

John Cromar's Arboricultural Company Limited

The Old School, Titley, Kington, Herefordshire, HR5 3RN

www.treescan.co.uk • admin@treescan.co.uk

01582 80 80 20

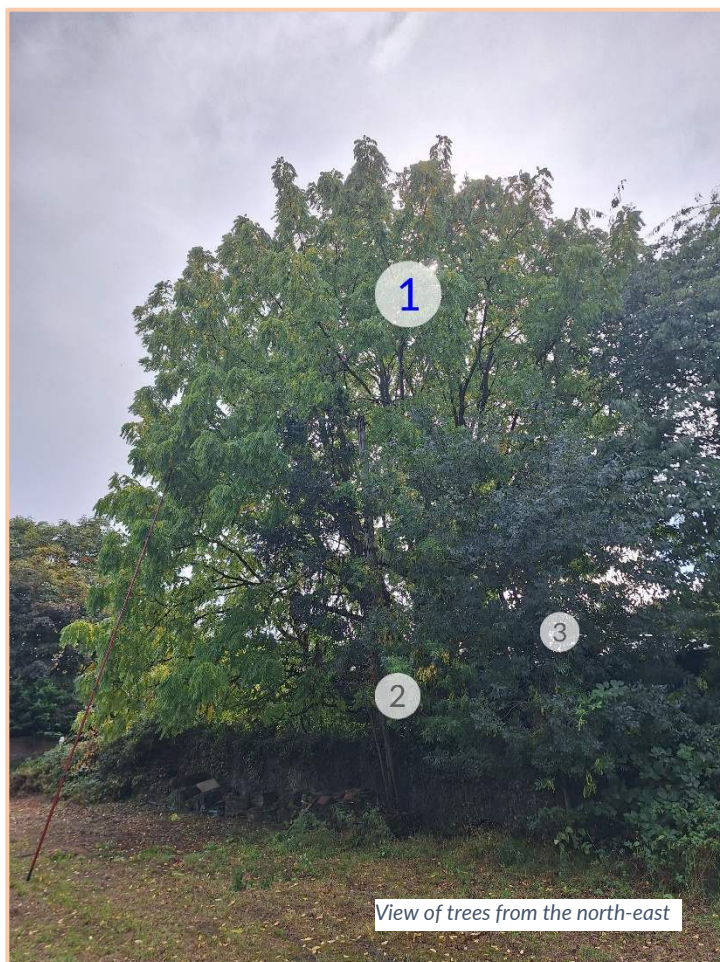
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S1670-J1-R1

PRE-APPLICATION TREE REPORT

regarding the constraints imposed by trees in the general context of
development

Land at Porters End, Kimpton, Hitchin, SG4 8ER



John Cromar, Dip. Arb. (RFS), F. Arbor A.



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1 Instructions

I am instructed by Clague Architects on behalf of clients to make an assessment of tree amenity value and condition of trees at Land at Porters End, Kimpton, Hitchin, SG4 8ER and of the constraints imposed by trees in the general context of development, and to supply a tree constraints plan.

An indication of a scheme being considered is to hand.

2 Executive summary

There is no particularly onerous constraint imposed by trees. One tree in poor condition damaging a boundary wall between the site and a neighbouring property could reasonably be removed as part of any proposal, or prior to full application.

Root protection areas should be avoided or subject to appropriate design in arriving at a final proposal.

There appears to be scope for tree planting (proposed indicatively) to mitigate any notional losses.

3 Introduction

3.1 The environmental role of Local Planning Authorities

Local planning authorities (LPAs below) play an important part in the almost continual balancing act that is part and parcel of local government. They regulate development in the interests of the community. Increasingly, the environment plays a role in our lives, and strongly affects our health, both mental and physical. This is typically recognised in planning policy determined by LPAs, and the formal planning guidance published by them. LPAs process planning applications in line with this policy and guidance.

3.2 British Standards

These continue to play a significant role in the quality of our lives in the UK, by defining minimum standards for many products, and making recommendations where precise, exhaustive specifications are not absolutely possible, for example with services.

