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148 – 150 High Street, Huntingdon

Arboricultural Implication Study

May 2025

Arboricultural Association Fellow Member

AA Registered Consultant trees.org.uk

UK Register of Expert Witnesses Registered

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Document Revision Record		
Issue No	Date	Details of Revisions
1	May 2025	Original issue

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.01
ACS Consulting is instructed by Coles Conservation Architects to report on trees and the implications for the proposed development at: 148 – 150 High Street, Huntingdon. The assessment and report was undertaken by Ian Murat, Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association.

1.02
In accordance with guidance on information requirements and validation for planning applications, this report fulfils the recommended national list criteria for tree survey/arboricultural information. More specifically, it contains the following:

- A full tree survey to the requirements of BS5837 (2012) Trees In Relation To Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations;
- A plan showing tree survey information, retention categorisation and root protection areas;
- An assessment of the arboricultural implications of development detailing trees to be retained/removed and appropriate protection measures;
- An Arboricultural Method Statement detailing a set of agreed principles for tree protection, implementation and phasing of works. (BS5837:2012 section 6).

1.03
The site was visited during April 2025. A survey of the trees was completed in accordance with BS5837 – 2012. All the trees have been summarised in the tables in Appendix A.

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Chapter 2 Background

2.01 Location
The application site is located at the southern end of the High Street and comprises No.'s 148-150 High Street with a car park to the rear, accessed via the vehicular passageway below No.148. The existing building has been in commercial usage in its entirety since its conversion and extension in 1990. (Figure 1)

2.02 Statutory Protection (Trees)
Huntingdonshire Council's TPO mapping system notes the trees within the site are not the subject of a TPO. The site is located in a Conservation Area.

2.03 Policy
In terms of trees, the application will be subject to Huntingdonshire Local Plan. The Development Plan includes objectives and planning policies that will be used in the determination of planning applications, and which will shape the quality of new development. The policy of most relevance to the arboreal aspects of the application is: LP 31 Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows. Also of relevance are policies 136 and 187 National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

2.04 Soils
BS 5837 – 2012 requires a basic assessment of the soils on site. An examination of the British Geological Survey site records the superficial deposits as: River Terrace Deposits, 1 To 2 - Sand and gravel. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 11.8 thousand years ago and the present during the Quaternary period.

2.05
The Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute Soilscapes viewer shows soils at the site to be: Lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage.

2.06 Topographical Survey
The arboricultural survey is based on the supplied topographical survey.



Figure 1

3.01
The tree data can be found at Appendix A. There is no requirement in BS 5837 to repeat the details of the constraints information save for confirming that the trees were surveyed for species type, age, height, crown spread, diameter-at-breast-height, condition, and their suitability for retention from ground level. Each tree or group was assigned to one of the four retention categories [A,B,C,U] specified by BS5837. The individual descriptions and other relevant information are contained in the attached schedule and they are shown on the attached plans, based on the original topographical survey. Only trees with a stem diameter of 75 millimetres measured at 1.5 metres above the ground are required to be recorded.

3.02
The heights were measured with a digital Hypsometer and the diameters were taken with a diameter tape to give an average stem measurement. Canopy spreads have been measured at the cardinal points or where they significantly extend in other directions.

3.03 Groups
The group classification is intended to identify trees that form cohesive arboricultural features either aerodynamically, visually or culturally. Where there are prominent trees within the group, these have been noted individually

Chapter 4 Development Implications

4.01 Project
The application is in support of: *erection of two high quality new-build houses.[sic]*.

4.02 Development Implications
The methodology for assessment is based on BS5837 – 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations. The guidance recommends that impacts on arboricultural assets should be assessed by considering:

1. Which arboreal assets are affected by the proposed development;

2. Understand what contribution the arboreal assets make to the significance of the site and location;

3. Identify what impact the loss of arboreal assets of the site might have on that significance;

4. Consider maximising enhancements and avoiding harm.

4.03 Loss For Development
The trees within the site, for the most part, are mediocre quality specimens. In line with the advice set out in BS 5837, the trees are not of such importance and sensitivity as to be a major constraint on development or, justify substantial modification of the proposals. The Category C trees are unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories. They offer low or only temporary/transient landscape benefits.

4.04
A detailed examination notes the trees are causing extensive damage to the retaining wall along the site's boundary with St Clement's Court (Figures 2, 3, and, 4). The wall has failed in a number of locations. The incremental growth of the sycamores' anchor roots has overcome the resistance of the wall and it has failed.

