

Arboricultural Note

Project: Bengo Nursery (ARB9392)

Preliminary Arboricultural Appraisal

December 2016

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Aspect Arboriculture received instruction on behalf of Kler Group to undertake an appraisal of the existing trees at the above site, and to identify the principal constraints and opportunities in the context of the site's promotion within East Herts District Council's local plan.
- 1.2. The principal constraints have been identified during an objective study using the principals set out within BS5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations*. By highlighting the principal arboricultural features of the site at an early stage, the study seeks to establish baseline conditions to assist in the Council's consideration for the site's suitability to receive residential development. The distribution and details of the site's important trees are illustrated within the enclosed preliminary Tree Constraints Plan and accompanying schedule (enclosures A & B).

2. Site Description

- 2.1. Located on the northern fringe of Hertford, between Sacombe Road and Wadesmill Road, the site comprises a parcel of land known as Bengo Nursery (totaling an area of circa. 1.7 hectares). With existing access of Sacombe Road, the site features glass houses, a gravel car park and areas of bare ground. The northeast and northwest areas of the site are overgrown with dense scrub and Bramble growth, which has made most of the site inaccessible; access to trees on the north and east boundaries was obtained via public footpaths on adjacent fields.
- 2.2. The site is contained by a perimeter fence and boundary tree cover, comprising intermittent tree groups with the occasional principal/independent feature, and unmaintained field boundary hedgerows. The south and west boundaries, and internal parts of the site feature ornamental buffer plantings, which have reinforced the boundary tree cover and provided diversity to the existing tree stock.
- 2.3. The site falls under the administration of East Herts District Council as the Local Planning Authority; background checks have revealed that there are no Tree Preservation Orders confirmed on the site, and that the site does not fall within a Conservation Area.

3. Appraisal

- 3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) provides planning policy guidance at the National level. In respect to arboriculture, it considers that '*planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration or 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*'. (para. 118).
- 3.2. At a local level, It is understood that the Council's primary development control document which relates to trees is the current adopted Local Plan (2007). Within which, Policy ENV11 *Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees*, refers to the consideration of existing tree cover and the Council's requirement for the maximum retention possible, and where required their preference for broadleaf replacement planting. In relation to the tests embedded within this policy and within the context of development, the council requires developers to consider existing trees with the presumption that those of amenity value will be retained and protected, and any necessary removals will be satisfactorily mitigated for.
- 3.3. This appraisal seeks to outline the tree stock in relation to these policy requirements; providing a summary of the trees present and their associated opportunities and constraints to a potential future development.
- 3.4. **Priority Tree Cover:** The Principal arboricultural constraints comprise one independant tree that is considered to be of quality veteran potential and a number of moderate quality trees & tree groups that are sited on the site boundaries (BS5837:2012 category A & B). Those on the northern and eastern boundary are located offsite and are presumed to be under third party ownership.
- 3.5. Category A tree cover: T7 Hornbeam, is located offsite on the site's eastern boundary and is considered to be of quality veteran potential. Although the majority of the tree's structure is covered in dense Ivy, which prevented a thorough inspection, the tree appeared to be formed by two boles which have fused together and formed a single feature; measuring 1230mm in diameter at breast height (over Ivy), T7 is considered to be a remarkable size for the species. At circa. 2.5m the tree forks and forms multiple leaders; this union is consistent in appearance with that of a lapsed pollard, suggesting the tree has been exposed to stages of past management. The presence of multiple cavities and pockets of decay within the bole & scaffold structure also contribute to the veteran characteristics of the tree, but in turn have rendered the structural condition to be considered hazardous.
- 3.6. On the basis of its veteran features, T7 is considered an aged tree and is afforded special consideration under the NPPF (2012), and should be considered a priority for retention within a future development. However, irrespective of future development, to reduce the risk of failure and to ensure the tree's long-term retention, it is recommended that the duty holder considers entering T7 into a staged regime of retrenchment pruning.

