

Memo

To: Jonathan Markwell, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC: GS Ecology

Date: 19th May 2026

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/26/0352

Application Type: Approval of details reserved by a condition

Address: Warren Creek, The Warren, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7TQ

Proposal: Discharge of conditions 3 (materials), 4 (scheme to mitigate flood risk impact), 6 (schedule for removal of existing structures), 7 (maintenance of the flood voids), 9 (sustainable drainage strategy), 11 (demolition and construction method statement), 16 (programme of archaeological work), 17 (hard and soft landscaping), 18 (arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan), 19 (construction environmental management plan), 20 (external lighting scheme), 21 (noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant) and 22 (privacy measures) of planning permission PL/24/1614, as granted on 12/11/2025.

I will be addressing Condition 17 and Condition 18 as they relate to trees and landscaping. I have also commented on elements of Condition 11, as this relates to Condition 18 in that they both demonstrate demolition and construction whilst considering retained trees. I have also commented on some elements of Condition 9 as they related to SuDs details required for Condition 17.

Application PL/24/1614 received approval for the demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings and the erection of a 4-bed detached dwelling. This site is subject to TPO 97/07, which protects three individual trees on site and there is also a Woodland TPO (96/07) directly abutting from Creek House. It is also within Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature (EN13), adjacent to the Thames that being an Area of Identified Biodiversity Interest (EN12), and on a 'treed corridor' as defined in the adopted Tree Strategy.

I had previously commented on this application on 8th May 2026. New documents and a response from the author of the AMS have been provided to address these comments. Please see my previous comments in black and my latest response in red.

Condition 17:

No development shall commence on site, barring any demolition works down to existing ground levels only, until a comprehensive scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

a) Proposed finished ground and floor levels or contours, means of enclosure (including mammal gaps where appropriate), car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;

b) Hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and other ancillary structures (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc);

c) Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), tree pit specifications, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable;

d) A maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting;

e) Routes and details of proposed and existing functional services above and below ground including foul and surface water drainage, soakaways and SUDs details, power, communications cables and water and gas supply pipelines, including access points;

The approved hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the dwelling hereby approved.

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: These details are required prior to commencement of development, barring demolition works to ground level, because of insufficient information contained within this submission and in the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment, including the Major Landscape Feature, the Green Network and the Waterspace, in accordance with Policies CC7, EN11, EN12, EN13 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Comments for Condition 17:

With reference to the Proposed Soft and Hard Landscaping Plan, January 2026, Drawing No. 3863/301, **Rev C**, and the Proposed Soft and Hard Landscaping Notes, January 2026, Drawing No. 3863/305, **Rev A**, I note the following:

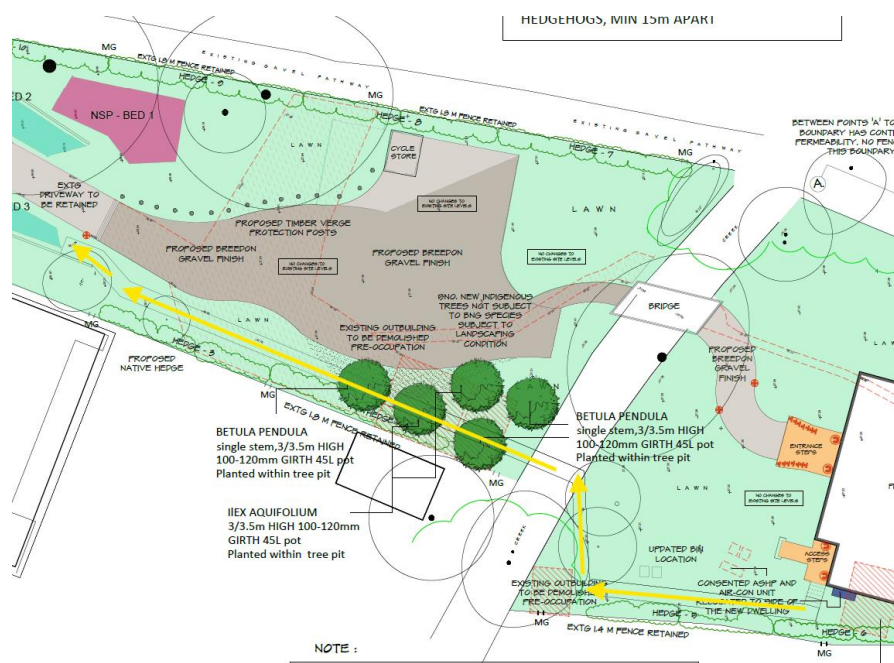
Regarding paragraph 'a' of the Condition, I do not note a clear car parking layout. I also don't note a clear pedestrian access. There are many references to the site levels staying as they exist. However, the use of a cellular confinement system will raise ground levels slightly but this not a significant matter when it comes to ground level changes, so I am happy for this not to be amended. The means of enclosure are also unclear in the

Landscape Plan – I have commented on the new gate proposed in the CMS below (Page 7).

