



APP 34 – Rebuttal Statement - Arboriculture

Sandleford Park, Newbury

Chris Alder MSc HNDArb FArborA MICFor RCarborA

Ref: 19156-Arb-Rebuttal-DRAFT-CA

LPA ref: 20/01238/OUTMAJ

PINS ref: APP/W0340/W/20/3265460



20th April 2021



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction

I am instructed by Bloor Homes Ltd to provide a Rebuttal Statement in response to the Arboricultural proof of evidence submitted by West Berkshire Council in relation to the appeal and public inquiry for the proposed development of land at Sandlesford Park, Newbury.

1.2 Limitations

The rebuttal deals solely with the evidence and appendices provided by Mr A Giles, Senior Tree Officer, West Berkshire Council.

1.3 Qualifications and experience

This statement is based on my site observations and the provided information, interpreted in the context of my experience. I have experience and qualifications in arboriculture and a summary can be found in my proof of evidence.

2 REBUTTAL

2.1 Summary

Page 4, [1.2]: Monks Lane Access

2.1.1 Mr Giles makes a generalised claim that the loss of trees covered by the recently modified TPO is without satisfactory landscape mitigation, and will be detrimental to the amenity, visual quality and verdant character of this important street scene. New planting and landscape enhancements is dealt with in the Landscape Evidence.

Page 4, [1.3]: Ancient Woodlands

2.1.2 Mr Giles claims that the ancient woodlands are at serious risk of encroachment by the proposed development, and post development pressures, especially Crooks Copse which he claims will be isolated and fragmented from the site due to the new road. Following the guidance set out in the NPPF, and through detailed design none of the woodlands will be subject to encroachment. Green links and new planting will ensure that connections are maintained where possible.

Page 5 [1.4]: Ancient/Veteran Trees

2.1.3 Mr Giles describes the loss of T34 and T127 as not explained by the proposals, and that trees T1, T31, T33 and T166 will be harmed by the development. As shown in the ongoing design and updated proposals, all these trees will be retained and protected. T1 is outside the red line boundary.



Page 5 [1.5]: Central Valley Crossing and Emergency Access

- 2.1.4 Mr Giles claims that the valley crossing will result in the loss of important trees and hedgerows, and damage an important green link between Barn Copse and Dirty Ground Copse. One moderate category tree T69, and part of a low category group G37 will be lost because of the valley crossing.

Page 5 [1.6]: Park House School Expansion

- 2.1.5 The 'Wheatcroft' proposals has, in Mr Giles' view failed to demonstrate how veteran trees would be protected. The trees adjacent to the proposed pitch are shown retained, and protected. At reserved matters stage, the full detail of their protection and how works in proximity are to be undertaken will be provided.

Page 6[1.7]: Inconsistencies in the documentation submitted

- 2.1.6 The designs are ongoing, and as is normal with an outline application, full details will be provided at reserved matters stage. As the design of specific areas, such as the valley crossing emerge, we have updated our plans and schedules accordingly.

Page 6[1.8]: Tree Preservation Order

- 2.1.7 The provisional TPO on the site has recently been confirmed, subject to a series of modifications. The statutory protection of trees on a development site is a duty of the LPA, and we welcome the protection this affords the trees.

2.2 Section 4 Monks Lane Access

Page 13, [4.2]:

- 2.2.1 Mr Giles references three notable trees that he says will be directly impacted by the proposed access off Monks Lane. T116 is dead, and although it has been included within the modified TPO, it is exempt from the TPO controls and can be removed without the need for a formal application. Any habitat within the trees will be subject to protection by the Habitat Regulations and the advice of an ecologist should be sought. Trees T222 and T233 are off site and outside the red line and unaffected by the proposed roundabout.

Page 14, [4.4]:

- 2.2.2 The provisional TPO, recently confirmed with modifications, has included the trees along the Monks Lane frontage as a woodland (TPO ref W13). We dispute that these trees constitute a woodland, do not possess the normal characteristics of woodland character, ground flora or quality. They are a linear group of scattered trees planted as an amenity buffer along the roadside boundary. Provision for replacement planting has been included within the scheme.



Page 14, [4.5]

- 2.2.3 T116 (TPO ref T12) is dead. It's retention is not practical for such a high profile location, and its removal is exempt from the TPO consent requirements.

Page 14, [4.6]

- 2.2.4 The trees along the Monks Lane roadside boundary have been described as woodland by Mr Giles in the TPO (W13), however he talks about the loss of 250m of hedgerow. This is a linear group of trees and scattered individuals, not a hedgerow or a woodland. Planting has been provided for in the scheme.

2.5 Section 5 Ancient Woodland

Page 15, [5.3]:

- 2.5.1 Mr Giles has paraphrased the buffer zone advice from the NPPF. Individual trees should have a buffer zone either 15x their stem diameter or 5m beyond the crown spread whichever is the greater, whereas ancient woodlands should have a buffer zone of 15m.

The individual veteran trees as included on the Ancient Tree Inventory have been calculated as having the following buffer zones:

T1: BS5837:2012 calculated RPA radius of 10.8m modified to 13.5m

T31: BS5837:2012 calculated RPA radius of 13.2m, modified to 16.5m

T33: BS5837:2012 calculated RPA radius of 12m, modified to 15m

T34: BS5837:2012 calculated RPA capped radius of 15m, modified to 19.5m

T127: BS5837:2012 calculated RPA capped radius of 15m, modified to 22.5m

T128: BS5837:2012 calculated RPA capped radius of 15m, modified to 24m

T133: BS5837:2012 calculated RPA capped radius of 15m, modified to 19.5m

The buffer zones for the ancient woodlands accord with the County Wildlife maps as set out in the ecology evidence by Mr West.

