Findings of the Arboricultural Assessment

- Tree Survey



Land at Hall Place Farm, Reading

On behalf of Sulham Estate & Farms

July 2018

Project Ref: LC/00290

Project Number: Authored by: Reviewed by: Date: Document version LC/00290 David Paginton Stephen Wadsworth 9th July 2018 M:\Landscape Collective\Projects\1-100\00290 Hall Place Farm, Reading

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Landscape Collective were instructed by Sulham farm & Estates to carry out a tree survey in accordance with BS: 5837:2012 on land at Hall Place Farm, Reading, and hereafter referred to as 'the site'.
- 1.2 The scope of this assessment was to visit the site and to survey relevant trees/vegetation in accordance with BS5837:2012 '*Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction recommendations.*'
- 1.3 The following information is therefore contained within this report:
 - Tree survey report
 - Schedule of tree survey data
 - Tree Survey Plan showing preliminary tree constraints
- 1.4 For the purposes of carrying out the assessment, Landscape Collective were provided with the following information:
 - Glanville Topographical Survey June 2018 REF: 8180514_4101-4103

The Study Area

- 1.5 The site is located on the western edge of Reading, at the junction of Little Heath Road and Sulham Hill. The site is made up of 1 large agricultural field, 2 smaller agricultural fields, a farmyard and associated farm buildings, a horse ménage and other associated horsiculture infrastructure.
- 1.6 To the north of the site is an area of woodland called Clay Copse which is designated as Ancient and Semi-Natural and Ancient Re-Planted Woodland. This woodland forms the entire northern boundary of the site.
- 1.7 The western boundary comprises of a vegetated area of blackthorn shrubs with occasional trees within the group. This vegetated area encloses the large agricultural field to the west of the site.
- 1.8 There are no internal trees within any of the 3 agricultural fields.
- 1.9 The southern boundary aligns Little Heath road and comprises of a dense belt of vegetation comprising typical native tree and shrub species. This encloses the southern edge of the site.
- 1.10 The eastern boundary of the site is generally absent of vegetation, with the exception of a small length of conifers adjacent the farm buildings, and a small section of vegetation that wraps around the south-eastern corner of the site.
- 1.11 There are some scattered individual trees and tree groups within the gardens of Hall Place Farm and its grounds.
- 1.12 Vegetation is generally confined to the field boundaries, with the exception of Hall Place farm itself.
- 1.13 Descriptions and accompanying photos will be provided under the 'Tree Survey Findings' section of the report.

<u>Site Visit</u>

- 1.14 Landscape Collective visited the site on 9th July 2018. Individuals present on site: David Paginton CMLI. Dip Arb L4. M.Arbor.A.
- 1.15 All trees were surveyed in accordance with BS: 5837:2012 (Appendix 3 Methodology).

<u>Planning Status</u>

Statutory Tree Protection

- 1.16 The site is not located within a Conservation Area. Reading Borough Council's online list of tree preservation orders has confirmed there are no TPOs covering any of the trees on or adjacent the site.
- 1.17 The following information is included for advisory purposes.
- 1.18 On many sites (excluding residential gardens and subject to specific exemptions) there is also a statutory restriction relating to tree felling that relates to quantities of timber that can be removed within set time periods. In basic terms, it is an offence to remove more than 5 cubic metres of timber in any one calendar quarter without having first obtained a felling license from the Forestry Commission.
- 1.19 Any proposed tree works that are planned to be carried out on site must be carried out in accordance with the statutory controls outlined.

Ancient Woodland

1.20 The wooded area to the north of the site, Clay Copse, is designated as Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland. Ancient woodland is fully protected by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 118 of the NPPF, bullet point states;

'planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss;'

Statutory Wildlife Protection

- 1.21 Although preliminary visual checks from ground level of likely wildlife habitats are made at the time of surveying, detailed ecological assessments of wildlife habitats are not made by the arboriculturist and are not required/agreed as part of the preapp.
- 1.22 Trees which contain holes, splits, cracks and cavities could potentially provide a habitat for bats in addition to birds and small mammals. It is recommended that in line with any accompanying specialist advice, any tree works should only be carried out following a detailed climbing inspection to the tree to ensure that protected species or their nests/roosts are not disturbed. If any are found, the project manager, site owner or consulting arboriculturist should be informed and appropriate action taken as recommended by a Statutory Nature Conservation organisation such as Natural England.
- 1.23 It is advised that tree/hedgerow works are carried out with the understanding that birds will generally nest in trees, hedges and shrubs between March and August. Ideally, operations should be avoided during this period. Any necessary work should only be carried out following a preliminary check of the vegetation.
- 1.24 For information, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010, form the basis of the statutory legislation for flora and fauna in Britain.

