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Proposed Southern Access Road Layout – Including Carriageway Widening Storthes Hall.

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

11th March 2025.

Introduction

Proposals exist to improve the southern access to the site. This will involve the creation of a new access with associated construction of carriageway widening and new stone walls to provide necessary visibility splays.

As indicated on OPTIMA Dwg. No: 18092/GA/06, all such works will have an impact upon adjacent trees which the following sections quantify.

Tree Preservation Order.

Trees to the north of the junction are within W1 of TPO17, 1989.

However, various plans show this Tree Preservation Order extending further south than on the original Tree Preservation Order plan which, clearly indicates that the southern end of the woodland stops opposite the dividing wall between No's. 55 & 56 of the terraced properties to the far side of the road.

As such and when reviewing on the OPTIMA drawing, there will only be minimal intrusion into the woodland TPO.

All remaining trees are outwith the Tree Preservation Order and it is probable that they are all self-set, developing across the area after demolition of the various buildings indicated on the Order and any necessary remediation.

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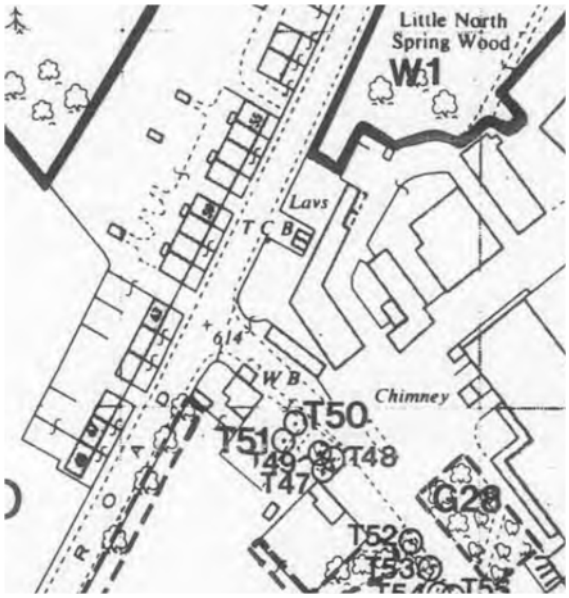
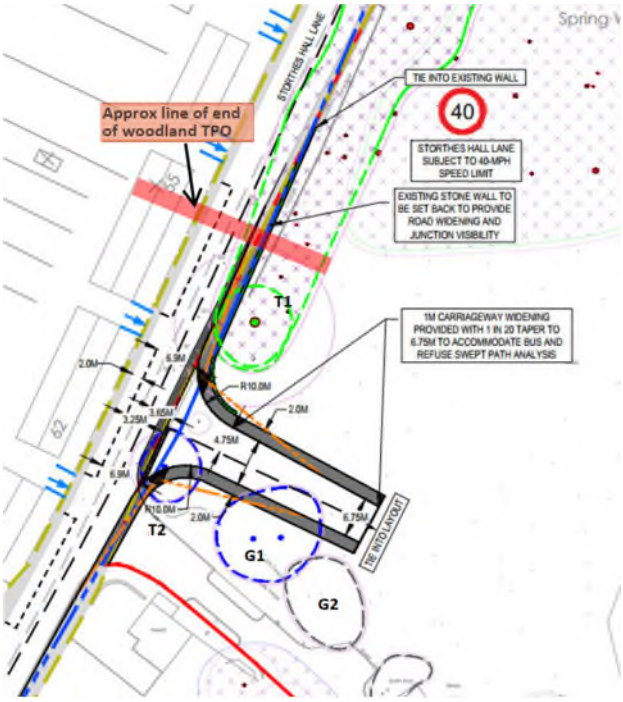
From the information available therefore it would be expected that all trees are comparatively young – 35 years maximum and were either not present when the Order was made or, not of sufficient quality / size to merit inclusion.



Having stated that, it is acknowledged that the potential effect of construction on trees whether statutorily protected or not is a material consideration that is taken into account in dealing with planning applications.

<u>Proposals.</u>



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The above plan extract has been annotated for discussion purposes.

Minimal intrusion into the woodland Order is required and it is not considered that subject to suitable care and attention, the proposed works would have any significant impact.

The new stone wall could be constructed on a pier and beam foundations system as per BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations Section 7.5 thereby reducing any potential impacts further.

Construction is within the root protection area of T1 but with the root protection area likely to have been biased into the site rather than penetrating beneath the boundary wall, footpath and highway, potential loss of a limited mass of root material may be tolerated. Due to the age and of the tree and good vigour and vitality, future development could be expected.

Having stated that, if this tree was removed, a new landscaping scheme could be implemented to create an attractive formal balanced entrance to the site with specimen trees, with material located in positions where long term retention could be assured and any potential conflicts avoided.

T2 will clearly be lost however, but new landscaping as mentioned above could be implemented to the southern side of the road.

G1 is a small group of two trees. Their form suggests possible coppicing at an early age but regardless have grown to form a visual feature.

It is unlikely that the eastern specimen nearest the proposed roadway would survive the required construction although the western specimen may have potential, especially if the root system has become biased to the west due to the presence of the competition.

The site could be managed by the Project Arboriculturalist during construction and all precautions taken to retain the single specimen or alternatively, removal accepted and again, new plating extended into the site to create a formal feature such as a short avenue.

G2 appears at sufficient distance from any works as not to be impacted upon.

Discussion.

As stated previously, buildings clearly existed across the site at the time the Order was imposed and there is no knowledge of how the site was cleared or remediated and what ground conditions may be encountered should works commence.

It is always feasible therefore that despite all good intentions trees are lost and in consideration of that, it would not be unreasonable to accept removal at this time, construct a complete new access and implement a high quality landscaping scheme with long term potential and high visual amenity value.

Should tree retention be attempted, a Project Arboriculturalist should be appointed to work with contractors to ensure tree protection is provided, specialist foundations for walls to be formed and to advise should issues arise that may impact upon retained trees.

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All such operations can be controlled by an Arboricultural Method Statement conditioned to any approval and supported by a Tree Protection Plan.

Conclusions.

The trees under consideration do provide some visual amenity from public areas outside the site.

They are however comparatively young, are not protected and generally of limited form and species diversity.

Should construction proceed, retention of the items identified could be considered and if attempted, managed by the Project Arboriculturalist working with the Contractors.

Alternatively, if removal prior to construction is accepted, a new formal planting scheme can be designed and implemented to formalise the entrance and create a long term high quality visual amenity at the site entrance.

I trust that this note provides sufficient information for the matter to be fully considered. Should there be any queries or if a site meeting is required to consider the options, I would be pleased to assist.

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