

142652/FO/2025: Chorlton Shopping Centre Redevelopment - Arboricultural Technical Note

Planning Context:

The planning application was validated in mid-June and Manchester City Council (MCC) circulated (as of 27th August 2025) consultation responses received from a mix of local resident opinions and statutory consultation bodies. These responses included the following in relation to arboricultural matters:

1. *"The submitted arboricultural assessments fail to protect trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders within the adjacent Edge Lane/Willbraham Road Conservation Area. (Trees specifically referred to in application documents are G2, G1, T3, T4, and T5).*
2. *In the application form document, section 15 Trees and Hedges; The question: "Are there trees and hedges on land adjacent to the proposed development that could influence the development or might be important as part of the local landscape character?" the response is "no". This ignores the fact that the adjacent area is a designated conservation area.*
3. *The Tyler Grange Arboricultural Method Statement contains an error that undermines tree protection. The report states the G2 ash tree trunk diameter as 70cm, it is suggested that an accurate measurement of that tree shows it is 117cm diameter at breast height (DBH). This underestimation impacts the calculated Root Protection Area, potentially leaving the tree vulnerable to root damage during construction and during its completed phase as a car parking area.*
4. *The assessment was conducted when trees were dormant (November/March), making accurate health evaluation impossible. Given the report's conclusion of the ash tree's "decline" with no supporting evidence, a growing season assessment by a qualified arboriculturist is essential. Other protected trees are referred to as "poor quality" and "insignificant" but without explanation or consideration of their contribution to the wider amenity or character of the area.*

Further serious concerns:

5. *It is proposed the protected trees will overhang residents' car parking spaces all along the western boundary of the conservation area. This presents a serious liability issue. This area is not typically used currently (presumably because of the distance from amenities and the road, and the perceived threat of falling debris).*
6. *In the northwest corner the boundary is ambiguous. The proposal is to remove tall trees within the health centre property to accommodate residents' car parking for the development. The tall evergreen trees are valuable as screening between the health centre, the development site and Oswald Road properties.*



This technical note has been prepared to provide arboricultural specific advice and clarity in respect of the comments set out above. It is recommended to read the note in conjunction with the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), as submitted with respect to the Prior Notice for Demolition Application (LPA ref. 141706/DEM/2024 – approved 6th January 2025).

Response to the Consultation Comments

- 1. The submitted arboricultural assessments fail to protect trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders within the adjacent Wilbraham Road/ Edge Lane Conservation Area. (Trees specifically referred to in application documents are G2, G1, T3, T4, and T5).*

The submitted AIA report (Ref: 16173_R02b) detailed that there were no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) or Conservation Area (CA) coverage directly inside the red line application boundary and that remains accurate.

As per Figures 1a and 1b below, sourced from the MCC website, the 2no. TPO trees are located beyond the application redline boundary (off-site) and 'Wilbraham Road/ Edge Lane Conservation Area' boundary runs along the existing boundary of the application site with the residential properties to the immediate west.

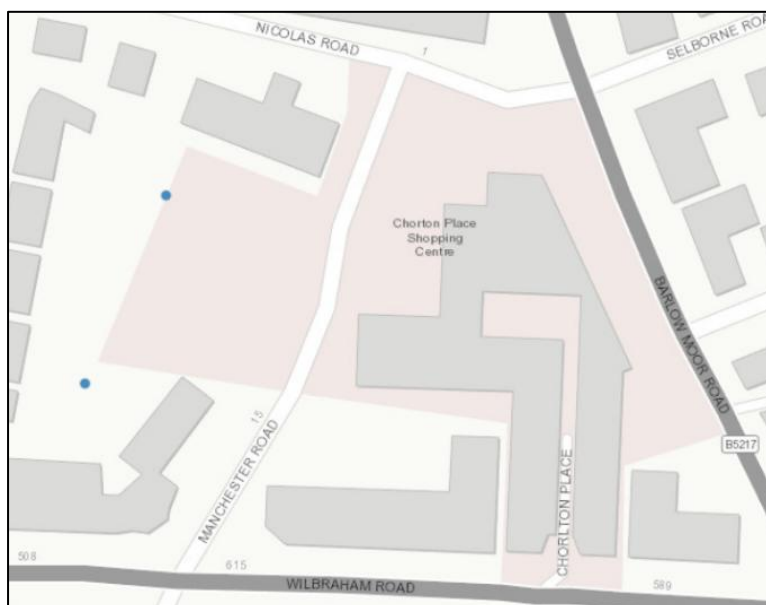


Figure 1a: Locations of the two TPO trees located offsite.

