

# David Clarke Chartered Landscape Architect and Consultant Arboriculturist Limited

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Brian Parker  
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10 Orient Close  
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23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

Dear Brian,

## **Re: Arboricultural Response – Proposed Footpath along Lye Lane, Brickett Wood, Herts.**

1. I have prepared a response to comments made by the St Albans City and District Council Tree Officer in relation to a Planning Application for a proposed footpath along Lye Lane. As part of this application an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) has set out how trees – including protected trees – will be retained, protected and not significantly damaged during the works. This followed a visual walking assessment of the full length of the proposed footpath. The AMS includes general principles for these works and the majority of significant trees are set back from the ditch where the works are proposed. I would challenge the Council's assertion that an 'extensive' number of trees would be affected.
2. There will be areas where the footpath will be in close proximity to trees and the methodology and specification has been adapted to address these potential issues. Where required Arboricultural Supervision will be undertaken to ensure that there is no significant damage to trees including the introduction of these localised adaptations to the specification. The Council will be informed of these localised adaptations prior to their implementation and will be able to comment on and/or attend the site for that stage of the works.
3. Once complete the footpath will be used by pedestrians. The Council have raised a concern over 'post development' pressure to remove trees. It is not clear what this pressure would entail as the construction of the footpath will be adapted to ensure the retention of trees. No further works are required. Pedestrians using the footpath would have a transient relationship to these trees and have no ownership of the trees. Additionally, the majority of the trees are protected and any works to these trees can be controlled by the Council. Therefore, I cannot agree with their contention that the introduction of the footpath - outside the area of protected trees - will eventually lead to the loss of trees and the erosion of the (whole) protected woodland.
4. The only tree management will be to crown lift canopies above the footpath. These canopies generally have a good clearance above ground level along this part of Lye Lane. If required, they will need to be maintained to a specific height (approximately 3.0 m) above the level of the footpath. This is the current requirement for the use of the adjacent road. These works are considered to be minor and insignificant to the long-term viability or amenity value of these trees.

5. The majority of the footpath/culvert works will take place within the void created by the existing ditch and within the verge adjacent to Lye Lane. I believe that the Council and myself are in agreement that there will be no roots in these areas. The Council also agree that where ditches are waterlogged then the subsequent anaerobic conditions will deter or prevent root activity. However, they do consider that where there was no standing water at the time of their inspection then normal root activity will occur. I cannot agree with that assessment. The ditches perform a water carrying function and will go through periods of full capacity to limited or no capacity. These periods of water flow can be prolonged. A visual inspection of these ditches at a specific time of the year does not reflect the conditions within these ditches through the year. Additionally, it is the soil conditions below the ditch which are relevant to root activity. Once soils become waterlogged and anaerobic conditions occur then these conditions become prevalent even if the ditch should have temporary periods where there is no standing water. I therefore reiterate that root activity will have preferentially taken place where conditions for root growth are more favourable – the soft landscaped areas to the east of the trees and the face of the ditch nearest the trees. The footpath and culvert can therefore be constructed without impacting on the rooting areas of trees.
  
6. If you should require any further information in relation to the Planning Application, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

David Clarke

David Clarke

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