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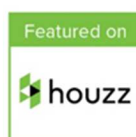
Arboricultural Impact Report

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR EXTENSIONS, OUTBUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPING
AT HILLCROFT, FRODHALL ROAD, FROGHALL, ST10 2HQ**



Photo courtesy of Google Maps

November 2023



Introduction/Context

This report presents the information gathered on the site at Hillcroft, Froghall on 28th July 2023 in relation to the proposed development and their arboricultural impacts within the site.

The purpose of this report is to make an appraisal of the trees that stand on the afore mentioned site, evaluating their condition and the amenity value of the trees to determine how they impose on the development proposals. The report provides assessments on any tree that is to be removed and how retained trees can be protected during the process of the development. Information will be provided to cover the following criteria: an evaluation of the condition and amenity value of the trees on site. How the proposed development is likely to impact upon the trees. Information on any trees that are designated for removal. Information on how the trees retained will be protected during the development process.

The site was surveyed on the afternoon of Friday 28th July. The survey only consisted of a visual tree assessment, no further methods or equipment were used to identify conditions of the relevant trees. The survey was conducted from ground level and the weather conditions of clear skies and right sunshine gave fair visibility. Crown spread and trunk girths and canopy heights were measured, although in some instances, undergrowth prevented close access to some trees. In these instances, measurements were estimated based off accessible specimens of similar species and size nearby. Trees are living organisms and although their condition and structures can be assessed, total confidence in this is not realistic as going forward, the lifespan of the tree can be highly unpredictable and susceptible to climate conditions etc.

The site consists of a single detached dwelling and other associated outbuildings. To the East of the dwelling is a mature woodland, mainly consisting of Oak's which spread across the rear of the dwelling to the roadside of the B5053. A Site of Special Scientific Interest and ancient semi-natural woodland covers the Northern tip of the site and extend beyond down the valley. Similarly, there is a specified Nature Conservation area that covers this area, but also the East side of the garden curtilage and dwelling. For this a separate Ecology survey and report is being submitted.

The current outbuildings on site consist of a modern timber framed shed, adjacent to the remnants (floor slab and dwarf walls) of a pig sty. It is believed above the current blockwork structure would have been a timber framed roof, which is no longer present, although large piles of dilapidated building materials are present on the site, which may be older structures that have been demolished. In addition to these, there is the slab and low-level brick courses of a small (single garage sized) building, and a flat roofed prefabricated single garage.

Proposal

The householder application is for extensions to the dwelling house and the replacement of current outbuildings with a new garage/carport structure.

Alterations to the dwelling include a two-storey side extension to the East, over existing garden curtilage, a single storey rear extension, over the existing driveway, and other general alterations. None of these alterations to the dwelling house have any direct impact on the trees on site.

All outbuildings will be demolished and removed from the site to allow for the construction of a new garage and carport structure. This is positioned on the higher ground level of the site, above a new retaining wall which shall be constructed around the driveway area. The new retaining structure is replacing an existing wall which is structurally failing. No excavations are taking place within the root protection zone of any tree and the footprint of the proposed outbuilding is partially over the footprint of the existing slab.

Landscaping/Access

The existing vehicular access from the highway shall be retained. The current driveway falls away from the roadside to the dwelling where there is car parking. The land then slopes back up as you approach the existing outbuildings to the North of the dwelling. The current surface material is a loose stone material. Currently on the driveway is a heavily decayed oak tree stump next to the single garage, assumed to originally have formed part of the main cluster, its proximity to the dwelling must have led to its removal by previous owners. This is to be broken out and the land sloping up to the proposed carport can be widened and made to be a consistent gradient.

The East and North side of the dwelling has a retaining wall around the perimeter of the house and existing garage. This has failed structurally, so it to be removed and rebuilt to new parameters which consider the demolition of the existing single garage. This cut out area can be backfilled, and it will follow the footprint of the extension to allow for a level pathway around the dwelling. The new retaining structure shall be constructed using brickwork to match the dwelling. Where the garden curtilage slopes down from North to South alongside the dwelling, the gradient of this area shall be unified to suit the levels between the new extension and boundary fence.

Impacts/Mitigation

The majority of trees shrubs are a Cat A mature Oak trees and shall be retained and protected as part of the development. T16 is a Cat C Ash tree, and T15 is a Cat U Ash tree. The removal of no trees is required to facilitate any part of the development. T15 is self-set, under the canopy of the mature Oak trees. Given its poor form and lack of space required for it to mature, it could be removed as it is interfering with the canopy growth of the adjacent Oak trees.



T1, T2, T3 and T4 are within the area of influence of the driveway and proposed outbuilding. These are four category A mature oak specimens which have blended canopies to form the edge of the wider woodland setting. The average trunk diameter is 0.7m and heights range from 12-14m. It should be noted the existing driveway and parking area is assumed not to have any ground protection measures in place, yet the condition of the trees seems to not be adversely affected by this. Also, the proximity of the existing outbuildings to the trunks is far closer than any new building should be constructed from a tree that is suitable to be retained and protected. The removal of the existing outbuilding should be undertaken carefully to preserve the surrounding trees, and it turn, it should have a beneficial impact on the trees if the cleared ground is left to naturalise as an extension to the forest floor.

The footprint of the proposed outbuilding shall encroach into the outer area of the RPZ of T4, approximately 6% of the RPZ shall be lost which is an acceptable proportion which should not cause adverse effect to the specimen. This is the only tree which currently does not have any hard surfaced areas, or existing buildings within the RPZ.

The existing (and proposed) driveway area is largely within the RPZ of T1, T2 and T3. The resurfaced driveway shall have the existing top material removed and a Geotextile EcoCell membrane laid over the hatched surface on Tree drawings PL06. This shall provide permanent ground protection for vehicular use around the tree in accordance with BS 5837:2012. A new top layer of gravel can then be laid, which will be stabilised by the ground protection membrane. All the surfaces within the RPZ of all trees shall remain permeable and the introduction of new ground protection will improve the level of protection to the surrounding trees.

No materials or machinery shall be stored within the root protection of any tree during the construction of the proposed development. 2m tall protection fences shall be erected along the edge of the wooded area down the East side of the dwelling prior to commencement of any demolition or ground works. It is not feasible to erect fencing to protect the entire area of wooded area given the location of the existing and proposed outbuildings. Due care and attention should be given to all trees whilst works are being undertaken in these areas. The current trees have a high canopy level, presumably from historic pruning of the lower branches to raise the canopy. Any low hanging branches that fall below the developed canopy base should be suitably pruned prior to commencement, so not to cause excessive damage to limbs by tall machinery. Operating machinery should be kept to a minimum and the waste materials being removed should be undertaken in an efficient manner to reduce the effects on nearby flora and fauna. Following the removal of the existing structures, the area of woodland to the North of the dwelling shall also have the protection fencing put in place.

BRITISH STANDARD

BS 5837:2012

Figure 3 Examples of above-ground stabilizing systems

