

Land west of School Lane, Higham

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Prepared in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations'.

December 2025



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Plumb Associates Ltd

Tel: 01621 744710

Email: steve@plumb-associates.co.uk

Web: www.plumb-associates.co.uk

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Plumb Associates Ltd was commissioned by M Scott Properties Ltd to undertake a tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment and prepare a draft arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan for land west of School Lane, Higham in support of an:

Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of up to 50 dwellings with associated infrastructure, landscaping and open space

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to assess the condition and quality of the existing trees on and adjacent to the site that could be impacted by the proposal to inform the measures required to minimise the impacts on the trees arising from the construction works.
- 1.3 An assessment of trees within the site was undertaken in accordance with BS5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations’.
- 1.4 The site survey was undertaken on 18th December 2025 by Steve Plumb CMLI CEnv MCIEEM who holds a Lantra Professional Tree Inspection certificate and has extensive experience with arboricultural assessment.

2 Site description

- 2.1 The application site comprises a single agricultural field which is currently in arable production on the northern edge of the village centre. There is a small woodland known as The Mount on the northern site boundary and a small group of trees on the southern boundary. There is a short section of hedge on the northern boundary.
- 2.2 The individual trees comprise a silver birch, a Corsican pine and a small field maple. There are other young trees and shrubs growing around them. The trees are growing close to outbuildings in the adjacent properties.
- 2.3 There are small areas of scrub and young trees on the southern boundary that have stems below 75mm and so have not included in the survey. These are within the areas proposed for landscape buffers and so will be retained and enhanced as part of the landscape and biodiversity enhancement scheme.

Legal constraints

- 2.4 Trees and woodlands can sometimes be the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or a property may be within a designated conservation area. Both a TPO and conservation area designation require the owner/occupier or those wishing to work

on trees to seek the Council's consent or provide written notice prior to carrying out any works. It is a criminal offence to carry out any works to protected trees without the Council's consent.

- 2.5 The site is not within a conservation area. Gravesham Borough Council does not have interactive maps showing TPOs and so it is not possible to confirm whether The Mount or individual trees are covered by an order. If any works were considered necessary it will be necessary to confirm their status with the Council prior to commencement.

3 Tree survey

- 3.1 Trees were assessed in accordance with recommendations and guidelines contained within British Standard 5837:2012 - 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction-Recommendations' henceforth referred to as BS5837. The survey was carried out in relation to the condition and quality of trees growing either within or near the boundary of the site. Where details have been omitted including the heights of crown break and the direction of the first major lateral branch, these details were not seen as being relevant to this application. Where access allowed, tree heights were measured with a Haglof electronic clinometer and trunk diameters with a diameter tape measure. Crown spreads were measured with a tape measure or paced out at the four cardinal points.
- 3.2 All trees were assessed from the ground utilizing the Visual Tree Assessment method as developed by Mattheck and Breloer (The Body Language of Trees, Research for Amenity Trees No 4 Department of the Environment).
- 3.3 This tree survey should not be treated as a hazard assessment, it has been carried out to inform the planning process with regards to the appropriate retention and protection of trees as visual and ecological assets within the landscape. However, where clear and obvious defects are observed, the relevant parties would be informed.
- 3.4 The tree schedule has been provided in Appendix 1. It contains details of the trees recorded on site, including their size, condition and expected life expectancy. Each tree has been categorised in accordance with BS5837's Table 1 Cascade Chart for tree quality assessment.

U= Trees in such a condition that any existing value would be lost within 10 years and which should in the current context, be removed for reasons of sound arboricultural management. (Trees that have serious, irremediable structural defects, such that their early loss is expected due to collapse or ill health including trees that will become at risk due to the loss of other U category trees).

A = Trees of high amenity quality and value in such a condition as to be able to make a substantial contribution (a minimum of 40 years is suggested).

1) Trees that are particularly good examples of their species if rare, unusual or essential components of groups or formal or semi-formal arboricultural features.

2) Trees, groups of trees or woodland which provide a definite screening or softening effect to the locality in relation to views in or out of the site, or those of particular visual importance.

3) Trees groups or woodlands of significant conservation, historical, Commemorative or other value (e.g. veteran tree or wood pasture).

B = Trees of moderate quality and amenity value: those in such a condition as to be able to make a significant contribution (a minimum of 20 years is suggested).

1) Trees that might be included in the high category but are down-graded because of impaired condition (e.g. remediable defects).

2) Trees, groups of trees or woodland that form distinct landscape features but do not form essential components of the landscape.

3) Trees with clearly identifiable conservation or other cultural benefits.

C = Trees of low quality and amenity value currently in adequate condition to remain until new planting is established (a minimum of 10 years is suggested) or trees under 150 mm stem diameter.

1) Unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories.

2) Trees presenting groups or woodlands but not with a significantly higher landscape value and / or offering low or temporary/transient screening benefit.

3) Trees with no conservation or other cultural benefits.

