Location:
Land West of Lancaster Park
Morpeth

Survey Type:
Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Ref:
AE/ARB/810

Completed By:

Authorised By:

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1. Concept Masterplan
1 Introduction

1.1 Acting upon the request of Signet Planning on behalf of the applicant, a pre-development survey of trees and woodlands at land due west of Lancaster Park in Morpeth was undertaken on the 6th and 7th of January 2014, subsequent to which a pre-development report and tree constraints plan was produced. Following this assessment of site and tree data, and in reference to the concept masterplan included in Appendix 1 this Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared. All arboricultural reports have been undertaken by Andrew Elliott of Elliott Consultancy Ltd.

1.2 Scope of the report:

- This report provides arboricultural information and advice in relation to the proposed re-development of the site in line with the proposals. A potential indicative design (as shown within Appendix 1) is considered with regard tree retention and protection and is discussed within section 4: Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- The tree and woodland data used within this report is contained within the aforementioned pre-development tree survey document (January 2014), which should be considered in tandem with this report.
2 Site & Proposal Information

2.1 The area surveyed is located to the west of the Lancaster Park residential estate in Morpeth, with farmland to the north and south, woodland leading to residential properties to the east, and bordered by the A1 to the west. Figure 1 shows the extent of the area surveyed.

![Figure 1: Areas surveyed highlighted](image)

2.2 The site is currently undeveloped being broken into separate fields in agricultural use, divided by a network of hedges including significant tree stock.

2.3 All trees on the site are located within the boundary hedge lines around each field. Around the eastern and southern periphery of the site are areas of mature woodland known locally as Scotch Gill. Hedgerow features are present within the site with several reasonable lengths of well maintained hedgerows noted, many are broken or derelict smaller sections possibly neglected in the past, but all appear well maintained at present.
2 Site & Proposal Information (cont)

2.4 The northern end of site is subject to change due to the new North Morpeth Bypass road scheme which will provide a new access from the A1 at this point with a new connecting highway continuing towards the northeast of Morpeth. This new road network is not connected to these proposals and will be undertaken regardless.

2.5 The proposals for the site include:

- Residential units.
- Mixed use/Commercial units apartments over.
- Hotel.
- Restaurant/pub adjacent to the hotel.
- PFS.
- Amenity Building with 3 components 200 sq m retail, 450 sq m convenience retail, 400 sq m hot food and drinks and 400sqm support services including showers, lockers, management offices, plant and also include circulation space and tourist information.
3 Tree Retention Considerations

3.1 Any tree retained within the design will require protection in accordance with BS5837:2012 ‘Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations’ regardless of its initial retention category. This protection will require trees being fenced-off in areas equal to the Root Protection Areas or above ground characteristics – whichever is the greater; this must be undertaken prior to any work beginning on site and should be fully detailed within an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan.

3.2 Category A & B trees and groups of trees have been identified on site as being of such stature, condition, and aesthetic quality as to be worthy of retention and protection within any proposed design if possible. If retained care must be taken within the design stage to ensure that adequate space is allowed for the protection of root and branch tissue.

3.3 Category C trees and groups of trees should not be viewed as a significant constraint to development, and it would be expected that where their removal was required within a design to benefit overall use of the site, this may be considered acceptable. However where these trees do not require removal due to design, and if not impeding the design could, and in many circumstances, should be retained if possible. If retained they will require protection in accordance with BS5837 details of which can be fully detailed within an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan secured by a planning condition at the application stage.
4 Arboricultural Impact Assessment

4.1 This section concentrates on the concept masterplan and how it relates to the trees on site at present. It further considers how the ongoing evolution of the masterplan can consider and respond to the arboricultural constraints within the site to ensure that any arboricultural impact is acceptable subject to mitigation. Any potential tree and design conflicts are highlighted and possible remedial action suggested if appropriate. The concept masterplan is shown within Appendix 1.

4.2 Potential Conflict 1: Loss of trees, woodlands, and hedgerows due to locations of buildings, access roads, infrastructure etc.

Location of dwellings and access roads can necessitate the removal of trees, groups of trees, and sections of hedgerows located within site.

Mitigation / Countermeasure: The illustrative design shows that all significantly valuable trees, woodlands, and hedgerows can be retained within the proposals. At this stage of the design only a single low quality Category C tree may require removal to allow an access road (Tree 91), with all other locations for access or construction being provided within areas without tree cover or where trees are required for removal regardless of development (Category U trees in a dead or dangerous condition). As such the proposals will have no significant impact on tree numbers, other than for a potential to increase tree cover within landscape designs.

