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Arboricultural Consultant

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

The Lancaster Lounge
152 Main St, Yaxley, Peterborough

7th February 2025
Client: Dominic Ricciardi
To accompany a variation of condition application relating to condition 2 (list of approved plans) of Planning Consent Reference 21/02807/FUL

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY 1

1 INTRODUCTION 2

1.1 THE WRITER 2
1.2 INSTRUCTIONS 2
1.3 PROJECT CONTEXT 3
1.4 SOURCE DATA 3
1.5 COMPLIANCE WITH BS5837:2012 4

2 CONSTRAINTS 5

2.1 SITE CONTEXT 5
2.2 STATUTORY PROTECTION 6
2.3 ARBORICULTURAL SURVEY 7
2.4 ECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS 7

3 NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY 8

3.1 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 8
3.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) 8
3.3 COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN/ POLICIES 8
3.4 CONCLUSIONS 9

4 CRITERIA 10

4.1 PROTECTION OF ROOT SYSTEM 10
4.2 PROTECTION OF TREE ABOVE GROUND 11

5 IMPACT ANALYSIS 12

5.1 SITE LAYOUT 12
5.2 ENGINEERING, DRAINAGE AND SERVICES 12
5.3 LIVABILITY 13
5.4 FUTURE GROWTH AND PRESSURE TO PRUNE 13

6 TREE REMOVALS 14

6.1 TREE REMOVALS 14

7 CONCLUSIONS 14

7.1 TREE REMOVAL 14
7.2 POST CONSTRUCTION 14

Appendix A – Tree Survey Explanatory Notes ii

Appendix B – Tree Survey Data iii

Appendix C – Arboricultural Impact Plan vi

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Revision	Layout Assessed	Author	Reviewer	Date
-	21036/PL02A	AMB	TC	07/02/2025

FILE REFERENCES:

This Report File Ref: 5585.Yaxley.Lancaster_Lounge.AIA

Arboricultural Impact Plan: 5585.Yaxley.Lancaster_Lounge.AIP

SUMMARY

It is my opinion that the tree retained during the development process could justifiably be removed due to its poor condition, a conclusion supported by the Arboricultural Consultee for this application at Huntingdonshire District Council.

The tree has been subject to a Section 211 Notice for pruning, and this was accepted by HDC.

In the process of redevelopment, I consider that there is an opportunity to provide replacement planting.

Signed:



A M Belson
RCArborA, DipArb RFS, Tech Cert (ArborA)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The writer

Andrew Belson

RCArborA, DipArb RFS, Tech Cert (ArborA)

I am a Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association. (RC Licence No: RC202) and have worked as a consultant for over 20 years.

I hold the Arboricultural Association's Technician's Certificate and the Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma, which is a level 6 qualification equivalent to an Honours degree.

From a background in the Landscape and Treework industry, my experience encompasses roles as an Arboricultural Officer for a Borough Council and as a specialist contractor for a Unitary Authority, specifically handling insurance claims involving trees. I have also conducted a Tree Preservation Order Review for a Unitary Authority.

My clients include national and regional planners, architects, developers, and statutory undertakers, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, and individual householders.

I also undertake health & safety inspections; mortgage, insurance and homeowner assessments; Tree Preservation Order and Conservation Area-related work; and provide general legal and practical advice, including representation at Committee and for the purposes of Appeal.

1.2 Instructions

1.2.1 This assessment was commissioned by the Applicant because trees are a material consideration and this report is required to support a Variation of Condition application.

1.2.2 The first instruction was to survey the trees on or adjoining the site in line with the recommendations of BS5837: 2012.

1.2.3 The second instruction was to draw a plan showing the tree constraints overlaid to the submitted planning drawing so that the impact could be assessed, and to write an Arboricultural Impact Assessment report to accompany the application.

1.3 Project context

1.3.1 The client has submitted a Variation of Condition application relating to Condition 2 (list of approved plans) of Planning Consent Reference 21/02807/FUL to address necessary amendments for building regulations compliance and acoustic noise attenuation.

1.3.2 The client was advised to provide an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to support the application.

1.3.3 I surveyed the trees on or adjoining the site on 23rd January 2025. The results of that survey are found at Appendix B.