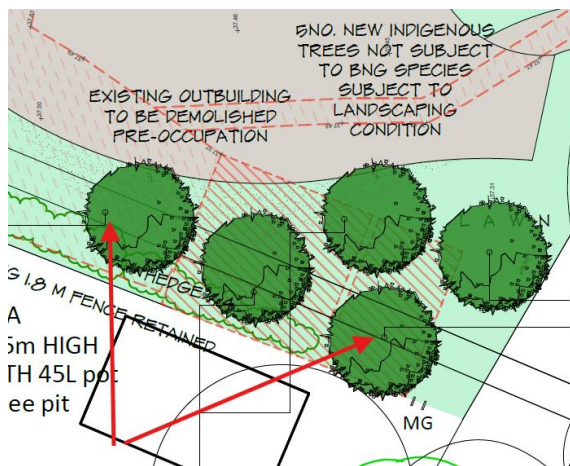
I note a 'PARKING AREA' has been shown on the Landscape Plan, which is fine. I note the new gate has been omitted so all boundary treatment appears to remain as existing. As this is a residential development without multiple individual residences, demonstrating pedestrian access is not required; however, this may somewhat be relevant to your assessment of the CMS.

I am unclear what the lines are along the western boundary, leading from the access steps of the new dwelling, over the creek and towards the frontage. It appears to be a footpath from the new dwelling to the frontage boundary; however, this is not clear and also passes by trees and is within the CEZ of the TPP. You have advised me this is the emergency escape path; however, this is not clearly labelled and are any works required to it? There are five new trees proposed adjacent to this path, and I question whether this going to raise nuisance/safety issues in the future – some of the newly proposed trees appear to be planted in the path itself or directly adjacent to it. Section 3.11 POROUS PATH/ACCESS ROAD of the AMS, details how the no-dig porous path will be constructed, although I am not clear on what path this is - the only no-dig surfacing shown is the driveway extension, south of the bridge and within the RPA of T7 of the TPP.

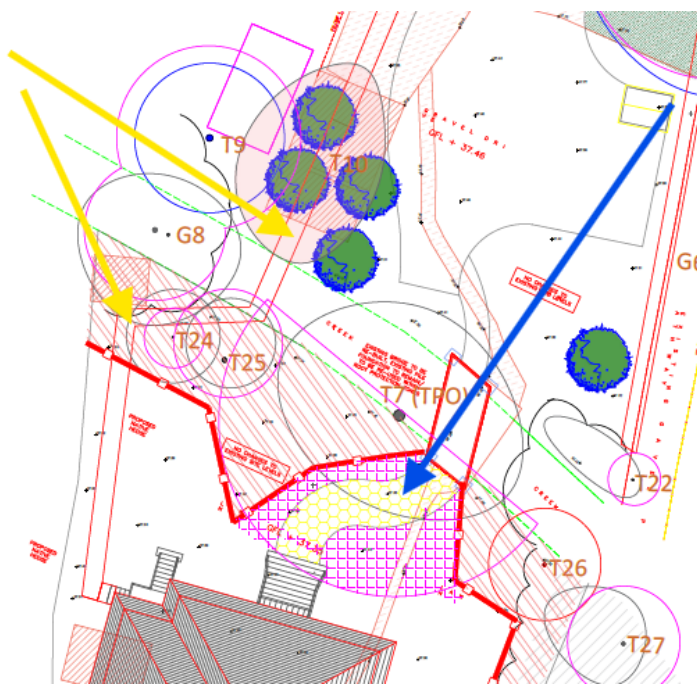
This has now been omitted from the Landscape Plan. Therefore, I assume this path is not required for emergency purposes so I shall leave its omission with you to confirm acceptability.



Landscape Plan – Unclear Path (yellow arrows)



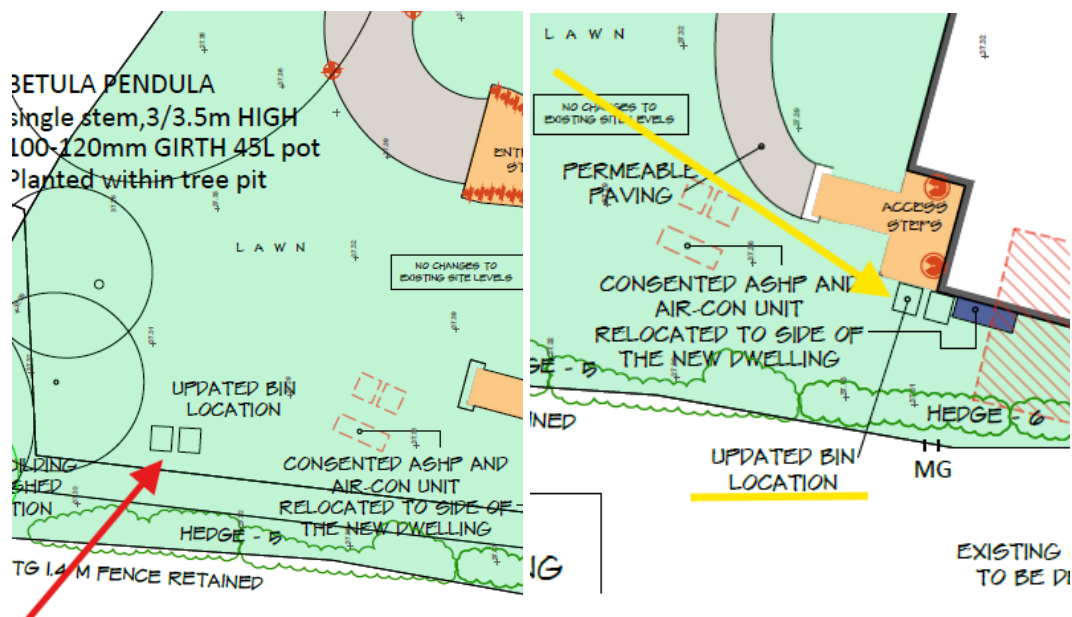
Landscape Plan – New Trees Located on Path