2.0 SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

Existing Arboricultural Resource

2.1 In total 21 items were surveyed. Species surveyed included Cypress, Oak, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Ash, Apple, Elm. The vast majority of surveyed items related to groups of vegetation, with two woodland areas, several sections of hedge and a few individual trees.

Tree Survey Summary

- 2.2 A summary of the survey findings before development are shown below:
- 2.3 In total 21 items were surveyed. 1 surveyed item was considered to be high quality (Category A) with an anticipated useful life expectancy of in the region of 40+ years. 9 surveyed items were considered to be moderate quality (Category B) with an anticipated useful life expectancy of in the region of 20+ years. 11 surveyed items were considered to be low quality (Category C) with an anticipated useful life expectancy of in the region of 10-20+ years. No items were considered to be unsuitable for retention with an anticipated useful life expectancy of less than 10 years. However, as shown on the survey plan, there were 3 trees that form part of W14-B2 that all have extensive exposed heartwood and cavities which will contribute to making those trees highly likely to fail and be a potential hazard. It is recommended these are removed in line with good management of the woodland asset and to avoid any potential impacts to the health and safety of current and potential users of the site.

2.4 Selected photographs of the site are shown below:

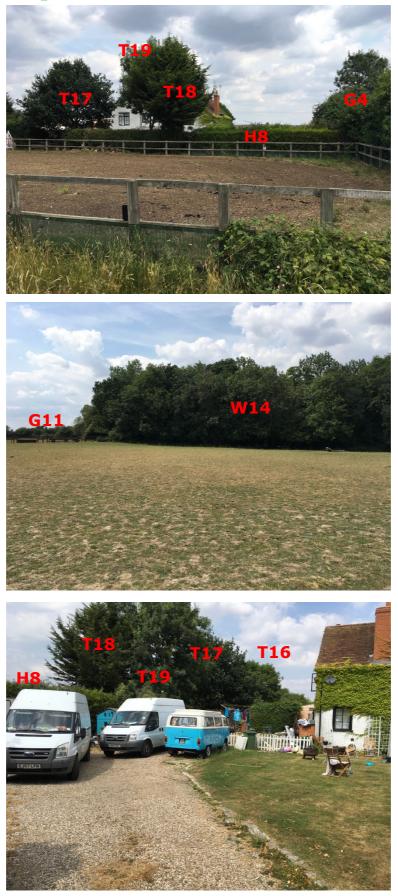




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3.0 PRELIMINARY TREE CONSTRAINTS

- 3.1 In accordance with BS5837:2012, below ground constraints, or root protection areas (RPAs), for the surveyed items have been plotted onto the tree survey plan for the site. These are represented as a circle centred on the base of each tree stem with a radius of 12 times stem diameter measured at 1.5m above ground level.
- 3.2 With reference to BS5837:2012, a root protection area (RPA) is defined as a 'layout design tool indicating the minimum area around a tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability, and where the protection of the roots and soil structure should be treated as a priority' (BS:5837:2012 p.4 para. 3.7). The default position, when considering design layout in relation to RPAs, should be that structures are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained.
- 3.3 BS5837:2012 states (p.11 para. 4.6.2) that, 'Where pre-existing site conditions or other factors indicate that rooting has occurred asymmetrically, a polygon of equivalent area should be produced'. The BS goes on to state that 'Modifications to the shape of the RPA should reflect a soundly based arboricultural assessment of likely root distribution'. Any deviation from the original circular plot should consider:
 - morphology and disposition of roots;
 - topography and drainage;
 - soil type and structure; and
 - the likely tolerance of the tree to root disturbance or damage, based on factors such as species, age, condition and past management (BS: 5837:2012 p 11, para 4.6.3).
- 3.4 Root systems can be damaged in several ways as follows:
 - Severance of a root will destroy all parts of the root beyond that point. The larger the root severed, the greater the impact on the

tree. If roots are damaged close to the trunk, the anchorage and stability of the tree can be affected;