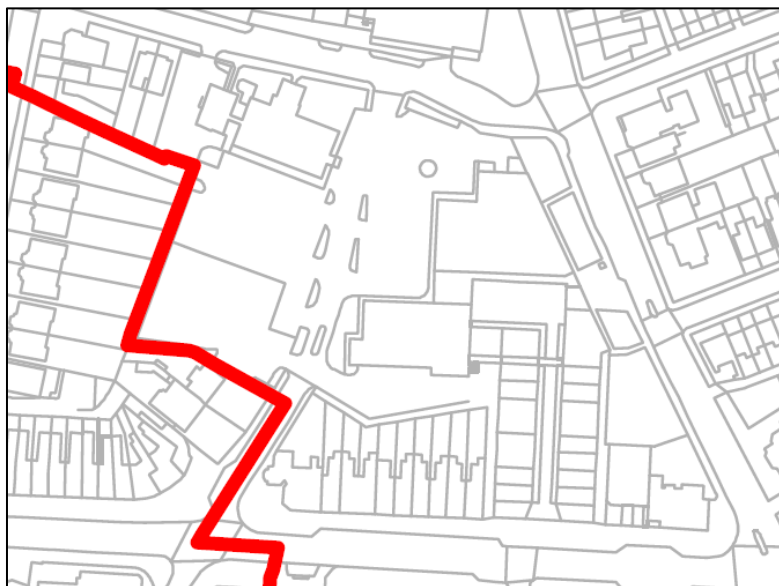


Figure 1b: Red line indicative extent of the Conservation Area boundary abutting the site's western boundary.

Details of relevant TPOs and CA:

- Northerly dot: Sycamore, TPO ref: The Manchester City Council (14 Oswald Road, Chorlton) TPO 2003, PGSM9JBC03O01.

This Sycamore tree is identified in the submitted AIA and on the Tree Retention & Removal Plan (TRRP) as being located within tree group reference G2. This Sycamore is located outside the application boundary but is within the Conservation Area.

As set out in the submitted AIA and shown on the TRRP, it is proposed to undertake crown lift pruning by up to approximately 2.5m within the eastern canopy extent of G2 (excluding the cluster of 3no. cypress and 2no. silver birch to be removed which are not TPO'd and are outside of the CA), to provide sufficient construction clearance for the proposed car parking surfacing works.

- Southerly dot: Lime, TPO ref: City of Manchester (Oswald Road/Vincent Avenue, Chorlton) Area TPO 1995, PGQYIWBC03O01.

This tree, which is also within the CA is identified in the submitted AIA and shown on the TRRP as tree reference T3. No works including pruning are proposed to this tree.

- The CA boundary includes most of the trees in G2, but the trees in G2 proposed for removal in the submitted AIA (2no. Silver Birch trees and 3no. Cypress trees) are not within this CA extent.



2. In the application form document, section 15 Trees and Hedges; The question: "Are there trees and hedges on land adjacent to the proposed development that could influence the development or might be important as part of the local landscape character?" the response is "no". This ignores the fact that the adjacent area is a designated conservation area.

Based on the above the applicant acknowledges that there was an unintentional error when completing the application form and therefore it has been updated to state 'yes' to the relevant question. A revised application form is submitted with this technical note. However, for the reasons set out in this technical note, the applicant considers that this important update does not materially change the basis for assessment.

3. The Tyler Grange Arboricultural Method Statement contains an error that undermines tree protection. The report states the G2 ash tree trunk diameter as 70cm, it is suggested that an accurate measurement of that tree shows it is 117cm diameter at breast height (DBH). This underestimation impacts the calculated Root Protection Area, potentially leaving the tree vulnerable to root damage during construction and during its completed phase as a car parking area.

In responding to this point, at the outset, it is important to confirm that the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement is the wrong report to refer to for this as it is the aforementioned AIA report which contains the detail on tree stem diameter sizing and subsequent RPA arrangement, as per the Tree Survey Schedule (TSS) and Tree Constraints Plan (TCP) included in the AIA as Appendix 4 and Plan 1.