TPP – Unclear Path (yellow arrows); No-Dig Surfacing (blue arrow)

Regarding paragraph 'b' of the Condition, I note that the lighting, grass verge bollards and other small, hard landscaped objects are demonstrated which is positive. The '*updated bin location*' is in the middle of a green/lawn area so it is assumed that hard surfacing will likely be required/desired to access it; both to access it from the new dwelling and to take it to its collection point (existing bin collection point shown on the Landscape Plan). I also assume that a structure to store the bins is likely required – refuse units and other storage are required to be demonstrated. I also note that a new septic tank and connection are proposed below this path, so I assume some changes are likely which need to be demonstrated.

The latest bin storage point appears to be suitable/practical. It isn't completely clear how this will be taken to the pickup point as it is adjacent to the access steps but not connected to a path/hard surfaced area leading to the pickup point, which somewhat links to the pedestrian access in and out of the site. The CMS describes the bin store as a '*bin store location with stone base & wooden enclosure*', which clarifies a structure is required which is fine.



Landscape Plans – Previous Bin Location VS Newly Proposed Bin Location

Regarding the lighting, I note Ecology have provided comments based on their requirements. I note some of the lighting is located beneath the tree canopies of T3 and T7. I am unclear whether these lights are to remain on throughout the duration of the night or if they are proposed to be switched off. Further clarity should be provided on this as artificial lighting can impact tree phenological and seasonal cycles.

I don't note any further clarity as to the duration of time the lights are to stay on. They are still proposed beneath a canopy of a protected tree (T7) hence this needs to be clarified further.

Regarding paragraph 'c' of the Condition, I note five new trees are proposed which is positive. However, three of these are *Betula pendula* and two are *Ilex aquifolium*, which offers limited diversity, so I encourage a broader range of species is used. I also suggest that species choice considers the character of the site i.e. trees which can tolerate highly water saturated ground, particularly when they are proposed to be planted in close proximity to a water course. The Landscape Notes state '*Selected standard trees to be planted as shown on drawing*', but they are plotted in the emergency path, so clarity needs to be provided on this and whether this location for planting is appropriate.

I note a broader range of species are now proposed which is positive: two '*ALNUS GLUTINOSA*', one '*SALIX ABA*', one '*BETULA PENDULA*', and one '*ILEX AQUIFOLIUM*'. I assume the *Salix 'aba'* is a *Salix Alba*? Both the *Alnus Glutinosa* and *Salix Alba* are agreeable as they are species which can tolerate highly water saturated soil. I would also suggest reconsidering the *Betula Pendula* to a *Betula pubescens* (Downy Birch), due to this species being more tolerable of the site's water conditions. Another alternative species could include a *Taxodium distichum* (Swamp Cypress), of which there are several along The Warren and the Thames Prom. The ultimate size of the species should also be considered when planting the trees close in proximity to one another, to ensure there is sufficient space to avoid future conflict.

The Landscape Plan and/or Landscape Notes should also specifically state:
Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local

Planning Authority

This has now been stated within the Landscape Notes which is positive.

The irrigation of the tree pits detailed in the Landscape Notes and the Landscape Plan are not consistent one another. The Landscape Notes includes the installation of slow-release watering bags. However, the Landscape Plan uses '*IRRIGATION AND AERATION SYSTEM ROOT RAIN URBAN WITH PVC CAP*' and the watering bags aren't shown.

I note that the Landscape Plan has omitted the irrigation/aeration system from the tree pit design. The Landscape Notes now states '*Install slow-release watering bags to all site trees and maintain water level*', however these watering bags aren't shown on the tree pit diagrams within the Landscape Plan. The use of the term '*maintain water level*' is somewhat unclear i.e. how much water forms the appropriate level.

Regarding paragraph 'd' of the Condition, the maintenance programme is insufficient in that some elements are unclear and/or lacking in detail. Some examples of this include: '*Prune / Repair winter damage to trees*' (unclear/lacking detail), '*Provide adequate watering daily to all newly planted material twice daily*' (insufficient i.e. needs to specify volume of water over a period of time), '*Tip back plants from each other to create separation and thinning of the plant*' (unclear what '*tip back*' means). Please note these are just some examples and other points within the Landscaping Notes require clarity or further detail.