- The root bark protects the root from decay and is also essential for further root growth. If damage to the bark extends around the whole circumference, the root beyond that point will be killed;
- Soil compaction, which may occur from storage of material or passage of heavy equipment over the root area, can restrict and even prevent gaseous diffusion through the soil, and thereby asphyxiate the roots. The roots must have oxygen for survival, growth and effective functioning;
- Lowering the soil level will strip out the mass of roots near the surface;
- Raising soil levels will have the same effect as soil compaction;
- Incorrect selection and application of herbicide; and
- Spillage of oils or other harmful materials.
- 3.5 Above ground constraints posed by trees describe the capacity for trees to have an overbearing or dominating effect on new developments. Typical above ground constraints include a number or combination of inconveniences including shading, branch spread, movement of trees during strong winds and so on. If not adequately considered, above ground constraints can lead to repeated requests to fell or heavily prune retained and protected trees.
- 3.6 The colour-coded categorisation of tree quality is also shown on the tree survey plan.

4.0 NEXT STAGE

Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) - Stage 2

4.1 Once a design is in place, an arboricultural impact assessment will be required to assess the impacts of the proposals on the existing arboricultural resource. The AIA will identify which survey items are to be removed due to existing structural and physiological condition, that are to be removed due to the development proposals, and which survey items will be retained.

Arboricultural method Statement (AMS) - Stage 3

4.2 Once the design is finalised and before construction takes place, an arboricultural method statement should be compiled detailing the location and nature of protection measures, including protection barriers, signage and ground protection (temporary and permanent). All site operative must be made aware of the nature of the protection set out in the AMS and should remain in place throughout construction.

5.0 SUMMARY

- 5.1 The site currently comprises of an existing Farmhouse with associated farm buildings, outbuildings and ménage area with gravel parking. There are several fields which contain horse jumps and other associated horsiculture infrastructure. Vegetation is confined to the area immediately surrounding the existing farmhouse and around the boundaries of the existing fields that make up the site area. The entire northern boundary is defined by the edge of Clay Copse which is designated as Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland.
- 5.2 In total 21 items were surveyed. 1 surveyed item was considered to be high quality, 9 surveyed items were considered to be moderate quality, 11 surveyed items were considered to be low quality. No items were considered to be unsuitable for retention with an anticipated useful life expectancy of less than 10 years.
- 5.3 Any future development proposals on the site should be designed with a view to the preliminary tree constraints that are illustrated on the Tree Survey Plan. The Project Arboriculturist should provide input to the on-going review of layout and landscape drawings.

