

Sylva Consultancy
expert arboricultural advice

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Land to the south of 'Southside'
Steeple Aston
Oxfordshire

December 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instructions

- 1.1.1 Instructions have been received to carry out an Arboricultural Implication Assessment on the likely impact with the regard to the proposal to construct 10 new dwellings on land at Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire (Appendix 1).
- 1.1.2 This appraisal assesses the impact of the proposal in relation to trees and discusses mitigation measures that may have to be adopted.

1.2. Arboricultural Survey

- 1.2.1 During November 2017 a tree survey was carried out in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction-Recommendations' and good arboricultural practice. This is a basic data collection exercise and a record of the trees condition at the time of surveying. The tree survey data, tree survey plan and arboricultural constraints plan are included in a separate document call the 'Arboricultural Survey' and has been forwarded to the client.

1.3 Site Description

- 1.3.1 The site is located on land to the south of 'Southside' on the outskirts of the village of Steeple Aston. The site surveyed is roughly rectangular in shape and flat.

1.4 Proposed Development

- 1.4.1 It is proposed to construct 10 new dwellings (and associated access) with the purpose of this report to assist with the design process.
- 1.4.2 Please note all tree numbers referred to in this document relate to the tree numbers annotated on the arboricultural implication assessment plan.

2. ARBORICULTURAL SURVEY

2.1 A total of 18 trees, 1 group, 2 hedges and 2 areas have been recorded within this assessment. The tree quality is assessed as follows:

U: Trees that are of such condition that any existing value would be lost within 10 years and which should, in the current context, be removed for reasons of sound arboriculture management. However, if category 'U' trees are placed in an inaccessible location such that concerns over public safety are reduced to an acceptable level, it may be preferable or possible to defer this recommendation.

A: Trees of the highest quality and value and are considered to be of such a condition as to be able to make a substantial contribution (e.g. 40 years +).

B: Trees of moderate to high value and are considered to be of such a condition as to be able to make a significant contribution (e.g. 20 years +).

C: Trees of low quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 10 years. Unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories. Young trees with a stem diameter of less than 150mm should be considered for relocation or replacement through mitigation (e.g. 10 years).

Category A, B & C trees are further divided into sub-categories. These sub-categories carry equal weight and are selected for either arboricultural values, landscape values or cultural values, including conservation. Within the British Standard 5837:2012 it is recommended to record hedge and shrub masses, however in the context of the standard it is not necessary to assess the quality of these or to provide a category classification.

The numbers of trees falling under each classification within the arboricultural survey are as follows:

U: 1 tree

A: 0 trees

B: 10 trees

C: 7 trees, 1 group and 2 hedges

Please note the areas have been shown for illustrative purposes only

3. PRINCIPLE ARBORICULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Consideration is given to the significance of the trees identified in the arboricultural tree survey, the constraints that they are likely to pose to any development that may occur, post development implications (if any) and work requirements to trees for reasons of sound arboricultural management in order to facilitate the development (BS5837:2012 Section 5.4).
- 3.1.2 This appraisal assesses the impact of the potential to re-develop the site in relation to the trees and discusses mitigation measures that may have to be adopted. The following document has been provided by the client:
- Proposed Site Plan

3.2 Trees

3.2.1 A desk top study of information posted on Cherwell District Council's (CDC) website details that select trees are located within Steeple Aston Conservation Area (Extent of Conservation Area at Appendix 2). No information is currently available on the website to determine whether any of the trees within or adjacent to the site are subject to any Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

3.2.2 The tree stock is confined to the boundaries of the site with a small number of trees located on the grass verge adjacent to the adopted highway. It has been interpreted that the following trees are subject to the provisions of the Conservation Area Legislation:

- Offsite trees T7 (Beech), T8 (Beech) and T9 (Beech)
- Trees on the highway verge T13 – T18 (Hawthorn & Sycamore)

To ensure that the interpretation of the boundary of the Conservation Area is correct it is advised that CDC are contacted direct to confirm which trees are situated within the Conservation Area.