There is still insufficient/unclear information regarding the above to discharge the condition. For example, the watering of trees within the five year maintenance programme still does not state an amount of water over a period of time. Watering of trees in Section 3.0 states '*Standard trees: 20 litres weekly between April and September*', but the five year maintenance programme states '*Provide adequate watering daily to all newly planted material twice daily*', so I am unclear what is truly meant. The '*Prune / Repair winter damage to trees (up to 12' in height) and shrubs*' is still unclear.

The maintenance of the newly planted trees needs requires demonstration. The '*Five year maintenance plan*' needs to include further detail such as, suitably regular inspections, stake and tie adjustment are/or removal (I note this is in Section 3.0 but needs to be included in the five-year maintenance plan for the trees) and frequency of reapplying mulch.

This is still the case.

The reference to the '*BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations*', within the Landscape Notes needs to be amended to include reference to the most relevant and up-to-date practice i.e. BS8545:2014+A1:2026 '*Trees from nursery to independence in the landscape – Code of practice*'.

This does not appear to have been amended.

I note that Section 1.0 Ground Preparation and Soil Specification of the Landscape Notes, state '*Topsoil shall be lightly consolidated in layers not exceeding 150mm using track laying machinery*'. Further clarity needs to be provided on this as heavy machinery should not be used in the RPAs of retained trees as this can impact tree health through soil compaction. It also states, '*Soil shall be stored in heaps not exceeding 1.5 metres high*', it should be ensured these heaps are also kept outside of RPAs, as the tree protection will be removed to implement the landscaping.

This is also still the case. There is still reference to track laying machinery (1.2 Topsoil) and no reference to heaps being kept outside of RPAs.

The preparation of the ground for planting within RPAs needs to be demonstrated further, particularly in the RPA of T3, and the areas of T4 and T5's RPAs where existing concrete is to be removed and replaced with soft landscaping. I note that Section 3.12 REMOVAL OF CONCRETE WITH RPA of T5 of the AMS, goes into detail about the removal of the existing concrete and that 100mm of topsoil will be applied following the removal of the concrete. However, this isn't consistent with that in the Landscape Notes. I note Section 3.14 LANDSCAPING of the AMS, mentions that ground levels should not be changed within RPAs. Section 1.1 Subsoil of the Landscape Notes, states '*Subsoil shall be spread to a minimum of 250mm below new grass and shrub areas*'. Section 1.2 Topsoil of the Landscape Notes, then states that '*Topsoil shall be laid to the following minimum depths: 150mm below new grass areas*'. I am slightly unclear what is meant by these depths of soil preparation and how they will be excavated and levelled whilst within RPAs, so further clarity on this is required.

This is still the case: 1.1 Subsoil 'Subsoil shall be spread to a minimum of 250mm below new grass and shrub areas'; 1.2 Topsoil 'Topsoil shall be laid to the following minimum depths: 150mm below new grass areas'. So, this is still lacking clarity and consistency with the AMS.

I note Section 2.9 New Turfed Areas to replace hard standing, of the Landscaping Notes, mentions the removal of existing hard surfacing to implement the soft landscaping; although, it is unclear what is meant by '*Any old foundations, concrete bases or driveway obstructions occurring within 300mm of the finished ground surface to be removed and new turf added as specification above*'. As this is within an RPA, it is likely tree roots may be an 'obstruction', and how these will be treated if they were to act as an obstruction to apply and level the turf is unclear.

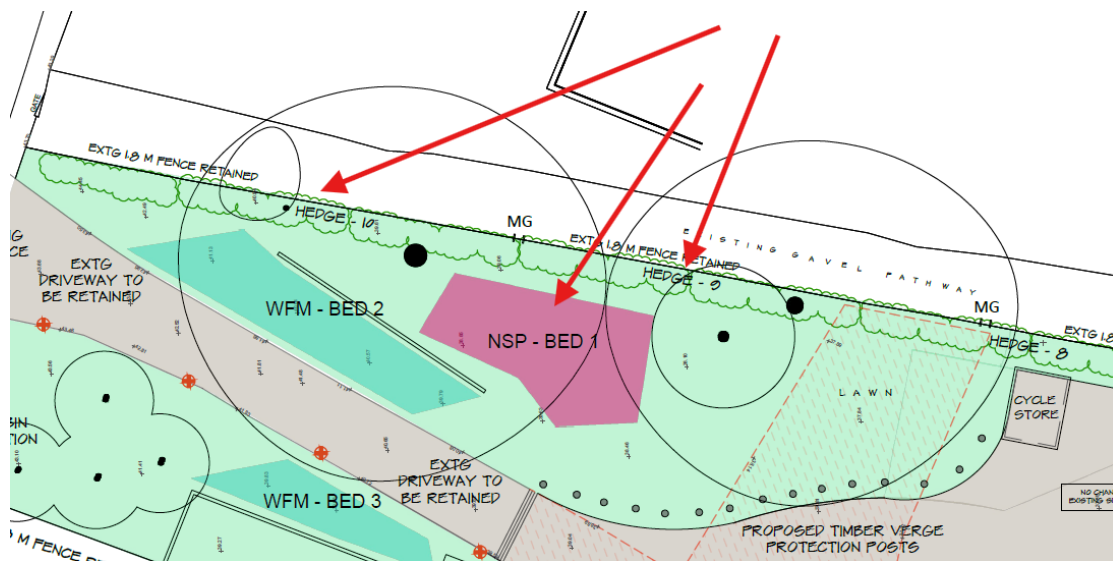
This is still unclear and I don't note any reference to the identifying and retaining tree roots, should they be considered an 'obstruction'.