APPENDIX 1 – TREE SURVEY SCHEDULE

	Species	Ht. (m)	Stem					Crown Spread (m)				ad (m))					
Ref no.			Stem Count	Stem dia. (mm)	RPA radius	RPA area	Category Grading	Ν	E	S	w	Ht. 1st Br. (m) Est. 1st Direc	Br. Ht. Can. s	Life tage	ULE Physiological Condition	Structural Condition and Notes	Management Recommendations	
H1	Cypress hedge	3.5	1	50	0.6	1	C2		As shown			N/A	0.0	м	10+	Fair	Garden hedge, managed. Typical of age and species.	None at time of survey
G2	Hawthorn, brambles, elm, field maple, laurel,	8.0	1	100	1.2	5	C2		As shown			N/A	0.5	М	10+	Fair	Group of vegetation aligning farmyard curtilage, between road and paddocks. Poor quality. Ivy throughout.	None at time of survey
G3	Laurel, ash, brambles, apple,	9.0	1	90	1.1	4	C2		As shown			N/A	0.5	М	10+	Fair	Area of vegetation with mature ash in middle. Dense and unable to access.	None at time of survey
G4	Cypress, ash, elm, bramble	5-12	1	100	1.2	5	C2	As shown				N/A	0.5	М	10+	Fair	Group of mixed vegetation aligning the site boundary to the south. Dead elms, brambles, conifers.	None at time of survey
T5	Ash (Common)	13.0	1	450	5.4	92	B1	As shown				N/A	4.5	м	20+	Good	Unable to access base. Tall tree within vegetated group. Good shape.	None at time of survey
T6	Apple	7.0	1	460	5.5	96	B1	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	N/A	1.5	М	20+	Good	Large tree in lawn area. Typical of age and species. Good dense canopy. Several small cavities, minor deadwood.	None at time of survey
T7	Apple	3.0	2	212	2.5	20	C1	3.5	3.0	1.0	2.0	N/A	1.5	м	10+	Fair	In lawn area, typical of age and species. Several cavities, at base and in stem. Twin stem, minor deadwood.	None at time of survey
H8	Cypress hedge, privet	3.0	1	50	0.6	1	C2		As shown		1	N/A	0.5	М	10+	Fair	Managed garden hedge adjacent farmhouse area. Brambles at base. Two cypress sections and privet in middle.	None at time of survey
Т9	Oak (English)	23.0	1	1000	12.0	452	A1	11.0	12.0	12.0	11.0	N/A	4.0	м	40+	Good	Unable to access base. Located within mature hedge. Ivy on stem and into canopy. Large spreading tree, good shape, typical of age and species. Minor deadwood.	None at time of survey
G10	Oak, ash, elm, blackthom, brambles, apple, cherry, field maple, willow, blackthom	10.0	1	300	3.6	41	B2		As shown		N/A	0.5	М	20+	Fair	Forms sites southem boundary. Typical roadside vegetation.	None at time of survey	
G11	Blackthorn, bramble, hawthorn,	5.0	1	75	0.9	3	C2	As shown		N/A	0.0	М	10+	Fair	Area of blackthorn at edge of horse paddock. Typical of age and species.	None at time of survey		
G12	Oak, ash	12.0	1	300	3.6	41	C2	As shown			N/A	0.0	м	10+	Fair	One oak one ash tree. Ivy on oak stem, located within vegetated group. Unable to access base. Ash suppressed by oak, deadwood in canopy. Minor deadwood at extremities in oak canopy.	None at time of survey	
G13	Oak (English)	12.0	1	430	5.2	84	B2	7.0	7.0	7.0	9.0	N/A	3.0	М	10+	Fair	Two oak trees in hedge. Ivy on stems, southern oak suppressed. Minor deadwood. Typical of age and species. Abscised branches on northern tree. Southern tree with cavity at base site side. Barbed wire grown into stem, exposed heartwood on site side. Metal railings at base.	None at time of survey
W14	Sweet chestnut, field maple, ash, oak, blackthom	18.0	1	700	8.4	222	B2		As shown		N/A	3.0	м	20+	Good	Woodland area. Horse jumps within woodland. Several access points for horse jumps. Several trees need removing at edge of woodland.	None at time of survey	
W15	Oak, ash, hawthorn, blackthorn,	18.0	1	700	8.4	222	B2		As shown			N/A	2.0	М	20+	Good	Woodland area. Horse jumps in woodland. Horse paddock adjacent. Good structure and density.	None at time of survey
T16	Ash (Common)	9.0	1	250	3.0	28	B1	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	N/A	1.5	М	20+	Fair	Comer of garden area adjacent ménage. Good shape. Typical of age and species. Ivy on stem. Unable to access base.	None at time of survey
T17	Oak (English)	9.0	1	200	2.4	18	B1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	N/A	1.5	М	20+	Fair	In garden area, unable to access base. Good shape. Typical of age and species.	None at time of survey
T18	Ash (Common)	11.0	1	175	2.1	14	B1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	N/A	2.5	М	20+	Fair	In garden. Typical of age and species.	None at time of survey
T19	Cypress	10.0	1	200	2.4	18	C1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	N/A	2.5	М	10+	Fair	Within garden hedge. Suppressed by adjacent ash. Poor quality.	None at time of survey
H20	Privet	2.0	1	50	0.6	1	C2		As s	shown	-	N/A	0.5	М	10+	Fair	Garden hedge with brambles and ivy.	None at time of survey
H21	Cypress	2.0	1	50	0.6	1	C2		As s	shown		N/A	0.5	М	10+	Fair	Boundary cypress hedge. Managed.	None at time of survey