Note: Category C trees are the least suitable for retention, where they would impose a significant constraint on the development their removal for development purposes may be considered acceptable by the LPA.

Tree Survey Data and Appraisal

- 3.5 This survey concerns three individual trees, one woodland and one hedge. Full survey data can be found in the Tree Survey Schedule at Appendix 1.

Category A trees and woodland

- 3.6 No individual trees have been graded as Category A however The Mount is assessed as being a Category A woodland due to its visual prominence within the landscape.

Category B trees

- 3.7 Two individual trees have been graded as Category B (trees of moderate quality) as part of this survey.

Category C individual trees and hedge

- 3.8 One individual tree and one hedge were graded as Category C (trees of low quality) as part of this survey)

Category U trees

- 3.9 No Category U trees were recorded.

4 Draft Arboricultural Impact Assessment

- 4.1 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) sets out the potential risks and threats associated with proposed construction to trees both within and near to an application site and seeks to minimise those risks through the implementation of a sound and recognised methodology set out within an arboricultural method statement.
- 4.2 Construction and development in general can impact trees in several ways, the most notable being damage to the tree's root system leading to physiological decline and structural instability. BS5837 recognises this and sets out recommendations to minimise damage associated with the effects of soil compaction and root severance.
- 4.3 The AIA also considers the loss of trees to development and the impact upon the immediate and wider landscape.

Trees to be removed

- 4.4 No trees would require removal to facilitate the development.

Retained trees

- 4.5 No pruning or other management works would be required to facilitate the development. There are some overextended branches on a large Ash within The Mount that extends south over the landscape buffer. This will need to be assessed to determine if it should be reduced for arboricultural reasons to lessen the risk of the limb failing irrespective of this scheme.
- 4.6 The three individual trees on the southern boundary are within a proposed landscape buffer that would be created along the boundary with the existing houses. This would ensure that the trees can be retained. Any landscape works within the root protection areas such as cultivation of the soil to provide wildflower grassland would need to be minimised to avoid potential root damage.
- 4.7 There are small trees and shrubs within this group which could be removed to provide more space for the better-quality trees.

5 Arboricultural method statement

Preliminary works

- 5.1 No works to the trees are required to facilitate development.
- 5.2 Prior to any works commencing appropriate tree protection fencing (e.g Herras fencing- see Appendix 2) must be installed as shown on the Tree Protection Plan. This must be retained for the duration of the construction works
- 5.3 The installation of the protective fencing must be carried out under the supervision of an arboriculturist.

Services

- 5.4 The scheme is in outline so details of services are not available. It is assumed that these can be located to avoid any of the trees and the woodland.

Landscape works

- 5.5 The Outline Illustrative Concept Plan shows landscape buffers being retained along the southern boundary which would extend around the three individual trees. It is essential that ground preparation works are specified to avoid any unnecessary root damage through cultivation or compaction. The landscape buffer with The Mount proposes to retain and enhance the existing scrub which should minimize the need for cultivation works.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposed scheme layout has been designed to avoid any direct impact on the trees, woodland and hedge. The proposal would have no indirect impacts on any surrounding trees if the measures set out in the Arboricultural Method Statement are followed. The landscape scheme would result in a significant increase in the number of trees on site.

7 References

British Standards Institution BS3998:2010 – Recommendations for tree work

British Standards Institution BS5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design demolition and construction – Recommendations

Site photos

Photo 1 – Location of proposed workshop showing trees in adjacent property set back from boundary



Photo 2 – The Mount is an important landscape feature



Photo 3– The edge of The Mount with scrub buffer to be retained and enhanced



Photo 4 – Hedge on northern boundary to be retained



Appendix 1 – Tree Schedule

Tree number	Species	Age	Dia (mm)	Height (m)	Crown height (m)	Crown spread (m)				Condition	Life Exp	BS Cat	RPR (m)	RPA (m ²)	Comments	Preliminary Recommendations
						N	E	S	W							
T1	Field maple	EM	200	6	2	2	2	2	2	Fair	20-40	C1	2.4	18		None
T2	Austrian pine	EM	420	11	3	3	2	3	3	Fair	20-40	B2	5.1	81	Growing close to wall of outbuilding in adjacent property	None
T3	Silver birch	EM	420	11	2	4	4	3	2	Fair	20-40	B2	5.1	81	Growing close to wall of outbuilding in adjacent property	Remove ivy
W1	Mixed including ash and sycamore	M	300-350 closest to edge	10-13m at edge	2					Good	40+	A1	4.2			
H1	Mainly hawthorn	EM	50-100	1.5						Fair	20-40	C1	1.2		Appears relatively young hedge	

Explanation of the tree survey schedule

The tree survey has been carried out in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Tree in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations'.

Tree number – relates to number on Tree Plan - T- Tree, G – Group of trees, H – Hedge

Species – Common name and *botanical name*

Age

NP – Newly planted

Y – Young

EM – Early mature

SM – Semi mature

M – Mature

OM – Over mature

V- Veteran/ancient

Dia – Diameter of stem measured at 1.5m above ground level for single stem trees and given in millimetres.