3.3 British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations'

BS 5837:2012 (the Standard, below) is the fourth version in a series, the first being in 1980. This Standard provides a framework for the valuation, in ornamental terms, of trees, and gives recommendations for their protection on building sites.

3.4 How the Standard is used by an arboriculturist

It is used as a tool by an arboriculturist, who for the purposes of this type of professional activity, is someone who has, through relevant education, training and experience, gained expertise in the field of trees in relation to construction. This is the profession which is

concerned, in a wider sense, with the care and cultivation of trees for amenity (all the benefits). An arboriculturist, then, uses the Standard:

- a) to assess the value, in terms of amenity, of the trees on and adjoining a particular site, whether such trees are formally protected or not, for example by reason of being in a Conservation Area or because they are scheduled within a Tree Preservation Order. (Both of these provisions are part of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, part VIII.); to determine constraints on design imposed by existing trees.

3.5 Classification of trees

The Standard recommends a way of classifying trees when assessing their potential value in relation to proposed development. Value means (mainly) *visual* value to the general public. It also allows for other values to be considered such as historic or conservation value. Some surveys may not find any trees of one or more categories.

Table 1 describes, as: 'U', a low-value tree; denoted by a **dark red** outline on plans, the shape of the edge of the tree's crown typically more or less concentric to the trunk position.

It also shows 'A', 'B' and 'C', in descending merit:

- 'A' category, **green** crown outline, are trees of high vitality or good form, or of particular visual importance.
- 'B' category, **blue** crown outline, are good trees but may be of slightly poorer form or be not sited as importantly as 'A' category trees.
- 'C' category, **grey** crown outline are trees of no particular merit, but in adequate condition for retention.

A minimum expected safe useful life is also assessed. Please note that a low value tree may have a very long life expectancy. The two factors are only linked in that, for example, a very high value tree cannot also have a very low life expectancy.

3.6 Root protection area

This is abbreviated to RPA below. The RPA is a zone around the trunk of the tree, used as a layout-design tool and in which protective measures must be used in order to prevent significant damage to trees.

3.7 Use of appended plan

Plan reference no. S1670-J1-P1, shows the spread of the crowns (the upper, leaf-bearing part of trees), and is intended to indicate the relationship of any neighbouring trees to each other. This plan gives a quick reference assessment of value as per section 4, table 1, page 9 of the Standard. It shows root protection areas, defined by an **orange line** or **orange shape** typically concentric to or at least surrounding the trunk position.

4 Observations

4.1 Site visit

I visited the property on 11th September 2025 in order to carry out an inspection. Weather conditions were fair to poor; they permitted adequate inspection.

4.2 Survey method

I used a tree mallet, spade, diameter tape, laser range-finder, pocket retractable tape, binoculars, scaling pole, tree data recording software, pen, pencil and paper. No trees were climbed: inspection was from ground level.

4.3 Appraisal identification

My appraisals of observations, discussions and other data are italicised below, in each relevant section and paragraph. This emphasises the clear separation between data and opinion to assist the end-users: client, architect and LPA case and tree officers.

4.4 Amenity / Screening by trees and shrubs

The site is in the administrative area of North Hertfordshire District Council.

According to the local authority website, the site does not stand within a Conservation Area.

No information on TPOs is available on the local authority website.

Some trees are visible from Porters End Lane.

Certain trees listed are of general public amenity value. Some of these and some hedges/lines of trees are of mainly local amenity value to owners / users of the site, and to those of adjoining properties.

4.5 Soil assessment

The British Geological Survey (BGS) information for the area indicates that the underlying sub-soil is clay with flints, overlying chalk.

Topsoil within the site appears to derive from the underlying subsoil. I saw no evidence of soil-stripping, trenching, or level-alteration in the recent past, nor did I observe any apparent compaction or drainage problems.

4.6 RPAs – modifications to shape

I carried out an assessment as per the Standard (section 4.6.2) in connection with the plotting of the RPAs of all trees. This section requires that site conditions such as location of various structures, the internal support mechanisms of various trees, etc., are taken into account in determining the likely position of roots. The RPAs either as circles or modified-shapes, of equivalent area, have been plotted on the plans appended (shown as shapes bounded by an orange circle or orange shape typically concentric to or at least surrounding the trunk position.)

