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QA: HCK 13.07.22

masterplanning ■
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VIA EMAIL: helen.bareford@dwh.co.uk

13th July 2022

Dear Helen

Improvement works at Barkby Road Crossroads, Queniborough

Following a review of the Arboricultural Report prepared by David C Dowson of Tree Life Arboricultural Consultancy Limited, dated 24th June 2022 please find within this letter my comments to address critical points raised.

2.0 Summary of Opinion, states:

2.1 The report compiled by FPCR on behalf of David Wilson homes is not fit for purpose and therefore should be unacceptable to the Local Planning Authority as an appropriate document. This is because it does not identify the actual impacts on trees or specify how the retained trees will be fully protected from damage.

This statement is considered to be false for the following reasons: the report has been prepared to address the comments of the LPA officer and provide information, so she is able to make an informed decision. No previous arboricultural information had been received to aid in this process and therefore the report provides this adequately.

4.0 states:

Requirements of the British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations' and which should be followed by FPCR.

It is important to understand that the British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations thus are not requirements. The execution of its provisions are entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people and the guidance is to be applied appropriately depending on the situation. The report prepared by FPCR has been carried out by an appropriately qualified and experienced arboriculturist and has applied the guidance contained within the Standard appropriately, forming recommendations on the level of impact and how to manage the trees appropriately during the works.

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Below are the concluding points raised by the Tree Life report (in italics) along with a comment to address each one (in bold).

- a) *'The report states that the site is in Rugby as opposed to Queniborough, Leicestershire.'*
This is clearly a typo and has no bearing on the content of or outcomes of the findings of the report as the same address without the inclusion of Rugby is provided within para 1.9.
- b) *'The tree survey data collection is not in accordance with BS5837, the report having stated that it is.'*
As stated above, the British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations thus are not requirements and are to be applied appropriately to the task or situation. The tree survey data is sufficient and relevant to the task. It provides the necessary information for the LPA officer to form an opinion. Whilst it is noted there is a difference in references such as 'diameter at breast height' and 'Age Class' and certain aspects have not been recorded these do not have a bearing on the outcome of the report.
- c) *'Many of the RPA's have been incorrectly calculated.'*
The stem diameters have been measured using tree callipers and a diameter tape to provide an accurate measurement. The root protection area has then been calculated in accordance with BS5837 to provide the RPA. There is no evidence provided as to which trees have been incorrectly measured and no evidence to suggest that the site has been visited by David, so it is not possible for me to check this statement and provide a further response. In any situation, if accurate stem diameters have been recorded, then it is not necessary to round them up or down in accordance with Annex D of BS5837, which is what I assume David's comments refer to when he claims the RPA's have been incorrectly calculated.
- d) *'The impact assessment does not identify the actual impacts of the highway widening on trees therefore, it also does not assess the impacts as required by BS5837.'*
The impact assessment describes the required encroachment of the highway widening into the existing grass verge. Due to the minimal extent of encroachment into existing soft landscape, actual impacts are not considered great enough to detail. Photographs have been provided to illustrate the approximate encroachment in relation to the setting. The impact assessment has therefore assessed the impacts proportionately to the situation, adequately enough to inform the LPA.
- e) *'The impact of any pruning (crown lifting) is not stated.'*
Crown lifting may be required depending on the exact location of tree protection fencing, the extent of any works would be confirmed on site by the appointed Arboricultural Clerk of Works if the proposals are approved. Due to the roadside location of the trees and typical management regime any crown raising works will not impact on the health or amenity value of the trees.
- f) *'The Method Statement is not site specific, is confusing to understand and does not do the job it needs to in demonstrating how the retained trees will be protected during the road widening.'*
The method statement provides a clear timeline of events for protection and construction within Table 4. The Tree Protection Plan which forms part of the method statement and is referenced provides site specific information for protection measures to be implemented during the proposed works. This includes the position of fencing with measurements and annotations, extent of areas to be constructed under supervision with a clearly defined key.
- g) *'Protective fencing is only shown as protecting one side of the trees which would allow potentially harmful access to protected areas by construction staff and machinery.'*
The requirement of fencing on all aspects of the trees is not considered necessary as no construction is proposed in these areas. The first stage of any works recommends a Pre-commencement site meeting to allow the review of all protection methods and identify any changes that may be needed. If it was deemed necessary at this point, additional fencing could be implemented.