- 3.7. Category B tree cover: The site's western boundary is defined by G1, which comprises remnants of a field boundary hedgerow, reinforced with additional ornamental plantings; the group forms a boundary screen which filters views from the adjacent residential dwellings and provides separation from Sacombe Road. By this virtue and as a collection, these trees are considered to be of moderate arboricultural quality and capable of contributing to the future amenity of the site.
- 3.8. T1, T5 Sycamore and T6 English Oak, are worthy of individual distinction, located offsite and are considered to be moderate quality components of the site's boundary tree cover. Displaying partially impaired, structural or physiological condition (which deterred their consideration for a higher category) they each provide structure to the boundaries and offer important contributions to the site's amenity.
- 3.9. G4, is a parcel of 3no. early mature Scots Pine, positioned within the eastern extent of the existing gravel car park. Although these trees have been exposed to compaction through car park traffic, they are each well established and form a balanced structure which is considered typical for the species. As a collection they represent moderate arboricultural quality and contribute to the internal amenity of the site.
- 3.10. Category U tree cover: Three offsite trees positioned on the site's northern boundary are considered unsuitable for retention regardless of promoting the site for development. T2 Ash and T3 Sycamore, both feature a significant amount of decay within large basal cavities. As such, their early loss is anticipated through structural failure. T4 Lime, has significant dieback within the upper canopy and is considered to be in a state of terminal decline.
- 3.11. Category C tree cover: All remaining tree cover identified on the site and its boundaries is considered to represent generally unremarkable examples of its type i.e.: trees that demonstrate compromised structure, signs of stress; trees of indifferent structural and physiological appearance for the site's context, and those providing limited or transient benefits which may be readily replaced. This includes trees that are not conferred a higher value when present in numbers.
- 3.12. To assist with the interpretation of the site plans, a selection of photo sheets showing the site's principal tree cover and category U trees is attached within enclosure C.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 4.1. Preliminary appraisal of the existing trees has identified a number of important arboricultural constraints across the site. It is Aspect's opinion that, should the site be brought forward for adoption, then future proposals would have to demonstrate particular consideration for the category A and B trees identified within this appraisal.
- 4.2. It is reasonable to expect some tree loss will be required to balance the demands placed upon the site, it is our opinion that this could be readily concentrated on the lower quality components of the site's tree cover, subject to appropriate mitigation planting.

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- 4.3. It is our subsequent opinion that sympathetic design would enable the integration of important trees and mitigation for low quality removals, in accordance with the NPPF (2012) and East Herts District Council's Policy ENV11 *Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees*. The principal of promoting the above site for residential development is therefore considered supportable from the arboricultural perspective and in terms of national and local planning policy where it relates to trees.
- 4.4. Technical confidence for the delivery of development to the site could be readily demonstrated by further arboricultural work to accompany a future planning application. This work would realistically comprise a detailed arboricultural survey, scaled tree constraints plan, design input and a standalone arboricultural impact assessment document.

Enclosures

- A: Preliminary Tree Survey Schedule (9392 TS 01)
- B: Preliminary Tree Constraints Plan (9392 TCP 01)
- C: Photo Sheets (9392 PS 01 - 03)

Enclosure A: Preliminary Tree Survey Schedule (9392 TS 01)

BS 5837:2012 Tree Schedule: Bengo Nursery

BS5837:2012 Tree Survey: Explanation of Survey Criteria

Tree Number	Common Species Name	Trunk Diameter (mm)	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m)					Crown Clearance (m)	Life Stage	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Comments	BS5837 Category	RPA Radius (m)
				N	E	S	W	radial							

Sequential reference number cited on all aspect drawing.

e.g.: young, semi-mature, early-mature, mature or over-mature

*Area around tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability, and where the protection of roots and soil structure is a priority. *The RPA has been manipulated to allow for various site features, i.e. roads, structures or changes in levels. Please refer to the Tree Constraints Plan for these changes.*

Height and Crown spread measured to the nearest half meter; # denotes where this is estimated.

Category prefix A-C denotes arboricultural quality, decreasing from A (high) to C (low); Subcategories 1, 2 and 3 highlight associated arboricultural (1), landscape (2) and ecological (3) qualities.

Category U trees are those in such a condition that they cannot be realistically retained as living trees in the current context for the long term.

