Arboricultural Consultation Response

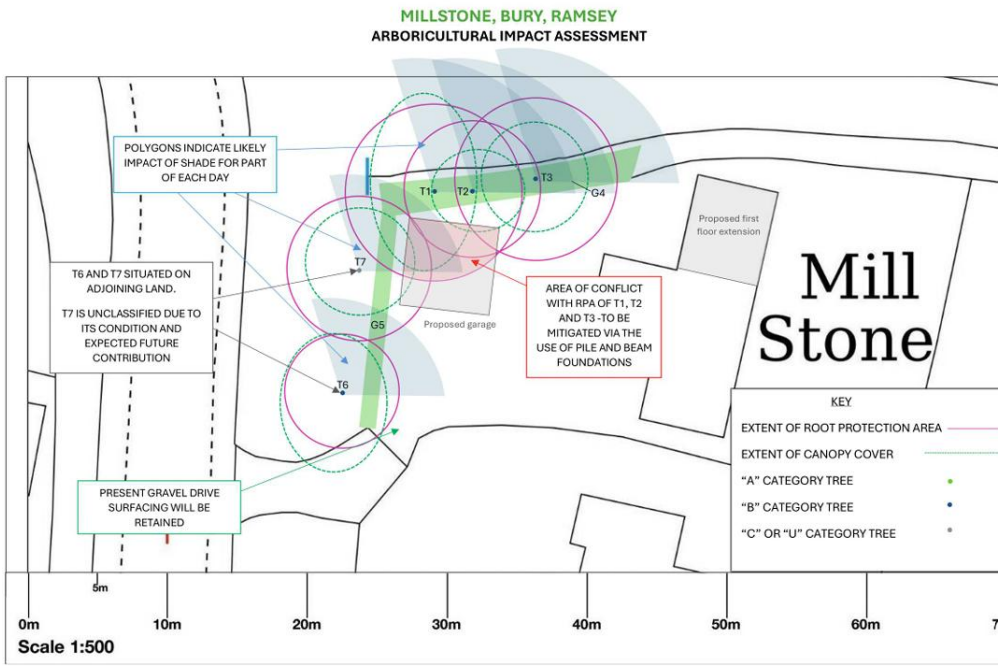
Application No:	**Location:**
25/00615/HHFUL -	Millstone, High Street, Bury, Huntingdon, PE26 2NQ
Case Officer: RKE	Erection of first floor extension over existing garage and replacement double detached garage with room over.

Observations:

An application has been submitted for the first floor extension over an existing garage and replacement double garage with room above. The site is located within a Conservation Area, but there are no Tree Preservation Orders in place nearby. There are however, a number of mature trees that add significantly to the vista and Arboricultural Landscape that could be affected by the works.



An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been provided along with a Survey of the trees, a Method Statement and a Tree Pretection Plan. These show that there will be significant encroachment into both the rooting areas of the trees and construction underneath the existing canopies.



The report suggest that these encroachments can be overcome with the use of pile and beam foundations, however locating new buildings in close proximity to mature trees that shed debris throughout the year would be against HDC Trees and Development Strategy.

The design takes no account of either mature canopy or root spread, and the location of the garage will result in increased pressure for innappropriate pruning and removal of the trees. The trees are located on the side of the road, and are therefore highly visible.

Existing trees are an important factor on construction sites, whether on or near the working areas, and trees are a material consideration in the UK planning system (see Annex B). This British Standard is intended to assist decision-making with regard to existing and proposed trees in the context of design, demolition and construction. Root systems, stems and canopies, with allowance for future movement and growth, need to be taken into account in all projects, including those that do not require planning permission. The space required for any proposed new trees to become established is an important consideration.

During their lifetime, trees will be vulnerable to disturbance, injury, environmental changes, pests and diseases. Construction work often exerts pressures on existing trees, as do changes in their immediate environment following the construction. A tree that has taken many decades to reach maturity can be damaged irreparably in a few minutes by actions that might be unwitting, negligent or wilful (see Annex A). The early provision of physical protection from damage is therefore critical.

Where tree retention or planting is proposed in conjunction with nearby construction, the objective should be to achieve a harmonious relationship between trees and structures that can be sustained in the long term. The good practice recommended in this British Standard is intended to assist in achieving this objective.

