

Memo

To: Catrin Davies, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC: GS Ecology

Date: 11th November 2025

Re: **Consultation on an Application**

Planning Application Ref: PL/25/1272

Application Type: Householder planning permission

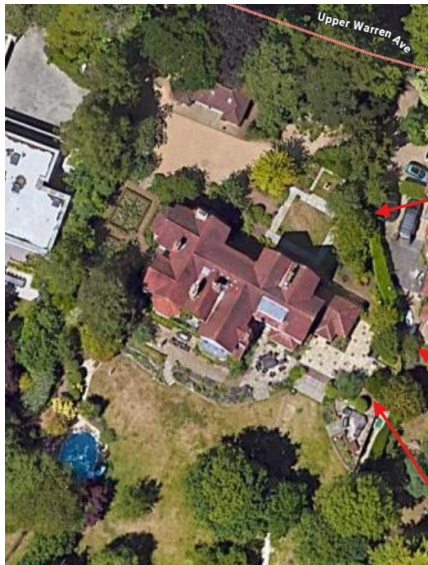
Address: West Chazey, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7ED

Proposal: Proposed new pool house

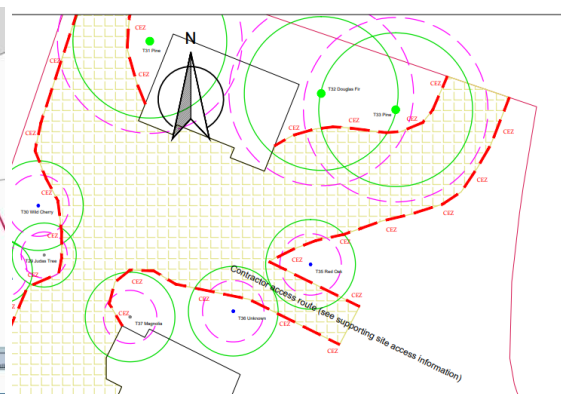
The site is located in Caversham where trees and soft landscaping contribute to the verdant nature and landscape. The site is covered by Area TPO 319 – 'Upper Warren Avenue (east)' which protects all trees of the species listed present at the time the TPO was made. At the front of the property is a Green 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, and my previous comments of 10th October 2025, I have the following comments with reference to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan, 31st October 2025, Ref: TH 5288 AMS:

I am unclear why the trees/vegetation which are adjacent to access route have not been surveyed, considered and protected. With reference to the Proposed Site Plan, 9th July 2025, Drawing No.02, Rev A, the access route is clearly shown and thus it is expected that the trees/vegetation are plotted, considered and protected here.



I also note the material storage is located within an RPA of a protected 'A' category tree, seemingly in the same location as the tree (T32) which isn't acceptable or feasible, and material storage should be outside RPAs and certainly outside the tree protection zone (with suitable ground protection if within RPAs):



9.2.1 states *'The RPAs of Ash T20, Cherry Plum T21 and Wild Cherry T22 have been amended to take into account the location of the existing pool (a barrier to root growth).'*' This was mentioned in my previous comments, and this has now been addressed with RPAs amended.

9.3.1 states *'The proposals will require the removal of five small trees and two groups of shrubs'*. This is now more specific than that of the previous arb report and we are clear on tree and shrub removals required. 9.3.2 states *'eight new trees will be planted post-construction.'* This is certainly positive given there will be a net gain in tree numbers. However, the access route needs to be considered, and further removals may be required here.

9.3.3 states *'It is normally appropriate to deal with re-planting matters by condition or by way of a landscape plan; however, potential re-planting locations have been shown on the TPP.'* It is agreed that replanting details can be dealt with via a condition, but the principles shown in the Tree Protection Plan, 31st October 2025, Drawing No. TH/A3/5288/TPP, are acceptable.

9.4.1 states '*There is a risk that the crowns and stems of some of the retained trees could be accidentally damaged during development – mainly from construction-related machinery entering the site (The largest machinery will be 4m long by 1.8m wide and 2.7m tall).*' I note it is recommended to crown lift the impacted trees to 3m over the path, which only allows approximately 30cm clearance. It may therefore be more appropriate to crown lift the trees slightly higher i.e. 3.5m above ground level, to provide further clearance and to ensure the vehicles can pass underneath the trees without causing damage. However, what is reasonable and required has not been assessed by the author as this trees/vegetation to the east side of the house have not been plotted.

