

RE: 30 Valley Road - F/23/95474

GRAHAM ASH ARCHITECTS LTD. COMMENTS ON CHRIS STRINGER'S REVIEW OF ALDERWOOD CONSULTING'S SUBMISSION TO EBC IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION.
WE HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE KEY STATEMENTS BY ALDERWOOD AND POINTS RAISED BY CHRIS IN YELLOW.

OUR COMMENTS RECORDED IN BLUE TEXT.

THIS SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LETTER OF RESPONSE FROM ALDERWOOD CONSULTING LTD DATED 27th NOVEMBER 2023.

Thank you for sending us the report. Unfortunately, it has not had the effect of altering our opinion on the proposal. It should be noted, however, that the issues with this proposal are in relation to unit 3 and, to a much lesser extent, the area of the existing dwelling (unit 2). We have no arboricultural issues with unit 1, which is located closest to the highway.

Fundamentally, the report does not contain enough site-specific information to alleviate our concerns.

The proposal remains contrary to policy DM1 and details contained within the Trees and Development SPD. The report has many examples where assumptions have been made without evidence or generic proposals have been provided without demonstrating that they can be applied to this site specifically.

The following are some examples (non-exhaustive):

1.0 Para 4.4 relates to the foundations. It states: *"The existing dwelling partly within RPAs and the garages almost completely within RPAs set a precedent for buildings in those places, with existing building footprints likely to have acted as constraints on the development of roots under the buildings."*

1.1 We disagree with this statement. The presence of existing structures does not set a precedent – it has not been demonstrated that the existing foundations have inhibited root growth, especially with regards to the garages, which are often not constructed with particularly deep or robust foundations.

There are 2 existing structures at the rear of the site and will form the general location of Plots 2 and 3. The existing dwelling has existed since its construction in late 1950's. The existing double garage (outbuilding) was probably constructed in mid-1960's. Both house and garage have services connected. Gas, water, electricity and foul drainage to the dwelling. Water, electricity and foul drainage to the outbuilding. Both structures utilise soakaways to discharge rainwater to the substrate.

Although no exhaustive structural surveys have been carried out, both structures exhibit no issues with damage that could be attributed to activity caused by tree damage. The structures are founded on traditional concrete strip foundations.

Having said that, if NHBC tables were applied to any new dwellings now, then piling and ground beams would be the most suitable foundation solution.

1.2 The paragraph goes on to state that piles (or similar) can be utilised for construction within an RPA: *"The principles will be that except for the localised piles or piers there should be no excavation into ground previously undisturbed."*

1.02 This is theoretically acceptable, but it has not been demonstrated that levels will be workable on this site specifically. For example, the dwelling in plot 3 would have to be elevated, which may have impacts on ridge heights and thus on other elements of planning.

It is proposed that the foundations for plots 2 and 3 (and possibly Plot 1) will be piled. Helical piles offer some advantages. The ground levels will remain as existing and no invasive excavation is proposed.

The site will have protective reinforced mats to minimise site damage. This will be defined in the construction management plan.

We have attached a sketch section showing the existing and proposed site levels. (appendix 1)

2.0 Para. 4.5 relates to the retaining walls in close proximity to trees, and states: *"This replacement of an existing wall [to the south of the existing dwelling] will not require significant additional excavation" and "This wall will have an additional element running along the south part of the east boundary. This is effectively radial from the nearest trees and the installation of this new element is not likely to cause significant harm to the retained trees".*

2.1 The requirement to install new retaining walls, both as replacement for existing ones and in locations where they do not currently exist, has not been backed up with evidence demonstrating that the proposal can be achieved without harm to the existing trees.

The proposed walls are exceptionally close to the stems of several trees and it seems unlikely that installation will occur without some degree of additional soil disturbance, even if accidental. There has been no engineering information provided exemplifying possible techniques or designs, despite that it appears critical to the development, especially of plot 3.

We have reflected on this matter and concluded that the removal of the existing areas of the retaining walls should be replaced with stepped gabions or permacrib type timber walls. (see Appendix 2).

This will avoid damage to any existing roof systems. The precise details could be conditioned.



There are many areas where the removal of the existing structures will provide a better engineering solution and will define boundaries more effectively. The use of the retaining structures suggested will allow better land stability and enable freer rainwater drainage to the substrate, hence benefitting the existing trees.

3.0 Para. 4.6 relates to surfacing: *"Where surfaces are proposed within RPAs, they will be installed using a 'no-dig' specification. Excavation into areas previously unsurfaced will be limited to the removal of the vegetation layer, a nominal 10cm, to be carried out by hand".*

3.1 Again, this is theoretically acceptable, but it has not been demonstrated that levels will be workable on this site specifically. Further, a significant area of RPA will ultimately be covered with surfacing.

We have shown indicative levels on the attached sketch drawings. The land around plot 3 has a range of 33.12 to 28.26. That's 4.86 fall from south to north. The use of porous landscape surfaces can easily be accommodated.

The use of a Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) build up will attenuate extreme rainwater flows and the build up over the existing levels will avoid damage to tree roots.