1.4 Source data

1.4.1 The data that has been used to inform this impact assessment comprises:

SOURCE	ANY ISSUES	CONCLUSION
BS5837 TREE SURVEY	• None	I consider that the survey has been carried out in accordance with BS5837.
PROPOSED SITE PLAN: 21036/PL02A	• None	This drawing was adequate for the purposes of the AIA

1.4.2 Note: This assessment is specific to the drawings listed above and cannot be generalised.

1.5 Compliance with BS5837:2012

1.5.1 This is an assessment of the elements recommended by BS5837: 2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction'.

1.5.2 Evidence of a tree survey conducted to BS5837:2012, including tree categorisation (BS5837 section 4.4 and 4.5) can be found in Appendix A (explanatory notes) and Appendix B (Survey Data Table).

1.5.3 An Arboricultural Impact Plan showing the trees and their RPAs overlaid to the proposed layout, indicating trees for retention and removal. (BS5837 section 4.5 and 4.6) can be found in Appendix C.

1.5.4 Consideration of any relevant policy, legislation or statutory protection affecting the site. (BS5837 section 5.2.3) (see section 3)

1.5.5 Throughout the report there is evidence of my assessment of the implication of the proposal and its acceptability based upon:

- The relationship between the trees and the proposed layout.
- Indicated tree losses (BS5837 section 5.2.3 and 5.4.3)
- The potential impact of RPA incursions (BS5837 section 5.3.1 and 5.3.2)
- Factors which may affect the reasonable enjoyment of the proposed structures such as shading, screening and privacy (BS5837 section 5.3.4)
- Future growth and/or pressures for removal or pruning (BS5837 section 5.3.4)
- Factors that may affect foundation design (BS5837 Annex A)
- Foreseeable issues with the planned demolition/construction of the proposed layout such as working space and access. (BS5837 section 5.4.2)

2 CONSTRAINTS

2.1 Site context

Location

2.1.1 The site is located in the southern part of Yaxley in an area of residential development.



Fig. 1 Location of site marked in red © Google Maps 2023

Overview

2.1.2 The site is occupied by a public house with parking to the rear.

Topography

2.1.3 The site is generally level.

Soil and Geology

2.1.4 With reference to Figure 4.3, Volume 1 'Tree Root Damage to Buildings' (P G Biddle), some soils can have shrinkable characteristics (i.e., they are susceptible to volume changes in response to variations in moisture content).

2.1.5 Understanding the impact of trees on soil moisture content and considering the potential effects of changes in soil volume on foundations are critical for ensuring both the stability of the built environment and the preservation of retained trees. Chapter 4.2 of the National House Building Council Standards specifically addresses the requirements and considerations related to trees and shrinkable soils. It offers guidance to developers, engineers, and builders on how to assess the risks associated with trees and shrinkable soils in a development site and implement appropriate measures to mitigate these risks effectively.

2.1.6 The British Geological Survey of England and Wales identifies the bedrock geology at this location as Oxford Clay Formation – Mudstone. No superficial deposits were noted.

2.1.7 Mudstone gives rise to a fine-grained clay type spoil, which can easily be damaged through compaction and can have shrink/swell potential.

2.1.8 It is assumed that the additional structures have been specified to suit the site conditions.

2.2 Statutory protection

2.2.1 None of the trees surveyed are included in a Tree Preservation Order.

2.2.2 The site is within a Conservation Area. However, a previous tree officer assessed NT1 Horse Chestnut after the applicant issued a Section 211 notice of their intent to prune the tree and determined that it did not warrant a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

2.2.3 In addition, full Planning Consent would allow those works described in the supporting documentation or necessary to implement the consented development to go ahead without the need for any further notice to the Local Planning Authority as a result of the Conservation Area.

2.3 Arboricultural survey

2.3.1 The trees inspected are growing within the site boundary.

2.3.2 NT1 Horse Chestnut has a moderate infection of Horse Chestnut Bleeding Canker and there is no practical method of control for the disease. There is decay in the main stem and an unoccluded wound on the south side of the main stem. The tree was historically pollarded at 3m. Given the relatively short useful life expectancy, removal is recommended. This aligns with the Arboricultural Consultee's email, which notes the tree's poor condition and unsuitability for retention.