APPENDIX 2 – TREE SURVEY PLAN

Arboricultural Development Statement

KEY - BS 5837 : 2012 Categories

Tree Category A - High Quality 0

- A Category Hedgerow, Group, Woodland
- Tree Category B Moderate Quality
- B Category Hedgerow, Group, Woodland
- Tree Category C Low Quality

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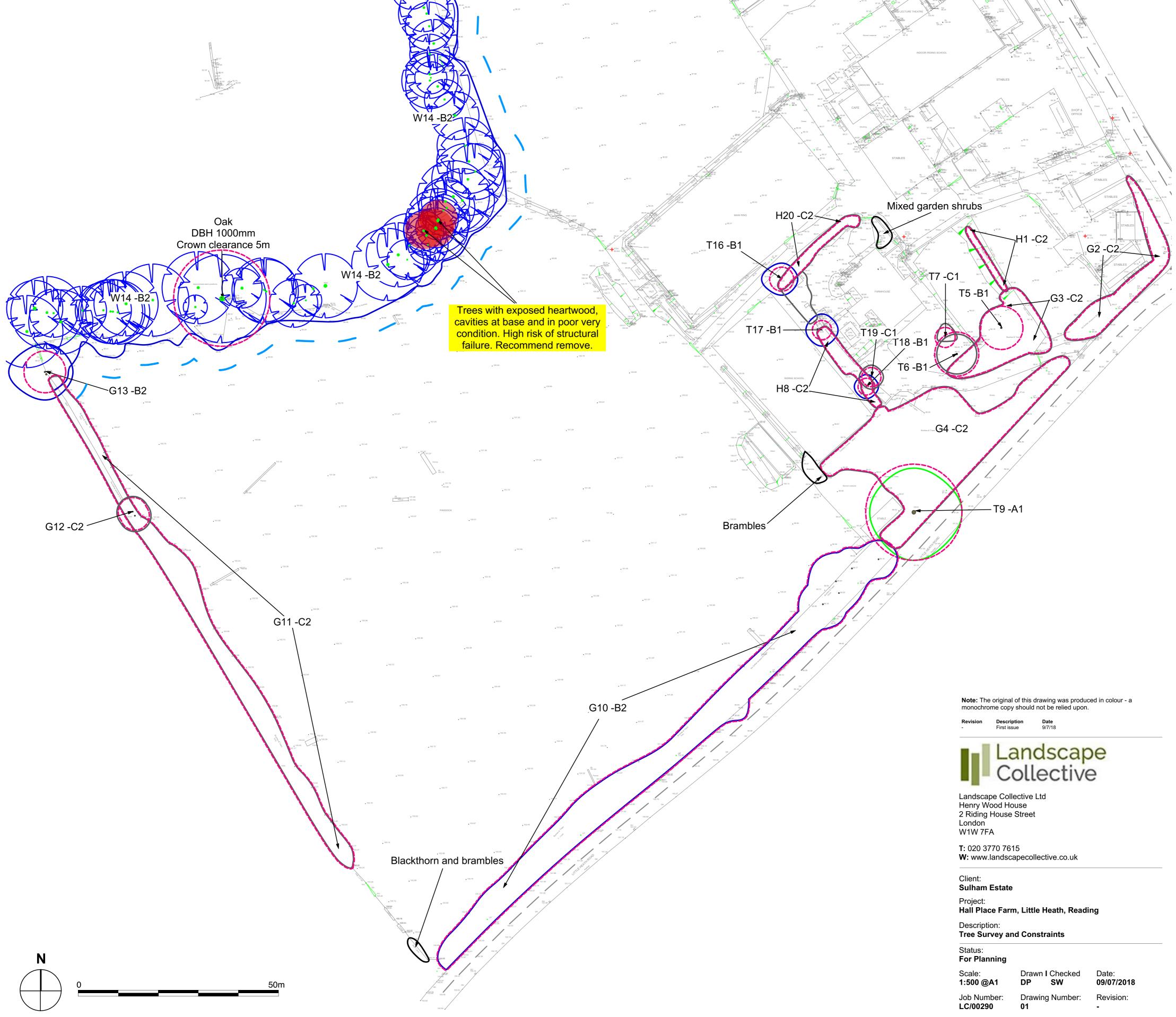
- C Category Hedgerow, Group, Woodland
- Tree Category U Unsuitable for Retention

