrated in the Existing Site & Location Plans, November 2024, Ref: PR11.5-101 Rev: B. It is important that access arrangements are consistent throughout the documents.

To conclude, the AIA needs to be revised to include the redressing of the driveway. The location of the bin storage area needs to be confirmed with consideration of the practicality of its use and impact on RPAs, which the AIA/TPP requires amending to be representative of this. The AIA also needs to recognise the demolition of the existing garage roof. The access arrangements also need to be confirmed, and the supporting documents require revision to be representative of this.