3.2.3 In addition The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, provides statutory protection to birds, bats and other species that inhabit trees. These have the potential to pose additional constraints on the use and timings of works that may occur to trees located at or adjacent to the site. Should further advice on this matter be required, this should be sought from a qualified ecologist.

3.3 Overview

- 3.3.1 The appended arboricultural implications plan (Appendix 3) illustrates the proposals in relation to the tree stock. In addition to pre-development concerns, post development concerns such as shading, debris and concerns of the tree's proximity and juxtaposition to the proposal have also be considered during the design process.
- 3.3.2 An assessment of the impacts of the proposed development on the tree stock reveal that for development 2 category 'C' trees, 1 category 'C' group and 1 category 'C' area will be removed to implement the scheme.

3.3.3 The proposed development layout has undergone a careful design process to ensure an efficient use of the site, whilst safeguarding the continued contribution to the greening of the immediate landscape. The design also involves post development landscaping.

3.4 Impact of the proposal on the tree stock

3.4.1 Tree T1 (Prunus) has a landscape values of less than 10 years in accordance with BS5837:2012. As such it is recommended to remove this tree regardless of any development occurring.

3.4.2 Trees assessed as category 'U' trees are of such condition that any existing value would be lost within 10 years and which should, in the current context, be removed for reasons of sound arboriculture management. However, if category 'U' trees are placed in an inaccessible location such that concerns over public safety are reduced to an acceptable level, it may be preferable or possible to defer this recommendation.

3.4.3 Whilst trees in categories 'A', 'B' and 'C' are all a material consideration in the development process, the retention of category 'C' trees, being of low quality or of only limited or short-term potential, will not normally be considered necessary where they impose a significant constraint on development. Furthermore, BS 5837:2012 makes it clear that young trees, even those of good form and vitality, which have the potential to develop into quality specimens when mature "*need not necessarily be a significant constraint on the site's potential*".

3.5 New Development

3.5.1 In order to implement the scheme 2 category 'C' trees (T3 Ash & T18 Hawthorn), 1 category 'C' group (Prunus sp) and 1 category 'C' area (A1 Elder) will be removed. The report notes that the British Standard highlights that Category 'C' trees are assessed as being either of low quality, limited merit, low landscape benefits, no material cultural or conservation value, or only limited or short-term potential; or young trees with trunk diameter below 150mm; or a combination of these. As such these trees should not be considered as a significant constraint to the redevelopment of the site.

3.5.2 It is acknowledged that the footprint of the Plot 1 falls within the root protection area (RPA) of tree T7, Beech. It has been assessed that there will be a 3m² encroachment into the RPA of T7 (which equates to 1% of the total area of the RPA). The encroachment is considered as marginal and it is concluded that the impact will not significantly affect the ability to successfully retain this tree.

3.5.3 The new access road falls marginally within the RPA of trees T11 & T12 (Ash x 2). To ensure no adverse impact occurs to these trees it is proposed to construct the new access, (where this encroaches on the trees RPA's) based on a cellular confinement system design (Appendix 4). Any marrying in of any levels will occur outside the RPA's of the trees. As such it is concluded that there will not be any adverse impact to the trees and as such the trees can be successfully retained.

3.6 Construction

3.6.1 Careful consideration has been given regarding the buildability of the proposals. The arboricultural impact assessment plans illustrate that sufficient room exists to locate the site compound and contractor parking outside the RPA's of the retained trees.