From BS53837:2012 – Please note the deisgn should allow for future development of the roots, stems and canopy

provision for these throughout the development process.

5.2 Constraints posed by existing trees

5.2.1 The RPA (see **4.6**) and any other relevant constraints should be plotted around each of the category A, B and C trees on relevant drawings, including proposed site layout plans.

NOTE RPAs represent below-ground constraints. Above-ground constraints might arise from the following attributes:

a) the current and ultimate height and spread of the tree;

b) species characteristics, including evergreen or deciduous, density of foliage, and factors such as susceptibility to honeydew drip, branch drop, fruit fall, etc.

5.2.3 The following factors should also be taken into account during the design process:

a) the presence of tree preservation orders, conservation areas or other regulatory protection;

b) potential incompatibilities between the layout and trees proposed for retention;

c) the working and access space needed for the construction of the proposed development;

NOTE This might involve access facilitation pruning, or the use of a height restriction bar to prohibit tall vehicles accessing a site containing trees with low canopies.

d) the effect that construction requirements might have on the amenity value of trees, both on and near the site, including the effects of pruning to facilitate access and working space;

e) the requirement to protect the overhanging canopies of trees where they could be damaged by machinery, vehicles, barriers or scaffolding, where it will be necessary to increase the extent of the tree protection barriers to contain the canopy;

f) infrastructure requirements in relation to trees, e.g. easements for underground or above-ground apparatus; highway safety and visibility splays; and other infrastructural provisions, such as substations, refuse stores, lighting, signage, solar collectors, satellite dishes and CCTV sightlines;

g) the proposed end use of the space adjacent to retained trees;

h) the potential for new planting to provide mitigation for any losses.

5.2.4 Particular care is needed regarding the retention of large, mature, over-mature or veteran trees which become enclosed within the new development (see **4.5.11**). Where such trees are retained, adequate space should be allowed for their long-term physical retention and future maintenance.

NOTE The presence of large species trees is increasingly being seen as advantageous, since it contributes to climate change resilience, amongst other benefits. Achieving successful integration of large species trees requires careful consideration at the conceptual and design stages.

5.3 Proximity of structures to trees

5.3.1 The default position should be that structures (see **3.10**) are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained. However, where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the tree(s) (see Clause 7). If operations within the RPA are proposed, the project arboriculturist should:

a) demonstrate that the tree(s) can remain viable and that the area lost to encroachment can be compensated for elsewhere, contiguous with its RPA;

b) propose a series of mitigation measures to improve the soil environment that is used by the tree for growth.

5.3.2 The cumulative effects of incursions into the RPA, e.g. from excavation for utility apparatus, are damaging and should be avoided. Where there is evidence that a tree has been previously subjected to damage by construction activity, this should be taken into account when considering the acceptability of further activity within the RPA.

5.3.3 On shrinkable soils, the foundation design should take account of the risks of indirect damage, i.e. subsidence and/or heave brought about by changes in moisture content of the soil due to remaining and removed vegetation, as well as the future influence of new planting (see Annex A).

5.3.4 A realistic assessment of the probable impact of any proposed development on the trees and vice versa should take into account the characteristics and condition of the trees, with due allowance and space for their future growth and maintenance requirements. To maximize the probability of successful tree retention, the following factors should be taken into account during the design process.

a) **Shading**. Shading by trees affects buildings and open spaces.

   1) **Shading of buildings**. Shading of buildings by trees can be a problem, particularly where there are rooms which require natural light. Proposed buildings should be designed to take account of existing trees, their ultimate size and density of foliage, and the effect that these will have on the availability of light.

   2) **Shading of open spaces**. Open spaces such as gardens and sitting areas should be designed to meet the normal requirement for direct sunlight for at least a part of the day.

   NOTE 1 Shading can be desirable to reduce glare or excessive solar heating, or to provide for comfort during hot weather. The combination of shading, wind speed/turbulence reduction and evapo-transpiration effects of trees can be utilized in conjunction with the design of buildings and spaces to provide local

designed and/or located with due consideration for a tree's ultimate growth, so as to reduce the need for frequent remedial pruning or other maintenance.