The shapes of the root systems of trees have probably not been unusually affected by subsoil type.

Adjoining structures have likely affected the RPA of one tree, as indicated on plan.

The factors above have no particular significance in connection with the overall assessment.

4.7 Measurements on site

Tree heights estimated by scaling pole.

Tree diameters measured as per the Standard, Annex C.

Tree spreads on the plans below are approximately to scale, determined on site, typically by laser rangefinder, direct measurement, pacing, sighting in relation to site features and architect-supplied plan data.

4.8 Tree data table

This is the core of the report in terms of site observations. In all cases, in the absence of negative comment below on health/vitality and structure of trees, normal physiological condition (health) and structural condition applies. Unless stated otherwise, 'tap tests' for the sonority typically associated with decay in trees were found to be normal. Unless stated otherwise, no signs of protected species were noted; for example, potential bat roost features (PRFs below). Where no height to lowest branch figure is given, the information appears completely irrelevant to planning determination. The matter of clearance above ground level is discussed under the individual tree entries if this is relevant to planning determination. (For information on other data in the columns, see section 3 above.)

Tree number	Tree type	Height/ Height range (m)	Stem diameters (mm)	Radius of RPA if circle (mm)	RPA (m ²)	Comments	Life expectancy (years)	Assessed BS5837 value category
1	black walnut	16.0	900	10800	366.4	Outside the site. No access. Estimated low trunk diameter	40+	B1
2	common ash	7.0	80, 40, 70	1362	5.8	Dominated by 1	10+	C1
3	common ash	7.0	110	1320	5.5	Dominated by 1	10+	C1
4	wild cherry	13.0	475	5700	102.1	Outside the site. Estimated trunk diameter. Contributes to screen	20+	B1
5	common ash	13.0	320	3840	46.3	Wind-sown sapling	20+	C1
6	common ash	8.0	100	1200	4.5	Wind-sown sapling	20+	C1
7	common ash	6.0	100	1200	4.5	Unsustainably close to the wall.	10+	C1
8	sycamore	9.0	200	2400	18.1	Unsustainably close to the wall	40+	C1

Tree number	Tree type	Height/ Height range (m)	Stem diameters (mm)	Radius of RPA if circle (mm)	RPA (m ²)	Comments	Life expectancy (years)	Assessed BS5837 value category
9	common ash	15.0	700, 600	11063	384.5	Heavily ivied. Unsustainably close to the wall. Causing considerable damage to it, and which is currently heavily cloaked in bramble. Rather thin in crown. Contribution to street scene. Possibly early-stage Ash Decline (<i>Hymenoscyphus fraxineus</i>)	10+	C1
G10	sycamores	7.0	Trunk diameters and RPAs as per plan			Small wind-sown saplings	40+	C2
G11	Lombardy poplars	>20	Trunk diameters and RPAs as per plan			Range of heights 8 - 22m. There appear to be two distinct age ranges – older trees around 600mm trunk diameter, and younger, around 400. Although of distinct landscape value, the nature of the species (very prone to decay) precludes a high value category.	10+	C2
G12	sycamores and hawthorn	10.0	Trunk diameters and RPAs as per plan			The western face of this informal group's crowns are all amenable to hedge face type pruning, which would improve screening function.	40+	B2

5 Appraisal and Conclusion

5.1 Appraisal / Conclusion

I conclude that there are some constraints imposed by trees, in particular tree 1. This is of a species which tends (rightly) to be viewed as of high value – not only for theoretical and ultimate timber value, but also for longevity and potential for great size and long term contribution to the landscape. Elsewhere the constraints impinge much less on the site.

The constraints can be handled by utilising site-specific tree-friendly design and methods of working.

The supervision of an arboriculturist at relevant points in the construction process assists in delivering a tree cohort in good condition at handover. This outcome benefits not only owners of the site but also public amenity.

6 Sources and relevant documents used

- Ground-level inspection
- Supplied plans:
 - Clague Architects drg. no.: 31030A_01_01 rev. B

7 Copyright

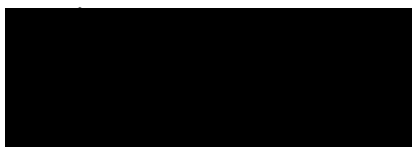
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8 Signature

End of main body of report – photos and plan appended.