The wildflower meadows are also proposed within RPAs, but ground preparation within the Landscape Notes only refers to trees, shrubs and grass, so I am unclear what ground preparation is required for the wildflower meadows and how this will impact RPAs.

I don't note any reference to the wildflower meadows within the 1.0 Ground Preparation and Soil Specification section.

Section 2.4 Execution and Establishment of the Landscape Notes, states that for the hedgerows and planting beds '*Ground prepared to minimum 450mm depth*'. The hedgerows and planting beds are also within RPAs and very close to the base of retained trees so I am unclear how this excavation will be achieved, whilst also considering RPAs and protecting the main stem/base of the trees during excavation.

This is still the case. I note the Landscape Plan states 'Any incursions into RPA's must be by prior arrangement, following consultation with the LPA.'; however, this is not sufficient, and the extent of RPA incursions need to be demonstrated and detailed in the AMS.



Landscape Plan – Hedgerows and Planting Beds within RPAs

Section 2.5 Standard tree planting of the Landscape Notes, mentions excavation for planting the new trees. From assessing the TPP, it appears that one of the new trees could conflict with the RPA of T9. It is difficult to assess their true location on the TPP as their exact trunk locations aren't plotted and the tree planting in the TPP is not consistent with that in the Landscape Notes. I advise that the newly planted trees avoid RPAs and consider my comments above regarding conflict with the emergency footpath.

As above, I note this footpath has been omitted so for you to determine whether it's acceptable.

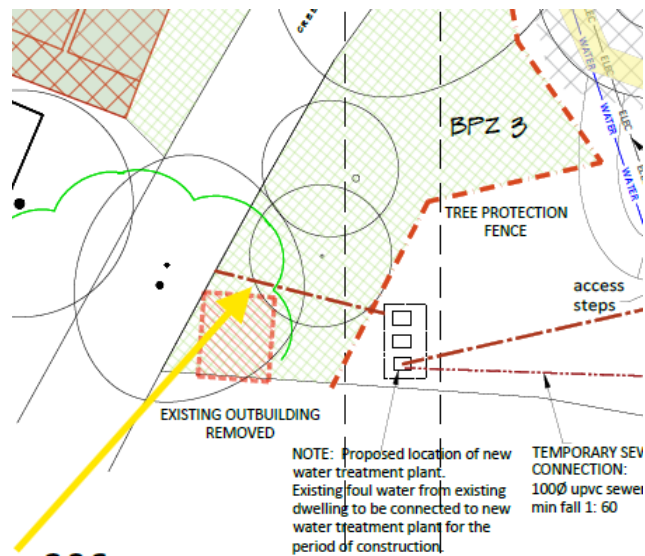
All excavation to implement the soft landscaping must be undertaken by hand, retaining roots or clumps of roots that are more than 25mm in diameter, any only severing roots less than 25mm in diameter leaving a clean cut.

I don't note any reference to the above.

Regarding paragraph 'e' of the Condition. I note that services are shown on the CMS documents hence I am referring to them. With reference to the Construction Management Plan - Sheet 2 off 3, February 2026, Drawing No. 3863/306, I don't note any broadband, sewage routes, or the full extent of electricity cabling for the outdoor lighting (or gas but this might not be needed). The water route is plotted but clean water vs sewage needs to be clear. I note that there is a temporary connection to the new septic tank. I am unclear what the permanent connection will be as this isn't indicated. It is difficult to appreciate the extent of the new services required as it doesn't clearly indicate what already exists vs that newly proposed. The access points for the services also need to be demonstrated as I can't note a clear label or key for these.

With reference to Rev C of the document above, I note there is a note that states 'Existing water, electrics & sewerage routes unknown' which is a concern as to what exists, how the newly proposed will connect to the existing and the extent of the impact to RPAs. I note one of the connection routes to the new septic tank, leading to the creek, is within the CEZ and RPAs, so how this will be installed with consideration for RPAs is not demonstrated adequately. The main electricity route across the site is stated as 'Proposed future utilities & power supply route', which is in the RPA of several trees. The AMS does not take this into account, so further detail is required. I suggest the existing services are determined, and the proposed are designed to avoid/minimise incursion into RPAs. There is insufficient information to discharge the condition as with the existing