W15 -B2

W15 -B2

- Root Protection Area to BS:5837:2012
- Shrub Mass / Offsite Tree
- Ancient Woodland Buffer -5m from canopy edge

0



,H21 -C2

APPENDIX 3 – METHODOLOGY

- 1.1 The tree survey was carried out with reference to the methodology set out in BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations'. Trees were not tagged.
- 1.2 Trees were surveyed individually or as groups where it was considered that they had grown together to form cohesive arboricultural features either aerodynamically (trees that provide companion shelter), visually (e.g. avenues or screens) or culturally (including for biodiversity). However, where it was considered that there was an arboricultural need to differentiate between attributes trees within groups/woodlands were also surveyed as individuals
- 1.3 Tree survey findings are recorded in the tree survey schedule.
- 1.4 Within the tree survey schedule, each surveyed tree (T), hedgerow (H), group (G), woodland (W) on or adjacent to the site is given a reference number which refers to its position on the tree survey plan.
- 1.5 Also shown on the tree survey plan are quality grading and preliminary tree constraints: root protection areas.
- 1.6 <u>Tree species:</u> listed by common name.
- 1.7 <u>Heights:</u> measured in metres. They are recorded to the nearest half metre for dimensions up to 10m and to the nearest whole metre for dimensions over 10m.
- 1.8 <u>Trunk diameters:</u> measured in millimetres and are rounded to the nearest 10mm. Single stemmed tree diameters are measured at 1.5m above ground level or, where a fork or swelling makes this impractical, at the narrowest point beneath. Diameters of multi-stemmed trees are calculated as 'combined stem diameters' according to specific guidance set out within BS5837:2012 (p.10, para 4.6.1 a and b).
- 1.9 <u>Crown spreads</u>: taken at the four cardinal points to derive an accurate representation of the tree crown. They are recorded up to the nearest half metre for dimensions up to 10m and to up the nearest whole metre for dimensions over 10m. For trees assessed as groups or woodland, an

estimated mean radial crown spread in metres is taken for trees at the 80 percentile size.

- 1.10 <u>Crown clearance</u>: expressed both as existing height above ground level of first significant branch along with its direction of growth (e.g. 2.5m-N), and also in terms of the overall canopy. Measurements are recorded to the nearest half metre for dimensions up to 10m and to the nearest whole metre for dimensions over 10m.
- 1.11 <u>Estimates:</u> where any other measurement has had to be estimated, due to inaccessibility for example, this is indicated by a "#" suffix to the measurement as shown in the tree survey schedule.
- 1.12 Life stage:
 - Y young (stake dependent);
 - SM Semi-Mature (still capable of being transplanted without preparation, up to 30cm girth and not yet sexually mature);
 - EM Early Mature (not yet having reached 75% of expected mature size);
 - M Mature (anything else up to normal life expectancy for the species);
 - OM Over Mature (anything beyond mature and in natural decline); and
 - V Veteran (any tree displaying characteristics described by Natural England).
- 1.13 <u>Management Recommendations:</u> recorded in relation to a tree's structural and/or physiological condition (e.g. the presence of any decay and physical defect) and /or any preliminary management recommendations that may be appropriate. This is NOT intended to comprise a specification for tree work; further advice should be sought prior to implementation. Trees

assessed as being in apparently immediately hazardous condition will be notified to the client separately as soon as practical.

1.14 *Physiological condition:*

- Good (Generally in healthy condition. No indications of impaired physiological function and in optimum condition for age and species);
- Fair (Condition satisfactory though below mean species performance, with indicators of reduced vitality. Some intervention may be required);
- Poor (Tree in decline/retrenching, with significantly impaired physiological function for age and species); and
- Dead (self-explanatory).
- 1.15 The above are informed by the following;
 - Leaf size and colouration unless otherwise state, leaf size and colouration is typical of the age and species; and
 - Canopy density unless otherwise stated, the canopy density of trees is typical of the age and species.

