

ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

*Units 5 & 6 Southern Court
South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS*

Application	PL/26/1038
Development description	External alterations to the property
Assessed amendment	Relocation of the entrance to residential Unit 1 from the side to the front elevation; associated external access
Report reference / date	SC-AIA-01
Issue status	Revision 01

1. Purpose and scope

This assessment covers omission of the approved side entrance to Unit 6 Southern Court serving residential Unit 1, matching brickwork infill, a new front door formed by adapting the approved window opening, and a 900 mm-wide brick-paved entrance path using a no-dig method.

T1 is a sycamore approximately 7 m high and T2 a Kilmarnock willow approximately 2 m high. Their labelled positions are shown on drawing 1000B. The drawing indicates that the proposed path enters both preliminary circular root protection areas; a suitable no-dig construction detail is therefore material to tree retention.

2. Assessment basis

The assessment refers to drawings 1000B and 1001B, together with the existing plans and other proposed sheets. The assessment uses the tree information set out in section 4.1, including species, approximate heights, trunk diameters, condition and retention categories. Drawing 1000B provides the tree positions, a 900 mm path dimension and the brick-paviour no-dig annotation.

T1 and T2 are recorded as being in fair condition and retention Category B. Their positions are shown on drawing 1000B. Trunk diameters of 315 mm and 105 mm were measured at 1.5 m above ground and are used for the single-stem RPA calculations. Crown spreads were not measured; the planting graphics on drawings are indicative only and not measured canopy outlines.

3. Planning policy and assessment method

The assessment applies the BS 5837:2012 single-stem method to calculate root protection areas [R1]. Reading Local Plan Policy EN14 seeks to protect important trees and provide for their retention and maintenance; Policy CC7 addresses the relationship between design, landscape and access [R4]. The relevant planning question is whether the entrance and path can be delivered while retaining T1 and T2 and protecting their rooting environment. Sections 5 and 6 address the identified overlap, construction controls and ongoing retention.

4. Drawing evidence and planting

Drawing 0001 depicts the existing frontage planting. Drawing 1000B shows T1 and T2 beside the 900 mm-wide path serving door D50. Drawing 1001B shows the front entrance and window W39. Both trees are treated as retained for this assessment; no removal, transplantation or pruning forms part of the assessed works.

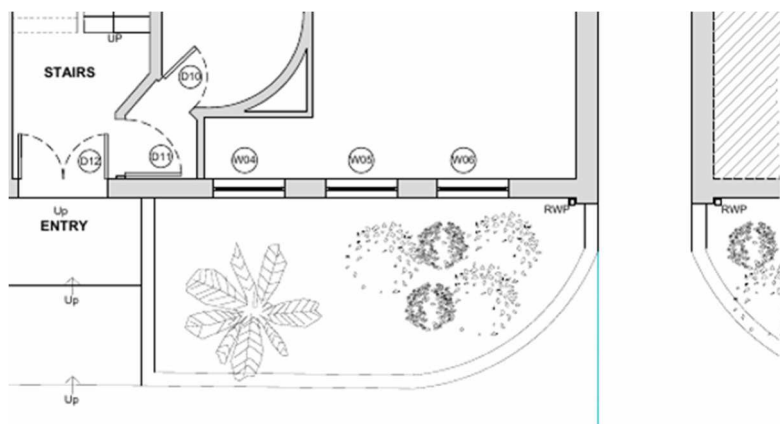


Figure 1. Existing frontage: extract from drawing 0001. The bed in front of building Unit 6 contains a large radial planting symbol and smaller planting symbols.

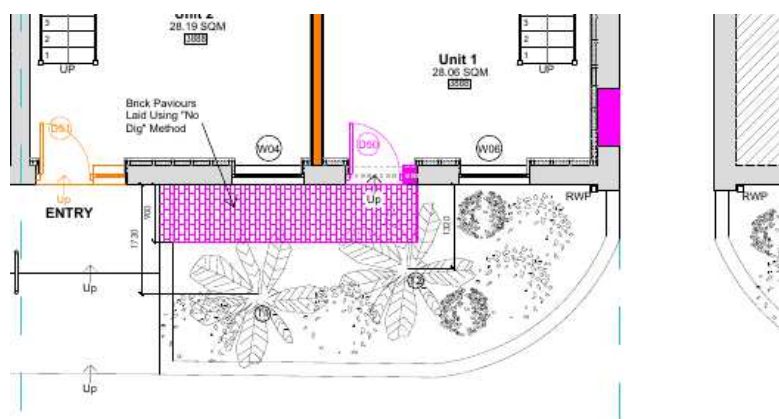


Figure 2. Reviewed drawing 1000B: T1 and T2 beside the 900 mm path, with the brick-paviour no-dig annotation. Magenta denotes proposed works.

These extracts are not to scale and do not constitute a tree protection plan. They compare the existing drawing with reviewed revision B. Tree heights and trunk diameters are recorded in section 4.1; the graphics are indicative only and are not surveyed crown spreads.

4.1 Tree information and root protection areas

Tree	Species	Height	Trunk diameter at 1.5 m	RPA radius	RPA area
T1	Sycamore	Approx. 7 m	315 mm	3.78 m	44.89 m ²
T2	Kilmarnock willow	Approx. 2 m	105 mm	1.26 m	4.99 m ²

Tree	Condition	Retention category	Crown spread
T1	Fair	B	Not measured
T2	Fair	B	Not measured

The 1730 mm dimension at T1 and 1320 mm at T2 appear to run from the building face to the indicated tree positions. Subtracting the 900 mm path width gives indicative edge clearances of 830 mm and 420 mm.

4.2 Implication for the access

Both indicative edge clearances are less than the calculated RPA radii. The path is therefore assessed as encroaching into both RPAs. Section 6 sets out the protection and construction requirements on which the assessment of tree retention depends.