4.05
The wall cannot be repaired. It requires taking apart and constructed on the same alignment. The wall is the boundary feature, there are no opportunities to realign the wall elsewhere in the site.

4.06
Irrespective of the desire to the develop the site, the sycamores require felling to allow the wall to be rebuilt. The trees cannot be retained in their current location and the wall successfully rebuilt. There is insufficient space and there is the requirement to remove significant volumes of roots throughout the root hierarchy to re-build the wall. This will cause the trees to become unstable with a clear and unacceptable risk of them collapsing onto third party property.

4.07 Disturbance
There will be a slight disturbance to the Root Protection Area of the birch (T2) during construction. This will be mitigated with ground protection measures as detailed in the Arboricultural Method Statement.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

4.08 Method Statement
The method statement is presented as a Heads of Terms document. The level of detail available is often a limiting factor when developing a method statement. The Heads of Terms identifies the main issues for tree protection that need to be addressed. It is often post-planning when detailed design occurs. Unforeseen issues may arise and therefore, further design may be required. The final method statement can be presented at this time.

4.09 Secondary Development Pressures
None.

4.10 Planning Policy
In terms of trees, the application will be subject to Huntingdonshire Local Plan. The policy of most relevance to the arboreal aspects of the application is: LP 31 Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows. Reference has also been made to the current NPPF 2024 (136 and 187) and Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030 (TDM 1).

4.11
The trees create a great deal of direct damage that cannot be mitigated through advanced construction techniques. Thus, irrespective of the desire to develop the site, their removal is justified to repair the wall that is required in any case. Areas of potential conflict in terms of site development are addressed by a Heads of Terms method statement at Appendix B.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

5.01
The application site is described in detail in the planning, design and access statement.

5.02
The Category C trees in this location are unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories. They offer low or only temporary/transient landscape benefits.

5.03
None of the trees proposed for replacement within the application footprint can be considered "major constraints", their lower quality grading does not merit this description. In line with the advice set out in BS 5837, trees are not of such importance and sensitivity as to be a major constraint on development or, justify substantial modification of the proposals.

5.04
As noted, the trees create a great deal of nuisance and direct damage to the retaining wall. The retaining wall requires repairing and cannot be repaired with the trees in situ. Thus, removal of trees is justified.

5.05
The Heads of Terms method statement in Appendix B details the precautions to be taken for the whole development. It is often post-planning when detailed design occurs. Unforeseen issues may arise and therefore, further design may be required. The final method statement can be presented at this time.

Appendix A

Contents

Key

BS 5837 2012

Tree data

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KEY

Age	Y – Young: Out-planted trees that have not yet established SM – Semi-mature: Established trees up to 1/3 of expected height and crown EM – Early mature: Between 1/3 and 2/3 of expected height and crown M – Mature: Between 2/3 and full expected height and crown FM – Fully mature: Full expected height and crown OM – Over mature: Crown beginning to break-up and decrease in size S – Senescent: Crown in advanced stage of break-up
Physiological Condition	Good – Very few defects a reasonable long life expectancy depending on age class Fair – Some defects giving the tree a shortened life expectancy Poor – Limited life with major problems
Structural Condition	Good – Very few defects Fair – Some defects rectifiable with minor tree surgery Poor – Significant defects rectifiable with major tree surgery or felling
#	Estimated dimensions.
(a)	Average stem diameter across a group of trees.
*	Tree subject to TPO.

Table 1 – Cascade chart for tree quality assessment

Category and definition	Criteria			Identification on Plan
Category U Those in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years.	• Trees that have a serious, irremediable, structural defect, such that their early loss is expected due to collapse, including those that will become unviable after removal of other U category trees (i.e. where, for whatever reason, the loss of companion shelter cannot be mitigated by pruning). • Trees that are dead or are showing signs of significant, immediate, and irreversible overall decline. • Trees infected with pathogens of significance to the health and/or safety of other trees nearby, or very low quality trees suppressing adjacent trees of better quality. *NOTE Category U trees can have existing or potential conservation value which might be desirable to preserve; see 4.5.7*			RED
	1 Mainly arboricultural qualities	**2 Mainly landscape qualities**	**3 Mainly cultural values, including conservation.**	
Trees To Be Considered For Retention				
Category A **Trees of high quality** with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years	Trees that are particularly good examples of their species, especially if rare or unusual, or essential components of groups, or of formal or semi-formal arboricultural features (e.g. the dormant and/or principal trees within an avenue)	Trees, groups or woodlands of particular visual importance as arboricultural and/or landscape features.	Trees, groups or woodlands of significant conservation, historical, commemorative or other value (e.g. veteran trees or wood-pasture)	GREEN
Category B **Trees of moderate quality** with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years.	Trees that might be included in category A, but are downgraded because of impaired condition (e.g. presence of significant though remediable defects, including unsympathetic past management and storm damage), such that they are unlikely to be suitable for retention for beyond 40 years; or trees lacking the special quality necessary to merit the category A designation.	Trees present in numbers, usually growing as groups or woodlands, such that they attract a higher collective rating than they might as individuals; or trees occurring as collectives but situated so as to make little visual contribution to the wider locality.	Trees with material conservation or other cultural value.	BLUE
Category C **Trees of low quality** with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150 mm.	Unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories.	Trees present in groups or woodlands, but without this conferring on them significantly greater collective landscape value, and/or trees offering low or only temporary/transient landscape benefits.	Trees with no material conservation or other cultural benefits	GREY

