

Memo

To: Catrin Davies, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC: GS Ecology

Date: 10th October 2025

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/25/1272

Application Type: Householder planning permission

Address: West Chazey, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7ED

Proposal: Proposed new pool house

The site is located in Caversham where trees and soft landscaping contribute to the verdant nature and landscape. The site is covered by Area TPO 319 – ‘Upper Warren Avenue (east)’ which protects all trees of the species listed present at the time the TPO was made. At the front of the property is a Green Link (EN12). Towards the south of the property is an escarpment which is a Designated Major Landscape Feature (EN13) and is also an Area of Identified Biodiversity Interest (EN12).

Following our site visit on 3rd October 2025, with my colleague Sarah Hanson, I have the following comments, which includes the main concern identified on site relating to site access for construction vehicles and the delivery of materials.

With reference to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan (to BS:5837 2012), 25th August 2025, Ref: TH 5288 AMS, I note the following:

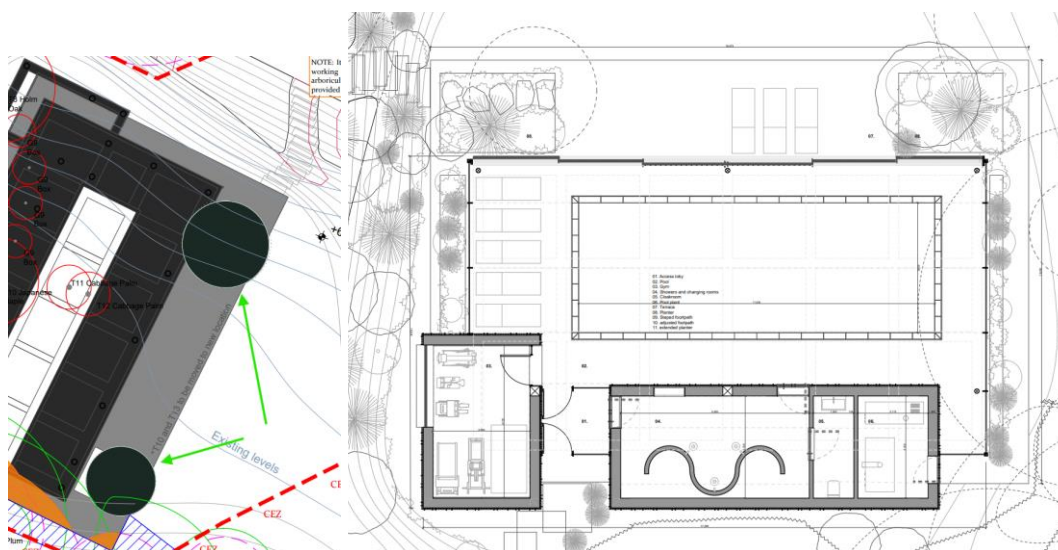
5.1 *‘It is not clear from the Council’s website, whether the trees within and adjacent to this site are covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)’*, - for clarity the whole site is protected by Area TPO 319 – Upper Warren Avenue (east). Officers would have been happy to confirm TPO details prior to completion of the report.

9.3.1 *‘The proposals will require the removal of several small trees’* – this is not specific in that it does not state the number of trees to be removed. In line with policy EN14, the development must not lead to a net loss of trees, so it is important we are clear on the number of removals required. Replacement replanting to mitigate for the loss of trees has not been suggested but it is a requirement. There is a section within the report that

demonstrates 'Tree Planting', however this is generic information and not specific mitigation for this proposal. I also note the removal of the shrubs within G9 and G14 – mitigation for this loss of vegetation hasn't been suggested either. The trees to be removed are a 'B' category Holm Oak (T8), a 'C' category Japanese Maple (T10 to be relocated), two Cabbage Palms (T11 and T12) and a 'C' category Chinese Privet (T13 to be relocated). This totals five trees alongside the shrubs.

9.32 'Two of these (T10 & T13) are to be carefully removed / transplanted and then re-planted post construction as a landscape feature within the new building' – replanting is more successful than relocating trees, which is something to consider as replacements will required if the relocated trees fail.

With reference to the Tree Protection Plan (TPP), 25th August, Drawing No. TH/A3/5288/TPP, I note the relocated positions of T10 and T13 (shown by green arrows below) appear to be in a hard surfaced area (although difficult to determine due to lack of labels). With reference to the Proposed Ground Floor Plan, 9th July 2023, Drawing No. 03, I note this includes a planting bed within the landscaped area surrounding the pool house, where the trees will be relocated. It is certainly positive that relocating T10 and T13 has been suggested and incorporated into the landscape design. However, I am wary that it may be more feasible and successful to replant new trees, which would be acceptable to us as an alternative, but it's at the applicant's discretion.