Pages 15 & 16 [5.4-5.7]:

- 2.5.2 Mr Giles has put forward some concerns relating to ecological and drainage issues. These matters are dealt with in the evidence by Messrs. West and Witts respectively.

2.6 Section 6 Ancient/Veteran Trees

Page 15, [6.0]:

- 2.6.1 Mr Giles has suggested that the proposed residential scheme is not nationally significant and does not consider this residential development to fall within an 'exceptional reason' under the NPPF. I would respectfully question whether Mr Giles is appropriately qualified to cast opinions on matters that are beyond his remit.



Page 17, [6.2]

2.6.2 Trees T34 and T127 are to be retained subject to ongoing design.

Page 17, [6.3]

2.6.3 Tree T1 is outside the red line. Trees T31, T33 and T166 are not being lost, nor will be detrimentally impacted by the proposals. Trees T34 and T127 are to be retained subject to ongoing design.

Page 17, [6.4]

2.6.4 Mr Giles has put forward an opinion on the effect of the development on priority habitats. I respectfully suggest that this is not an arboricultural matter, and is beyond his remit. Mr West's evidence will consider the ecological impacts.

Mr Giles continues to state that the proposal will cause harm to veteran trees, although as demonstrated this is not the case.

Page 18, [6.5.1 Table 2]

2.6.5 Mr Giles has made comments concerning the veteran trees, claiming no reason given for felling, or stating that the RPA is impacted by the design. This is a misrepresentation. Any trees to be felled on a development site will be due to the proposal layout requirements, unless they need to be felled for safety or good management. However in this case, ongoing design work now means that these trees can be retained and protected during the development.

Pages 18 & 19, [6.6-6.17]

2.6.6 Mr Giles has quoted the standing advice in the NPPF concerning buffer zones, and has claimed that there will be impact within the RPA of a number of trees. The trees Mr Giles has highlighted as potential veteran trees, have not been classified as such by the Ancient Tree Inventory and therefore their RPAs are in accordance with the BS5837:2012. Any works within the RPA of retained trees will be subject to precautionary measures, in accordance with the provisions and recommendations of BS5837:2012. New surfacing, structures or services proposed within RPAs following the detailed design stage at reserved matters, will all be installed with care and will follow the industry guidance.

2.7 Section 7 Central Valley Crossing and Emergency Access

Page 23, [7.1]:

2.7.1 Mr Giles describes trees T69 and part of G68 as an important green link between Barn Copse and Dirty Ground Copse. Whilst the loss of trees has been minimised on this site, there is a need to provide the necessary access roads as set out in the Sandleford SPD, and this location is seen as having the least impact.



Page 23, [7.2]:

2.7.2 Due to ongoing design work, tree T76 can now be retained as part of the proposal.

Page 23 & 24, [7.3-7.3.1.1]:

2.7.3 The parameter plans shows an indicative route for the emergency access. This will be subject to detailed design work at reserved matters stage, and important trees will be retained and protected.

2.8 Section 8 Park House School Expansion

Pages 25 & 26, [8.1-8.6]:

2.8.1 The parameter plans shows an indicative area for the school expansion, however this is subject to ongoing design work, and at the reserved matters stage important trees will be retained and protected.

2.9 Section 9 Inconsistencies in the documentation submitted

Page 27, [9.0-9.1]

2.9.1 The schedule of inconsistencies is dealt with in Mr Jones's evidence, and clarifies those matters raised by the LPA.

2.10 Section 10 Conclusion

Page 28, [10.1]

2.10.1 The development of the site and protection of the important trees has been fully considered under the national guidance as laid out in BS5837:2012. The proposal achieves a sustainable relationship between its built form elements and the existing trees and complies with the quoted policies. By implementing the precautions to protect the retained trees that are specified through the arboricultural method statement included in this revised arboricultural report (APP 11 Appendix 3), the development proposal will have no significant impact on the contribution of these trees to amenity or character in the wider setting.

Page 28, [10.2]

2.10.2 The veteran trees as identified by the Ancient Tree Inventory have been protected and retained in accordance with the national advice. All other trees have been classified in accordance with BS5837:2012.

Page 28, [10.3]

2.10.3 New landscaping proposals will be dealt with in Mr Cooper's evidence, and clearly demonstrate that the provision of new planting is extensive.



Page 28, [10.4]

2.10.4 No off site trees will be detrimentally impacted by the proposals.

Page 28, [10.5]

2.10.5 No ancient or veteran trees will be lost as a result of the proposals.

Page 28, [10.6]

2.10.6 Adequate space in accordance with the national advice will be afforded trees to be retained for the Park House School expansion.

Page 28, [10.7]

2.10.7 The road alignment around Crooks Copse, as set out in the Sandlesford SPD is a necessary requirement, and road design and new planting will not result in a deterioration to the woodlands.

Page 28, [10.8]

2.10.8 None of the ancient woodlands or veteran trees will be detrimentally impacted by the detailed proposals. New planting will be extensive and complement the existing character of the area.

Page 29, [10.9]

2.10.9 The proposals accord with the policies as set out in the submitted report and proofs of evidence. Standing advice as set out in the NPPF, and the recommendations of BS5837:2012 have been followed.

Chris Alder MSc HNDArb FARborA MICFor RCarborA
20th April 2021



Field House Fordingbridge Business Park Fordingbridge Hampshire SP6 1BD
☎ 01425 651470 ✉ info@barrelltreecare.co.uk 🌐 www.barrelltreecare.co.uk