2.3.3 The full table of survey data can be found in Appendix B.

2.4 Ecological considerations

2.4.1 Protected species such as nesting birds, bats, dormice, and reptiles play important roles in local ecosystems and are safeguarded by various laws and regulations.

2.4.2 Any contractors on site will assume responsibility under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitat Regulations 2010 (as amended), and the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. They are required to take all reasonable measures to identify the presence of protected species such as nesting birds, bats, dormice, and reptiles in the work area and its surroundings.

3 NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY

3.1 Town and Country Planning Act 1990

3.1.1 Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives the local planning authority the duty to ensure that, whenever it is appropriate, planning permission for any development should include conditions that make adequate provision for the preservation or planting of trees. It also obligates the authority to make Tree Preservation Orders (dealt with in Section 198) when they are deemed necessary in connection with the granting of planning permission or to give effect to imposed Conditions.

3.1.2 In this case, the suitability of the Horse Chestnut for inclusion in a Tree Preservation Order has been tested and it was found unsuitable.

3.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.2.1 The NPPF (updated in December 2024) contemplates the importance of trees in the context of development and sets out principles and requirements to inform planning decisions. In particular, Section 12: Achieving well-designed and beautiful places, Paragraph 136 states that "planning policies and decisions should ensure that … existing trees are retained wherever possible."

3.2.2 Both trees on site have been retained to date. The proposal does not require or implicate removal.

3.3 Council Local Plan/ Policies

3.3.1 During the planning application process, Huntingdonshire District Council will evaluate whether the proposed development complies with the objectives and requirements set out in the Local Plan to 2036 (adopted May 2019) and supporting planning documents.

3.3.2 Relevant to this assessment, Policy LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Hedgerows, requires developers to demonstrate that any potential adverse impacts on trees and vegetation have been investigated. Where impacts are unavoidable, proposals must outline measures to minimize harm and, where necessary, provide appropriate mitigation. The policy emphasizes the importance of retaining and enhancing existing trees and hedgerows of visual, heritage, or ecological value.

3.3.3 The Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (2022) advises that developments should protect existing mature trees where they contribute to the character of the street scene. Similarly, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017) highlights the necessity of incorporating landscape principles into developments, particularly ensuring that existing trees are retained and integrated from the earliest design stage in line with BS5837:2012. It also stresses that development layouts should allow sufficient space for retained trees to mature without creating future pressures for removal or excessive pruning. Additionally, developers must ensure that appropriate tree protection measures are in place throughout the construction phase.

3.4 Conclusions

3.4.1 This proposal meets NPPF and Huntingdonshire District Council requirements by ensuring that the trees at this site have been a material consideration and providing evidence of a survey and impact assessment to BS5837.

3.4.2 As all the works that might affect the tree have been implemented, a tree protection methodology is not required in this instance and in all likelihood, the tree will be removed.

4 CRITERIA

4.1 Protection of root system

4.1.1 Construction activities can cause damage to the root system of a tree in several ways:

- Physical damage Excavation for construction or the digging of trenches to install underground utilities can result in root damage such as the loss of bark, splits or complete severance.

- Changes in ground levels. Elevating soil levels can lead to root death through asphyxiation. Reducing soil levels can result in the loss of the beneficial humus layer and root loss.

- Soil compaction. Heavy machinery or vehicles operating near trees can lead to soil compaction. The degree to which this is significant will depend on the soil on the site but in principle, compactions reduces or removes pore spaces in the soil structure. This in turn can lead to root death through asphyxiation. During construction, ground can be protected from damage through the use of barriers or a suitable ground protection system.

- Soil contamination. construction materials, Materials such as fuel, chemicals, lime, cement, and waste water can cause root death, either through chemical action or asphyxiation. A site must be organized in such a way to prevent damage.

- Heat. Fires can not only damage the tree above ground but the heat can also cause root death. Fires should ideally be avoided on most sites but on larger sites, it may be practical to accommodate a fire, providing it is a suitable distance from retained trees.

4.1.2 In its simplest form, the Root Protection Area (RPA) is a circle which is drawn on plans to indicate an area that is adequate for a tree's normal needs such as anchorage, moisture and nutrient absorption. It is described in British Standard 5837 as a "layout design tool" and in most cases the radius of the circle is calculated by multiplying the diameter of the main stem of the tree by 12. The shape can be adjusted to account for the possible or absolute effect of sub-surface features on the rooting environment. The Arboricultural Impact Plan (see Appendix C) shows the Root Protection Area (RPA) as a magenta circle or polygon around each tree or group of trees.

