

Ecus Review of Arboriculture reports, Cuerden Site (application reference LCC/2022/0044)

February 2023

Ecus have undertaken a review of the additional information submitted by the applicant in January 2023.

Survey Data

The latest Smeeden Foreman report has used the 2016 TEP report as the basis of a resurvey in 2022. The resurvey areas are Phase A; B (including B green); C; D; and Future Phase North. They did not resurvey the areas known as housing phase Zone E, or the two areas marked as 'Future Phase'. Both Future Phase and Zone E will need resurveys as the tree data is out of date.

Veteran Trees

In regards to veteran trees the original TEP report picked up T119 as being a veteran with T42, T137 and T149 as having veteran characteristics (likely to be classed as in future). The Smeeden Foreman re-survey details trees T79, T189, T137 and T197 as veteran trees. As such these four trees as well as T119 now have veteran status and these are now of significant merit and due consideration should be given to them being retained, with 15m buffer zones incorporated into designs.

Arboriculture Impact Report

The Smeeden Foreman AIA report focuses on phase A and C and the outline planning of Phase D. The report states the removal of 18 trees, 7 groups and 3 hedgerows within phase A and C with a table of tree numbers. This table is also replicated on the plan.

The plans are not marked up with the tree removals however, the numbers in the tables do not correlate to trees to be removed and the key does not represent what on the plan: for example trees T61 to T67 are clearly in locations for development, yet are not listed in the table as being for removal. As category A trees this will have a significant impact.

It would appear that the removal data is wrong on both the full planning site and the outline, and as such there is no scope for the planning authority to be able to make an informed decision using the submitted information.

Method Statements

The Arboricultural Method Statements submitted are inadequate: inaccurate tree removal, no protection measures, and no detail with regards to special mitigation around any retained tree.

Method Statement

A tree survey was carried out in 2016 by TEP and is a detailed survey and clear report. The AIA section of this report details the impacts of the Phase 1 site that corresponds with Phase B or Zone B on other plans. This AIA for this phase is detailed, shows tree removals and protection fencing for the development, however within the report it was specified an Arboricultural method statement would be required: this has not been submitted and will be required for this development parcel.

We are of the opinion that the additional information submitted in February is incomplete and inaccurate, and consider that that LPA can not come to an informed decision on the basis of it.

Karen O'Shea
Associate Director of Arboriculture