To clarify, given G2 contains multiple trees of varying sizes, the data column containing stem size information on the TSS specifies a range (75-720mm), as below:

Tree Number	Common Species Name	Scientific Name	Height (m)	Trunk Diameter	Crown Spread (m)				Height of Crown Clearance (m)	Age Class	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	BS5837 Category	Comments/Preliminary Management Recommendations	RPA Radius (m)	Root Protection Area (m2)
					N	E	S	W								
G2	Sycamore, Lawson cypress, Common ash, Common holly, Golden weeping willow, Silver Birch & other species unconfirmed	Acer pseudoplatanus Chamaecyparis lawsoniana, Fraxinus excelsior, Ilex aquifolium, Salix sepulcralis Erythroxylus, Betula pendula	11-16	75-720	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	2.00	Early-mature	Fair	Fair	B2	Semi mature to mature group located on the western boundary of the site. Single stems. Forms a common cohesive canopy. Birch specimens within the group showing signs of decline. Provides minor screening from the residential properties/ buildings to the west. Ivy on stems. RPA somewhat confined and limited due to kerbing and hard surfacing adjacent to raised soil volume, forming raised soft landscaped area.	8.64 max	shown on TCP

Due to site access limitations since these trees (including the individual ash tree in question) are off-site in private gardens, an accurate stem diameter measurement could not be taken so the surveyor could only estimate its sizing with limited visibility.



However, for robustness, another competent BS5837 tree surveyor visited the application site again on the 9th September 2025 and peered over the fence line (stood from the site's car park) and gauged that the stem size of this individual Ash tree to be approximately 950-1000mm.

Therefore, even if assuming the new upper sizing of this RPA area, the implications of this now larger RPA in principle are negligible as the RPA is expected to be contained primarily beneath the private land use (mainly gardens and soft soil/ grassed landscaping), with restricted and very unlikely tree root presence beneath the site's existing car park surfacing as the combination of perceived level changes/ differences between the tree (rooted in the private garden) and the surfacing immediately east of the boundary fence line, and tarmac car parking surface and boundary fence foundations/ sub-base, would deter tree root growth in this direction.

Hence, irrespective of tree sizing, the presence of tree roots inside the red line boundary from any tree within G2 is likely to be minimal, reduced or only at depths beneath the sub-base foundations. Meaning that this ash tree and trees in G2 are no more vulnerable to impacts by their inaccurate stem/ RPA sizing, and construction mitigation of the proposed car parking re-surfacing is recommended to abide the protection methods detailed in Table 6b of the submitted AIA, to safeguard these trees and minimise impacts.

On a separate note, it is worth confirming that the species highlighted above have been added into the species column making this accurate and correct compared to the inconsistent TSS which was included as Appendix 4 in the submitted AIA, as minor human error resulted in these species not being correctly listed previously.

4. *The assessment was conducted when trees were dormant (November/March), making accurate health evaluation impossible. Given the report's conclusion of the ash tree's "decline" with no supporting evidence, a growing season assessment by a qualified arboriculturist is essential. Other protected trees are referred to as "poor quality" and "insignificant" but without explanation or consideration of their contribution to the wider amenity or character of the area.*

As detailed in the submitted AIA (Table 2) the original BS5837 tree survey was in fact completed in Summer (4th July 2024), and therefore the assertion that the assessment was conducted when the trees were dormant is unfortunately incorrect. However, it is noted that the date printed on the appended TSS states '10/12/2024' which could mislead (and has done) since this was the date the tree survey data was verified by a secondary visit undertaken pertaining to the separate Prior Notice for Demolition Application (LPA ref. 141706/DEM/2024 – approved 6th January 2025).

5. *It is proposed the protected trees will overhang residents' car parking spaces all along the western boundary of the conservation area. This presents a serious liability issue. This area is not typically used currently (presumably because of the distance from amenities and the road, and the perceived threat of falling debris).*



The retained trees within G2 inside the CA (including the Sycamore which is TPO'd) as well as trees T3 (also TPO'd) T4, T5, and G1, currently overhang the car parking area by varying amounts. However, generally it is only the canopy peripheries and lower branches of selective trees that extend over the boundary fence, as evidenced below which are photos taken on site on the 9th September 2025.