- h) *'The Tree Protection Plan is incomplete.'*
As stated above fencing has been shown where deemed necessary at this stage. The Tree Protection Plan provides the position of fencing with measurements and annotations, extent of areas to be constructed under supervision and areas of specialised construction with a clearly defined key. Trees beyond T20 are not considered to be within close proximity to the proposed development to an extent that they will be impacted on. The Tree Protection Plan is considered to be complete and fit for purpose.
- i) *'The report does not identify clearly how the widening construction of the highway and pavement will be carried out e.g., at what depth are the kerb/edging stones/pegs going to be installed.'*
Full technical details for the highway construction were not available at the time however this information is not required to inform the report as it has been determined that excavation will occur. Due to the required excavation within potential rooting areas the method statement clearly states that all works will need to be supervised. This is to ensure that the works are undertaken in a controlled manner to minimise any impacts.
- j) *'No indication of level changes and the impact on trees is covered.'*
As stated above. Level changes are indicated by the reference to excavation, further details can be provided if necessary.
- k) *'Consideration has not been given to the likely true distribution of roots which may be more prominent along the edge of the grassed area where widening is to take place.'*
The distribution of rooting material has been considered in relation to the existing setting within the street scene and infrastructure. The true extent of rooting material is not something that could be easily determined due to a number of factors such as the restrictive nature of the setting and number of trees present, what we know is that there will be roots present. The impacts to any rooting material are considered to be minimal due to the small extent of widening and therefore detailed discussion regarding an unknown element is not necessary.
- l) *'Nothing is written in way to respond to the landscape officer's notes related to replacement planting of T.12 if that was removed, or reduction of levels to meet the existing highway.'*
Proposals for suitable replacement of T12 is not considered necessary for the content of this report. Suitable replacement planting should form part of further discussion and agreement with the LPA and likely to be conditioned to any planning approval.
- m) *'The report makes no attempt to demonstrate that the trees can remain viable despite encroaching within RPA's or to demonstrate that the area lost to encroachment can be compensated for elsewhere contiguous with its RPA. Given the limited size of the rooting area it is almost impossible to compensate for the encroachment. No overriding justification is presented for the incursions into the RPA's'*
The very fact that the trees within this report are currently growing within their current setting is evidence that they can remain viable despite the encroachment within rooting areas. The calculated RPA is not a true representation of the actual rooting area for these trees due to the presence of hard infrastructure on two sides however the adjustment to the illustrated RPA is not possible in this scenario and would confuse the situation. The justification is the requirement to implement a highway improvement scheme subject to the approval of a residential development.
- n) *'The report fails to understand that the square meterage of the RPA's must not be reduced.'*
BS5837 does not state that square meterage of RPA's must not be reduced. 7.2.1 states that limited manual excavation within the RPA might be acceptable, subject to justification. In this case the justification is the requirement to implement a highway improvement scheme subject to the approval of a residential development.

It is also considered necessary to address the below point as a matter of clarity.

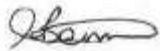
'No qualifications are provided related to the report author.'

This is not a requirement of the British standard, and it is assumed in the preparation of the report that the execution of its provisions is entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people. As a long serving Practice within this sector FPCR employ trained and qualified, and highly experienced arboriculturists. For the avoidance of doubt, I am the author of the FPCR report, with five years practical experience in the arboricultural industry and eight years as a practicing consultant with proven experience in the field of trees and development, and hold the following qualifications:

- **VALID Tree Risk Benefit Assessment & Management Validator**
- **Lantra Accredited Professional Tree Inspector (PTI)**
- **Level 3 AA Technical Certificate in Arboriculture**
- **Level 2 RFS Certificate in Arboriculture**
- **Technician Grade within the Arboricultural Association**

Despite the points raised and expert opinion provided by David Dowson it is concluded that the FPCR report is adequate and fit for purpose. The trees have been assessed using the guidance contained with BS5837 and provides sufficient information to conclude that the impacts of the proposed highway widening works are not significant to the existing trees. The current setting does not provide a harmonious and sustainable relationship between the trees and highway and therefore any works to provide what would be a requirement of a consented residential development, would not be able to improve this. The report therefore provides appropriate recommendations as to how to control construction works during the implementation of the highway improvements and solutions for ensuring the trees can be retained and protected, thus preserving the current amenity value for the surrounding area as far as practically possible.

Yours sincerely



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FPCR is a corporate member of the Arboricultural Association.