5. Arboricultural impact assessment

5.1 Direct loss and vegetation clearance

Both Category B trees are to be retained under the assessed scheme. No removal, transplantation or pruning is proposed. Any shrub clearance must be restricted to the path footprint and carried out without grubbing into tree-rooting soil. Branch clearance must be checked before works, with any conflict referred for arboricultural advice.

5.2 Roots, surfacing and entrance levels

The specified no-dig method is intended to avoid excavation for the 900 mm-wide brick-paved path. Potential residual effects include construction loading, soil compaction, raised levels and changes to water and air movement. The support layers, bedding, edging and threshold must be designed consistently with that method; conventional excavated edging or sub-base construction should not be assumed.

Drawing 1000B shows 1730 mm and 1320 mm dimensions at T1 and T2 and a 900 mm path. Their apparent relationship places the path within the preliminary circular RPAs of 3.78 m and 1.26 m radius respectively. This is a drawing-based overlap finding, subject to confirmation of stem centres and dimension endpoints. No overlap area or percentage is asserted; these require an accurately coordinated RPA and path layout.

The path must be constructed above retained rooting soil without stripping topsoil, cutting roots or excavating edge restraints. Its design must distribute pedestrian and installation loads and maintain water and air movement through the full build-up. These requirements apply to the bedding and support layers as well as the brick paviours. Levels and the entrance threshold must be coordinated without reducing ground levels within either RPA.

5.3 Building openings and side infill

The Planning Statement describes replacing the side entrance with matching brickwork and forming a front entrance from an approved window position. These wall works would not themselves enlarge the building footprint. Their potential tree effects arise mainly from access, local threshold works, temporary support and debris handling. No below-ground works associated with the side infill are specified.

5.4 Construction activity

Door installation, masonry work and any scaffold or access platform could affect vegetation through contact, material storage, repeated foot traffic and concentrated loading. Mortar mixing and washout could contaminate planted soil. Temporary operations must be planned around verified tree constraints rather than assuming that existing hardstanding is safe for unrestricted loading.

5.5 Longer-term relationship

Crown spreads were not measured. Consequently, this assessment does not quantify canopy overlap or prescribe pruning. Before installation, check branch clearance against the entrance, 900 mm path and temporary working space. Any conflict should be referred for arboricultural advice rather than resolved through unplanned pruning.

5.6 Other planting

Planting is also illustrated at the opposite end of the frontage and beside the rear communal bin area. No change to those areas is identified as part of the entrance amendment. They remain relevant if deliveries, storage, scaffold or disposal routes use those locations. Off-site trees have not been surveyed.

6. Tree protection and construction requirements

The following requirements form the mitigation proposed for the external works. They provide the basis for a detailed arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan to be secured before path construction. The assessment of acceptability is conditional on their implementation.

6.1 No dig construction requirements

Construct the 900 mm-wide brick-paved path using an above-ground, load-spreading system over retained soil. The detailed section must specify compatible permeable bedding and support layers, layer depths, a suitable separation layer, and edge restraints that do not require trenches or damaging root penetration. No conventional excavated sub-base or concrete haunching within the RPAs is permitted under this method. Coordinate the finished levels, threshold and surface-water disposal before installation.

Use drawing 1000B to set out the path and the circular RPAs of T1 and T2. Check the stem-centre offsets, mark protected areas and establish branch clearance before works. An arboriculturist must review the protection layout and installation method on site. If levels or clearances cannot be achieved without root damage or unplanned pruning, revise the detail before proceeding.

6.2 Before construction starts

Before path construction, provide a coordinated plan showing the path, RPAs, protection barriers, working corridor, material storage and pedestrian access. Fence off rooting areas outside the agreed working corridor. Use temporary ground protection where installation access would otherwise load exposed soil. The construction sequence must prevent machinery or stored materials from bearing directly on unprotected rooting ground.

The site manager should brief the workforce on the agreed protection, identify material and waste storage areas, and record the condition of retained planting. Any required tree-work consent or other permission must be resolved before relevant operations.

6.3 During the works

Keep plant beds and identified protected areas free from spoil, materials, vehicles, mortar mixing and washout. Use agreed access routes and prevent debris from falling into retained vegetation. Locate scaffold supports and any ground protection in accordance with the agreed details; do not fix temporary works to trees.

Do not excavate, reduce levels, install services, cut roots or undertake unplanned pruning within identified tree constraints. If unexpected roots, vegetation conflicts or changes to the proposed construction are encountered, stop the affected operation and obtain arboricultural advice before proceeding. Keep any exposed roots protected from drying while advice is obtained.

6.4 Completion

Retain protection until the works and removal of materials are complete. Arrange an arboricultural completion check of retained trees and the protected ground. Reinstall disturbed planting outside the path where needed. Maintain the path and retained trees without trenching, root cutting or unplanned pruning; future repairs within the RPAs must follow the same root-sensitive principles.

7. Policy assessment and conclusion

The proposal retains both Category B trees and confines the building alterations to the existing envelope. The path encroaches into their calculated RPAs, so conventional excavation is inappropriate. The specified no-dig approach, supported by the load-spreading, permeability and protection requirements in section 6, addresses the principal mechanisms of root severance, soil compaction and changed rooting conditions.

Retention of T1 and T2 preserves the existing tree contribution to the frontage, consistent with the tree-protection and retention objectives of Policy EN14. Matching building finishes and a limited pedestrian approach support the design and landscape objectives of Policy CC7. This assessment supports the proposal in arboricultural terms subject to securing and implementing the section 6 method and protection requirements.

Crown spreads were not measured and no pruning is proposed; pre-work branch-clearance checks are included in the method. Any necessary change to the path or tree works must be assessed before implementation.