

# ***ARBORICULTURAL REPORT***

Summary Report for Cumberland Council

Prepared by Alistair Hearn

**Reference:** 4/22/2407/0F1

**Location:** THE KNOLL, HIGH HOUSE ROAD, ST BEES

**Officer:** Christie Burns

**Date:** 20 May 2024

## **CONSULTANTS REPORT**

### DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Construction of three two-storey, four bedroomed detached dwellings with associated infrastructure.

### DISCUSSION

Following our site visit, we have the following comment/observation to make on the proposed development.

The proposed site layout involves ground level changes and construction close to trees growing on the site, and on adjacent sites.

The submitted Arboricultural Survey, Implication Assessment and Tree Protection report (Ref. No. F476-08 / BK) categorises two trees (T1 & T5) and a woodland area (W1) as moderate or high-quality trees worthy of retention within the proposed development scheme.

Tree T1 is a Copper Beech tree with a full, wide spreading crown (<11m) with a clearance over the site of around 2m from ground level. The proposed driveway will involve pruning work to create sufficient clearance to allow vehicles to drive under the crown. In addition, the driveway and house on plot 2 appear to require significant level changes during construction. Alterations to soil levels and changes to the soil moisture content can have a negative impact on the root system of mature beech trees, which can lead to a rapid decline in health.

In addition, the height and crown spread of tree T1 will dominant the site. The shade created by the tree across the site throughout the day, and the overbearing nature of the tree on windy days, is likely to lead to repeated requests to prune the tree. This will lead to a decline in the tree's health as the mature tree repeatedly loses leaf area.

Alterations to the soil levels are also likely to affect off-site trees, both with excavating and building up topsoil in root protection areas, and changes to soil moisture with alterations to drainage.

### ADDITIONAL RESPONSE – May 2024

Lowther Forestry have provided a response to our previous comments.

To determine the impact of the proposed development on tree T1, we require further details of the proposed level changes within the calculated RPA. Construction activity within the RPA is likely to have a detrimental impact on the tree's health and longevity.

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From the drawing, the proposed houses in plots 1 and 2 appear to be with 2-3m of the crown of the copper beech tree T1. I suspect future residents of these houses will have serious concerns about the proximity of the tree to their houses and request to repeatedly prune the tree to alleviate fears of failure and/or daylight into the adjacent habitable rooms. Repeated pruning will have a detrimental effect on the health and longevity of this tree.

Additionally, construction vehicles for the site will have to use the proposed new driveway to access the site. Large, heavy vehicles accessing the site will cause compaction of the spoil within the calculated RPA of tree T1 and require a significant clearance under the crown. This will have a detrimental impact on the health and longevity of the tree.

Tree T1 provides a significant contribution the amenity of local area, which is clearly visible from High House Road and the surrounding properties. The site is within the St Bees Conservation Area so the trees have legal protection. Mature beech trees do not respond well to interference with their roots and repeated pruning. Currently, the applicant has not supplied sufficient information to demonstrate the proposed development is feasible without it leading to the eventual loss of this tree.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Ask the applicant if they can provide further information about the level changes across the root protection area (further elevation cross-sections) for tree T1 and woodland area W1. Also show the realistic height and crown spread of tree T1 on elevation drawings. These should accurately demonstrate the separation distances between the houses at plot 1 and 2 and the tree crown.

Ask the applicant to demonstrate the gradient changes, soil protection requirements and level of pruning necessary to create a construction road into the site through the RPA and under the crown of tree T1, and the potential impacts of this on the health of the tree.

Ask the applicant if they can demonstrate the potential shade pattern created by the significant trees on and off site.

Ask the applicant to provide a proposed plan of underground drainage for rainwater runoff and wastewater pipes and other underground services (electricity and gas).