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ANDERSON TREE CARE
Arboricultural Contractors and Consultants

Carlisle Estates Limited,
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19 Ravenshorn Way, Renishaw,
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October 3rd 2023.

Dear Sirs,

Tree Report: Project at Oak Road, Thurnscoe, Barnsley, S63 0AN.

You have submitted, or are intending to submit an application to develop a vacant plot at the above address. From the Barnsley website it seems an application was made and approved in December 2020 (ref 2020/1245). I could not find any mention of trees being a consideration in that application so it is something of a puzzle as to why they should need one for this one.

Nonetheless I have been to site and appraised the situation. The following comments are made while considering the advice of *British Standard 5837 2012 Trees in relation to design demolition and construction – Recommendations*, which is the guidance that most local planning authorities follow in their tree related deliberations, and also considering the 1997 Hedgerow regulations.

The site is to the rear of other properties and this could be regarded as a "backland-development." There are areas of hard standing on the site, currently overgrown with Blackberry Bramble and other ruderal plants. The site is a south-facing, gentle slope, accessed down a shared drive from Oak Road to he north. The surrounding neighbourhood seems to have been developed within the last 15 years; the July 2009 photos on Google show what appears to be a recently cleared area.

The trees.

Photograph 1.

Photograph 1 is a view looking roughly south, from the site entrance. The fence in the left foreground is the boundary with the neighbouring house, Tulloch. All the trees in this photo are along the boundary. The taller ones to the left are Leyland Cypress and the row extends beyond the site's confines. It is not clear whether the trees are within the site or outside, perhaps even straddling the boundary. The less tall trees at the right are Holly.

The Leyland Cypress are approximately 14 metres tall. It's difficult to measure heights accurately as the rangefinder devices used for measuring tree height require a clear view of the top and bottom of the tree, and due to a pile of soil in that corner of the site, this was not available. Also the site is somewhat overgrown so that's another obstruction to the view.

Photograph 2.

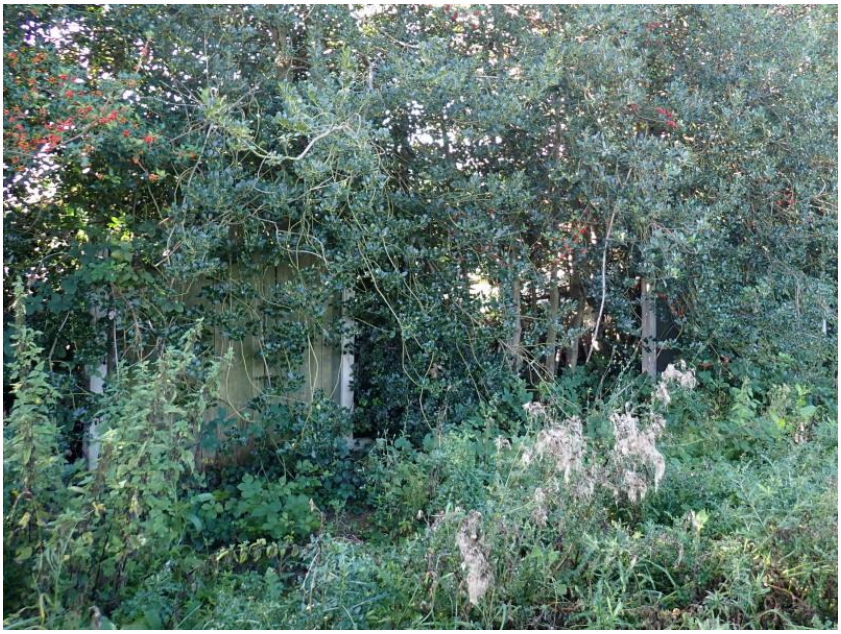
Photograph 2 is another view of the Leylands. The fattest trunk on any tree was approximately 250 mm.

I don't think there's any doubting that this is a hedgerow that's become overgrown.

This subject might seem rather irrelevant but a row of trees might eventually become worthy of statutory protection, while a relatively recently planted hedgerow cannot be protected. I shall discuss this further below.

The tallest Holly is approximately 8 metres tall and while the hedgerow along the southern boundary is predominantly Holly. There is also a Leyland Cypress at the western corner, as can be seen in photograph 3, which was taken looking westwards along the boundary.

Photograph 3.



Photograph 4.

Photograph 4 shows the base of the Holly hedge, which I've included to show that it is planted on the outside of the fence at its base, which implies that the hedge does not belong to this site. That said, in one place it seemed that there was another fence at the other side of the Holly plants.

