Arboricultural Consultation Response

Application No:	**Location:**
25/00500/HHFUL	4 Rectory Lane, Wyton
Case Officer: JF	**Proposals:** Conversion of a Conservatory into a Lounge

Observations:

An application has been submitted for the conversion of an existing conservatory into a lounge. The site is located within a Conservation Area, and there is a Tree Preservation Order that covers the whole property. This is due to the extensive and important tree cover in the area.

Previous information provided was not sufficient to make a judgement upon, however new information has now been provided.

The following potential impacts have been identified with regard to the proposed conversion of the existing conservatory at 4 Rectory Lane, Wyton into a functional, year-round living space which occurs within close proximity to significant trees (see associated annotation points adjacent):

A As the proposed conversion of the conservatory reuses the existing foundation and services there are no impacts arising from the footprint on the adjacent trees.

B Access to the conservatory will be through the garden (along the route shown as a dashed red line adjacent) with an entrance created through the existing fence by removing a panel. Partial demolition of the conservatory is anticipated to use hand tools with debris barrowed or moved in a small dumper through the garden and gap in the fence, through to the driveway. Similarly, materials for the conversion will follow the same route with the maximum size of any small plant moving larger materials dictated by the scale of the entrance through the fence and the available space between T11 and the dwelling (2.3m). This access route will necessarily cross the RPA of T2, T6, T7 and T11 - in addition to the low risk of direct mechanical injury from vehicle / plant movements, the vast majority of tree roots normally occupy the upper 600mm of soil, (with a typical bias to the uppermost layers within that depth) soil compaction by construction traffic has the potential to cause physiological stress through the impairment of root function. This can lead to decline and dieback, a resulting susceptibility to pests and diseases or other systemic stressors (e.g., waterlogging or drought) and an associated loss of amenity value. However, due to the small-scale nature of the project and the assessed ground conditions (a well-trafficked garden lawn) it is not considered that there will any significant compaction risk. Should there be an abnormally wet winter period prior to commencement then it may be prudent for the contractor to provide some ground protection if light plant (i.e., tracked barrows or mini-dumpers) is needed, but this is as much to prevent damage to the garden as a whole, as it is to mitigate the minimal risk of compaction damage to the trees.

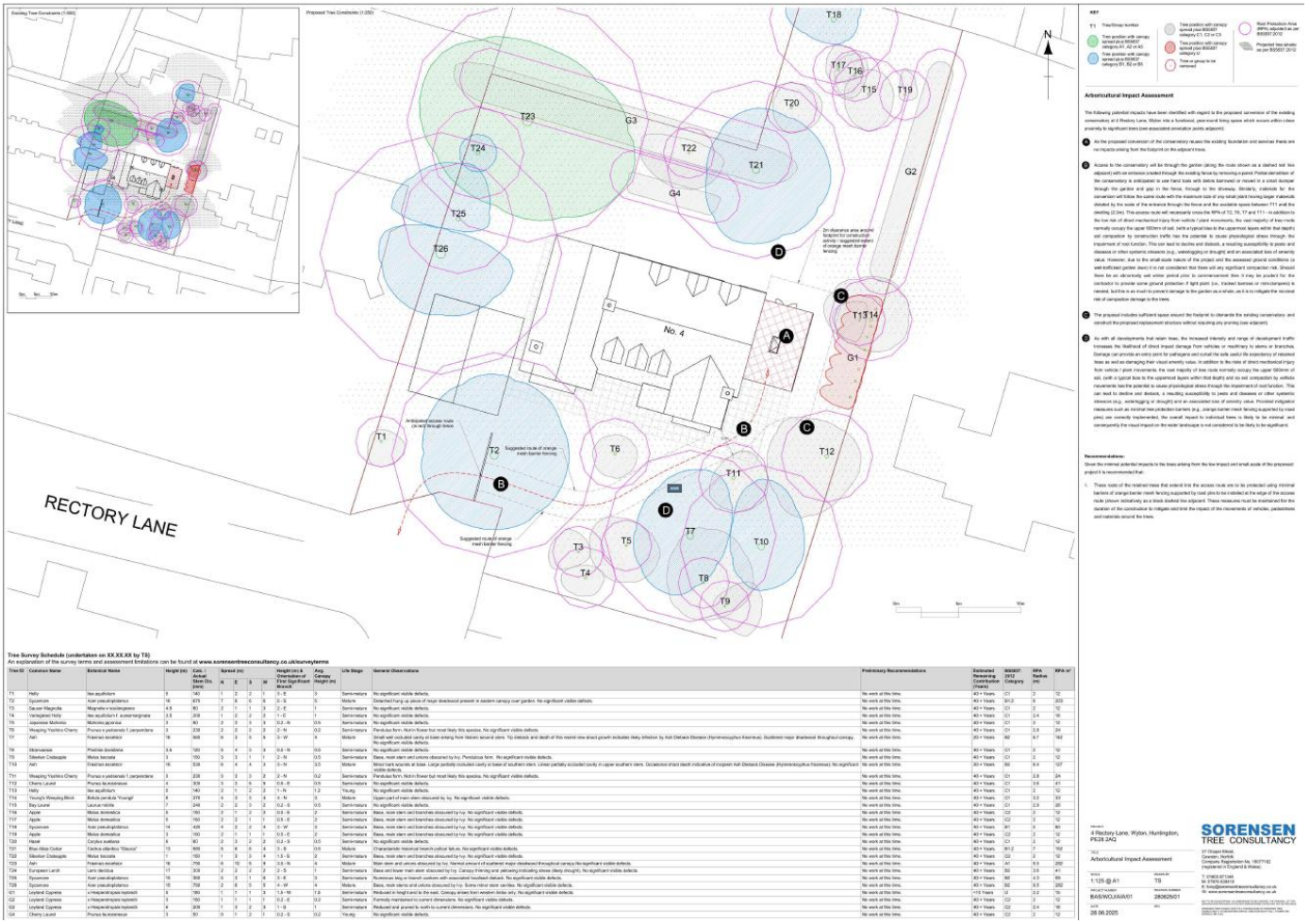
C The proposal includes sufficient space around the footprint to dismantle the existing conservatory and construct the proposed replacement structure without requiring any pruning (see adjacent).