Tree Ref No.	Species	Height M	Stem Diameter MM	Branch Spread M				Height of Crown Clearance M	Clear Branch Height M	Age Class	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Comments/Preliminary Management Recommendations	Estimated Remaining Contribution Years	Category Grading	RPA Radius (M)	RPA Area (M^2)
				N	E	S	W										
G1	Sycamore	17	<400	6	4	7	#6	3 (S)	2	EM	Fair/Poor	Fair	Linear group of 3/4 trees managed by topping. Multiple attachment of regenerative growth at 5m. Bark inclusion. Swelling beneath the union. Lack of natural bracing throughout the canopy. Located on top of a retaining wall that is approximately 1.5m high. The wall has failed in a number of locations. Evidence of minor buckling of the concrete brick setts.	10	C1/2	4.8	72
1	Yew	4	150, 185	4	2	2	2	2	2	EM	Good	Good	Incongruous feature. Poorly pruned. Located in third party property, approximately 2m from the boundary. A tree of low quality and value in the landscape.	10+	C1/2	2.9	26
2	Birch	10	240	3	4	3	2	1 (N)	2 (N)	SM/ EM	Good	Good	Located in third party property, 1m from the corner of the house. A tree of moderate quality and value in the landscape.	20+	B1/2	2.9	26

Appendix B

Contents

Heads of Terms Method Statement

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Arboricultural Supervision

The general purpose is to ensure compliance with planning conditions. It is anticipated that arboricultural input is likely to be needed for the following operations:

- Pre-commencement meeting;
- Tree Protection measures;

All supervisory visits will be logged and a copy of the minutes circulated to all team members including the LPA. A number of the operations named above can be undertaken in a single visit.

The pre-commencement site meeting is to be held before any work is undertaken. All tree protection measures, haul routes, site storage, contractor parking, deliveries, working methods are to be freely discussed and agreed in writing. Initial site visits may be intense to ensure measures are implemented.

General site visits will be undertaken once the site is 'live' at intervals agreed with the team. Our role will be to initially to act in a compliance capacity to ensure the protective measures are fit for purpose and meet or exceed the council's requirements and the tree works are undertaken to the required standard. Once this has been completed, our role will be one of monitoring and 'troubleshooting'.

Targets

- Pre-commencement site meeting to agree roles, responsibilities and duties in relation to tree protection. Details to be minuted and distributed.
- Appointment of an Arboricultural Consultant to oversee works.

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Construction Methods and Sequence

A Construction Method Statement and Timetable is to be drafted on the appointment of a construction firm. As noted in BS5837 – 2012 5.5.6 it is sufficient to list a heads of terms summary of the issues requiring more detailed consideration once consent is issued. On this site, those issues are likely to include:

- site construction access;
- the intensity and nature of the construction activity;
- phasing of construction works;
- the space needed for foundation excavations and construction works;
- the location and space needed for all temporary and permanent apparatus and service runs, including, electricity or other communication cables;
- working space for cranes, plant, scaffolding and access during works;
- space for storing (whether temporary or long-term) materials, spoil and fuel and the mixing of cement and concrete;
- the effects of slope on the movement of potentially harmful liquid spillages towards or into protected areas.

Tree Felling/Stump Removal/Tree Pruning

The following precautions are to be taken.