NOTE 2 Exceptions might arise where this is a known and acceptable management outcome (e.g. cyclical maintenance of previously pollarded trees or where retention of desirable trees would otherwise not be feasible).

d) **Future pressure for removal**. The relationship of buildings to large trees can cause apprehension to occupiers or users of nearby buildings or spaces, resulting in pressure for the removal of the trees. Buildings and other structures should be sited allowing adequate space for a tree's natural development, with due consideration given to its predicted height and canopy spread. However, this does not mean that trees should not be retained within any particular distance of a structure (see Table A.1 for new planting).

e) **Seasonal nuisance**. Trees are naturally growing and shedding organisms. Leaves of some species can cause problems, particularly in the autumn, by blocking gullies and gutters. Fruit can cause slippery patches, and accumulation of honeydew can be damaging to surfaces and vehicles. Buildings, footpaths and hard-standing areas should be designed with due consideration to the proximity of retained trees, especially in terms of their foliage, flowering and fruiting habits. Where conflicts might arise, detailed design should address these issues, e.g. use of non-slip paving; provision of leaf guards or grilles on gutters and gullies; provision of access and means of maintenance.



It is not clear how construction of the garage will occur without the removal of a signficant part of each canopy. This is likley to allow the egress of pathgens, stimulate the development of fast growing poorly attached branches, and add additional stress to the trees. If they survive, pruning will need to be continual and on-going.

A Section 211 Notification was received from the applicant in this case to 'Pollard' each of th Ash trees by the side of the driveway. The Council deemed the trees 'Not Suitable' for a TPO and therefore the works were allowed to proceed. This would not have influenced the RPA of the trees as the DBH remains unchanged.

However, following a site visit with the case manager, and discussions with the resident, I feel that there is now room for negotiation on the proposal. The trees have been pruning back to the boundary rather than reduced to 2m stems as proposed, and as such the overhanging branches, litter and other issues would no longer be of concern. The trees are covered in brambles and form a valuable ecological resource, as well as a visual screen from neighbours. I would therefore accept a proposal that used pile and beam foundations and applied protective 'wearing layers' throughout the RPA's during the works as indicated below.

have a ditch between the verge and boundary hedgerow. Tree roots are on the slope of the ditch, though it is possible that these may extend over to the calculated area shown on the plan.
Radial spreads of the tree roots are shown in accordance with the recommended guidance in BS5837:2012, however, ground conditions are variable, and roots will grow to the constraints surrounding them. Tree roots are rarely found at a depth greater than 600mm from ground level and may extend beyond the areas shown.

4.5 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment plan shows the proposed garage is conflicted with the RPAs of the Ash trees T1, T2 and T3, and to an extent, the unclassified tree T7. As the Ash trees are in an acceptable condition, and have considerable stature to the wider area, their retention is preferable. In order to achieve a build solution where the trees and the proposal can successfully co-exist, an alternative build method to strip foundations has been considered in relation to the ground conditions and adjacent water course. This may be achieved via the use of a pile and beam foundation system which will minimise disturbance to the tree roots.
Construction methods must give careful consideration to the soil surrounding tree roots, particularly within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs), to prevent damage during the build phase. Where excavation is necessary within these zones, it should ideally be carried out using hand tools only. It is also recommended that the existing boundary fence remain in place for the

duration of the works, and that a minimum buffer of 1 metre from the base of the Ash trees be left undisturbed.

4.6 Site access will be via the existing gravel-surfaced driveway, which is to be retained as part of the proposed scheme. As this driveway will serve as the primary access and egress point during construction, a temporary wearing course may be required for the duration of the build phase, depending on the volume and type of construction traffic, to protect the existing surface and any tree roots within the RPAs shown on the attached plan.

Comments

The conversion of the existing dwelling would be acceptable as long as no heavy vehicles access the driveway, as there is very limited enncroachment into RPA's or canopies growing nearby.

Now that much of the canopy of the overhanging trees have been removed, I am satisfied that falling debris will not be an issue. The trees have signifcnat value as an ecological feature, do not meet criteria for a TPO but should be retained if possible.

I am now satified that using the pile and beam construction method whilst protecting the ground with a 'wear layer' throughout works would allow the retention of the trees. They may show signs of decline over the coming years due to ash dieback, and any damage to the rooting environment would accentuate the effects of this.

Recommendation: Recommend Refusal of Application Support Application

Signed: NS NS	**Date: 16/06/2025 22/08/25**