- 3.6.2 Fence protection is required for retained trees and will comprise of Heras fencing and will be based on Figure 2 'Default Specification for Protective Barrier' as recommended within the British Standard 5837:2012. Where appropriate the fencing will be braced to withstand impacts.
- 3.6.3 In addition to the fence protection ground protection measures are also required. In this instance it is recommended that the ground protection consists of Duradek Mats (Appendix 5).
- 3.6.4 A tree works schedule to facilitate the proposal has not yet been finalised. In the event pruning works to trees are required it is judged that the trees can be pruned to acceptable standards in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 'Tree Works - Recommendations'.
- 3.6.5 New service runs have yet to be confirmed, however the layout illustrates that sufficient room exists to route new services outside of the root protection areas of retained trees. In the unlikely event new service runs are placed unavoidably within the RPA of trees then all new installations will be carried out in accordance with the guidelines set out in NJUG Publication No.10 and Section 7.7 of the British Standard 5837:2012.
- 3.7 Proposed Landscaping
- 3.7.1 A comprehensive landscape plan has been developed which provides an enhanced environment and compliments the development of the site. New tree planting is proposed whereby suitable species for the site and for climate change will be chosen.

4. SUMMARY

4.1 Conclusions

- 4.1.1 The British Standard 5837:2012 states that there is the need to avoid misplaced tree retention; for example, to attempt to retain too many unsuitable trees on a site may result in excessive pressure on the trees during the development work and subsequent demands for their removal post development. However where design permits, the retention of lower category trees can be beneficial providing screening and softening to a development and a sense of maturity to a scheme.
- 4.1.2 Careful planning of site operations will be carried out so as to avoid any adverse impact to the retained trees. In order to safeguard the trees through the development it is recommended that a site specific Arboricultural Method Statement is drawn up and implemented.
- 4.1.3 It is acknowledged that consideration for both the direct impact and indirect impact of a development with respect to retained trees needs to be assessed. With respect to the retained tree stock it is considered that their successful integration into the layout can be achieved. As such it is regarded that there will not be any future pressure to significantly prune, or to seek permission to remove trees within the site. With further regard to any concerns of debris and seasonal nuisances it is considered that this can be managed by good design and as part of the overall general maintenance of the development.

