

Beechy Bottom Parkland Reserve

Appendix A Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement Report

Ref: jwmb/rpt1/BBPR/AIAAMS

(To be read alongside vision documents)

November 2023

Fairfax



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Arboricultural Impact Assessment

& Method Statement:

Beechy Bottom Parkland Reserve
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Ref: jwmb/rpt1/BBPR/AIAAMS

Date: 3rd November 2023

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose & Use of the Method Statement

- 1.1.1 This arboricultural impact assessment & method statement report has been prepared for submission to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) to accompany a planning application for a change of use for farmland & woodland standing to the west of Cuckfield Park, to a parkland reserve. The site will be known as Beechy Bottom Parkland Reserve. This statement is intended to demonstrate the feasibility of this proposal without harm to the retained tree resource on the site. See the material accompanying this report for full scheme details.
- 1.1.2 This document lays down the methodology for any proposed works that may have an effect upon the trees on and adjacent to the site. It is essential within the scope of any contracts related to the development proposals that this method statement is observed and adhered to. It is recommended that this document form part of the work schedule and specification issued to the building contractors and can be used to form part of the contract.
- 1.1.3 Copies of this document should be available for inspection on site. The local planning authority will be informed within twenty-four hours if the designated arboriculturist is replaced.

1.2 Terms of Reference

- 1.2.1 I am instructed by Fairfax Acquisitions Ltd to prepare an arboricultural impact assessment & method statement report to accompany a planning application for a change of use for farmland & woodland standing to the west of Cuckfield Park, to a parkland reserve with reference to British Standards publication: Trees in relation to design, demolition & construction - Recommendations (BS5837:2012).
- 1.2.2 The tree protection plan at Appendix A is based on Detailed Masterplan drawing reference DLA.2131.L.21.P04 from Davies Landscape Architects, Office 1C, 1-2, King St, Stroud GL5 3BS.

1.3 Tree Survey

- 1.3.1 A BS5837:2012 survey of the trees based on an aerial photo/Lidar data was conducted in 2022, concluding on 2nd November 2022, by James Bell of Arbortrack Systems Ltd. Full tree survey data is provided at Appendix B.
- 1.3.2 Data from the iGeology app from the British Geological Survey suggests that it is likely that the site has a mixed bedrock geology of:
- Lower Grinstead Clay – Mudstone
 - Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand - Sandstone, siltstone and mudstone
 - Wadhurst Clay Formation - Mudstone
 - Upper Grinstead Clay - Mudstone
 - Cuckfield Stone Bed - Sandstone, calcareous
 - Ardingly Sandstone Member – Sandstone

With superficial deposits of:

- Alluvium - Clay, silt, sand and gravel

See the British Geological Survey website (www.bgs.ac.uk) for additional detail regarding the geology on site.

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- 1.3.3 The potential for soil compaction (highly deleterious to root function) during the construction of paths, cycle routes and viewing platforms will depend both on weather conditions at that time, i.e. winter wet & whether clay is present in the upper soil profile. The presence of clay in this location would appear to be possible but cannot be definitively determined based on currently available data. On this basis, the potential for soil compaction is unquantifiable but arguably rather limited. In the event of clay being present, mitigation can be provided.
- 1.3.4 Areas of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Ancient Replanted Woodland (ARW) have been indicated on the Tree Protection Plan at Appendix A. See the Department for Environment Fisheries & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) MAGIC website for details at <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>.
- 1.3.5 The status of surveyed trees has not been established with MSDC.

1.4 Development Proposals & Impact Assessment

- 1.4.1 Beechy Bottom Parkland Reserve is a parcel of land (circa 230 acres) to the west of the village of Cuckfield, bounded to the east by the Cuckfield Park Estate and New England Wood (Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW), i.e. continuously present as woodland since 1600 A.D.).
- The site is bisected by a bridleway running west/east, which is part of the High Weald Trail. There is no public access to the site (currently farmland with a recreational pheasant shoot), however, it has been used informally by the public - particularly dog walkers - since the COVID pandemic, we are advised.
- The site is bounded to the south & south west by the catchment of the River Ouse, where recreational fishing ponds are also present. Other ponds (formerly quarry workings) are scattered throughout the site.
- 1.4.2 Woodland within the site on the western flank, known as Walks Wood (W37) and Beechy Bottom (partially within the site), is designated Ancient Replanted Woodland (ARW). Large sections of these woods are constituted of a relatively young mixed broadleaf plantation, i.e. estimated 20-25-year-old sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) & birch (*Betula pendula*) amongst other broadleaved species in smaller concentrations. Undesignated young plantation (to the north) makes up the remainder of this wooded area. Two smaller parcels of ASNW stand on the southern flank of the site near Old Mill Cottage.
- The species mix of the ASNW is typical with English oak (*Quercus robur*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), birch (*Betula pendula*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and goat willow (*Salix caprea*) present. Several non-native horse chestnuts (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) are present, e.g. trees in G54. Many of the ash on site are showing symptoms of Ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*), and the prognosis for these trees is very poor. Plantations are made up of same-age birch, sycamore, sweet chestnut, oak and willow, predominantly.
- The two large southern fields of the site were formerly known as Cuckfield Park Deer Park. Historic maps sourced from the National Library of Scotland mapping service suggest that at least 80 parkland trees formerly stood within Cuckfield Park Deer Park. Of these, only remnants remain, with the feature trees being free-standing English oaks, e.g. trees 58 & 59, and two magnificent groves of sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), i.e. G61 & G62, in the south eastern corner of the site.