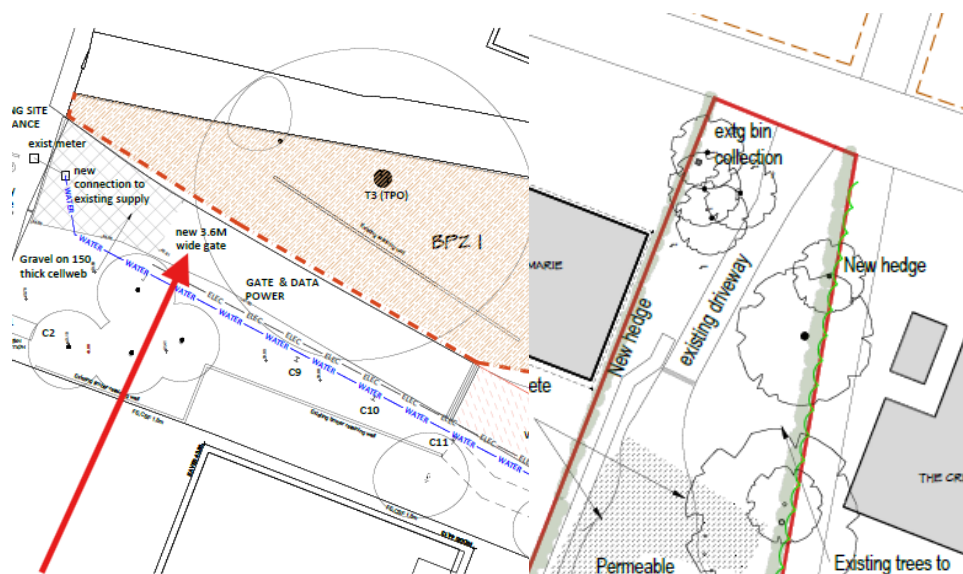
services unknown, the impact the proposed services will have on RPAs of the trees cannot be assessed.



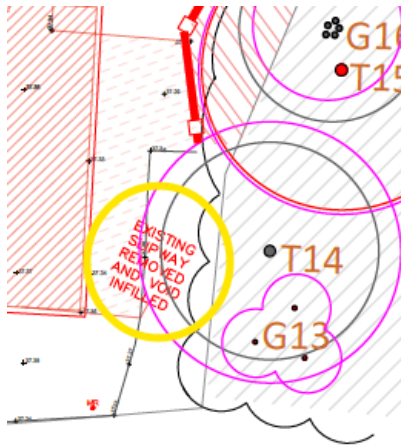
CMS – Sewer Run from New Septic Tank within CEZ of TPP and within RPAs

I note a 'new 3.6M wide gate' is proposed. This gate is not shown in the approved Block Plan or the current Landscape Plan, so clarity needs to be provided on this. It should also be noted this is in close proximity to T3 of the AMS and likely within it's RPA. The AMS will need to demonstrate how it will be constructed with consideration for trees. It also appears from the CMS that it is an electric gate, so it is assumed to be powered by an existing electricity route (if that is what is shown). This requires further clarification.

This has now been omitted so I have no further comment to add regarding condition requirements. I note Point 8 of the decision notice for PL/24/1614, has removed some of the PD rights from the property, including Class E (building or enclosure, swimming or other pool required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse). Hence a new gate (enclosure) will not be able to be constructed under PD rights without permission in the future, which is something for the applicant to consider within this application.



CMS - Proposed New Gate VS Approved Block Plan



TPP – Existing Slipway Removed and Infilled

Condition 18:

No development shall commence on site, barring any demolition works down to existing ground levels only, until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan in accordance with the relevant recommendations of appropriate British Standards or other recognised Codes of Good Practice for all existing trees that are not shown as being removed on the approved drawings, both within and adjacent to the site, has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan.

Reason: In order to ensure that appropriate protection is given to trees of amenity value within and adjacent to the site in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Comments for Condition 18:

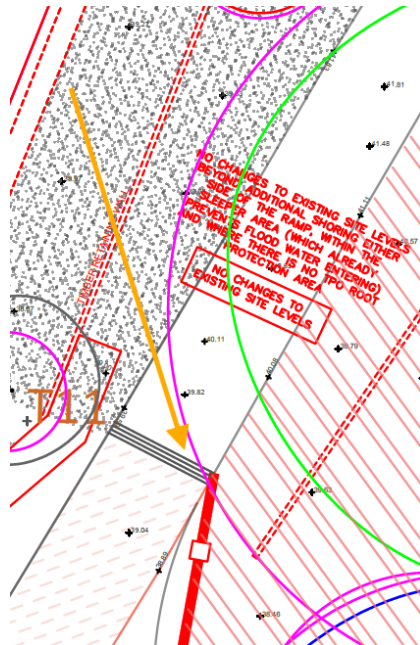
With reference to the BS5837 ARBORICULTURAL REPORT, 14th November 2024, Ref: AIA/AMS 06560/2024, and the associated BS:5837 TREE PROTECTION PLAN, January 2026, Ref: WARREN CREEK TPP 06942/2026, I note the following:

Section 2.6 TREE WORKS AND REMOVALS, states the only tree removals that are required is G10 a 'C' category group of Willows and Pyracantha. It is then stated that these will be replaced with five new, native trees. Section 3.4 TREE WORKS, also demonstrates that T5 requires a crown lift to 4m above ground level over parking and driveway area which is reasonable. Please see Section 3.4 for the full pruning specification, as this is a protected tree it is important that the full pruning specification is read and undertaken.

