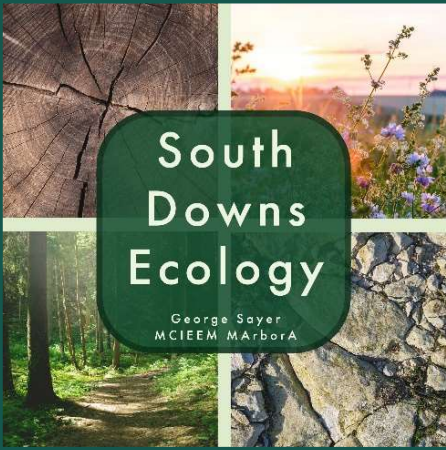


Arboricultural Impact
Assessment and
Method Statement

Mill Farm, Mill Lane,
Itchingfield



**South
Downs
Ecology**

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A tree survey and tree protection package have been commissioned for the proposals for the replacement of 2 agricultural buildings with dwellings at Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Itchingfield.
- 1.2 A detailed tree survey was carried out on 27th August 2025 by George Sayer (*BScHons PgDip MArborA; LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection 2019*); from which a schedule and constraints plan of existing trees on and surrounding the site was produced in accordance with *BS 5837:2012 – 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations'*. From this information an arboricultural impact assessment was undertaken and a plan of tree protection devised to ensure the long-term retention of the trees on-site.

Proposals

- 1.3 The proposals are for demolition of the existing agricultural buildings and construction of two new dwellings, set slightly further back and away from nearby ancient woodland. The dwellings would be accompanied by associated parking, gardens and an area for biodiversity enhancement. The proposals would use the existing access track which is already used by two dwellings.

Site Description

- 1.4 The site consists of two agricultural buildings, surrounded by bare ground and grassland paddocks. To the north-west is an area of Ancient Semi-natural Woodland, whilst to the north and east are modern dwellings.

Surrounding Landscape

- 1.5 The immediate surroundings are mixed, with the urban environs of Horsham to the north-east; however, the immediate surroundings are largely a mixture of pastures/paddocks, arable fields and pockets of woodland.

Existing Site Vegetation

- 1.6 The site contains a hedgerow with emergent ash trees, all fairly indifferent and considered of low value, which sit behind the buildings. To the south-east corner is a line of mature oak trees. To the north-west is an area of Ancient Semi-natural Woodland, formed of oak, ash, sycamore and field maple with dense scrubby understorey. The ancient woodland has no material buffer, with the woodland habitat immediately abutting the access track with buildings beyond.

2.0 Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Removal of Trees

- 2.1 Of the existing trees, the hedge with trees (H01 and TL02) would require removal. Whilst these currently screen and shelter the buildings their retention would not be possible in the proposed context.

Disturbance to Roots and Rooting Environment

- 2.2 The proposed dwelling does not encroach into any RPAs or canopies.
- 2.3 The proposed dwellings have been set back so as to avoid the nominal 15.0 m buffer of the ancient woodland. The dwelling would be wholly outside the buffer, with the parking area just coming within the buffer, but in an area already developed. The area between track and dwelling would be returned to semi-natural landscape, which would present a positive impact upon the woodland, helping to buffer disturbance such as lighting and enhancing the soil environment in the vicinity.
- 2.4 The existing western barn/store would be demolished within the nominal Ancient Woodland buffer. This would have no material effect on the woodland, with the area being longstanding developed land, providing machinery operated from the developed land and took due care. There would be no significant roots in this area due to the distance from RPAs and intervening access track.

Construction in Proximity to Trees and Hedges

- 2.5 The construction works would take the built form further away from trees and therefore represent a positive impact.
- 2.6 To protect trees from vehicular collision and damage to RPAs outside of the operation zones, Tree Protection Barriers will be installed surrounding the existing hard surfaces in proximity to trees. Only a small length is required to the north-east to protect TG03 and another length to protect the woodland; given this lines an existing track this might not need to form a solid barrier, but could simply consist of signage and discrete protection around larger trees. Other trees would be protected by existing boundary fences.

Further Protection Measures

- 2.7 If any new surface water drainage is required, such as soakaways or French drains, these should be designed to avoid all RPAs and the Ancient Woodland buffer. There is ample room in the site for such drainage.
- 2.8 Any other new services required should be routed outside of RPAs and using existing runs where possible.

Replacement Planting

- 2.9 A new hedge with trees will be planted along the rear boundary, to both replace the lost H01 and TL02 and to re-connect the vegetative corridor between the woodland and TG03, particularly for aerial species such as bats and birds. Species such as hawthorn, rowan, blackthorn, hazel, field maple, crab apple and disease-resistant elm would all be suitable amongst others.
- 2.10 A separate Biodiversity Net Gain assessment accompanies the application, detailing how a compliant gain will be achieved.

Summary of Impacts

- 2.11 Overall, the proposals require removal of 1no. group of low-value trees, and 1no. section of hedgerow. The proposals present a very low risk of direct harm to an ancient woodland and several high-value trees; these risks can easily be avoided through some limited and basic protection measures to small discrete areas. The proposals move structures further away from the ancient woodland and provide new planting to provide vegetative connectivity, resulting in a Biodiversity Net Gain. The proposals are therefore supportable.

3.0 Arboricultural Method Statement

Site Movements, Storage and Compound

- 3.1 No vehicular or pedestrian movements shall be permitted during construction over unmade ground within RPAs. The site storage, waste and compound areas must be located either within existing hard surfaces or outside of tree RPAs. Fuel and chemicals shall be stored in appropriate containers to prevent spillage into unmade ground. All site movements, storage and compound shall seek to protect trees during construction in accordance with BS 5837:2012 – *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations*.
- 3.2 All works shall take place from previously-developed land and special care shall be taken when demolishing the westernmost shed not to traffic or drop materials close to the woodland.