4.2 Post development tree management.

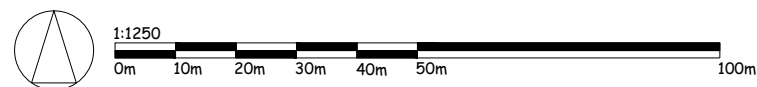
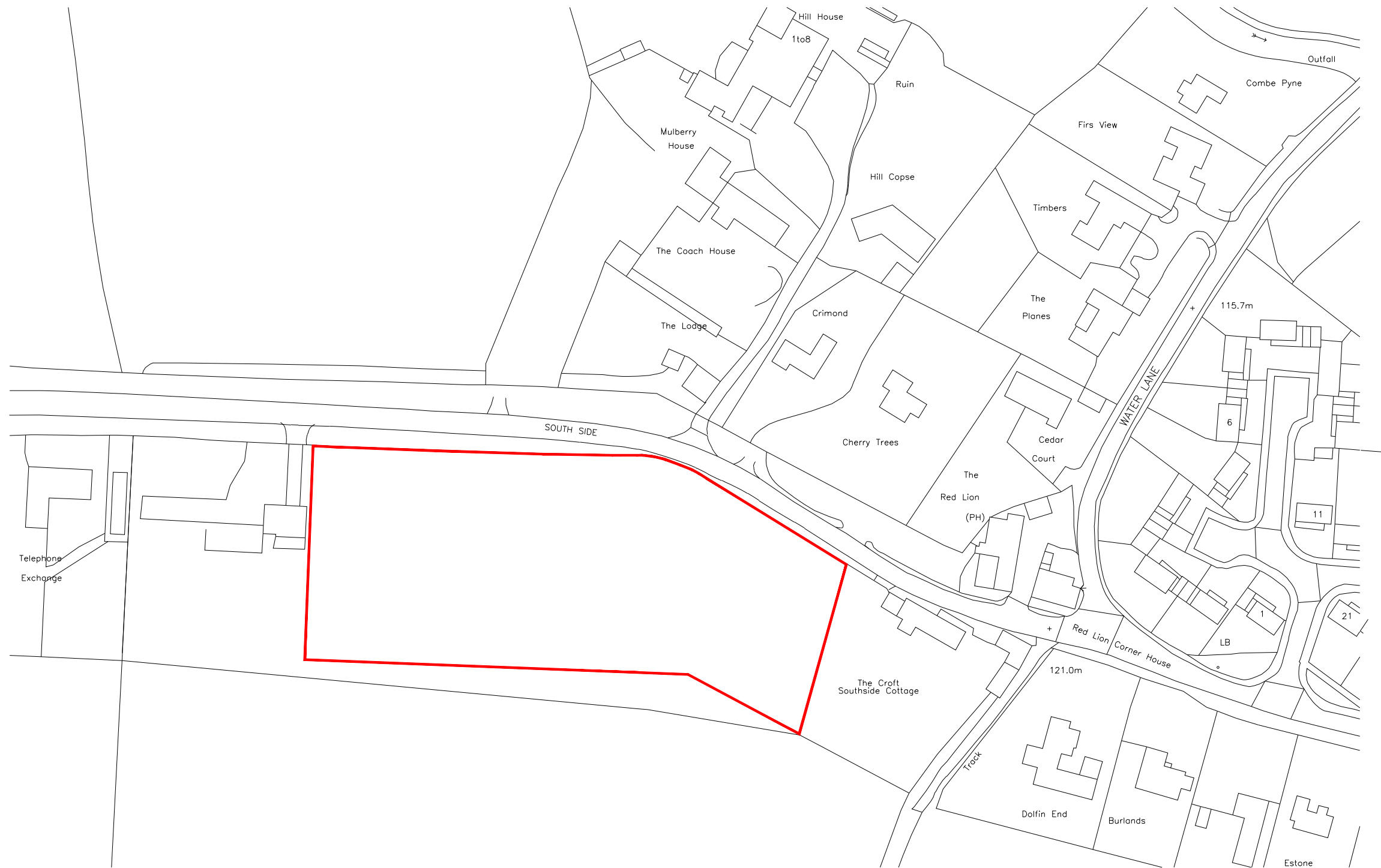
4.2.1 Tree owners have a duty of care to maintain and manage their tree stock and it is recommended that regular tree inspections are undertaken by a person competent in arboriculture.

4.2.2 Section 8.8.2 of the British Standard: 2012 recommends post development aftercare of trees following the completion of development works. It is recommended the following is considered with regard to post development inspection of retained trees:

1. Trees that grow on a site prior development may, if adversely affected be in decline over a period of several years before they die. This varies due to age, species, condition prior to development, extent of damage during development, soil conditions and climate. It is recommended that regular inspections are undertaken.
2. Where trees are protected by planning controls, it is recommended that the LPA is informed, and necessary agreements obtained prior to any remedial works.
3. Following completion of a development it is recommended that the arboricultural consultant inspects the trees for signs of intolerance to the change of conditions and the effect of the development. There may be a need for additional tree works to those originally specified.
4. Maintenance of newly planted trees is important during the establishment period, of at least two years and it is recommended an appropriate maintenance schedule is included with the Landscaping Scheme.