Measured to the nearest 10mm; # denotes estimated diameter where access is not possible.

e.g.: above-average, average, below average or dead

General observations, i.e. defects, preliminary management recommendation, presence of pests/disease, perceived significance.

Height of first significant branch and/or canopy

e.g.: good, indifferent, poor, or hazardous

Colour band key:

- Category A
- Category B
- Category C
- Category U

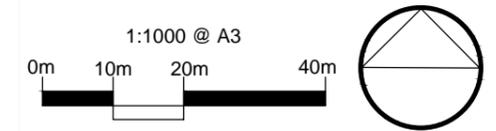
The following survey should not be interpreted as a report on tree health and safety. Aspect's opinion of tree condition and structural potential is valid for a limited period of 12 months from the date of inspection. Validity is assumed in the absence of inclement weather and no change to the trees existing setting.

Tree Number	Common Species Name	Trunk Diameter (mm)	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m)					First Significant Branch (m)	Crown Clearance (m)	Life Stage	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Comments	BS5837 Category	RPA Radius (m)
				N	E	S	W	Radial								
1	Sycamore	850	16m	7#	8#	8#	5#		3.5	3	Mature	Average	Poor	Offsite Cladded in Ivy Impact wound at the base to the east, exposed heartwood with decay present Canopy predominately forms to the east due to suppression from adjacent tree cover Moderate quality	B2	10.2
2	Ash	970	16m	8#	10#	8#	9#		4.5	3	Mature	Average	Indifferent	Offsite Significant cavity at the base to the north with extensive decay present within the cavity, the buttress roots and extending up the trunk to a failed stem at c. 9m Lower scaffold is cladded in Ivy obscuring views from the south Anticipating early loss through structural failure	U	N/A
3	Sycamore	890	14m	7	2	7	7		3	3	Mature	Average	Poor	Offsite Single stem Canopy is cohesive with T4 and predominately forms to the west Significant cavity at the base to the south west with exposed heartwood and decay Large diameter lower limbs have been removed, now partially occluded over decaying stubs Unlikely to maintain its contribution in the long-term	U	N/A
4	Common Lime	700#	13m	7	6.5	6	3.5		3	1	Mature	Below Average	Poor	Significant dieback within the upper crown Base inaccessible due to established basal epicormic growth Considered to be a state of terminal decline	U	N/A
5	Sycamore	580	14m					6	3	3	Early Mature	Average	Indifferent	Single stem Balanced scaffold structure Radial canopy Levels around the base of the tree appear to have been built up Moderate example of the species	B12	6.9
6	English Oak	900#	10m					8	3	3	Mature	Average	Poor	Squat canopy Trunk cladded in Ivy Levels around the base of the tree appear to have been built up Moderate quality	B2	10.8
7	Hornbeam	1230 oi	14m					8.5	2.5	2	Veteran	Average	Hazardous	Base and scaffold structure is densely covered in Ivy Appears to be 2no. boles that have fused and appears to have been previously pollarded at c.2.5m Now has 5no. co-dominant stems from a main union at c.2.5m Pollard union is likely to be poor with cavities and pockets of decay present Limited amenity value but considered to be of Veteran potential Recommend reinstating the tree within a regime of repollarding to enable its long term retention	A3	15