Photograph 5 shows the base of a couple of the Holly trees, seemingly squeezed between two fences and with yet more derelict fence tangled with Bramble.

Photograph 5.

This sort of situation is not particularly unusual in urban areas. Trees or hedges growing on a boundary are fenced off on one side by one neighbour, and then fenced off by another on the opposite side. Most urban tree workers have come across such situations, often accompanied by arguments about which neighbour owns the tree or hedge. Disputes about responsibility for the trees (that develop from such hedgerows) may very well follow on from there!

The Hedgerow along the western boundary is predominately Hawthorn and barely 6 metres at its tallest. This is also unkempt but not as overgrown as the Holly or the Leyland Cypress. This also appears to be over the site's boundary but as that fence is more solid and significantly overgrown, it was impossible for me to see if it's also squeezed between two fences.

Photograph 6 below shows the western hedgerow, taken looking roughly west. While it's predominately Hawthorn there is some Elderberry and Ivy. At this time of year Elderberry is a popular source of food for small birds and the noise they were making while feeding there could be heard right across the site.

Photograph 6.

This concludes my tree (shrub) related observations on this site.

Discussion.

Most people are aware that trees are good for wildlife but probably don't think much further than that. The reason they're good for wildlife, and by extension, for "biodiversity," is not only for food but also for cover. The western hedgerow is currently not only feeding birds but providing them a roosting or nesting site as well. Indeed Hawthorn is a very good roost site and it's not hard to envisage a Sparrow hiding from a Sparrowhawk in a Hawthorn's tangled thorny branches. It's also fairly easy to imagine Hawthorn so tangled and thorny that even a domestic cat can't get in to predate a nest. I should note here that clipping a hedgerow is likely to mean that the branches and new growth are even more impenetrable and thus provide even better cover.

On this site it is fairly obvious that the Hollies are growing to become more open than the Hawthorns and are thus providing less cover, and less food for wildlife.

Photograph 7.

It's also worth noting that the Leyland Cypress in the south east corner are not providing very good cover, as can be seen in photograph 7. The branches of the Leylands are not very dense in this photo, which is possibly partly due to some nearby trees having been removed, but also because this particular cultivar of Leyland Cypress grows differently to others.

Again, most people don't think much about Leyland Cypress beyond the fact that there are fairly regular stories in the press about neighbour disputes when hedges become overgrown. Indeed the disputes were sufficiently regular to lead to the High Hedges Legislation 2003. (Which hasn't exactly been a rip-roaring success.) Leyland Cypress is actually a bi-generic hybrid, that is one that's been produced by plants from two different genera interbreeding. Leyland's parents were a True Cypress and a False Cypress.

This interbreeding was accidental and because of the vagaries of such accidental cross-fertilisation, has given rise to several different cultivars of Leyland and these have been propagated to perpetuate particular characteristics. Some have golden foliage, some have blue or grey foliage, and some have been grown because they're meant to make a better hedge than others. It becomes even more complicated when we understand that Monterey Cypress[1], usually noted as one of the parents of Leyland, grows very differently depending on whereabouts in the Country it is planted: On the coast it's frequently a spreading tree with a broad crown, further from the coast it's a more upright tree, growing in the manner of a Lombardy Poplar.

My reason for mentioning this rather esoteric topic is that the Leylands here, as seen in photo 7, do not appear to be growing the dense screen that might be anticipated. This is certainly not a good hedge and the reason might not be merely that it's become overgrown; it might be that the plants were wrongly chosen. Most pertinently, it is not providing a good roost site or cover for small birds. Unlike the Holly and the Hawthorn elsewhere on the boundaries, it's not adding much to local biodiversity. And to make matters worse, it's reached a size where chopping the tops off in an effort to turn it into a manageable hedge would probably not be successful. This is in contrast to the Holly and Hawthorn that could be remedially pruned to become more easily managed hedges.

The 1997 Hedgerow regulations do not affect these hedges. This legislation lists several criteria that might lead to a hedgerow being declared "important," but these hedgerows do not meet any of them. While considering legislation, it should be remembered that the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 makes it an offence to recklessly disturb a nesting bird, so any remedial works to the hedges really need to be completed in the autumn and winter.

The hedges are undoubtedly worth trying to retain trough this project, established hedges should be seen as a positive attribute to domestic properties even if they do mean the eventual occupiers have to commit to annual hedge-clipping. If the intention is to retain the hedges then it will be necessary to ensure that construction work does not adversely affect them. This is not complicated and I've attached a basic Tree Protection Method Statement that should be followed wherever a construction project wants to avoid damaging established trees.