I have no further comment to add.

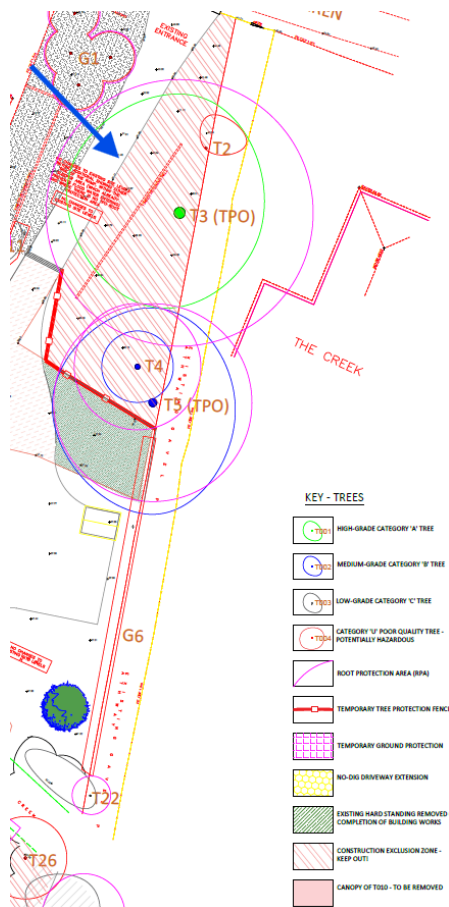
Section 2.8 TREE PROTECTION DURING BUILDING WORKS, demonstrates that all of the retained tree's rooting areas will be protected through the use of tree protection barriers and fencing. The existing concrete ground will act as ground protection throughout the build. The concrete surface at the foot of the ramp will be removed and replaced on completion of the building works, replaced with a no-dig porous surface. I am slightly unclear where this foot and ramp are located. The only RPAs that have existing concrete acting as ground protection, but is proposed to be removed, is that of T4 and T5.

So, I am unclear where this foot/ramp is positioned in respect to T4 and T5's RPAs. I have annotated an extract of the TPP below for where I assume this to be, but this is in the RPA of T3, not T4 or T5.



I also do not note any protective fencing adjacent to T3. It is within a CEZ which is positive, but fencing to protect the soft ground around T3 would be prudent as no ground protection is specified here either. The use of fencing would help to clearly demonstrate this is a CEZ, which is particularly important being adjacent to an 'A' category, protected tree.

Tree Protection fencing is not required along the edge of the ramp to protect the RPA of T003 as there is a steep bank along the edge of the access ramp which is marked by posts and it would not be possible or practical for vehicles or pedestrians to leave the ramp or impact on the Construction Exclusion Zone - for this reason the area was shown as Construction Exclusion Zone but not requiring to be fenced.



TPP – CEZ of T3 (no fencing or ground protection)

Section 3.14 LANDSCAPING and Section 3.12 REMOVAL OF CONCRETE WITH RPA of T5, demonstrates some basic principles for implementing the proposed landscaping and ground preparation. However, given my comments above regarding excavation and soil preparation within RPAs, this needs to be demonstrated in further detail and consistent with the Landscape Notes.

The author of the AMS has clarified this via email, and is as follows:

Further information on seeding of ground within the CEZ has been provided within the technical landscape specification.

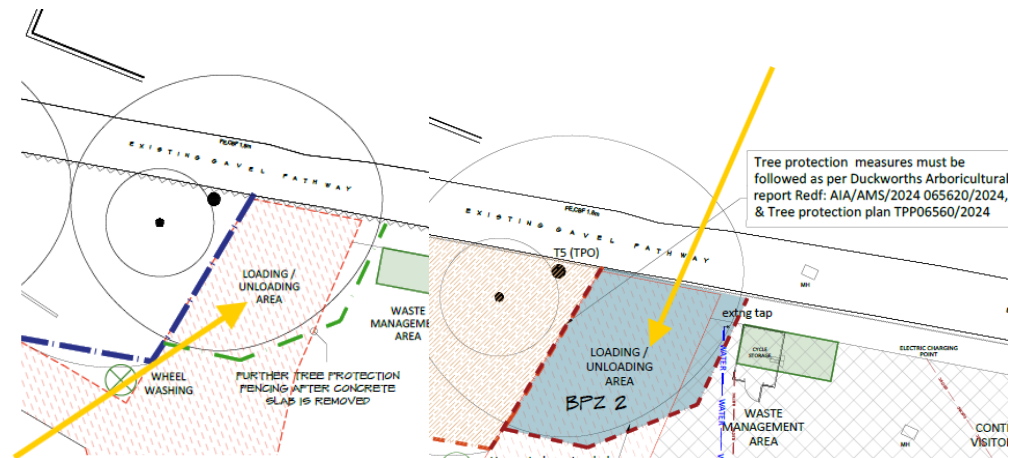
My client has confirmed that the loading bay shown close to T005 has been relocated within the updated Technical landscape specification document.