D As with all developments that retain trees, the increased intensity and range of development traffic increases the likelihood of direct impact damage from vehicles or machinery to stems or branches. Damage can provide an entry point for pathogens and curtail the safe useful life expectancy of retained trees as well as damaging their visual amenity value. In addition to the risks of direct mechanical injury from vehicle / plant movements, the vast majority of tree roots normally occupy the upper 600mm of soil, (with a typical bias to the uppermost layers within that depth) and so soil compaction by vehicle movements has the potential to cause physiological stress through the impairment of root function. This can lead to decline and dieback, a resulting susceptibility to pests and diseases or other systemic stressors (e.g., waterlogging or drought) and an associated loss of amenity value. Provided mitigation measures such as minimal tree protection barriers (e.g., orange barrier mesh fencing supported by road pins) are correctly implemented, the overall impact to individual trees is likely to be minimal and consequently the visual impact on the wider landscape is not considered to be likely to be significant.

Recommendations:

Given the minimal potential impacts to the trees arising from the low impact and small-scale of the proposed project it is recommended that:

1. Those roots of the retained trees that extend into the access route are to be protected using minimal barriers of orange barrier mesh fencing supported by road pins to be installed at the edge of the access route (shown indicatively as a black dashed line adjacent. These measures must be maintained for the duration of the construction to mitigate and limit the impact of the movements of vehicles, pedestrians and materials around the trees.



The actual construction and development project does not clash significantly with any trees nearby. However, accessing the site is more complicated due to the density of trees in the front garden.

The provided Method Statement/mapping indicates that low level fencing will be used to form a path through the RPA of a number of trees in the front garden, but then no ground protection is intended to protect this area. This makes the fencing irrelevant.

It does suggest that during wet weather ground protection 'could' be utilised. This will need to be done as a matter of course. Matting will need to be installed across the length of the proposed path across the garden before works starts, and then left in place until it is complete. The fencing either side of this boarding will then help to prevent damage to the surrounding RPA's. BS587:2012 confirms that the ground needs to be protected, even if it is only from repeated pedestrian traffic.

I am happy that once this is taken care of, the project can be completed in a way that does not impact the trees on site.

Comments

Once confirmation is received that protective matting is to be utilised across the front garden and its type, I happy to support the application.

Recommendation: Support Application with minor revisions to the Tree Protection Plan.

Signed: NS	**Date: 04/07/2025**