(Left- Facing North, Right- Facing South)

As detailed in the submitted AIA, it is expected that crown lift pruning is required to provide construction clearance to G1, retained trees in G2, T4, and T5 (no works are expected to be required to T3 which is TPO'd). Yet, future management and repeat pruning to combat liability pressures has not been formally agreed or considered in the AIA.

T4, T5	B	Crown lift pruning by up to approximately 2.5m within the south-eastern canopy extents to provide sufficient construction clearance (total height clearance of 4.5m), for the proposed car parking surfacing and substation installation, as shown on the TRRP.
G1	C	Crown lift pruning by up to approximately 1.5m within the eastern canopy extent to provide sufficient construction clearance (total height clearance of 4.5m), for the proposed car parking surfacing, as shown on the TRRP.
G2	B	Crown lift pruning by up to approximately 2.5m within the eastern canopy extent, to provide sufficient construction clearance (total height clearance of 4.5m) for the proposed car parking surfacing works, as shown on the TRRP.



Irrespective of the development, it is understood that tree pruning or any works to TPO'd trees (T3 and 1no. Sycamore tree in G2) or those in the CA (G1, retained trees in G2, T4, and T5) would normally require consent via a Tree Works Application (TWA), however the works specified to trees (in the tables extracted from the AIA above) as part of the development proposals (via full planning application) are automatically consented without need for additional TWA(s).

However, it is proposed that the preparation of a written tree pruning management plan (or similar document) is secured by way of pre-development plan condition. The plan would specify what tree pruning works are anticipated long-term which encompasses the pruning works needed to directly facilitate the development via ensuring sufficient height clearance, but also for the potential cyclical/ reactive pruning works to manage the trees once the development is operational to combat these issues of liability during normal car park usage. Therefore, agreeing up front to the pruning requirements to the trees in G1, G2, T4, and T5, without the need for future, reactive TWA(s).

6. *In the northwest corner the boundary is ambiguous. The proposal is to remove tall trees within the health centre property to accommodate residents' car parking for the development. The tall evergreen trees are valuable as screening between the health centre, the development site and Oswald Road properties.*

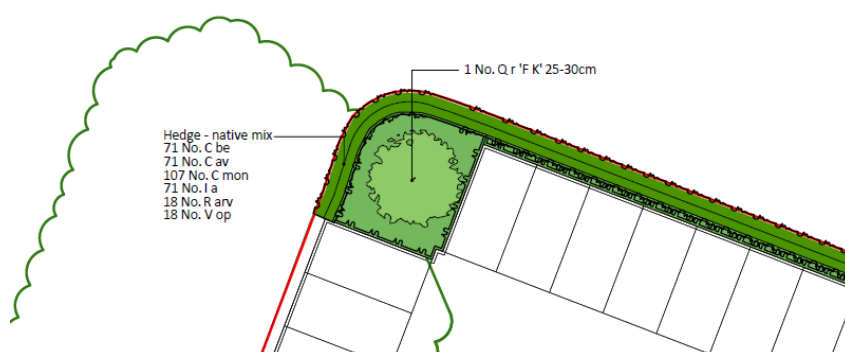
The area of G2 which is proposed for removal contains the loss of 2no. Birch trees and 3no. Cypress trees, as shown below which are off-site on a square raised planting segment bound by fencing and hard surfacing.

The image shows the proposed 5no. trees in G2, identified for removal. At the outset it is important to note that these trees are located outside of the defined conservation area (inward of the boundary which runs along the Oswald Road property boundary) and are not subject to TPOs.





In terms of the trees proposed to be removed, these are identified within the submitted AIA (Appendix 4) as being within BS5837:2012 Category B2 – *'trees of moderate quality and of mainly landscape value'*. Consequently, the trees are not of the highest quality and offer limited arboricultural amenity merits. Therefore, it is proposed to replace the trees, as per the submitted soft landscape plan (Randall Thorp – extract below with 1no. Oak tree and a new hedge (native mix). This is considered to provide a betterment long-term and provide the applicant with the ability to effectively manage the area and secure biodiversity enhancements relative to the current baseline condition.



Finally, the loss of these trees within G2 will not cause major screening loss effects due to replacement tree planting and the limited angles of views which are possible through this channel to the residential dwellings on Oswald Road to the west.

Therefore, the applicant considers that the removal of non-protected trees of 'moderate quality' (as per the relevant BS5837:2012 standard classification) is fully justified with appropriate localised compensation.