Tree Number	Common Species Name	Trunk Diameter (mm)	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m)					First Significant Branch (m)	Crown Clearance (m)	Life Stage	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Comments	BS5837 Category	RPA Radius (m)
				N	E	S	W	Radial								
8	English Oak	300 2 * 240	10m					5.5	2	2	Early Mature	Average	Poor	Multi-stemmed from the base Cladded in Ivy Unremarkable example of the species	C1	5.4
G1	Field Maple White beam Red Oak Weeping Willow Hawthorn	400# max	9m max					5 av	1.75 av	2 av	Semi Mature to Early Mature	Average	Indifferent	Boundary tree cover comprising remnants of a former field boundary hedgerow buffered with additional ornamental plantings Cohesive canopies Structures appear typical for the species Filters views of the adjacent residential development to the west of Sacombe Road Moderate quality collection	B2	4.8
G2	Ash Holly Sycamore	350# max	9m max					5 max	1.5 av	1.5 av	Early Mature	Average	Indifferent	Tree cover that has outgrown companions within H2 Unremarkable examples of the species Contributes to a boundary screen	C1	4.2
G3	Sycamore Field Maple	350# max	12m max					5 max	2 av	2 av	Early Mature	Average	Indifferent	Parcels of established Sycamore and Field Maple that have outgrown companions within H3 Unremarkable example of the species Contributes to a boundary screen	C1	4.2
G4	Scots Pine	390 max	9m max					3 av	4 av	3 av	Early Mature	Average	Indifferent	3no. early mature Scots Pine Ornamental car park features Structures are typical for the species Slightly squat form Collectively considered to be of moderate arboricultural quality	B2	4.8
G5	Rowan Swedish White Beam Field Maple Hawthorn Scots Pine Elder	6*100 max 250 av	4m to 10m					4 max 2.5 av	1 av	1 av	Young to Semi Mature	Below Average to Average	Indifferent	Intermittent young to semi mature ornamental plantings with occasional remnants of a hedgerow Low quality screen Readily replaced	C12	3
G6	Crack Willow Buddleia Silver Birch	<75	3m max					1.5 av	0.5 av	0.5 av	Young	Average	Indifferent	Internal self-set components colonising areas of bare ground Densely overgrown with Brambles	N/A	N/A
H1	Laurel	<75	1.5m max					0.5 av	0.5 av	0.5 av	Young	Average	Indifferent	Internal ornamental hedging defining the car park layout Readily replaced	N/A	N/A
H2	Hawthorn Ash Field Maple Blackthorn Hazel Sycamore	200# max	7m max					3 av	0.5 av	1 av	Early Mature	Average	Indifferent	Offsite Unmaintained field boundary hedgerow	C12	2.4
H3	Hawthorn Field Maple Blackthorn Sycamore Elm Elder	180# max	7m max					2.5 av	0.5 av	0.5 av	Semi Mature to Early Mature	Average	Poor	Offsite Unmaintained field boundary hedgerow Parcels of established Sycamore within	C12	2.1

Tree Number	Common Species Name	Trunk Diameter (mm)	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m)					First Significant Branch (m)	Crown Clearance (m)	Life Stage	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Comments	BS5837 Category	RPA Radius (m)
				N	E	S	W	Radial								
H4	Sycamore Hawthorn Elder	100 max	3m max					1 av	0.5 av	0.5 av	Semi Mature to Early Mature	Average	Indifferent	Offsite Maintained hedgerow Cladded in Ivy	C12	1.2

Enclosure B: Preliminary Tree Constraints Plan (9392 TCP 01)



KEY:

- Tree Numbers
- Tree Canopies
- Category 'U' Trees
- Category 'A' RPA
- Category 'B' RPA
- Category 'C' RPA
- Shading Arc

Note: No topographical survey available, all tree, group and hedgerow locations have been approximated using a scaled aerial photograph. In addition to this the location of the existing kerb-edge along Sacombe Road has also been approximated using an aerial photograph.

G6

Species: Crack Willow, Buddleia and Silver Birch
DBH: <75mm
Height: 3m max
Canopy Spread: 1.5m average

Internal self set components colonising areas of bare ground. Densely overgrown with Brambles.

REV	DATE	NOTE	Drawn	Chk'd



TITLE
**Bengeo Nursery
 Preliminary Tree Constraints Plan**

CLIENT
Cerda Planning

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN
1:1000 @ A3	DEC 2016	GW
DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION	
9392 TCP 01		

Based on aerial photograph cited from Bing Maps

Enclosure C: Photo Sheets (9392 PS 01 - 03)



T2 (Ash) - Category U - Located on northern boundary



T3 (Sycamore) - Category U - Located on northern boundary



T5 (Sycamore) - Category B - Located on northern boundary



T4 (Common Lime) - Category U, T3 (Sycamore) Category U - Located on northern boundary



G4 (Scots Pine) - Category B - Located on eastern edge of existing car park



T7 (Hornbeam) - Category A - Located on eastern boundary

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