

Land Rear of Chesapeake  
Sayers Common

# Arboricultural Impact Assessment

November 2023  
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Project Details	
<b>Client:</b>	Antler Homes
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## Executive Summary

- i) **Introduction.** Aspect Arboriculture are commissioned by Antler Homes to prepare an Arboricultural Survey and in principle Impact Assessment relating to the promotion of the site for residential development of up to 32 homes' at Land Rear of Chesapeake, Sayers Common.
- iii) **Surveys.** The site was surveyed by Aspect during June 2023, following the guidance contained within BS5837:2012. Copies of the tree survey information are available within appendices A and B.
- iv) **Statutory Designations.** Background checks have revealed that the site is not located within a Conservation Area and that a none of the trees are afforded protection within a Tree Preservation Order.
- v) **Arboricultural Impact.** The arboricultural impact of introducing the development as currently proposed comprises the loss of seven individual trees alongside sections of six groups. Where possible, the concept has been designed to major its effect on lower quality internally sited trees.

A preliminary tree protection drawing is provided to demonstrate the deliverability of safeguarding measures for retained trees.

The concept does not threaten the well-being of significant retained trees. It is therefore our concluding view that the introduction of residential development to the site would be acceptable in terms of its arboricultural impact, subject to the implementation of an appropriate scheme of soft landscaping.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background & Proposals

1.1.1 Aspect Arboriculture are commissioned by Antler Homes to prepare an Arboricultural Survey and in principle Impact Assessment relating to the promotion of the site for residential development of up to 32 homes' at Land Rear of Chesapeake, Sayers Common.

## 1.2 Site Overview

1.2.1 The site comprises the curtilage of Chesapeake, Reeds Lane, Sayers Common; alongside a patchwork of agricultural fields to its south. Currently under pastoral usage, the area also contains equine stabling and a manège facility.

1.2.2 The site is bound to the east and west by adjacent residential dwellings associated with Furzeland Way, and Meadow View respectively. To the south and southwest, further agricultural land lies immediately beyond the respective boundaries.

## 1.3 Existing Tree Stock

1.3.1 Tree cover within influence of the site represents a typical species mix for its locality and setting, majoring on early mature to mature deciduous broadleaves set within a network of hedgerows. In total, there are forty seven trees of individual distinction, eleven groups of trees and three hedgerows within the coverage of the survey.

1.3.2 The site's principal tree comprises a single English Oak (T18) set internally. A mature example of its species; demonstrating a well balanced, radial crown and scaffold structure, T18 is a high quality example of its species. Notwithstanding typical defects associated with age the Oak is warranting of category A within BS5837:2012 guidance. The retention of the Oak has subsequently been the principal constraint during the initial design process.

1.3.3 Tree and hedge components at the northern end of the site are predominantly low value, planted domestic species, which provide screening with recent residential development to the west. Typical for their setting, all are of low arboricultural quality, with the exception of a single early mature Oak standard (T4) afforded BS5837:2012 Category B.

1.3.4 The site's north eastern boundary is formed of a linear collection of Oak of both moderate (T44 - T47) and low quality (T42 - T43) alongside an understorey of low quality scrub (G4).

1.3.5 The Eastern boundary comprises groups of low quality scrub and ornamental plantings (G8 & G9) alongside a number of moderate quality Oak that appear both onsite and within adjacent gardens. One off site Oak (T35) was dead at the time of the survey, and is therefore given BS5837:2012 Category U only.

- 1.3.6 The southern area of the site is made up of two large groups consisting of low value scrub, which has colonised the site through neglect, alongside a linear collection of moderate quality Category B Oak standards, lining the south western boundary.
- 1.3.7 The western boundary is similarly defined by scrub groups and low quality hedge, supporting a continuation of the linear, moderate quality Oak group found to the south west. A number of moderate quality category B Oaks are found along this boundary at the northern end while several low quality specimens including one mature Ash tree with significant physiological and structural defects are located behind the existing stable block. A single Oak (T11) set adjacent to the footpath is within a state of terminal decline, and should be removed regardless of any proposed development.
- 1.3.8 Overall, seven trees and one group was of such poor physiological condition, or were already dead, at the time of the survey and have been afforded category U only (T11, T24, T25, T29, T35, T40, T41 and G10). Unusually, these major on dead English Oak, of varying ages, all of which should be removed in the interests of sound arboricultural management.
- 1.3.9 The remaining assemblage consists of less well established trees, unmanaged hedges and scrub, and is of lesser arboricultural interest. Providing a transient contribution to the site's amenity, its retention has been sought where possible, remaining cognisant of where this would not increase developmental pressure on more significant components of the tree stock.