Unfortunately the landscaping documents provided have not been considered sufficient. It may be useful for the author of the AMS and the author of the landscape documents to discuss the preparation of ground for the different types of landscaping within RPAs.

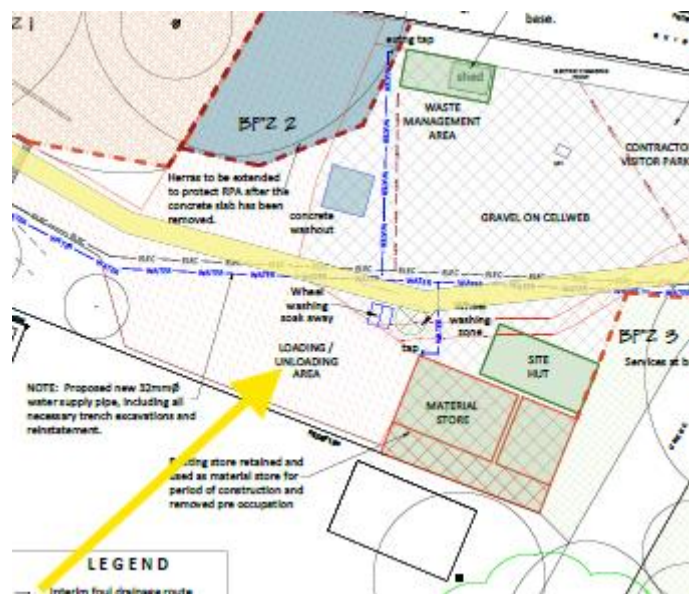
I note that the CMS has proposed the loading/unloading area for vehicles under the canopy of T5. With this in mind, is a crown lift to 4m above ground level going to allow adequate clearance for large vehicles to safely park and load/unload materials without damaging or interfering with the tree's canopy? Section 3.13 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS, mentions transit and transverse of vehicles/plant machinery and the delivery of materials. Given that this is large development in that it is a new dwelling, I am simply questioning whether 4m of ground clearance is sufficient given the nature of the construction. The amount of materials and the associated height of the type of vehicles required to deliver this, whilst not coming into contact with the tree (T5), should be considered. If tall lorries are required to deliver the materials, will 4m ground clearance be

sufficient or would it be more appropriate to locate this loading/unloading area elsewhere. It is also unclear where this loading/unloading area will be once the existing concrete has been removed. It shows the protective fencing extended following its removal, yet this loading/unloading area is still in the same place but then conflicts with the protective fencing.

The loading/unloading area has been revised within the CMS, and I can confirm I am happy with its location.



CMS (previous)– Loading/Unloading Area within Protective Fencing Following Existing Concrete Removal



CMS (revised) – Updated Loading/Unloading Area

Section 2.9 SERVICES, states that the author was advised by the applicant that the services will be connected to those at the existing property and that they will avoid the RPAs which is positive. These services are shown on the CMS plan, although please refer to comments above regarding further requirements.

The CMS above indicates that the current services are unknown, which is a concern regarding how these will be installed with consideration for RPAs. The impact that service installation can have on RPAs can be significant. Until the existing services are

determined, it can't be assessed how the proposed services will impact RPAs. There are service routes I have mentioned above that do impact RPAs which the AMS will need to provide appropriate methodology for.

Section 3.2 SITE SUPERVISION AND MONITORING, details that the removal of the existing hard surfacing within T5's RPA which is positive. I can confirm that I am also happy with the remaining methodology outlined in this section.

I have no further comment to add.

Conclusion

To conclude, currently neither Condition 17 nor Condition 18 are supported for discharge. Regarding Condition 17, further clarity needs to be provided which is detailed above. The ground preparation for the landscaping within RPAs needs to be demonstrated further. It may be useful to discuss this with the author of the AMS, as they will likely be able to advise this in relation to RPAs and will aid consistency across documents. The majority of the AMS to support the discharge of Condition 18 is acceptable. However, some further protective measures for T3 to create a clear CEZ would be beneficial. The tree works proposed to T5 may need to be reconsidered, as the unloading/loading area is beneath the tree's canopy CMS, or an alternative vehicle loading/unloading area could be proposed to limit any further tree work that might be necessary. The new gate proposed in the CMS requires further detail as to how it will be constructed in relation to trees.

To conclude, as the existing service routes are unknown and the AMS will be expected to cover the installation of the newly proposed service routes should they fall within RPAs, which they appear to, neither Condition 17 nor Condition 18 are supported for discharge. Condition 17 and Condition 18 relate in this respect, as they do the ground preparation for planting within RPAs. There is still information that is lacking detail/consistency, mentioned above, which will be required to support the discharge of Condition 17. Condition 18 will not be supported for discharge until the impact to the trees from service route installation is demonstrated, minimised and mitigated.