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- 1.4.3 Tree survey data is provided at Appendix B. Native broadleaved trees dominate the surveyed tree stock: many fine individual English oaks are present outside the wooded areas with beech & sweet chestnut. Other species present include copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea', hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) & Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) in smaller quantities. Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), i.e. G35, G47, G57 & G70, and a Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra*), i.e. tree 44, are also present as landscape planting.
- 1.4.4 The trees & woodlands identified on the Tree Protection Plan are a key element of the biodiversity & amenity value of the site. The proposed change of use for the site, i.e. a rewilding/renaturing project for the benefit of the general public with an educational and research remit, envisages the retention of all surveyed trees, where possible. Exceptions will include any tree in imminent danger of collapse (within influencing distance of new paths and potential areas of greater footfall) should the risk of failure be unacceptable and some small plantation trees of minimal individual value, which may be removed to create groves & paths. See the plan at Appendix A & accompanying material for details on proposed path locations. There is good scope for management in the woodland parcels to improve biodiversity value in these areas - see accompanying material from Tadorna Consulting (Ecology) for further guidance.
- 1.4.5 Footpaths (marked in lime green on the attached plan) will be grass paths and, therefore, will not impact on the RPAs of retained trees. These will run outside 15m buffers around ASNW. See the plan at Appendix A for details.
- 1.4.6 There is good scope for new planting of native broadleaved trees to augment the amenity value, character and biodiversity value of the former deer park at the southern end of the site & the two small fields to the north of the site, which are designated for recreational use by walkers, with or without dogs.

1.5 Sequence of Works

- 1.5.1 The sequence of works should be as follows:
- tree works required to allow or facilitate development or for arboricultural best practice—see Appendix B for details
 - laying of ground protection where indicated - for path/cycle route construction
 - construction of cycle route using rolled hoggin, including sections within RPAs of retained trees to a 'No Dig' specification
 - removal of ground protection

1.6 Site Supervision

1.6.1 An individual, e.g. the Site Agent, must be nominated to be responsible for all arboricultural matters on site. This person must:

- be present on-site for the majority of the time
- be aware of the arboricultural responsibilities
- have the authority to stop any work that is causing, or has the potential to cause, harm to any retained tree
- be responsible for ensuring that all site operatives are aware of their responsibilities toward trees on site and the consequences of the failure to observe these responsibilities
- make immediate contact with the local authority and/or the designated arboriculturist in the event of any tree-related problems occurring, whether actual or potential

1.7 Site Monitoring

1.7.1 The site agent will be responsible for monitoring all arboricultural works and monitoring all on-site works in the context of tree protection. The designated arboriculturist will be available for site visits on a basis to be agreed upon between the client and planning authority when/if appropriate or required, i.e., if required by condition. It is recommended that a record of site visits is maintained for inspection on-site and copies forwarded to the developer/agent and to the local planning authority. A certificate of practical completion can be produced for sites deemed by all parties to merit this.

1.7.2 It is the responsibility of the client to advise Arbortrack when the project begins and to forward on the approval notice when published on the planning portal, should supervision requirements be stipulated.

1.7.3 Principal contact information: 1/. Mr James Bell. Arbortrack Systems Ltd. Arboricultural Consultant. 07986 122074. james@arbortrackservices.com. 2/. Ms Irene Fletcher. MSDC Arboricultural Officer. 01444 477445. irene.fletcher@midsussex.gov.uk. 3/. Ms Sam Hart. Davies Landscape Architects. shart@d-la.co.uk. 01453 807602. 4/. Mr Martin Wilkes. Fairfax Acquisitions. Client. 07803 985894. martinwilkes@fairfaxproperties.co.uk.

1.8 Statement Adoption

1.8.1 It is recommended that, in due course, acceptance of the recommendations in this report is demonstrated by, for example, the architect specifying in writing to the building contractor that tree care conditions apply in the execution of the contract and by an estimate or written undertaking from the contractor to the architect demonstrating that the practical aspects of observation of such recommendations have been priced in.

