

Woodland Assessment Report



For Land to The North of Ethlinden, Crawley Downs

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on 27 November 2024

Introduction

I have been instructed to carry out a Woodland Assessment Report in respect of the proposal for change of use to equestrian, of the land to the North of Ethlinden, Crawley Downs, RH10 4LP. This is in light of the potential impact the change of use may have onto the existing trees and woodland on this site.

This report includes:

1. Woodland survey
2. Woodland Impact Assessment
3. Arboriculture Method Statement
4. Woodland Protection Plan

This Arboricultural Report has been compiled in accordance to British Standards BS 5837 following the review of the existing plans and documents, the Visual Trees Assessment and the completion of relevant site measurements and studies.

The woodland

The current composition of the surrounding woodland includes Silver Birch (*Betula Pendula*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea Sativa*), Beech (*Fagus Sylvatica*), Alder (*Alnus sp.*) Holly (*Ilex sp.*), Goat Willow (*Salix Caprea*), Rowan (*Sorbus Aucuparia*) and some invasive Rhododendron.

The majority of the woodland trees are relatively young with some being semi-mature, and they are likely the result of a plantation on a previous woodland site. The current woodland floor is known to have been lined with the spoil from the nearby lake excavation, and, whilst the trees planted do not have the ecological and historical value of an ancient woodland, they have had a role in the forestation and improvement of the poor quality soil.

The whole site would have been part of **Cuttinglye Wood** several centuries ago, however, the *Land Utilisation Survey 1931-1938* shows the section of the woodland, including this site, being allocated as residential land, See figure 1 below:

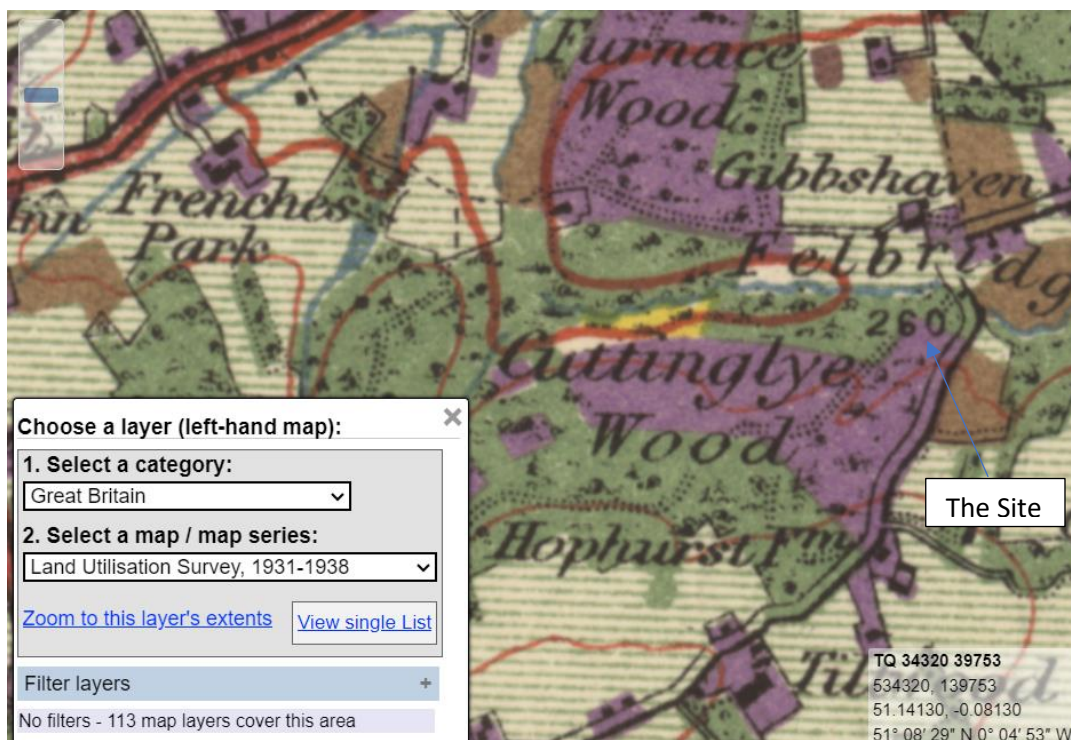


Figure 1. Land utilisation Survey 1931-1938

Woodland Protection Plan

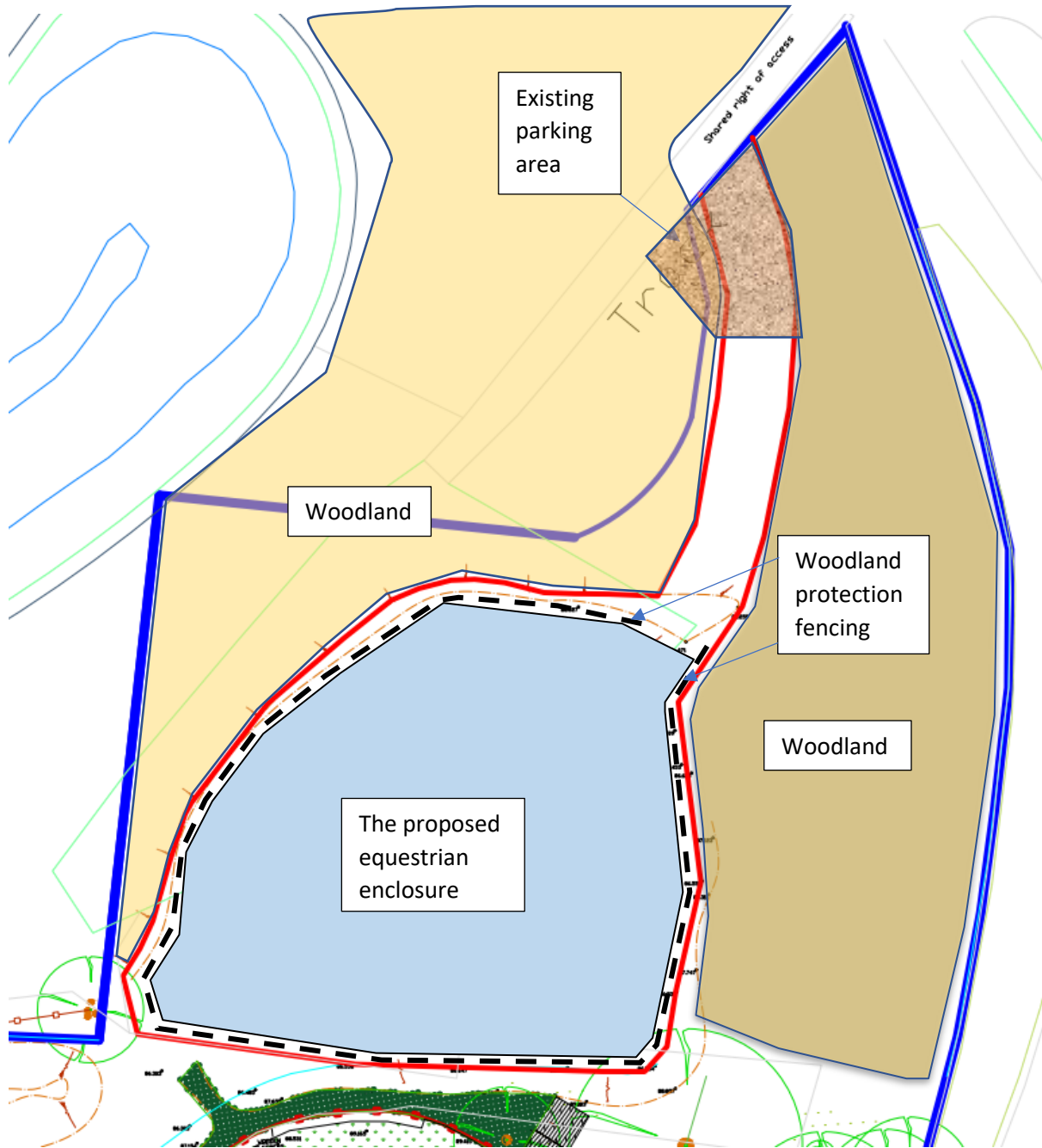


Figure 2. Woodland location and protection plan

Woodland Impact Assessment

In order to assess the impact of the proposed change of use onto the existing woodland, located just outside of this site, I carried out measurements with the help of a tape measure (on the ground) and a clinometer (for the aerial parts of the trees).

British Standards 5837:2012 recommends that the root protection area (RPA) for a single stem tree is calculated as an area equivalent to a circle with a radius of 12 times the stem diameter.

The proposed change of use poses two main concerns from a tree and woodland perspective; firstly the impact on roots due to any *excavations* needed for this change of use, and secondly, the actual impact of the existing trees/woodland onto the proposed equestrian enclosure.

In order to assess the effect of any excavations, onto the existing trees and woodland, I had to discuss the necessary (physical) work to be carried out on site in light of its impact on all Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of all trees within reach.

From a root interference perspective, the only notable impact would be posed by the installation of the enclosure for the proposed equestrian land. This will be in the form of a fence with individual posts (no foundation) and hand installed (no heavy machinery).

The type of fence chosen is known to cause minimal root disturbance as it has no foundations but only posts. Furthermore, the fence will be placed at distances of a minimum of 3-4 metres from existing trees therefore, the posts installed will be outside any of the RPAs of any woodland trees.

Finally, I will also need to address the impact, of the existing woodland, onto the proposed equestrian enclosure. Having no buildings/foundations nor living spaces, any roots or tree crown encroachment can be disregarded.

Considering the likely “residents” of the site, an assessment has been carried out to take into account any tree species which could prove harmful to horses.

The following trees are known to cause harm to horses if they ingest their leaves/fruit/seed: Oak, Maple/Sycamore/Acers, Yew and Laburnum.