Targets

- Trees to be removed shall be felled so as to fall away from tree protection zones and to avoid pulling and breaking of roots of trees to remain. Brush can be chipped into the tree protection zone to a depth of 150 mm.
- The roots shall be removed by severing the major woody root mass before extraction. This may be accomplished by Hydro Vacuum & Suction Excavation or Compressed Air Displacement and then, cutting through the roots by hand, with a vibrating knife, rock saw, narrow trencher with sharp blades, or other approved root pruning equipment.
- Trees to be removed within the tree protection zone shall be removed by qualified tree contractors.
- All felled brush and trees shall be removed from the tree protection zone either by hand or with equipment sitting outside the tree protection zone. Extraction shall occur by lifting the material out or by 'skidding' it across the ground.
- Exposed roots to be kept moist with hessian sacking.
- Site inspections to be reported to the development team and the LPA.
- Tree pruning to BS3998 – 2010. No deviation from the specification.

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Construction Exclusion Zone Root Protection

Due to the nature of the works, standard BS 5837 fencing will be used. The Construction Exclusion Zone fence will be heras fence panels fixed in place with braceblok™.

Drawing No. – ARB/5298/Y/300.

Targets

- Fencing installed at locations shown on the plan (ARB/5298/Y/300) and marked on site.
- Fence fixed with braceblok™.
- Location and adequacy signed off by Arboricultural Consultant and LPA advised.
- Tool Box Talk – make construction staff aware of the importance of areas by site manager.
- Signs to be erected advising of the area's importance.



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Construction Exclusion Zone Ground Protection Site Wide

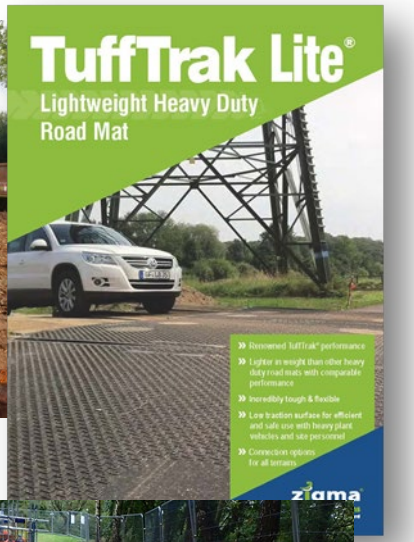
The Root Protection Area/Construction Exclusion Zone will be protected by Tuff Trak over a mulch/woodchip compressible layer where there is encroachment. Adequate protection of trees requires the installation of the correct ground protection at the locations agreed at the on-site meeting.

Drawing No. – ARB/5298/Y/300.

Targets

- The following applies to Tuff Trak (other systems follow a similar installation procedure).
- Permatex 300 geotextile to be laid with a mulch or wood chip compressible layer to bring to level.
- Tuff Trak laid over. This surface will be retained through the contract to form a working surface.
- Mulch/woodchip layer can be left as a soil ameliorant.
- Location and adequacy signed off by the Arboricultural Clerk of Works and the LPA advised.
- Works to be monitored by Arboricultural Consultant.









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General Precautions

The retention of trees requires a number of general precautions to be taken. Compliance is to be maintained on site by the Arboricultural Consultant. The site visits are detailed at criterion 1 – Timing of Works.

Targets

- Spoil from the foundation pits or other excavations shall not be placed within the Construction Exclusion Zone.
- No materials, equipment, spoil or washout water may be deposited, stored or parked within the Root Protection Area/ Construction Exclusion Zone.
- On-site inspections to be undertaken by the Arboricultural Clerk of Works with the Arboricultural Consultant visiting during critical operations. The aim of the visits is to maintain on-going liaison with all personnel involved in the site development, Local Planning Authority and its Tree Officer.
- Any defects requiring rectification shall be notified to the Contractor/Site Manager/Arboricultural Consultant and the client.
- A site logbook for tree protection measures is kept to record all stages of the development from the erection of the protective fencing, right through to the completion of the project. This will be made available to the Arboricultural Consultant and the Local Planning Authority, if required, to show evidence of continuous site monitoring.

Protection and Emergency Procedure/Contacts

Adherence to the method statement, appointment of the Arboricultural Consultant and their involvement, at the critical demolition and construction phases, should negate any incident. The contact page details those personnel who should be contacted if an incident involving a retained tree should take place.

Targets

- Spill kit available.
- On site fuels to be located away from RPA/CEZ and contained in a bunded tank at 110% capacity.
- All incidents involving trees to be reported by telephone and email.
- Bunded storage of oil/fuels.
- Refuelling points for machinery at distance to the watercourse.
- Use of drop trays under plant/machinery overnight.
- Availability of spill kits on site – and training of site staff in their use.
- No excavation during periods of heavy rain.
- Regular maintenance and inspection of plant – engines and hydraulic systems.

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Contact List

Title	Name	Address	Telephone	Email
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Design	TBA			
Project Manager	TBA			
Arboricultural Consultant (Council)	TBA			

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