N.B. The removal of Trees 1-16 to facilitate the creation of the North Morpeth bypass road scheme is not in any way connected or resulting from the scheme shown in the masterplan (Appendix 1) and will be undertaken regardless of these proposals.
4 Arboricultural Impact Assessment (cont)

4.3 Potential Conflict 2: Damage to trees within the site due to proximity of buildings, access roads etc.

Trees may be damaged during construction due to a variety of reasons during a development process.

Mitigation / Countermeasure: The plans show that the design has allowed for adequate space to be maintained between trees and structures and roads, and should in most cases provide protection exceeding that within the recommendations of BS5837, with no necessity for incursions into the recommended root protection areas of the retained trees. Further design evolution and continued impact assessment of more detailed proposals will allow any minor conflicts to be avoided and mitigated against. All the retained trees and hedgerows can be fenced off in accordance with BS5837 with immoveable fencing as detailed within an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan prior to any work being undertaken on site.

4.4 Potential Conflict 3: Location of connecting footpaths through woodland along the eastern boundary.

The construction of these connecting footpaths and any associated lighting etc could cause damage by excavation or compaction to underlying root tissue of woodland trees.

Mitigation / Countermeasure: During the ongoing design evolution consideration will be given to the most appropriate routes to ensure any disturbance within the wooded areas is kept to a minimum. Construction methods, materials, and the precise locations of features will all be designed with the specific objective of minimising any potential impacts to trees.
4 Arboricultural Impact Assessment (cont)

4.5 **Potential Conflict 4: Location of utilities runs with Root Protection Areas.**

Damage can be caused to roots during the installation of utilities runs.

**Mitigation / Countermeasure:** No new utility runs must be located within any of the retained trees root protection areas. Any works to existing utilities will be undertaken with regard for the retained tree cover and will be in accordance with NJUG (National Joint Utility Group) recommendations.

4.6 **Potential Conflict 5: Damage to trees due to post-development landscaping:**

Damage can be caused post-development by excessive landscaping and soil changes in close proximity to retained trees. Further damage can be caused to trees in the long-term by inappropriate tree planting in close proximity that can cause damage to tree shape and lead to competition for water and nutrients.

**Mitigation / Countermeasure:** Landscaping works within the root protection areas will be kept to a minimum. Tractor mounted rotavation or other heavy mechanical cultivation must not be used within the root protection areas of retained trees. All cultivation within RPA’s will be carefully undertaken by hand or pedestrian controlled light machinery to avoid root damage. Trees chosen for planting will take account of their position so as to avoid pressure on existing trees and to avoid future pressure for removal due to issues of size or form.
4 Arboricultural Impact Assessment (cont)

4.7 Masterplan evolution: It is expected that the design will be subject to an ongoing evolution to ensure that all of the sites various constraints and opportunities are considered and managed appropriately. Within this evolution the information provided within the Tree Survey (January 2014) can be used to inform detailed engineering designs and layout. It provides physical and qualitative details of tree features that will allow trees, groups of trees, and hedgerows to be retained free from damage and integrated into the final layout.
5 Summary

5.1 The development of the site as shown in the masterplan included within Appendix 1 can be undertaken with the retention of almost every tree, woodland, and hedgerow on and adjacent to the site. Retained trees and woodlands can be protected in accordance with, and in the majority of locations exceeding, the recommendations outlined within BS5837 ‘Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations’ 2012. A comprehensive landscape strategy, which will include tree planting within the new layout, can not only compensate for any minor loss of vegetation (present estimate being a single low quality Category C tree), but will actually increase tree numbers, and ensure a sustainable integration of the trees and woodlands within the proposed scheme.

5.2 It is expected that during ongoing detailed design evolution this potential for tree retention and protection of trees, hedges, and woodlands will continue to be central to the scheme and that any new potentially negative impacts will be highlighted within further Arboricultural Impact Assessments and countermeasures proposed to avoid conflicts.

5.3 It is recommended that after detailed engineering design, and before any construction begins, Arboricultural Method Statements and Tree Protection Plans are undertaken to be used on site to guide tree protection and retention during and after the construction phase.

5.4 If any element of this report requires clarification Elliott Consultancy Limited should be contacted for further information.

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