

## Wykham Park Farm Arboricultural Technical Note edp5378\_r003a

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Arboricultural Technical Note has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) on behalf of L&Q Estates Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'the client'). It provides a summary of the potential constraints and opportunities with respect to Wykham Park Farm (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). This has been informed by a desk-based assessment and walkover survey of the site, to inform representations for the site through the Local Plan.
- 1.2 EDP is an independent environmental planning consultancy with offices in Cirencester, Cardiff, Cheltenham and Shrewsbury. The practice provides advice to private and public-sector clients throughout the UK in the fields of landscape, ecology, archaeology, cultural heritage, arboriculture, rights of way and masterplanning. Details of the practice can be obtained at our website ([www.edp-uk.co.uk](http://www.edp-uk.co.uk)).

#### Site Context

- 1.3 The site is located to the south-west of Banbury and is centered on National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 449 386. The site contains several field parcels comprising arable farmland and measures c.47.7 hectares (ha). The site is bound to the north by the Salt Way, further field parcels form the eastern and southern boundaries with Wykham Lane also forming a section of the southern boundary, and the A361 Bloxham Road is located to the west.

### 2. Methodology and Limitations

- 2.1 A British Standards *BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction* compliant walkover survey was undertaken on 29 November 2019 by EDP. The survey sought to identify all viably retainable trees within the site based upon established guidance and best practice.
- 2.2 The survey was undertaken using a GPS enabled tablet PC, which provides accuracy to within 0.5m. To assist in both the survey and future depiction of the tree population, the survey base mapping comprised a composite of Ordnance Survey data and high-resolution aerial imagery.
- 2.3 All surveyed items are depicted on **Annex EDP 1**. and also detailed in the Tree Survey Schedule for the site along with the required root protection area (RPA) for each tree, group and hedgerow (**Annex EDP 2**).

- 2.4 The survey sought to identify all principal arboricultural features of high (Category A), moderate (Category B) and low (Category C) quality, along with any items considered unsuitable for retention (Category U) as defined by BS 5837:2012. All recorded items were allocated a unique reference number with individual trees being given the prefix T, groups the prefix G and hedgerows the prefix H.

### **3. Overview of Tree Stock and Recommendations**

- 3.1 The assessment of the site recorded a total of 22 individual trees, 26 groups of trees, and 18 hedgerows totalling 68 items. Of these 68 items, 10 have been classified as Category A, of high quality, 36 have been classified as Category B, of moderate quality, and 22 items as Category C, of low quality.
- 3.2 Groups and hedgerows form the majority of the external boundaries and also split the site into six field parcels, individual trees are located within these boundary groups and hedgerows.
- 3.3 A total of 26 species are supported by the site. These comprise native and naturalised species and are considered typical of the rural setting, with sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) dominating the hierarchy of individual trees, with species such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) also regularly present within the hedgerows and groups.
- 3.4 Due to several of the field parcel boundaries being formed by groups, there is a predominance of moderate and high quality (Category B and A) tree cover, with a number of hedgerows assessed as being of low quality (Category C). Four items (G7, T10, T36 and T54) warranted a further assessment to clarify the potential for veteran status. Full information on the veteran trees is discussed further in **Section 4**.

### **4. Statutory Protection**

#### ***Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas***

- 4.1 Following consultation with the Local Planning Authority, Cherwell District Council North Oxfordshire, it is understood that there are no Tree Preservation Orders or conservation area designations that would apply to any trees present on, or in close proximity to the assessment site and therefore no statutory constraints would apply to the development in respect of trees.

#### ***National Planning Policy Framework***

- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) assumes protection of all irreplaceable habitats unless there are exceptional reasons for not doing so. The importance of ancient woodland and veteran trees as irreplaceable habitat is set out in Paragraph 175c of the NPPF, which states:

*“Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists”.*

- 4.3 One group of trees (G7) and three trees (T10, T36 and T54) within the site have been identified as having a veteran status. Veteran trees are depicted with a yellow star on **Annex EDP 1**.
- 4.4 A veteran tree is a tree which, by recognised criteria, shows features of biological, cultural or aesthetic value that are characteristic of, but not exclusive to, individuals surviving beyond the typical age range for the species<sup>1</sup>. The standing advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission<sup>2</sup> recommends that any development should be kept as far as possible from veteran trees, leaving a buffer at least 15 times larger than the diameter or 5m from the edge of its canopy, whichever is greater. In this instance the veteran tree buffer has been updated in line with the recommendations and is depicted with a solid orange line on **Annex EDP 1**.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The majority of boundaries forming the field parcels within and around the site are formed mainly by groups and a smaller number of hedgerows, both containing occasional individual trees, with the internal areas of the field parcels being devoid of trees. The peripheral location of tree cover means many of the trees should be retainable and incorporated into any future development.
- 5.2 The retention of the high and moderate quality trees, along with their associated above- and below-ground constraints, should be a material consideration in the masterplanning exercise due to their visual prominence and contribution to the site’s character.
- 5.3 Any tree losses should be mitigated through the provision of a replacement planting program and supported by a future management plan.

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<sup>1</sup> BS 5837 Trees in Relation to design, demolition and construction 2012

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences#history>