Dated: 15th September 2025

Signature (for John Cromar's Arboricultural Co. Ltd.)



John Cromar

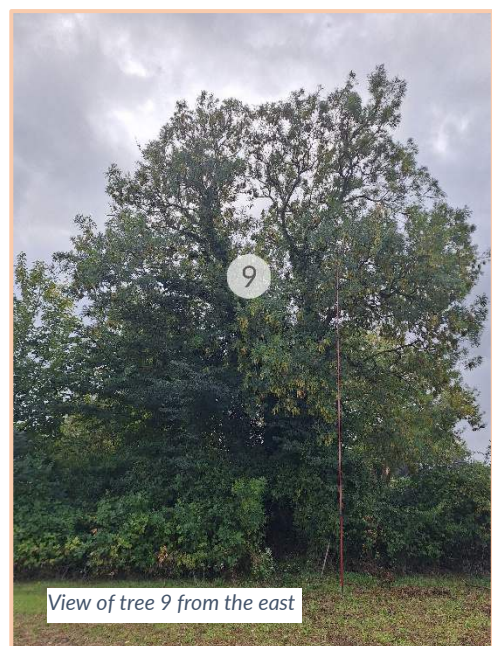
Dip. Arb. (RFS), FArborA.



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Arboricultural
Company Ltd.

9 Photos

Note on photo labelling- the colour of the numeral identifying trees matches that used for the four BS 5837:2012 tree value categories: see 3.5 above.



View of trees in G11 and G12 from the north-east; from adjoining land to the east



View of trees in G11 and G12 from the north-west

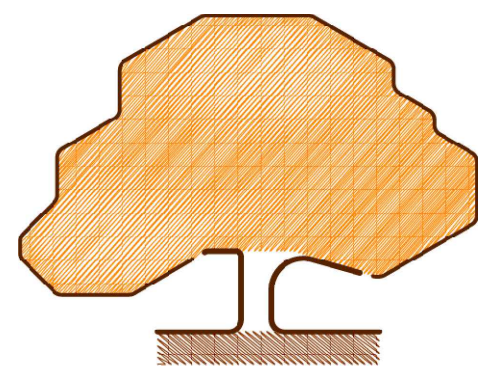


Nest holes (arrowed) in decayed tree in G11

10 Plan

N.b. The scale of the plan is dependent on the paper size on which any hard copy is produced.

S1670-J1-P1 v1



JOHN CROMAR'S
ARBORICULTURAL
COMPANY
LIMITED

THE OLD SCHOOL,
TITLEY, KINGTON,
HR5 3RN.
at Wheatley, Oxford
& Harpenden, Herts.

TEL 01582 808020
FAX 01544 231006
MOB 07860 453072
admin@treescan.co.uk
www.treescan.co.uk



KEY TO COLOURS /
LINETYPES USED IN
RELATION TO TREES

GREEN - High Value (A)
BLUE - Moderate Value (B)
BLACK - Low Value (C)
RED - Very short life
expectancy (U)
ORANGE SHAPES: Root
Protection Areas

Spread and trunk colours
correspond directly to
those used in British
Standard 5837:2012,
Table 2.



TOOTHED LINE: Tree spread line

DRG. NAME
**TREE VALUE
ASSESSMENT
(AS PER BS
5837:2012) &
ROOT
PROTECTION
AREAS**

NOTES

Do not use for setting out purposes.
All dimensions to be checked on site.

Any scale referenced below applies ONLY when plan
printed at ISO A1 size.

The original of this drawing was produced in colour - a
monochrome copy should not be relied upon.

TEXT
FOR FULL DETAILS OF TREE VALUE
PLEASE SEE REPORT

BASED ON
CLAGUE ARCHITECTS DRG. NO.:
31030A_01_01 rev. B SUPPLIED

SITE ADDRESS
Land at Porters End, SG4 8ER

DRG. REF.
S1670-J1-P1
SCALE & SIZE
1:200 @ A1
0

REV. NO.
v1
DATE
16-Sep-25
10