4.1.3 Trees rely on their root systems to absorb water, nutrients, and provide stability. Severe root damage can lead to decline, poor growth, or even the eventual death of the tree. The degree of damage also depends on the health of the tree, its age, the species, and the overall site conditions. The results of damage can take several years to become evident.

4.1.4 BS5837 (paragraph 5.3.1) states that the RPA is the area where, if the trees are retained, ideally no excavation should take place; the soil level should not be raised or lowered; no materials should be stacked; there must be no contamination and no services should be routed. However, trees are remarkably resilient, and some root loss can typically be tolerated in a tree of normal health and vigour.

4.1.5 An incursion into a Root Protection Area can be superficial (as with a driveway constructed over the existing ground level for example) or may involve partial or complete root loss within the area. BS5837 contemplates the possibility that there may be justification for construction within the RPA and that technical solutions can be used to mitigate the effects of an incursion. The Project Arboriculturalist is charged with demonstrating that the tree can remain viable, that the area lost to encroachment can be compensated for elsewhere, and to propose mitigation methods.

4.2 Protection of tree above ground

4.2.1 The Arboricultural Impact Plan (see Appendix C) shows the tree canopy as an indented green circle or dashed polygon which takes account of any variations in crown spread at the four cardinal points.

4.2.2 During construction, the aerial parts of the tree are at risk from potential physical damage due to contact with plant or vehicles. This can be avoided through effective site management, pruning to create sufficient space for the vehicles to pass under, or using protective barriers to create a safe distance between construction activities and tree canopies. The height of the lower crown above ground is shown in the Tree Survey Table (Appendix B).

5 IMPACT ANALYSIS

5.1 Site layout

5.1.1 The application is a Variation of Condition application for a change to the approved plans relating to Consented Application 21/02807/FUL for the Change of Use of the public house to a wine bar. Associated renovations now include for an increase in the size of the covered external seating area to the rear incorporating a retaining wall and steps, and additions to the rear parking area including a bin store and larger graveled area.

5.1.2 The proposed works have the potential to damage parts of the Horse Chestnut's root system but as the tree is already in decline due to other factors, this is academic.

5.1.3 Sycamore NT2 is not affected by the proposal.

5.2 Engineering, drainage and services

5.2.1 The retaining wall shown at the western side of the paved area has the potential to sever roots of Horse Chestnut NT1.

5.2.2 The drainage layout has the potential to sever roots of Horse Chestnut NT1.

5.3 Livability

Screening

5.3.1 Screening provides a means to create separation, privacy, and aesthetic enhancement in both residential and commercial contexts. It helps shield properties from unwanted views, reduces noise pollution, and can contribute to the overall visual character of the area.

5.3.2 The loss of screening can be mitigated through replacement planting.

Shade

5.3.3 The shade footprint that may be cast by the trees has been shown as a grey hatch on the Arboricultural Impact Plan (see Appendix C). The shade area is based on a solar inclination of 45 degrees in line with the median suggested by BS5837: 2012 that covers the main daylight hours. This simplifies the actual shade area that may affect the site, but it is considered to be a good representation of the area in question.

5.3.4 Due to the type of development proposed, it will not be affected by shade cast by trees.

5.4 Future growth and pressure to prune

5.4.1 Future growth has been shown on the Arboricultural Impact Plan (see Appendix C) by way of a light green dashed line around NT2. This growth potential can lead to conflicts with structures; but generally, trees can tolerate the minor pruning required to maintain a satisfactory relationship between a tree and a building.

5.4.2 There is room for the tree to grow to maturity without the need for any significant arboricultural intervention.

6 TREE REMOVALS

6.1 Tree removals

6.1.1 NT1 Horse Chestnut is recommended for removal due to its poor health and declining condition. This recommendation aligns with the assessment provided in the email from the Arboricultural Consultee at Huntingdonshire District Council, which highlights the tree's compromised rooting environment and its lack of suitability for long-term retention.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Tree Removal

7.1.1 Although the proposal does not directly implicate the loss of any trees, Horse Chestnut NT1 is shown for removal due to its condition.