1.16 <u>Structural Condition & Notes:</u>

- Good (without any observable significant biomechanical structural weaknesses);
- Fair (with minor biomechanical structural flaws. Some remedial action may be required); and
- Poor (with significant biomechanical weaknesses requiring intervention particularly where risk management is required).
- 1.17 Notes on the apparent structural integrity of the tree are based upon visual tree assessment, including notes on form, taper, forking habit, storm damage, wood decaying fungi, pests and disease etc. plus other pertinent observations.

- 1.18 <u>Anticipated useful life expectancy (ULE)</u>: the length of time a tree is estimated to be able to make a safe useful contribution to local amenity is expressed in years as: <10, 10+, 20+, 40+.
- 1.19 <u>Category Grading</u>: individual trees, hedgerows, groups of trees, and woodlands are assessed in terms of quality and benefit within the context of proposed development and graded into one of four categories (U, A, B, and C) which are differentiated on the tree survey plan (Appendix 3) plan by the colours indicated below:

Category U (Red)

1.20 Unsuitable for retention. Trees in such a poor condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years.

Retention Implications to a site

1.21 Not a material consideration in the planning process but may have other benefits i.e. ecological benefits/importance.

Category A (Green)

1.22 Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of 40 years.

Retention Implications to a site

1.23 Tree should be retained and amendments to a proposed scheme should be identified in preference to tree removal.

Category B (Blue)

1.24 Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years.

Retention Implications to a site

1.25 Where possible amendments to a proposed scheme should be considered in preference to tree removal.

Category C (Grey)

1.26 Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150mm.

Retention Implications to a site

- 1.27 The retention of trees may be advantageous in the short term, but they should not be seen as a constraint to development.
- 1.28 A, B and C trees have also been given a sub-category of 1, 2 or 3 which reflects their arboricultural, landscape or cultural and conservation values respectively. Each subcategory has an equal weight, for example an A1 tree has the same retention priority as an A3 tree.
- 1.29 Trees have been assigned 'U' or category grading A-C in accordance with the cascade chart given in BS: 5837:2012.
- 1.30 In addition to the category, the tree survey schedule also describes each tree's root protection area (RPA) in terms of radius (metres) and overall area (sq metres).

Limitations

1.31 This report has been undertaken in compliance with BS: 5837:2012 and is not intended to be a tree safety survey. This report is prepared for planning application purposes only and does not evaluate the degree of risk posed by trees. Any notes offered regarding structural integrity of trees are to be considered incidental. Our recommendations given for immediate intervention should be put in the hand of the owner/site manager as soon as reasonably practicable.

- 1.32 Trees are dynamic living organisms as well as self-supporting dynamic structures, capable of achieving considerable size and structural complexity. Their physiological and structural condition can change rapidly in response to a wide range of biotic/abiotic factors. They are exposed to and can become damaged by the elements and by human activity, and have co-evolved with decay causing organisms that can degrade and sometimes destroy their structural integrity. The laws and forces of nature dictate a natural failure rate even among trees that appear healthy and structurally sound. They therefore have the potential to fail structurally, without prior manifestation of any reasonably observable symptoms. By their very nature, therefore, it is not possible to categorically state that any tree is 'safe' or hazard free. Tree surveys and/ or tree inspections are inherently a snap shot in time of the structural and physiological conditions of the trees concerned.
- 1.33 It is beyond the scope of this report to comment in relation to structural damage – direct or indirect, existing or potential – that might be associated with vegetation growth, or vegetation-related soil subsidence or heave.
- 1.34 Unless otherwise stated, all such surveys/inspections are undertaken from ground level and no internal inspections or tests have been undertaken.
- 1.35 Any management recommendations set out within this report are of an advisory and preliminary nature only and relate to trees within the context of current site use.
- 1.36 The findings and recommendations of this report should be considered time-limited for planning purposes to a maximum of 24 months from the date of this report (absent revisions of BS5837, which render pre existing data obsolete).