APPENDIX 1

Site Location Plan



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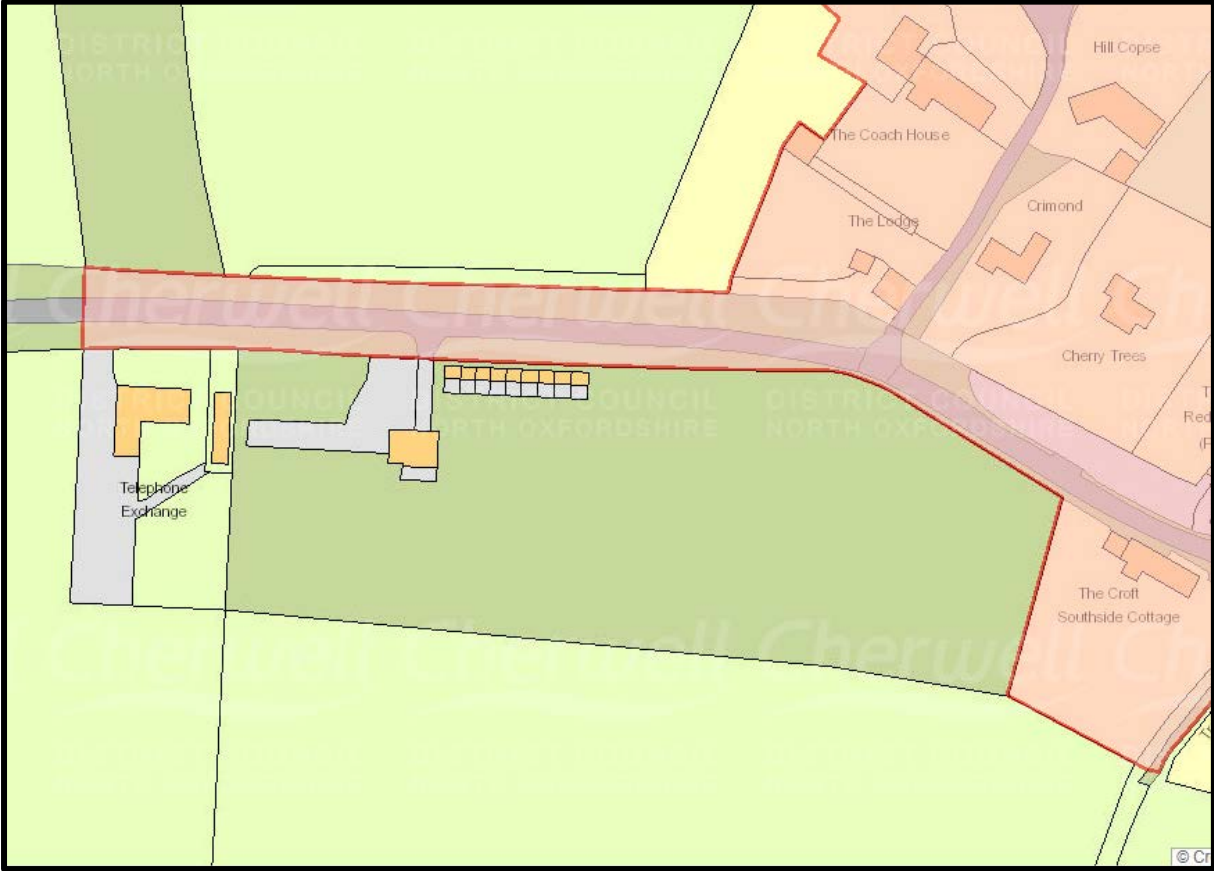
PROJECT: South Side Steeple Aston			
DRAWING: Location Plan			
DEPARTMENT: Planning	DRAWN BY: GL	CHECKED BY:	
DRAWING No: P.224.LP.01	SCALE: 1:1250	PAPER: A3	REV: -
STATUS: Proposed		DATE: 28.07.17	

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APPENDIX 2

Extent of Conservation Area

Extent of Conservation Area



APPENDIX 3

Arboricultural Implications Plan



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Site: Steeple Aston
 Drawing Title: Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 Dec 2019

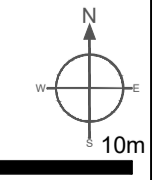
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Key:

- Category A (Green circle)
- Category B (Blue circle)
- Category C (Grey circle)
- Category U (Red circle)

Category (Green circle) - Crown Spread
 Root Protection Area (Green dashed circle) - Tree Number
 Tree Number (Number inside circle)

NOTE: Tree/group numbers marked with an * have approximate locations.
 NOTE: The original of this drawing was produced in colour - a monochrome copy should not be relied upon.