None of these trees are found in the current composition of the nearby woodland, however, there are mature Oak trees in the garden of the existing nearby property (owned by the same owner). Whilst these Oak trees do not currently overhang by any noticeable amount, the proposed equestrian enclosure, a further assessment will have to be carried out, and tree pruning if needed, before the first occupation.

Rhododendron is also known as a shrub likely to cause harm to horses when ingested. With this in mind, when considering that Rhododendron is an invasive woodland species and has to be controlled in any case, it will be a win-win situation to fell/remove and treat the stumps of any such shrubs located within a buffer zone of 10 metres or so from the enclosure.

Arboriculture Method Statement

In order to minimise any adverse effect on trees during this project, the following measures will be applied:

1. All neighbouring trees to be adequately protected during construction and other operations in accordance with BS 5837 : 2012 "Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction."
2. Protecting fencing as per *Figure 2* shall be erected prior to any operations on site.
3. The fencing shall not be removed or breached during operations without prior consultation with an Arboricultural specialist and the approval of the Local Authority.
4. Herras Fencing will be securely installed with the help of non invasive supports, and with RPA warning signs attached. This fencing shall be erected in accordance with the drawings in *Figures 2 and 3*.

5. No materials will be stored within the fenced-off area nor within the RPAs of either of trees on this site or its vicinity.
6. Notices should be erected on the fencing with such words as “Protected Area – no operations or materials within the fenced area.”
7. Additional precautions outside the fenced areas should be taken to avoid damage to trees by materials such as cement, oils, bitumen or anything else likely to cause damage to tree roots.

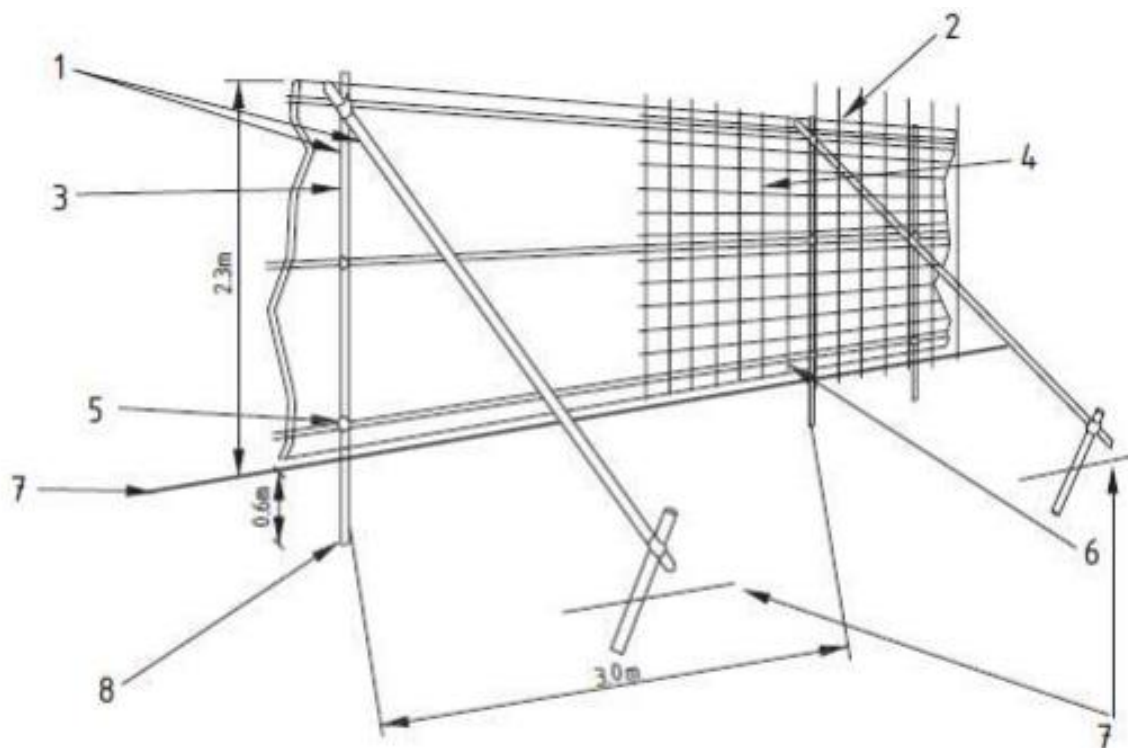


Figure 3. Protecting fencing. 1. Standard scaffold poles - 2. Uprights to be driven into the ground - 3. Panels secured to the uprights by wire ties or scaffold clamps - 4. Weldmesh wired to the uprights and the horizontals - 5. Standard Clamps - 6. Wire twisted and secured on the inside face of fencing to avoid easy dismantling - 7. Ground level - 8. Approx 0.6 m driven into the ground.

Conclusion

The proposed change of use to equestrian land has been shown above to be possible with minimal to no impact onto existing trees and woodland as long as the recommendations with this report are followed.

With regards to the impact of the existing woodland onto the proposed equestrian enclosure, not only that this has been shown as minimal, but the very existence of woodland shade for various parts of the day will be added comfort to the horses in periods of hot weather.