4.0 Para. 4.7 relates to services: *"For services where there is the need to run pipework within tree protection zones, such pipework will be installed in trenching in accordance with the recommendations in NJUG Publication: Volume 4: Issue 2: 16/11/2007: Guidelines for the planning, installation and maintenance of utility apparatus in proximity to trees. Within the root protection areas for trees, trenches will be dug by hand and any roots over 2.5cm in diameter will be retained undamaged."*

4.1 It would appear, although not proposed at this stage, that the services to plot 3 will have to run directly through a narrow gap, which is entirely RPA. As with other elements, it has not been demonstrated that this can be achieved and there is little room for adjustment if large roots are discovered.

There already is a services connection to the existing outbuilding. This provides the outbuilding with the following services to the outbuilding. Water, electricity and foul drainage.

It is intended that the 110-diameter foul drainage be inspected and to be reused if undamaged. If impractical the existing drainage route will be reused.

5.0 Para. 4.7 goes on to state: *"The Council may reasonably require details of service routes to be provided as a condition of consent. The same principles apply to the disposal of surface water, where soakaways can be located outside RPAs."*

5.1 We would require service routes to be shown prior to determination, given the site is so highly constrained. Further, it is not possible to see where a soakaway could be positioned within plot 3 that was outside of all RPAs.

It is intended that rainwater from plot 3 will be discharged to the existing stream at the rear of the site (see photo). The levels are such that a modest dig and gravity flow for the surface water will be possible. See Appendix 3.

For Plot 2, services such as water, gas, electricity and BT hard wiring already exist at the site.

The rebuilding of the existing house will enable the service routes to be rationalised in order to avoid any existing routes. The principle service routes will be in a common trench in accordance with NJUG publications.



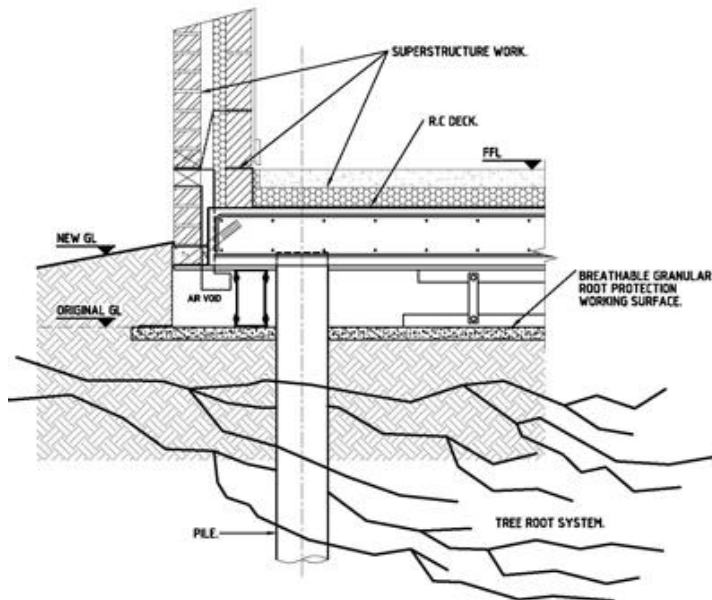
6.0 With regards to light and dominance of the trees over the new dwelling (principally unit 3), the report states: *"There is no reasonable expectation of unobstructed daylight and anyone moving into this dwelling will acknowledge its relationship with trees, which gives this plot its particular and special character" and "The redevelopment will not bring new pressures on trees and where formal tree protection measures apply, the Council will be able to resist unreasonable applications for tree work, with such decisions likely to be supported at appeal."*

It is a rather large assumption to state that anyone moving into the dwelling of plot 3 will have no expectation of unobstructed daylight. Whilst a future occupier may enjoy the close proximity of the trees, it is beyond the control of the LPA to decide the resident and we cannot knowingly allow a dwelling to be built that is contrary to policy and where experience tells us that there could be issues.

Plot 3 has a special and sylvan character and the location of the new dwelling is considered appropriate. The width of the proposed dwelling footprint is 2 metres less than the existing outbuilding. The site coverage of the existing outbuilding is 131 sq. metres compared with 118 square metres for the new dwelling. This excludes the new car port.

The garden to the new house is 22 metres at its narrowest point. The amount of rear garden amenity space is 484 square metres. This is more than adequate for a family dwelling in Hiltingbury. As with any dwelling, oak trees provide considerable amenity not just for their own beauty, but for the host of wildlife they support. The plot has been unmanaged for some years. This application provides an opportunity to provide a dwelling in an appropriate location where the rear garden will provide great value and interest. Some trees will require maintenance over time, perhaps crown raising of those in close proximity of the dwelling. T.P.O.s exist throughout the site and any works will need to be assessed by our own consultant and an EBC tree officer. Any application will be considered on its merits.

APPENDIX 1 – SUGGESTED DETAIL TO AVOID INVASIVE DISRUPTION/DAMAGE TO EXISTING ROOTS WITHIN THE RPZ. SECTION THROUGH PROPOSED NEW DWELLINGS USING CONCRETE OR HELICAL STEEL PILES



APPENDIX 2 – PERMACRIB RETAINING WALL



APPENDIX 3 SUDS DRAINAGE DETAIL FOR ACCESS DRIVE.

