

ARBORICULTURAL METHOD STATEMENT FOR PL/26/0994

Project: Erection of Refuse Bin Screen Wall and Small Side Extension to Garage Under PL/26/0994.

Location: 8 Surley Row, Reading, RG4 8LY

Planning Authority: Reading Borough Council

Designation: Surley Row Conservation Area

Compliance Standard: BS 5837:2012 (*Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations*)

1. Document Control and Declaration

- **Document Title:** Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) for PL/26/0994
- **Application:** Householder Planning Application
- **Local Authority:** Reading Borough Council (Natural Environment Team)
- **Site Reference:** The land opposite 8 Surley Row and in between 13 and 19 Surley Row but part of the dwelling that is 8 Surley Row)
- **Accompanying Drawing:** Drawing no. 1/3 with PL/26/0994
- **Primary Reference:** BS 5837:2012 & BS 3998:2010
- **Prepared By:** A Boughton MSc retired and former Member of the Royal Society of Biology and Chartered Biologist (CBiol).

Professional Declaration

This Arboricultural Method Statement has been prepared by A Boughton MSc, a retired member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB) and former Chartered Biologist to demonstrate full compliance with BS 5837:2012 principles for the protection of trees during construction within the Surley Row Conservation Area. The site history, excavation depths, proximity metrics, and physical boundary conditions referenced herein accurately reflect approved prior site works and physical ground conditions.

2. Introduction and Site Context

2.1 Purpose of Statement

This Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) provides site-specific methodology for the erection of a refuse bin screen wall and small side extension (about three square metres) adjacent to the existing garage at Surley Row, Reading. It outlines physical site constraints, ground history, and low-impact working protocols to ensure complete protection for all important trees within the visual environment of the Surley Row

Conservation Area. The design of the work is to utilize only land that has already been disturbed by recent building work and not affect the natural environment in any way, which should be demonstrated by this statement. See also the tree plan drawing 1/3 accompanying this application (PL/26/0994).

2.2 Statutory Protection and Tree Inventory

- **Conservation Area Designation:** The site lies within the Surley Row Conservation Area. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, trees within Conservation Areas are afforded statutory protection equivalent to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) where stem diameters exceed 75mm (measured at 1.5m above ground level).
- **Principal Subject Tree (Mature Copper Beech - *Fagus sylvatica* f. *purpurea*):** The primary arboricultural feature within the proximity of the build area vicinity is a mature Copper Beech. This tree is situated approximately seven metres away from the proposed bin store footprint and is on an adjacent plot of land. The diameter of the stem is not more than 350mm at 1.5m above ground level. It stands behind an existing traditional five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence, and is separated by a long established three metre wide tarmac driveway. It is on the opposite side of the existing garage from the proposed garage side extension so is entirely separated by the existing garage.
- **Secondary Subject Tree (*Robinia* - *Robinia pseudoacacia*):** A mature *Robinia* is located on the other side of the plot, situated entirely behind an existing traditional five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence and the long established three metre wide tarmac driveway forming a continuous physical barrier between the tree and the construction zone. The diameter of the stem is about 300mm at 1.5m above ground level
- **Hawthorn (*probably a common hawthorn Crataegus Monogyna*):** This tree is of interest because it is in close contact with the beech tree described above. The pair are probably insosculating and therefore the hawthorn needs to be considered in any root spreading assessment of the beech. The diameter of the stem is about 180mm at 1.5m above ground level
- **Other Trees and Shrubs.** There are four juvenile Silver Birch (*Betula Utilis*) and three juvenile Rowan (*Sorbus* 'Joseph Rock') trees on the site. These are all demonstrating pronounced distress during the current hot and dry weather and will be evaluated in the spring and, if necessary, replaced by more drought resistant trees. Numerous Stag Horn Sumac (*Rhus Typhina*) of various ages and sizes self-set, rapidly colonising the ground and are not threatened by the proposed works due to their prolific nature. There is also a Flowering Cherry with multiple stems averaging 100mm (measured at 1.5 m above ground level) in the

adjacent plot beyond the waney lap timber panel fence considered not to be at risk.

