Arboricultural Consultation Response

Application No: 25/00868/FUL	**Location:** Holywell C of E School
Case Officer: KS	**Proposals:** Construction of a MUGA All weather pitch.

Observations:

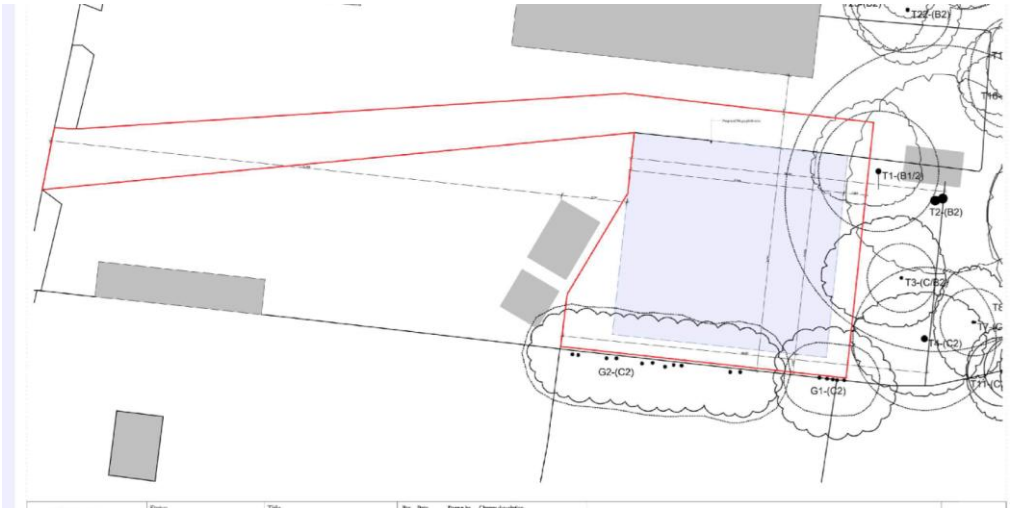
An application has been submitted for the construction of an 'All Weather' pitch at Holywell C of E School. The proposal is not located within the Conservation Area, and there are no TPO's in place on the property. There are however a number of large mature trees that provide significant benefits to the school, so must be taken into account during the construction process.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report comprises an arboricultural impacts assessment to assist a planning application for a MUGA at Holywell Primary School in Needingworth. A full tree protection strategy including arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan is included in the report. The proposed scheme necessitates removal of the C grade elder T6 and plum T5. The MUGA encroaches upon very low sections of RPA of T2 and G2 and though negligible in terms of impact, appropriate methodology is recommended. The level of incursion is such that whether the MUGA is porous or not is not of significance. No new ground services with in RPAs are proposed. Some leaf litter on the new surface should be anticipated periodically. A detailed arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan is detailed in Sections 5-7 to address these potential impacts and obviate the need for tree a protection condition.

The proposal requires the removal of T5 and T6 (low value), and some minor tree surgery works to allow access (G2 lateral reduction of 1m). The trees on site provide important visual, shade and environmental benefits.



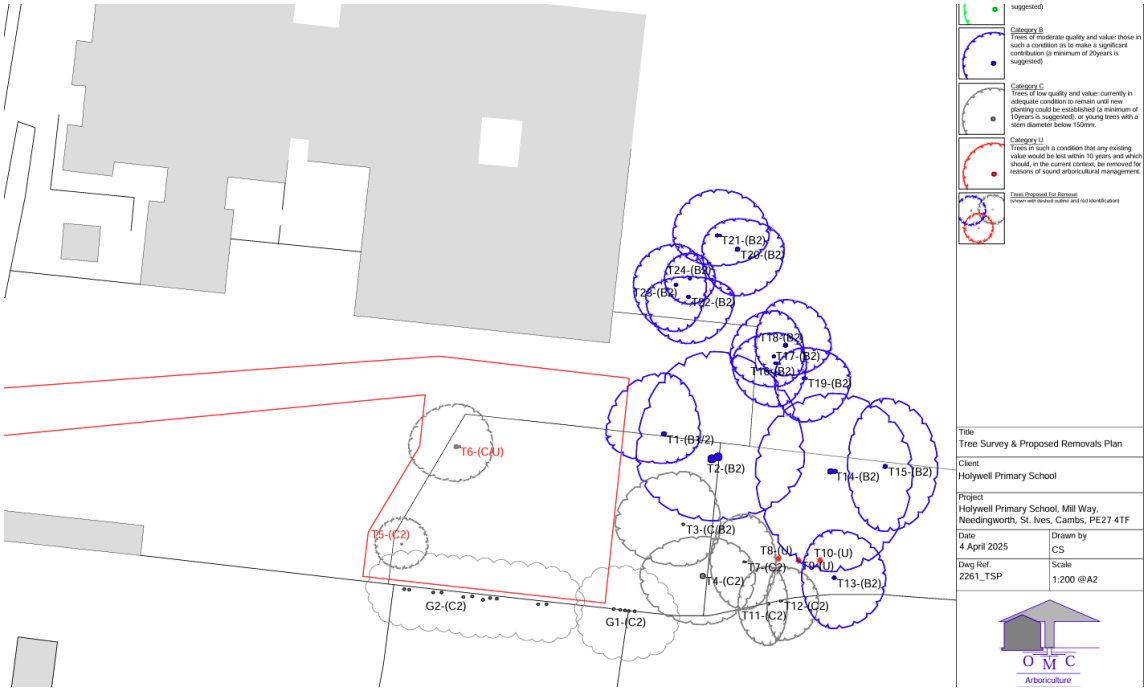
I have concerns regarding the consistent litter dropped by the large number of trees around the area, along with the additional risks perceived with overhanging/nearby trees. It is likely that this will create pressure for inappropriate pruning and removal of the trees. The report provided agrees that this is likely to be a concern.

I am concerned that future root development also has the potential to damage the surface, and create trip hazards. The report also highlights Mechanical Damage, Ground Compaction and Severance of Roots during construction as potential issues.

Arboricultural Report



Historic pruning to the Silver Birch trees has significantly shortened their life spans and integrity. This has been completed near play areas historically, raising the concerns over pressure for removal of the trees near this development.



The Method Statement confirms that the margin around the pitch is to be matted, in order to prevent root damage. This is to be retained throughout the process and used with fencing to prevent access into the Construction Exclusion Zone.

HDC policies state that construction should be avoided within RPA's due to the likely damage caused.

LP 30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

This policy focuses on safeguarding and enhancing the district's ecological value.

- **Development must avoid harm** to biodiversity and geodiversity assets, including trees, woodlands, and habitats.
- Proposals should align with national planning policy.
- If harm is unavoidable, it must be **minimised and mitigated**, with compensation as a last resort.
- The policy supports the **protection of trees** as part of wider ecological networks—especially those with veteran or ancient status.

This indirectly reinforces the protection of RPAs by discouraging development that would damage root systems or tree health.

LP 31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

- Development proposals must **retain and protect existing trees**, especially those of high arboricultural or landscape value.
- **Encroachment into RPAs is discouraged**, and any such impact must be justified and mitigated.
- Proposals should include **tree surveys and arboricultural impact assessments**, following BS5837 standards.
- New planting is encouraged to **enhance green infrastructure** and compensate for unavoidable losses.

Recommendation: Support Application – RPA incursions are within acceptable limits, and the trees will then be protected from damage with matting and fencing.

Signed: NS	**Date: 18/08/2025**