## **2 Statutory Designations**

### **2.1 Conservation Area**

2.1.1 Background checks have revealed that the site does not occur within a Conservation Area (Mid Sussex District Council, August 2023). Accordingly, the amenity value of the trees is not elevated to preserving or enhancing any unique or distinctive interest linked to the setting.

### **2.2 Tree Preservation Orders**

2.2.1 Background checks have also confirmed that no trees within influence of the application area are scheduled within a Tree Preservation Order (Mid Sussex District Council, August 2023).

## 3 Policy Review

### 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework

3.1.1 The NPPF (2023) provides planning policy guidance at a National level. With respect to arboriculture, four paragraphs are of particular relevance:

3.1.2 Paragraph 131 details the aspiration to secure increased tree cover within new developments, comprising both new tree planting, and the retention of existing trees where possible: *'Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.'*

3.1.3 Building upon paragraph 131, the Framework also considers that 'decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland' (para 174b).

3.1.4 In respect of Veteran Trees and Ancient Woodland, paragraph 180c requires that development proposals award particular consideration to these important features; *'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists'*.

3.1.5 To confirm, there are no veteran trees within influence of the application area, subsequently it is not anticipated that the tests of paragraph 180c will be applied in respect to this proposed development.

3.1.6 In addition, paragraph 180d also emphasises the benefit that can be secured through the provision of public access to, and resultant appreciation of, retained tree cover, stating: *'...opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can... enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.'*

### 3.2 Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031

3.2.1 In terms of development control at a local level, East Hampshire District Council has a statutory obligation to ensure adequate provision is made for the preservation of trees through Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (adopted March 2018) is understood to be the Council's current primary development control document which relates to trees within the context of development; Policies DP37 & DP38 set out the Council's tests concerning trees and development (relevant parts reproduced below).

### 3.2.2 POLICY DP37 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

*The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.*

*Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.*

*Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose.*

*Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:*

- *incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and*
- *prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and*
- *where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and*
- *has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and*
- *takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and*
- *does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets. Proposals for works to trees will be considered taking into account:*
  - *the condition and health of the trees; and*
  - *the contribution of the trees to the character and visual amenity of the local area; and*
  - *the amenity and nature conservation value of the trees; and*
  - *the extent and impact of the works; and*
  - *any replanting proposals.*

*The felling of protected trees will only be permitted if there is no appropriate alternative. Where a protected tree or group of trees is felled, a replacement tree or group of trees, on a minimum of a 1:1 basis and of an appropriate size and type, will*

*normally be required. The replanting should take place as close to the felled tree or trees as possible having regard to the proximity of adjacent properties.*

*Development should be positioned as far as possible from ancient woodland with a minimum buffer of 15 metres maintained between ancient woodland and the development boundary.*

### 3.2.3 POLICY DP38 – Biodiversity

*Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:*

- *Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and*
- *Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and*

## 4 Arboricultural Impact

### 4.1 Net Tree Removals<sup>1</sup>

4.1.1 Trees are recommended for removal where: a) it is necessary and unavoidable to site development within proximity to existing trees, such that they cannot be confidently retained in the long-term as living features, and/or b), where the amenity value of the tree will be significantly reduced as a result of the proposals, particularly if already of a low retention priority.

4.1.2 By reference to Table 1 below, the concept’s arboricultural effect is focussed on low quality elements of the site’s existing tree cover. These are primarily set internally, where their removal will have a limited effect on the site’s public amenity, other than the public right of way which crosses the southern extent of the site. Similarly, the two moderate quality (category B) removals are set centrally within the site, whilst their removal will be visible from the public right of way, intervening retained trees will limit the effect on amenity.

4.1.3 Importantly, of the category B trees within the site, the two Oak scheduled for removal are of slightly lesser quality than the general population; T27 is of questionable structural condition, with multiple desiccated *Ganoderma applanatum* fruiting bodies present, whilst T39 is of below average physiological condition.

4.1.4 Table 1: Net Tree Removals by BS5837 Category.

Category A	Category B	Category C
None	T39, T27 English Oak	T1 Goat Willow T2 Monterey Cypress T19 Crack Willow T42, T43 English Oak G1Δ+, G4Δ+, G7Δ+, G8Δ Blackthorn & Laurel G9Δ Goat Willow G11Δ+

Δ Denotes partial removal of an arboricultural feature

+ Denotes collection comprising 3 or more species; refer to Appendix B for details

4.1.5 Although tree removals can demonstrably be focussed on low quality and internally sited trees, their removal to accommodate residential development would generate a requirement for replacement within a scheme of landscaping.