The TPP also has not included the trees on the frontage. As the frontage will be used as an access route, I am slightly unclear why this hasn't been considered. Tree/vegetation removals or facilitative pruning is likely to be required on the frontage. The trees here should also be protected from construction activity here.

9.7.1 'The excavations required for the foundations and pool will result in the following RPA incursions: • Ash T17 – 1.25m of 29m² = 4.3% • Yew T18 – 0.4m of 19m² = 2% • Ash T20 – 8.7m of 52m² = 16.5% • Cherry Plum T21 – 1.2m of 15m² = 8% • Wild Cherry T22 – 5.8m of 120m² = 4.8% • Japanese Maple T23 – 0.6m of 22m² = 2.7%'. This incursion is certainly not ideal, particularly for the Ash (at 16.5%) when this species is already struggling, and whilst it is justified in 9.7.5 as 'it is possible to off-set the incursions within soft areas contiguous with the RPAs (within the land to the rear)', it should be noted that all the trees to the south of the proposal are offsite (also protected) hence we do not know and have no control over what is going on within the remainder of the RPAs. It is

effectively implying this incursion is fine as there is other land that the tree can develop roots in, despite recognising that '*An RPA is an estimation of the minimum root system needed to sustain the condition of a tree*', means that if an RPA is impacted the condition of the tree may not be sustained. It is also worth noting that we do not know if the RPAs have been offset to account for the existing pool (root constraints) as no existing plan (a Tree Constraints Plan) has been provided as would be expected. I also note the lack of 'existing' plans in submissions which you may wish to consider.

9.8.2 '*To reduce the risk of accidental damage to acceptable levels, the lateral branches on the vulnerable sides of the crowns will be tip-reduced and / or crown lifted to improve clearance*' – the amount of clearance required is not stated. It was discussed during our site visit that access & logistics will need to be considered at this stage so that any potential harm to the trees can be fully assessed.

9.8.3 '*The proposed pruning is minor, targeted and in line with the applicant's common law rights*'. – all the trees are covered by a TPO so this is not the case.

9.9 describes '*Underground Services*'. Routes of services should be considered at this stage as the new building is likely to require new services to supply water and electricity to the pool house. There are RPAs to the east, south and west so it would be prudent to consider this at an earlier stage.

11.1 '*This AMS lays down the methodology for all construction works*' – as discussed with the applicant during our site visit, the access for construction vehicles hasn't been determined yet so not all methodology has been considered.

12.0 of the '*Arboricultural supervision*' section demonstrates that arb supervision isn't required during excavation, despite being in the RPAs of protected trees, which I would disagree with.

Appendix 4b states '*The foundation trenches shall then be lined with plastic sheeting*', whilst this is agreeable in principle, 'plastic sheeting' is generic and should be stated to be an impermeable membrane.

It is difficult to assess the future pressure to prune or removal trees as a Tree Constraints Plan showing the existing site has not been submitted so it is difficult to compare that to the proposed. I note that with reference to the Tree Protection Plan, 25th August 2025, Drawing No. TH/A3/5288/TPP, that the proposed pool house is in close proximity to the trees towards the south which may increase the pressure to prune or fell the trees in the future. However, this is difficult to assess without a Tree Constraints Plan.

With reference to the Design and Access Statement, 23rd August 2025, by OutsetThink Architects, I note a green roof has positively been incorporated into the design of the pool house. Whilst this will mitigate for the impact of increased development, tree replanting will still be required to ensure the development does not lead to a net loss in trees. The details of the green roof and landscaping can be secured by condition.

To conclude, as agreed during our site visit, it is important that we understand the full extent of the works required. The construction vehicle access and logistics is currently undetermined. We advise that the applicant seeks the relevant advice regarding the access into the site and the logistics and then contacts the arb consultant to include the impact of these within the AIA, how this will be mitigated and includes a Tree Constraints Plan and specifies the amount of tree/vegetation removals and facilitative pruning

required. The frontage of the site has not been included in the AIA/TPP despite there being trees here and it will be used for the access route, hence the report and plan need to be extended. Service routes should also be considered at this stage to ensure no unnecessary impact on RPAs. In line with policy EN14, it must be ensured that there is no net loss of trees to facilitate the development and thus we expect tree replanting to be shown on a plan.