

Memo

To: Huimin Chen, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 24th April 2026

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/26/0203

Application Type: Householder planning permission

Address: 7 Kelmscott Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DG

Proposal: Part single storey and part two storey side and rear extension with pitched roof and flat roof

The site is located Caversham, a naturally verdant area of the Borough where trees and soft landscaping contribute to its character. There is a woodland to the rear, which is a designated Local Wildlife Site, protected under policy. There are two street trees on the frontage in the near vicinity to the development. There is a line of trees that runs parallel to the northwestern boundary of the site. The front and rear gardens of the site are a mixture of hard and soft landscaping.

With reference to the ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND METHOD STATEMENT BS5837:2012, 6th March 2026, Ref: AAAIA7KEL, I note the following:

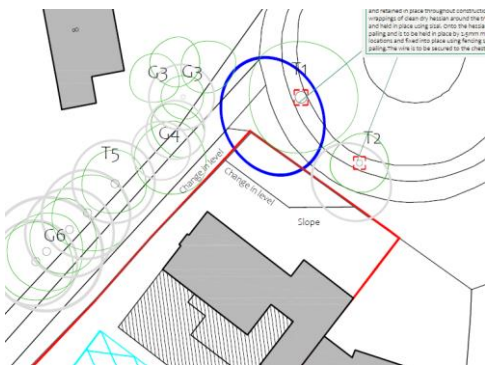
Section 5.0 Vegetation description states '*The vegetation consists of 1 Category B tree, 2 Category C trees and 3 Category C groups. The councils website shows the site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order close to the site*'. There are no TPOs on the site or in directly adjacent land, however; there is also a woodland to the rear which hasn't been mentioned. There is a line of trees along the northwestern boundary of the site. The report has only included some of these trees along this boundary, being the ones within influencing distance of the proposal (within 15m).

Section 6.0 Arboricultural impact assessment, Table 1, shows the tree impacts in relation to the proposal. This certainly is positive considering no tree removals, no facilitation

pruning, and there is no demolition/construction in RPAs.

Table 1: Summary of impacts	
Tree removal	None
Facilitation pruning	None
Demolition within RPA	None
New surfacing within RPA	None
New structures within RPA	None

However, I note the application form states *‘Low-height brick wall and associated piers raised and reconfigured to accommodate widened driveway access and to include remote operated sliding gates creating secure off road parking. Include provision for a separate access gate, operated manually, with stepped approach to principal entrance door of host property’*. The widening of the driveway and associated works such as service runs for the sliding gates (assumed electric) has not been included in the AIA. With reference to the Block Plan As Existing and Proposed, December 2025, Drawing No. 2437-P104, I note that none of these features are shown on the Block Plan and aren’t covered with the AIA. With reference to the Tree Protection Plan, 6th March 2026, Ref: AATPP7KEL, I note the driveway and entrance are likely within RPAs of the street trees on the frontage (T1 & T2). The AIA needs to be amended to demonstrate these access/driveway alterations, along with any service runs/excavation associated with the new sliding gate as they are within RPAs.



It is unclear on any vegetation removal on the frontage as a result of the driveway works so clarity needs to be sought on this. The works to the brick wall and piers also aren’t completely clear (not shown in the AIA/TPP) so it is difficult to appreciate their

juxtaposition in relation to the trees and their canopies/RPAs. I note that protective fencing has been provided around the stems of the street trees, please note suggested Informative I17 below regarding the use of the grass/soft ground for construction related activity around the street trees.

Section 7.0 Arboricultural method statement states, '*Storage and handling of materials: This site has sufficient space for materials to be stored and handled outside of the RPA's of retained trees.*'. Whilst this is true, there would be an expectation that a CEZ will be demonstrated as part of a secured CMS. This would demonstrate protection of retained trees and vegetation.

Section 7.0 states '*Special surfacing will not be required.*', clarity needs to be provided on the driveway/access and associated sliding gates as these are likely to fall within RPAs, so special surfacing may be required. The removal of existing surfacing within RPAs will also need to be demonstrated.

Section 7.0 also states '*No details of new service runs have been provided at this stage but it is likely they will be connected to the existing. They should be routed to avoid the RPA's of retained trees. If this is not possible, special techniques must be employed to place the services within the RPA of the trees. The British Standard suggests a range of trench less methods suitable for various applications including micro tunnelling, surface launched directional drilling, Pipe ramming and Impact Moleing/thrust boring. It is important common ducts should be used where it is not possible to avoid the RPA. Further guidance on installing underground services adjacent to trees can be found in the NJUG Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees (Volume 4 Issue 2). This document outlines a number of techniques that may be used for trenching near trees, including trench less techniques, discontinuous trenching and hand digging.*' Given an electric gate and assumed associated service runs are proposed at the frontage and likely to be within RPAs, we need further clarity on this. NJUG Volume 2 Issue 2 has also been replaced now so the methodology in this guidance is no longer up-to-date practice. Street Works UK Volume 4 is the most up-to-date guidance which should be referred to: <https://streetworks.org.uk/>

With reference to the General Arrangement Floor Plans Ground Floor Level As Existing and Proposed, January 2026, Drawing No. 2437-P120, there seems to be a changes to the front garden which have not been demonstrated within the AIA or TPP. We need to be clear on existing vs proposed hard and soft landscaping, which could be demonstrated in a basic landscape principles plan at this stage.

To conclude, clarity needs to be sought on the driveway/access alterations and the sliding gate as it is currently unclear what is proposed. The AIA will then need to be amended accordingly to cover these elements in relation to the impact on tree health, should they fall within RPAs. We also need to be clear on the extent of any vegetation removal and extent of hard surfacing. It is encouraged that soft landscaping is incorporated into the proposal to mitigate for the impact of increased development.

If you are minded to approve this application, then Condition L7 (pre-commencement AMS) would be applicable, along with L1 due to the changes to the front garden. As mentioned above, Informative I17 would also be appropriate.

I17 Do not damage the verge

You are advised to avoid the use of the grass verges for development related activity, e.g. storage of materials, due to the resulting potential harm to important street trees.