### 4.2 Vulnerable Trees

4.2.1 Due to the constrained nature of the site, and the deliberate decision to retain the highest quality components, there will likely be minor development encroachment within the root protection areas of retained trees. This primarily relates to the

<sup>1</sup>All tree works should be timed to avoid the main nesting season for birds between 1st March and 31st August. If scheduled within this period it is recommended that an ecologist is present to advise on any necessary protective measures, and on hand to confirm that tree works are not likely to cause disturbance to nesting birds.

introduction of the vehicular access from Reeds Lane and the provision of pedestrian access within open space and connecting to the PRoW crossing the south of the site. The extent of works proposed within root protection areas are detailed within Table 2 below, and all are achievable subject to the implementation of deliverable construction methodologies.

4.2.2 **Table 2: RPA Incursions by Type and Extent.**

	Supervised Excavation (m <sup>2</sup> /%)		Above Soil Surfacing (m <sup>2</sup> /%)	
<b>T14</b>	-	-	7.3m <sup>2</sup>	6.5%
<b>T15</b>	-	-	7.0m <sup>2</sup>	2.4%
<b>T16</b>	20.2m <sup>2</sup>	3.9%	55.2m <sup>2</sup>	10.6%
<b>T17</b>	13.3m <sup>2</sup>	5.6%	-	-
<b>T18</b>	32.2m <sup>2</sup>	4.7%	-	-
<b>T20</b>	36.4m <sup>2</sup>	14.3%	34.8m <sup>2</sup>	13.7%
<b>T21</b>	5.7m <sup>2</sup>	3.2%	28.5m <sup>2</sup>	16.1%
<b>T22</b>	-	-	19.2m <sup>2</sup>	21.0%
<b>T23</b>	-	-	14.0m <sup>2</sup>	19.3%
<b>T26</b>	2.1m <sup>2</sup>	0.9%	28.4m <sup>2</sup>	12.8%
<b>T44</b>	4.3m <sup>2</sup>	1.8%	-	-
<b>T45</b>	28.4m <sup>2</sup>	4.5%	-	-
<b>G5</b>	-	-	21.4m <sup>2</sup>	n/a

### Supervised Excavation

4.2.3 In principle the excavation works within the RPAs of retained trees can be defined by two cohorts: Firstly, to construct the site's vehicular access and small sections of internal road and; secondly, to form the attenuation basin to the south of the development parcel. Referring to each in turn:

4.2.4 **Access:** The construction of the site's vehicular access and internal roads is anticipated to require excavation due to the depth of construction required, and to enable the installation of underground services. By reference to T26, T44 & T45 within Table 2 above, the extent of excavation required is, in all instances, minor, and readily achievable without undue concern regarding the affected trees' physiological or structural condition.

4.2.5 **SuDS:** Conceptually, the works necessary to construct the site's attenuation basin will incur excavation within the RPAs of T16, T17, T18, T20 & T21. Again, with the exception of T20 the extent of excavation is minor within the RPAs. All are readily achievable however; due to being excavated at a shallow angle to form the attenuation basin, the effect on the rooting environment is far less than would be expected were the excavation to be square edged. The excavation works will be deepest at the very periphery of the RPAs, gradually marrying into existing levels closer to the tree. Therefore the deepest excavation works are where the presence of significant roots is least frequent, and the natural turnover rates are at their greatest.

- 4.2.6 As a precautionary measure, and to prevent avoidable root severance, all excavation works within the RPAs of retained trees will need to be carried out by hand under direct arboricultural supervision, following the guidance of clause 7.2 of BS5837:2012.

### **Above Soil Surfacing**

- 4.2.7 The proposed concept also includes the introduction of footpaths within areas of open space and linking with the PRoW which crosses the south of the site. Whilst generally occupying a greater proportion of the RPAs than the areas for excavation, the above soil installation will incur minimal root disturbance.
- 4.2.8 To preclude the need for excavation (other than the removal of turf), the footpaths are to be constructed using a CellWeb (or similar) sub-base, thereby preventing severance of sections of the RPA, and related effects on the trees' physiological or structural condition.

