

## **Hinckley and Bosworth Tree Officer**

### **Amended Comments**

I have reviewed the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment and visited the site for the proposed development at Cliffe Hill Farm and must express strong concern regarding the scale of tree loss. The removal of mature, high-value native specimens – including Category A and B trees represents a significant and unacceptable impact. This is not something that can be mitigated by the proposed landscape scheme alone. The loss is substantial and must be acknowledged as such.

Following my site visit, I disagree with the assessment of T87 as B1; in my professional opinion, this tree is more appropriately classified as Category A. Similarly, T88, listed as C1, appears to warrant a higher grading. These trees do not materially encroach into the proposed layout, and where there is any conflict, it is minimal. This is however a minor concern compared to the scale of the rest of the proposed tree loss.

The trees on this site should have informed the design process, yet it is evident that the existing tree stock has not shaped the proposed footprint. This is a clear disregard for the tree stock.

The site lies within open countryside and within the National Forest, contributing positively to local character and biodiversity. The visual and ecological impact of this development will be considerable. The National Forest Company has highlighted that the applicant has failed to clearly identify existing National Forest planting and has not met the required 30% planting provision (8.47ha for a site of this size). Current proposals fall well short of this, offering only 2.3ha of woodland and 1.4ha of scrub. Additional woodland and scrub planting is essential, and mitigation for tree loss must be provided in addition to (not instead of) the National Forest requirement. Furthermore, the woodland mix and planting density require revision to meet National Forest standards.

Although the site does not contain Veteran trees, Ancient Woodland, or statutory designations, retained trees must be afforded full protection. Tree protection fencing, ground protection, and supervision of works near trees should be secured by condition in accordance with BS5837:2012. While the report indicates that tree protection has been considered, particularly in relation to construction within Root Protection Areas (RPAs), it is vital that all specified measures are implemented in full. Any deviation must be reported to the Local Planning Authority immediately.

The Local Planning Authority will consider the most appropriate measures to safeguard these trees, which may include serving a new Tree Preservation Order on the specimens to be retained.

Arboricultural site monitoring should be undertaken by a suitably qualified project Arboriculturist. Prior to commencement, confirmation of their appointment and a schedule of supervision visits must be provided to ensure retained trees are properly safeguarded throughout the works.

Finally, utility alignments and drainage layouts must avoid RPAs wherever possible. Where this cannot be achieved, trenchless installation methods should be used. A detailed Arboricultural Method Statement is required pre-commencement to support this and all other retained trees, along with a post-construction tree health assessment to identify any latent damage.

In summary, the proposed development results in a severe and unjustified loss of mature, high-quality trees, undermines the principles of the National Forest, and fails to demonstrate that

existing trees have informed the design. Significant revisions are to be required to address these shortcomings.