APPENDIX 4

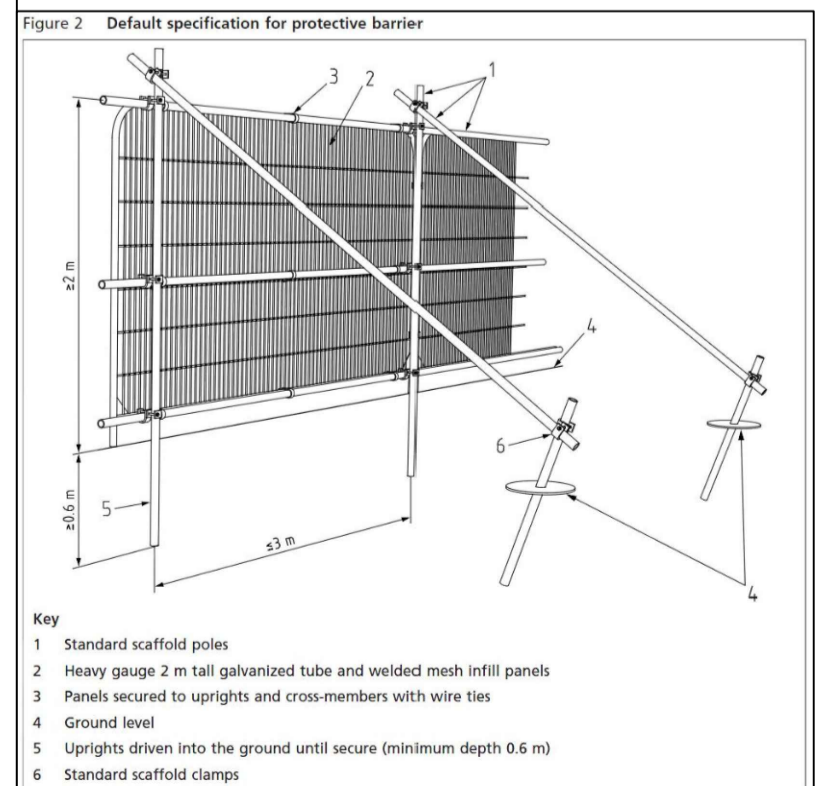
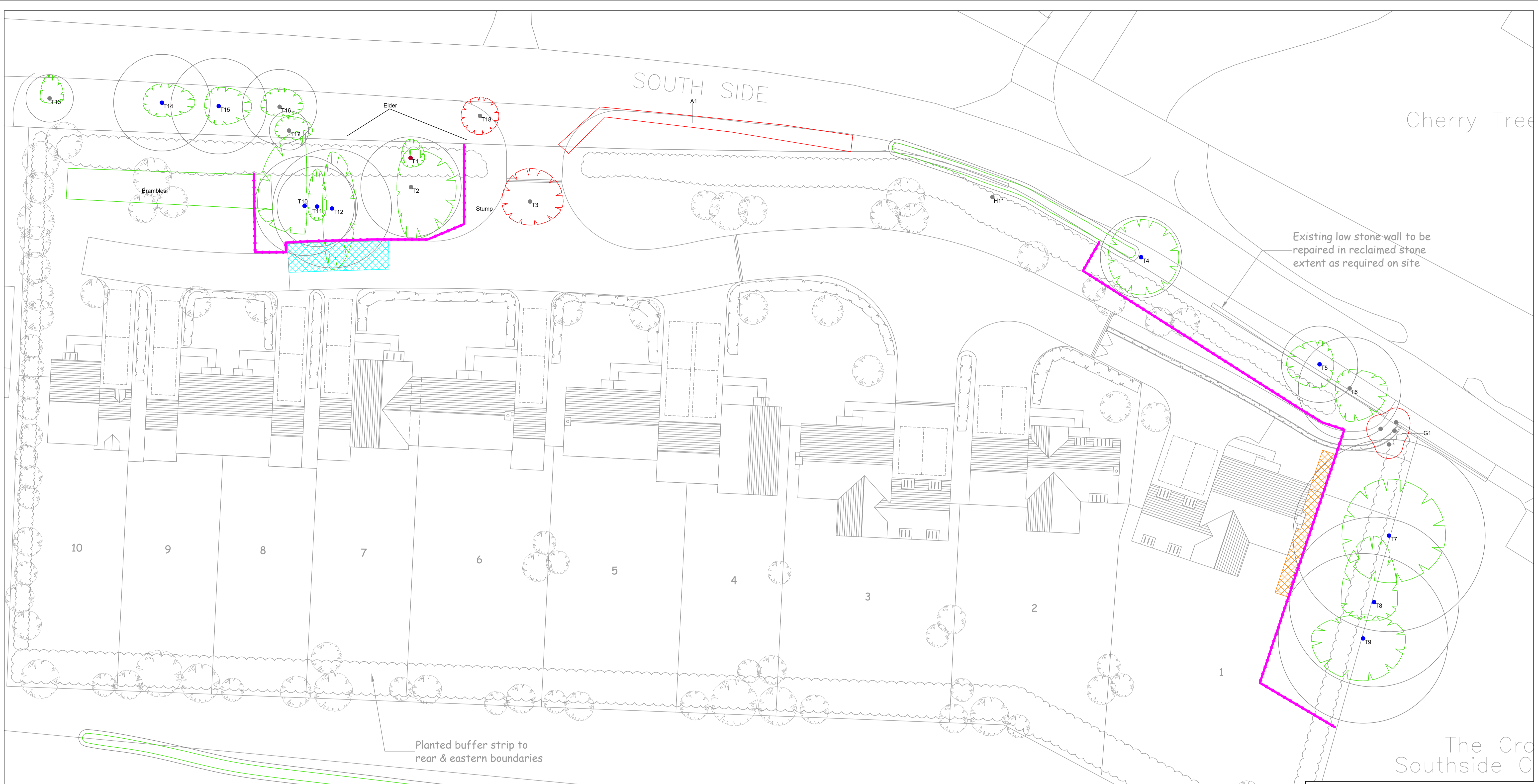
Example of a Cellular Confinement System Design