3. Site History, Existing Levels and Ground Modification

3.1 Chronology of Site History and Consented Works

- **Consented Tree Removal (Ref: PL/17/1725):** This tree formerly situated in the centre of the bin store footprint was removed in full accordance with planning consent granted by Reading Borough Council under application PL/17/1725 (*Consent for Tree Works*).
- **Subsequent Ground Levelling:** Following the consented tree removal, the localized ground within this footprint was levelled by hand.
 - **Bin Screen Footprint:** Manually cleared and excavated to a reduced level approximately 300 mm below original natural ground level.
 - **Garage Side Working Strip:** A 900 mm wide strip extending along the side of the existing garage was established at a reduced level on average about 200 mm below the adjoining tarmac driveway but not level.
- **Material Staging and Soil Compaction:** During the construction of the existing garage, the area proposed to be used for bin storage was lowered and levelled and was utilized as the primary material staging post. Heavy building material such as bricks, concrete blocks, roof tiles and aggregates were stacked and stored directly across this ground, resulting in sustained, heavy sub-surface compaction. The 900mm strip to the side of the garage has been left as it was after the build, containing builders' rubble and concrete spoil, in anticipation of the side extension.

3.2 Arboricultural Impact and Root Horizon Analysis

Under BS 5837:2012 principles, active nutrient-absorbing fibrous roots reside almost exclusively within the upper 300 mm of uncompressed, organic topsoil.

The physical sequence on this site demonstrates that:

1. **Removal of Active Root Horizon:** The manual lowering physically removed the upper 200 mm to 300 mm topsoil horizon across both the bin screen footprint and the 900 mm garage-side working strip prior to the current application.
2. **Sub-Surface Suppression:** The subsequent heavy loading from stored bricks and masonry blocks compressed the remaining subsoil, preventing secondary root re-establishment near the surface.
3. **Impact on Principal Copper Beech:** The mature Copper Beech is doubly protected: it sits behind a traditional five foot timber fence and on the opposite

side of the plot (about seven metres) from the bin storage area which includes a three metre wide tarmac driveway. The proposed side extension to the garage is on the opposite side of the garage to the beech tree, so the existing garage foundation and boundary fence act as absolute physical barriers to root movement or construction encroachment into the build footprint.

4. **Impact on Robinia:** The Robinia sits across a long established three metre wide tarmac driveway from the side extension, eliminating the likelihood of encountering root bearing soil. Moreover, the vast majority of the 900mm wide strip was disturbed and re-filled with detritus during the garage build, further reducing the risk of root bearing soil being encountered.
5. **Low Risk to Retained Vegetation:** Because the proposed bin screen wall sits entirely within this previously lowered and compressed footprint, construction will not intrude into pristine root-bearing soil or compromise the structural root system of any nearby planting.
6. **Root protection Area Calculations for the Copper Beech - *Fagus sylvatica* f. *purpurea* and Robinia - *Robinia pseudoacacia***

The root protection areas are calculated as described in BS5837:2010 Table A1. It must be noted that this applies to loose, unconstrained soil which is not the case for either tree; however, this figure can give a guide for marking safe work distances on the tarmac driveway.

Using the single stem calculation for the Beech with a single stem of less than 350 mm (measured at 1.5m above ground level), a multiple of twelve gives a maximum root protection area radius of 4.2m. As the beech appears to be insculcating with a smaller hawthorn the multiple-stem tree root protection is also calculated using the square root of the sum of the squares for each stem diameter, multiplied by 12. This gives a radius of 3.9m. The only relevant digging is about seven metres distant so it is confirmed that no further protection will be proposed for the beech.

Using the single stem calculation for the Robinia with a diameter of about 300 mm (measured at 1.5m above ground level), a multiple of twelve gives a maximum root protection area radius of 3.6m. The nearest building work will be about 4.3m from the stem of the Robinia. Because this is close to the root protection zone, a distance of 3.6m from the robinia's stem will be marked on the tarmac driveway prior to commencing work. It should be restated that this calculation applies to loose, unconstrained soil whereas this is a tarmac surface so this approach could be regarded as 'over-engineered' to provide the maximum tree protection possible.