Height – height in metres from the ground to the top of the crown.

Crown height – clearance under lowest branches.

Crown spread – spread of branches from trunk to edge of crown at each cardinal point.

Condition – Physiological condition – Good, fair, poor or dead

Life expectancy – an estimate of the likely number of years the tree will remain without management

BS Cat – Category in accordance with BS5837:2012

A – high quality and value with at least 40 years life expectancy remaining.

B – moderate quality and value with at least 20 years life expectancy remaining.

C – low quality and value with at least 10 years life expectancy remaining or young tree with stem diameter less than 150mm.

U – unsuitable for retention.

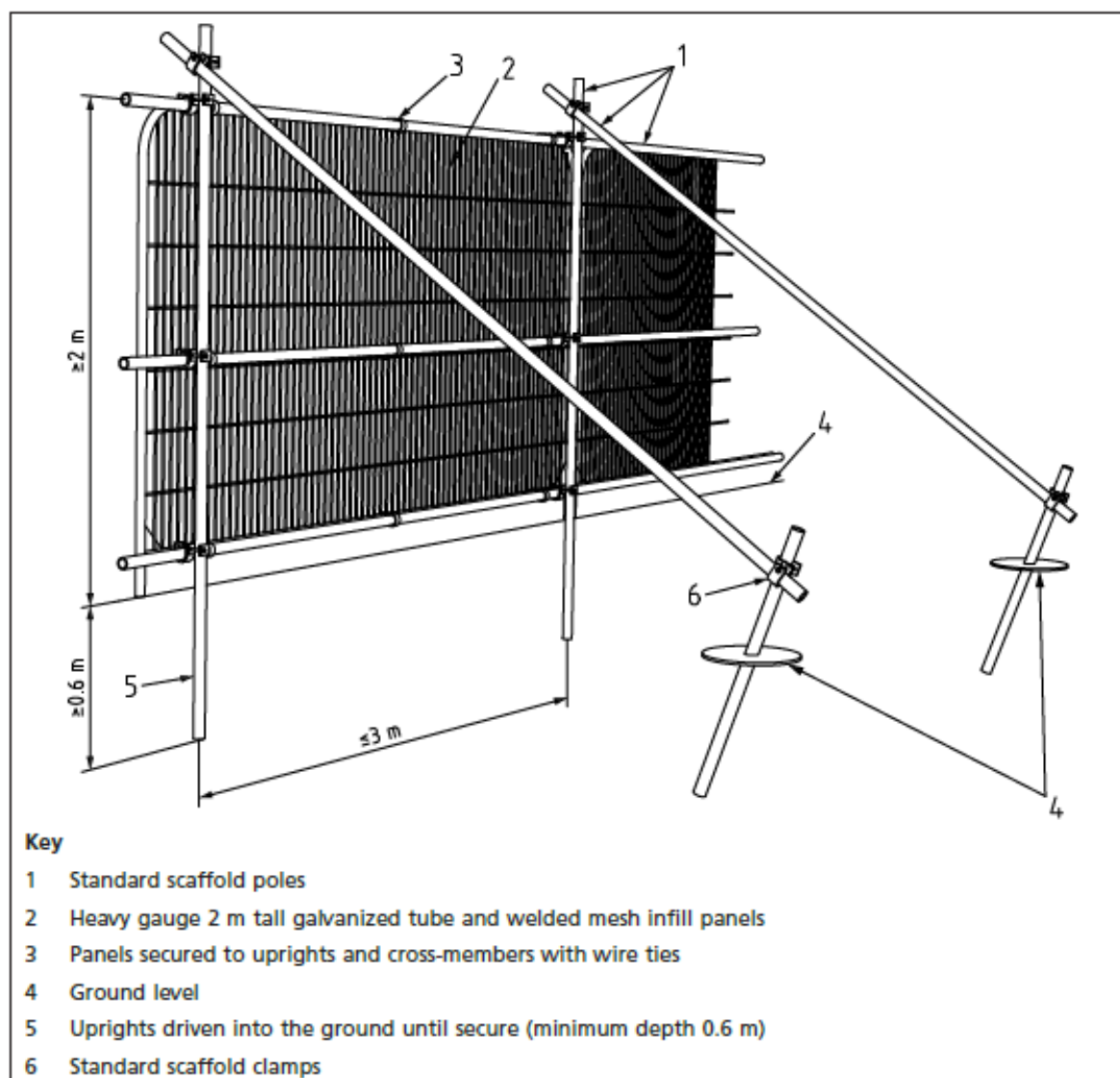
A, B and C category trees are graded into 1 – mainly arboricultural value, 2 – mainly landscape value, 3 – mainly cultural value including consultation.

RPR – Root protection radius in metres.

RPA – Root protection area in square metres.

Preliminary recommendations – recommendations based on the tree's condition and current surroundings.

Appendix 2 – Example of specification for protective fencing



Appendix 3 – Example of tree protection notice