I've seen the proposed site layout and it seems that all the construction work is a reasonable distance from the hedgerows. BS5837 gives advice about root protection areas (RPAs) for established trees. In this case if all construction work can be kept 2 metres away from the base of the hedges, the hedges should not suffer. I acknowledge that removal of some of the existing surfaces may require work to be closer than 2 metres but if the

[1] See Trees of Britain and Northern Europe by Alan Mitchell. Collins Pocket Guide, second edition. 1988. (reprinted 2001.)

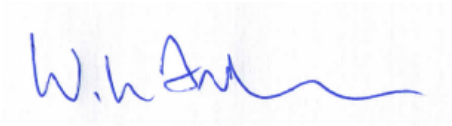
principle is followed as far as possible, there shouldn't be any long lasting damage. I'm assuming here that removing existing fences (if that is the intention) will not be too disruptive. That is they'll simply be cut to ground level rather than excavated.

Summary.

1. I see no reason for the hedges adjacent to or on the boundary of this site to stand in the way of the proposed development.
2. I think it would be sensible to undertake remedial work to all the hedges before commencing construction work. In the case of the Leyland Cypresses this may mean their complete removal and replanting.
3. Before undertaking any work to the hedges it would be sensible to ascertain the precise boundary and ownership of the hedges.
4. Obviously the neighbours of the site need to be consulted before undertaking any work to the hedges, in order to ensure they are sympathetic to the objective of hedgerow restoration.
5. It's a difficult judgement to make but it's likely that in the long-term, a regularly and thoughtfully maintained hedgerow is of greater value to urban wildlife and biodiversity than an overgrown one.

I trust you will find this helpful. I think I've covered all the pertinent factors but please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further problems.

Yours sincerely,



W L Anderson. Dip.Arb(RFS). M Arbor A.

Enclosure: Tree Protection Method Statement.

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October 6th 2023.

Project at Oak Road, Thurnscoe.

Tree protection method statement.

This project involves some site clearance and the installation of new dwellings

1. Tree work should be undertaken before commencing reconstruction. This means remedial works to overgrown hedges and possibly the removal of some Leyland Cypress.
2. Before commencing site works tree protection fencing should be erected. BS5837 requires fencing to be adequate for the site's activities. (See BS5837, section 6.2.) On a project like this, signs stating "root protection area, no entry" should be fixed to the fencing.
3. 

   Photograph 1.

   Photograph 1 shows tree protection fencing more than adequate for this project.

   NB the foot blocks are entirely within the RPA and pinned to the ground to prevent casual disturbance. The diagonal braces are also pinned to the ground.
4. For this project, it would probablybe feasible for the tree fencing to double as the site security fencing.
5. All site operations should be conducted with a view to ensuring that no spillages take place where they might seep into a Root Protection Area (RPA). For example machinery should not be washed where the waste water will affect trees. (eg. by seeping into an RPA.)

6. Also, machinery exhausts and the like should be directed away from overhanging or nearby branches, and obviously machinery should not be refuelled where spillages might pollute an RPA. Attention should be paid to trees in neighbouring gardens.
7. If any trees are found to need pruning for some unforeseen reason, this should be done by a properly qualified and experienced contractor.
8. If scaffolding and the like has to be erected above any RPA, care should be taken to ensure there are no spillages of mortar (and such-like) into the RPA. A protective membrane might need to be utilised but ideally spillages will be avoided. If necessary a temporary mulch (100 mm of woodchip) can be spread so that any spillages can be more easily removed later.
9. No materials of any sort are to be stored within the Root Protection Areas. With this project there is no need for any spoil or materials to be stored anywhere near the hedgerows.
10. If while undertaking excavations for foundations and the like (outside the RPAs), any significant roots (larger than 25 mm diameter) are encountered, they should be cut cleanly with a sharp saw (not hacked off with a spade), and covered to prevent drying out or being affected by frost. If trenches have to be left open for a period, any exposed roots should be protected with damp sacking or perhaps loosely covered with a woodchip mulch.
11. It should be remembered that these precautions are not aimed merely at avoiding tree roots, but also at protecting the soil structure from compaction and contamination.
12. The tree protection fencing should not be removed until building work is complete.

W L Anderson. Dip.Arb(RFS). M Arbor A.

Anderson Tree Care Limited. October 2023.