4. Justification for Omission of Temporary Physical Barriers

Due to the physical layout of the site, existing structural barriers, and the very small scale of the development, no temporary tree protection fencing or Heras barriers are required or proposed. This approach is justified under BS 5837:2012 based on the following physical controls:

1. **Structural and Physical Separation of Principal Tree (Copper Beech):** The mature Copper Beech is set back about seven metres from the working zone, situated behind a traditional five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence, and physically shielded from the side extension by the full bulk and foundations of the existing garage. These physical barriers render construction encroachment or mechanical damage to the Copper Beech extremely unlikely.
2. **Pre-Existing Physical Boundary (*Robinia* Protection):** The *Robinia* tree is located entirely behind a traditional five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence. This solid structure provides a permanent, continuous physical barrier isolating the tree's stem and crown from the building footprint. The three metre wide pre-existing tarmac driveway protects the route zone. To afford additional protection a root protection zone a distance of 3.6m from the stem of the robinia will be marked on the tarmac driveway prior to commencing work.
3. **Confined Footprint:** Construction activity is strictly confined to the previously lowered footprint (300 mm below ground level) and the existing hardstanding driveway. Unexcavated organic soil outside the immediate working zone will remain completely untouched.

5. Construction Methodology and Site Working Protocols

5.1 Working Standards and Root Care

- **Hand Tools Only in Bin Screen Area:** Any minor surface preparation or fine levelling required within the 300 mm lowered bin area footprint will be executed exclusively using hand tools (spades and shovels). This will provide some protection for the self-setting sumac (*Rhus typhina*) that colonise the adjacent ground.
- **Hand and Mechanical tools in the side extension:** The 900mm wide strip running about 3m along the side of the existing garage will be excavated by hand where possible and mechanically where required. The area nearest the robinia contains the ducting for mains electricity and the rainwater drains, so this will be excavated using hand tools only. The area towards the rear of the garage and

furthest from the robinia will be mechanically excavated if necessary. This area comprises builders 'in-fill', discarded concrete and mortar spoil which would be difficult to remove by hand only.

- **Root Protection Protocol:** In the unlikely event that minor, non-structural roots (<25 mm diameter) are encountered during hand levelling of the bin area, they will be pruned cleanly using sharp bypass secateurs in accordance with BS 3998:2010 to prevent root tearing.
- A root protection zone a distance of 3.6m from the stem of the Robinia will be marked on the tarmac driveway prior to commencing work.

5.2 Material Storage

- **Hardstanding Utilization:** All bulk building materials, mortar mixing and tool stores must be positioned exclusively on existing hardstanding or within the garage, remaining fully separated from the mature Copper Beech by both the five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence and strictly on the construction side of the *Robinia* five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence.
- **Pollution Control:** Concrete and mortar mixing areas must be underlaid with heavy-duty plastic sheeting with bunded edges to collect washings and prevent chemical runoff into adjacent soil.
- **No Underground Utilities:** No new underground service trenches, drainage pipes, or electrical conduits are anticipated within the root zones of the Copper Beech, *Robinia*, or any nearby trees, during this work.

6. Phased Construction Sequence

Site operations will follow a clear chronological sequence to ensure low-impact compliance throughout:

- **Phase 1 (Site Setup):** Designate material storage and mixing area on existing hardstanding area. (Garage structure and five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence shield the beech; a separate five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence shields the *Robinia*). A root protection zone a distance of 3.6m from the stem of the robinia will be marked on the tarmac driveway prior to commencing work.
- **Phase 2 (Site Preparation):** Fine hand levelling within 300 mm lowered footprint using hand tools only. Excavation of strip down the side of the garage using hand tools where possible and mechanical tools where necessary.
- **Phase 3 (Construction):** Erection of bin screen wall and side extension and finishing works.

- **Phase 4 (Completion):** Site clearance and hand clearing of the hardstanding area.

7. Conclusion and Professional Sign-Off

This Arboricultural Method Statement confirms that the proposed refuse bin screen wall and small garage side extension can be constructed without significant risk to the principal mature Copper Beech or the *Robinia* within the Surley Row Conservation Area.

The combination of:

- The seven-metre setback and five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence, pre-existing three metre longstanding tarmac driveway and the existing garage protecting the Copper Beech,
- The five-foot high, waney lap timber panel fence, pre-existing three metre longstanding tarmac driveway and a root protection zone marked on the tarmac driveway protecting the *Robinia*, and
- Working within a previously lowered (300mm) and compressed footprint and a 900mm disturbed strip along the side of previous construction,

eliminates the need for temporary protective fencing while fully meeting all statutory standards of BS 5837:2012.

Authored By:

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