7.2 Post construction

7.2.1 The detail of the landscape scheme and how it will be maintained can be secured by Condition of any Consent.

Appendices

Appendix A – Tree Survey Explanatory Notes

Identification

All significant trees within and adjoining the site were surveyed in accordance with British Standard 5837.

Two trees have been designated the prefix 'NT' and numbered. Reference to the trees' locations can be made using the plans appended to this report.

Limitations

The tree survey was carried out for the purpose of informing the planning process. Relevant structural defects and aspects of tree condition are noted in the tree survey table in Appendix B; however, a full hazard assessment has not been carried out.

As trees and shrubs are living organisms whose health and condition can change rapidly, conclusions and recommendations are only valid for one year. The health, condition and safety of trees should be checked regularly, preferably annually.

It may have been necessary to estimate some measurements when assessing trees on neighbouring land. This will not generally affect the conclusions of this report.

No invasive investigations were carried out to assess the internal condition of the trees. Should this be required, it will be highlighted in the report.

The soil was not examined and no soil samples were taken. Should soil analysis be indicated, this will be recommended in the report.

Appendix B – Tree Survey Data

Key	
Age Class	Y = Young (Less than 1/3 of normal expected life) OM = Over-mature or in decline SM = Semi-mature (1/3 – 2/3 of normal expected life) V = Veteran M = Mature
Main Stem Diameter	Measured at 1.5 metres above ground or in accordance BS5837: 2012 Annex C and D
Height	Estimated or measured with clinometer where considered critical (m)
Crown spread	At cardinal points (m)
RPA (Radius)/(Area)	Distance in metres from centre of tree to achieve a circular Root Protection Area/ Root Protection Area in square metres.
Remaining Contribution	Estimated number of years the tree may contribute in a safe condition
Category	See table overleaf for definitions

Note: This survey is an assessment of the existing site and any recommendations are preliminary and do not reflect a particular layout or proposal

BS5837:2021 Cascade Chart for Tree Quality Assessment Trees to be considered for retention

Category and definition	Criteria (including subcategories where appropriate)			Identification on Plan
Trees unsuitable for retention				
Category U Trees 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 category U trees (e.g. 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 it might be desirable to preserve			
	1. Mainly arboricultural qualities	**2. Mainly landscape qualities**	**3. Mainly cultural values, including conservation**	
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 those that are essential components of groups or formal or semi-formal arboricultural features (e.g. the dominant 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)	
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 detention 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	
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 value	

ref.	Species	Age Class	Observations: Factors affecting the quality and value of the trees	ø m/s (mm)	Height (m)	Lower crown height (m)	Ultimate height (m)	Crown Spread N (m)	Crown Spread S (m)	Crown Spread E (m)	Crown Spread W (m)	Category	Remaining Contribution (yrs)	Preliminary management recommendations	RPA radius (m)	RPA (m^2)
NT1	Horse Chestnut	M	Moderate infection with Horse Chestnut Bleeding Canker. Previously pollarded at 3m. Decay in unoccluded wound south side of main stem.	1100	15	2.5	15	7.5	6.5	6.5	8	C1	10+	Fell and replace	13.2	547.46
NT2	Sycamore	SM	No visible defects seen	500	15	1	18	7	7	7	7	B1	40+	No works required	6	113.11

Appendix C – Arboricultural Impact Plan

1:200 Plan follows. To be printed in colour on A2.



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NOTES Based on proposal drawing 21036/PL02A

The original of this drawing was produced in colour - a monochrome copy should not be relied upon.

KEY

- GRADE B TREE
- GRADE C TREE
- ROOT PROTECTION AREA
- CANOPY OUTLINE - INDIVIDUAL TREE
- ROOT PROTECTION AREA OF TREE TO BE REMOVED
- TREE NOT SUITABLE FOR RETENTION
- INDICATIVE SHADE AREA
- CANOPY OUTLINE - FUTURE POTENTIAL

Rev	Description	Date
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Purpose of Issue
Planning

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Drawing Title
ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT PLAN

Drawn	Checked	Reviewed	Date
AMB	--	--	06/02/2025
Job No.	Scale	Sheet Size	Revision
5585	1:200	A2	—

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