APPENDIX 5

Technical Specification of Duradek Mats

APPENDIX 6

Tree Protection Plan



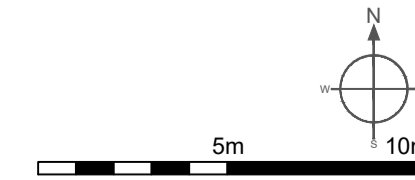
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Site: Steeple Aston 1:200 @ A1
 Drawing Title: Tree Protection Plan Dec 2019

Key:

- Category A (Green circle)
- Category B (Blue circle)
- Category C (Grey circle)
- Category U (Red circle)
- Tree Proposed for Removal (Red dashed circle)
- Tree Protection Fencing (Pink line)
- Category (Green circle)
- Root Protection Area (Green dashed circle)
- Duradek Ground Protection (Red hatched)
- No Dig Construction (Blue hatched)
- Crown Spread (Green dashed circle)
- Tree Number (Number in circle)

NOTE: Tree/group numbers marked with * have approximate locations. The original of this drawing was produced in colour - a monochrome copy should not be relied upon.



APPENDIX 7

Qualifications

Fiona Bradshaw

MicFor; RFS Dip Arb;F. Arbor.A; Tech Cert (Arbor.A)

I have over 20 years' experience of arboriculture and I am the principal consultant at Sylva Consultancy. I hold the Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma in Arboriculture and the Arboricultural Associations Technicians Certificate. I am a Fellow member of the Arboricultural Association and a professional member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, of which I am also a registered Consultant.

I have the benefit of both a local authority and private practice background and I am frequently instructed to provide advice and assistance relating to trees and the planning process. I am also experienced at compiling expert reports, providing evidence and also appearing as an expert witness at Public Inquires.

I am committed to my continued professional development which is reflected in my regular attendance of seminars and workshops.