9.7.1 states '*The south-western (1.2m wide) end of the proposed pool building will be cantilevered over the majority of the nearby trees' roots, and therefore excavations have been minimised. The excavations beyond the cantilevered section will now only result in the following RPA incursion: • Ash T20 – 1m of 52m² = 2% (RPA amended to take into account existing pool).*' This is positive given the incursion is of a lesser amount and also impacting a lesser amount of trees.

9.7.5 states '*Furthermore, it is possible to offset this minor incursion within soft-surfaced garden areas located entirely within the applicant's ownership, contiguous with the RPA and remaining fully accessible to the same root environment.*' I had only mentioned that off-setting incursion may not be feasible in my previous comments as it impacted trees in adjacent land.

9.8.2 states '*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 (see appendix 2 for more specific details).*' The pruning specifications for the trees are slightly vague and generic. It would be more appropriate to state in metres how much the trees are to be reduced by to provide a specified measurement of clearance. This will be different for each individual tree, and we need to be clear on the works required.

9.9.4 states '*The existing (and proposed minor changes) services are shown on the TPP – and do not affect any retained trees' RPAs.*' This is fine.

I had mentioned in my previous comments that section 12.0 describes '*Arboricultural supervision*' and that it would be appropriate that supervision is undertaken due to excavation within the RPA of protected trees. Table 2 describes '*Indicative arboricultural supervision requirements*'. I note that '*Meeting with tree contractors*' hasn't been advised. If more specific pruning specifications can be provided for the individual trees this may not be necessary; however, currently I believe it to be prudent as the tree contractors may not be aware of the clearance requirements. A '*Pre-commencement site meeting*' has also not been advised. I disagree with this as the methodology for excavating within the RPA of protected trees and the importance of protective measures is highlighted in the AMS which needs to be fully understood by those undertaking the works.

I had also mentioned in my previous comments that 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. This point is reiterated; however, the requirement to install an impermeable liner within the concrete foundations could be secured via a condition (within an amended AMS).

In my previous comments I had mentioned the future pressure to prune or remove any impacted trees was difficult to assess as a Tree Constraints Plan had not been provided.

This is still the case and whilst the existing pool is shown on the TPP, it does appear that the development will at least increase the pressure to prune the impacted trees to some degree as ongoing maintenance will be required to provide clearance between the trees and pool house. 10.4 states *'The trees do not cause any significant conflicts in terms of construction activities, nor will any significant issues of post-development pressure be likely to emerge that could not be managed with routine, minor tree maintenance'*. I do not agree with this as several tree removals are required, alongside facilitative pruning and ongoing maintenance. I don't consider this to be a justified reason for refusal and as the trees are protected by a TPO, we have a level of control over reasonable future works to the trees in close proximity to the pool house.

The TPP should be extended to offer protection for the street Lime trees at the front of the property from development related activity – this is a normal request along Upper Warren Avenue.

To conclude, we made it clear on site and in my previous memo that site logistics needed to be fully accounted for – these appear to be omitted from the arb report and the information provided on the Proposed Plan is not helpful and is inconsistent with the TPP. During our visit the applicant indicated that the pool might come pre-formed and be craned over the house – there is no mention of this or clarity on how it is being constructed as an alternative, hence clarity is sought. There is lack of clarity regarding the pruning specifications required to facilitate the development, as mentioned above, for both the building and access. Clear pruning specifications and annotated photographs for each impacted tree, so we are clear on what exactly is required and proposed, would be helpful. On going arboricultural supervision and pre-commencement meetings should also be considered given the extent of trees and works on site. The material storage area needs to also be outside the RPA of the trees. The landscaping, green roof details and tree replanting can be secured via a condition.

Whilst ultimately, a condition may be appropriate for an AMS, we are not currently in a position to have sufficient comfort to leave the final details to be secured. Logistical matters need to be properly considered prior to a decision and demonstration provided that the proposal can be feasibly constructed with suitable tree protection and retention in place.