1.8.2 If conflicts between any part of a tree and the building arise during the course of development, these can often be resolved quickly and at little cost if a qualified arboriculturist is consulted promptly. Lack of such care is often apparent quickly, and the decline and death of such trees can spoil design aims and can, of course, affect saleability, as well as reflecting poorly on the construction and design personnel involved. Trees that have been the recipients of careful handling during construction add considerably to the appeal and value of the finished development.

2.0 Pre-Development Site Preparation

2.1 Arboricultural Works

2.1.1 See Appendix B for full details of tree works required to allow or facilitate development.

2.2 Preparation of Surfaces

2.2.1 Areas within RPAs potentially requiring ground protection (for path/cycle route construction) are shown in Appendix A, i.e. ground within the RPAs of plantation trees and trees within W37 and trees 78, 79 & 81. Ground protection should be fit for purpose as per the guidance in BS5837:2012 section 6.2.3.3. The preferred specification is provided by products such as Trak Mat; see www.multimatts.co.uk. Alternatively, many other treatments are available, e.g. those provided by InfraGreen Solutions: see www.infragreen-solutions.com.

2.3 Installation of Tree Protective Barrier–n/a

2.4 Pre-Development Site Inspection

2.4.1 At the instigation of the client/site agent or MSDC, the designated arboriculturist will meet the relevant local authority member on-site to check the standard of the work(s). If there are any amendments required to tree protection measures, these will be agreed upon at this meeting, confirmed in writing, and undertaken thereafter.

3.0 Development Phase

3.1 General Precautions

- 3.1.1 No fires shall be made on any part of the site or within 10m of the furthest extent of the canopy of any tree or group tree to be retained on-site or on land adjoining.
- 3.1.2 No spilling or pouring of fuels, oils, solvents, or tar shall be made on any part of the site.
- 3.1.3 No materials that are likely to have an adverse effect on tree health, such as oil, bitumen or cement, will be stored or discharged within 10 metres of the trunk of a tree that is to be retained.
- 3.1.4 No spillage or discharge of wet mortar or concrete shall be made on any part of the site.

3.2 Root Protection Areas

3.2.1 The RPA is a desirable zone of protection around the trees' rooting system, and these have been marked on the plan in Appendix A. The RPAs will be protected by ground protection through the course of development where appropriate i.e. for cycle path construction.

3.3 Site Access, Accommodation & Storage

- 3.3.1 Many site activities are potentially damaging to trees, e.g. material storage, parking, soil compaction and the use of plant machinery. In this latter example, particular care is required to ensure that the operational arcs of excavation and lifting machinery, including their loads, do not physically damage trees when in use or while accessing the site.

3.4 Routing & Installation of Services—n/a

3.5 Demolition Measures—n/a

3.6 Changes in Grade

- 3.6.1 The upper layer of topsoil (top 60cm) contains the majority of a tree's roots, and if this is disturbed by a change in ground level, serious damage can be caused. On this basis, as a minimum, level changes should be avoided within RPAs.
- 3.6.2 If any significant section of ground level requires raising within RPAs, this should be achieved using coarse, granular material such as pebbles. See section 7.4.4.4 of BS5837:2012.
- 3.6.3 If ground levels need to be altered within 1.5 metres of any tree trunk, prior agreement must be sought from and given by the local authority tree officer.

3.7 Construction Measures

- 3.7.1 Minimum areas of cycle path/footpath within the RPAs of plantation trees, trees within W37 (along existing glades/paths) & trees 78, 79 & 81 should be constructed to a 'No Dig' specification using rolled hoggin - see Appendix A and D for additional detail. Surfaces should be porous to allow water infiltration & gaseous exchange.
- 3.7.2 Wooden viewing platforms (if standing within the RPAs of retained trees) will rest on pads set at ground level supported by helical screw piles (or similar) if necessary. Details can be agreed upon by the discharge of an appropriate planning condition.

3.8 Removal of Tree Protective Barrier—n/a

4.0 Summary of Proposed Methods

4.1 Table of Impacts and Mitigation

4.1.1 The table below summarises the main areas where trees could become damaged by the proposed development and the methods that need to be adopted in order to prevent such damage:

<u>Impact</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Trees Affected</u>
Works within RPAs of retained trees	Ground protection	Section 2.2.1	78, 79 & 81
New hard standing within RPAs	New driveway/parking area installed to specialist 'No Dig' construction specification	Section 3.7.2 & Appendix D	Trees within plantations, trees in W37 & trees 78, 79 & 81

5.0 Completion

5.1 Completion Meeting

- 5.1.1 Following completion of the approved works on site, the designated arboriculturist can meet with a local authority representative and agree upon any remedial works deemed necessary (if any).
- 5.1.2 Any works agreed upon in the above meeting will be confirmed in writing and should be performed to BS3998:2010.
- 5.1.3 Any work proposed post-development should be checked to avoid a penalty for performing illegal work on a protected tree.