## **4.3 Residual Effects**

- 4.3.1 Worthy of individual discussion is T10 (Ash), which lies on the site's western boundary, behind an existing stable block. The tree is of poor structural condition, and is entering a state of decline, similar to T11 to its south. Regardless of any development proposals, it is recommended that remedial pruning works are carried out to T8 & T9 (two low quality Oak slightly further north), T10 Ash and T11 Oak. These are recommended primarily due to the presence of the PRoW immediately adjacent to the trees, and the stable block to their east. In any event, the reduction, deadwooding and thinning anticipated will significantly reduce residual effects, whilst effectively managing the trees' anticipated decline.

## **4.4 Pruning Works<sup>2</sup>**

- 4.4.1 To introduce the conceptual design, it would be necessary to shorten branches within the lower western canopies of T44 & T45 to provide c.5m clearance over the footprint of the access road. The canopy clearance is currently c.3 & c.3.5m, resultantly, the pruning works would be limited to the lower branch tips only, and could be achieved without harming the trees' amenity contribution, which is currently limited to glimpsed views of the upper canopies only.
- 4.4.2 Although not required to facilitate any proposals, it is also recommended that were development to be introduced, that dead branches and those with structural defects are removed from the canopies of retained trees where oversailing areas of high future use. This will help mitigate the risk of future tree related hazards emerging and associated apprehension.
- 4.4.3 Pruning works should be undertaken in accordance with section 7.3 (for removal of deadwood), section 7.6 (for crown lifting) of BS3998:2010, by a competent tree

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<sup>2</sup> All tree works should be timed to avoid the main nesting season for birds between 1st March and 31st August. If scheduled within this period it is recommended that an ecologist is present to advise on any necessary protective measures, and on hand to confirm that tree works are not likely to cause disturbance to nesting birds.

contractor. This is necessary to ensure that cuts are performed correctly and positioned to avoid future structural defects or physiological issues, facilitate growth and maintain aesthetic value.

## 4.5 Protective Barriers and Ground Boarding

4.5.1 It will be important to protect the retained trees' above-ground structures and underlying RPAs from damage during construction works. To achieve this, tree protection barriers should be erected prior to the commencement of any development works. Within the development parcel, the barriers should consist of the default specification provided in BS5837:2012.

4.5.2 Within the area of Public Open Space to the south of the watercourse, it would be appropriate to utilise a reduced specification barrier, due to the limited access proposed. This specification barrier is to consist of heras panels, mounted on feet, and secured every second panel with a driven 100x100mm timber post or scaffold pole.

4.5.3 The locations for protective fencing are illustrated within the Tree Protection Plan (Appendix C) with a bold blue line illustrating the default specification, and a light blue dashed line denoting the reduced specification.

## 4.6 Compensation Replanting

4.6.1 The removal of trees, albeit having a limited effect on public amenity, to implement residential development would generate a requirement for replacement planting to compensate for the scheme's initial arboricultural effect. In accordance, a future application would need to be accompanied by landscape proposals detailing the approach to maximising replacement planting within the scheme.

## 5 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 In accordance with current best practice guidance, the conceptual design has been informed by a survey of the existing tree stock using the guidance provided within BS5837:2012.
- 5.1.2 Through design, the concept majors its arboricultural effect on the removal of low-quality trees from within the site interior, although two internally sited category B Oak would be removed to introduce the proposed concept. There will be a requirement to mitigate for this initial effect with new tree planting, and there is capacity within the site for this to be delivered, supporting and complementing the important retained trees.
- 5.1.3 An effective scheme for safeguarding retained trees can be prepared which relying on the use of recognised construction methodologies, and building on Appendix C; this will be reinforced by precautionary reliance on arboricultural auditing where construction is proposed within influence of retained trees.
- 5.1.4 Whilst the Council's adopted Policies seek the retention of significant trees, they do not preclude tree loss as a rule, subject to appropriate replacement planting. It is evident that, through sensitive design, a development proposal can retain the site's key trees within public ownership. Resultantly, it can be demonstrated that residential development could be introduced to the site, whilst ensuring accordance with both Mis Sussex District Council's adopted policy tests and those set out within the NPPF.
- 5.1.5 The principal of introducing residential development to the site is therefore considered acceptable in arboricultural terms.

## 6 Recommendations

- 6.1.1 Pursuant to the Council's preference to ensure confident tree retention during development, ongoing arboricultural input is imperative during the iterative design process.
- 6.1.2 As part of any future application, it would be prudent to include a compensation strategy to deliver enhancement, including mitigation for any unavoidable tree removals; all supporting elements could be delivered and justified within the narrative of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to accompany a submission.

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