Tree Protective Fencing

- 3.3 The RPAs of trees to be retained shall be protected through the installation of tree protective fencing to the outside of the root protection area. The installed protective barriers shall be 2.0 metres minimum height 'Heras' Welded Wire Mesh Fencing secured to a scaffolding framework, set into the existing ground, and positioned to the outside edge of the existing Tree Root Protection Area. Where existing ground conditions do not allow for the above method, the Welded Wire Mesh Fencing Panels may be mounted on concrete or rubber feet, supported on the inner side with stabilizer struts fixed on a block tray or secured with ground pins; and positioned as specified. The fencing should be strained, and fixed to fences, walls, knee rails where possible to provide a complete protected area (*refer to Figure 2 and Figure 3 below; © British Standards Institute 2012*). All tree protection to be in accordance with BS 5837: 2012 - *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations* set out as specified within figures 2 and 3 below.
- 3.4 In locations where no construction is being undertaken, but there is a risk of inappropriate storage or vehicle parking or collision such as along access tracks, exclusion zones shall be created through the use of barrier tape, traffic bollards or low level traffic barriers. Such measures shall be pinned down to prevent easy removal. Individual tree stems can also be highlighted and protected such as with hi-vis barriers.
- 3.5 Signs shall be affixed to the barriers stating 'Tree Protection Zone – No Access' in addition to day-glo tapes to the top of the fencing, in accordance with BS 5837:2012 – '*Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations*'. Within the protected area, no construction activities shall be permitted, to include:
- *Lighting of fires*
 - *Storage of chemicals or building materials*
 - *Dumping of spoil or rubbish*
 - *Driving of vehicles*
 - *Alteration of soil levels.*

Figure 2 Default specification for protective barrier

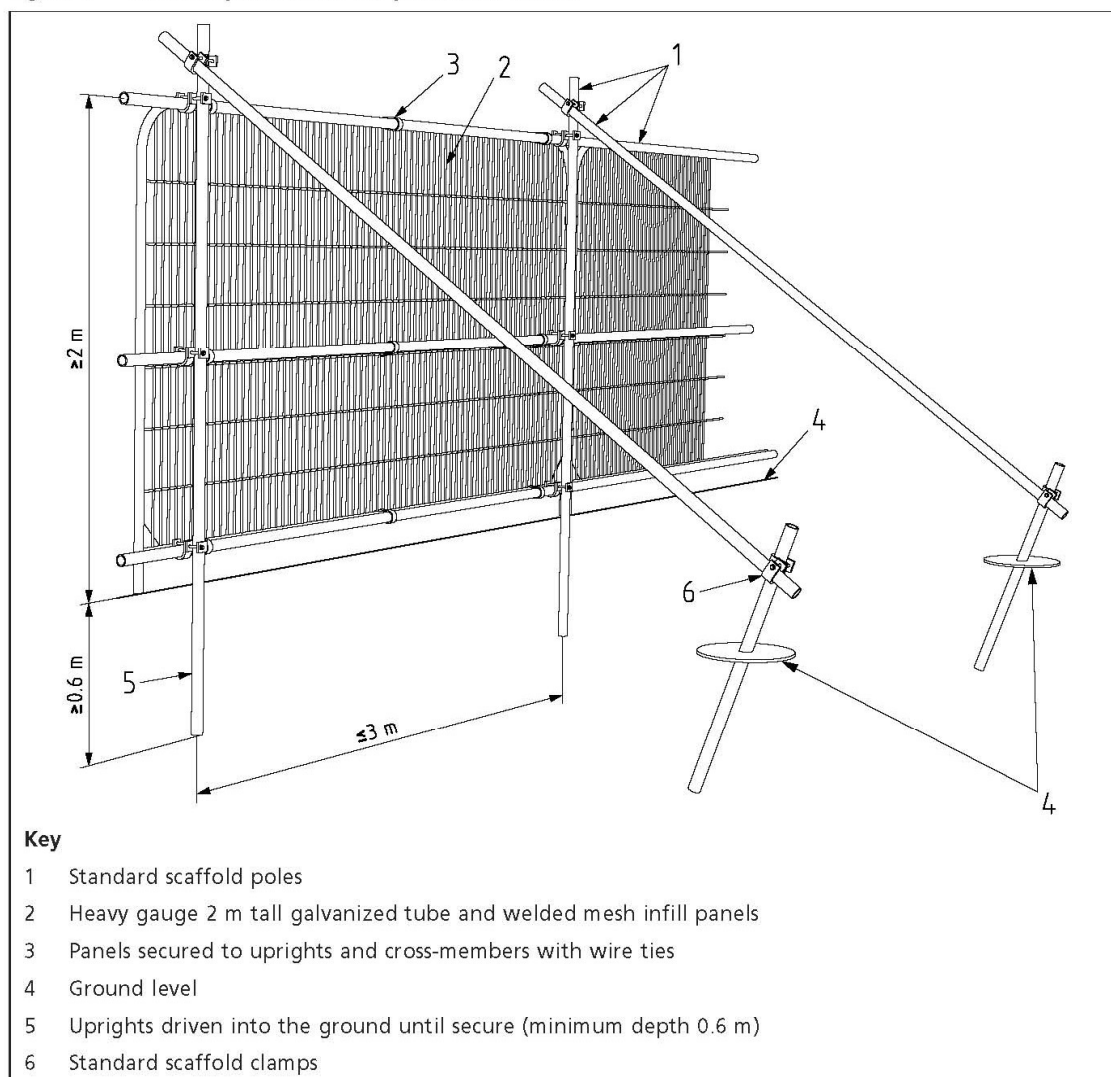
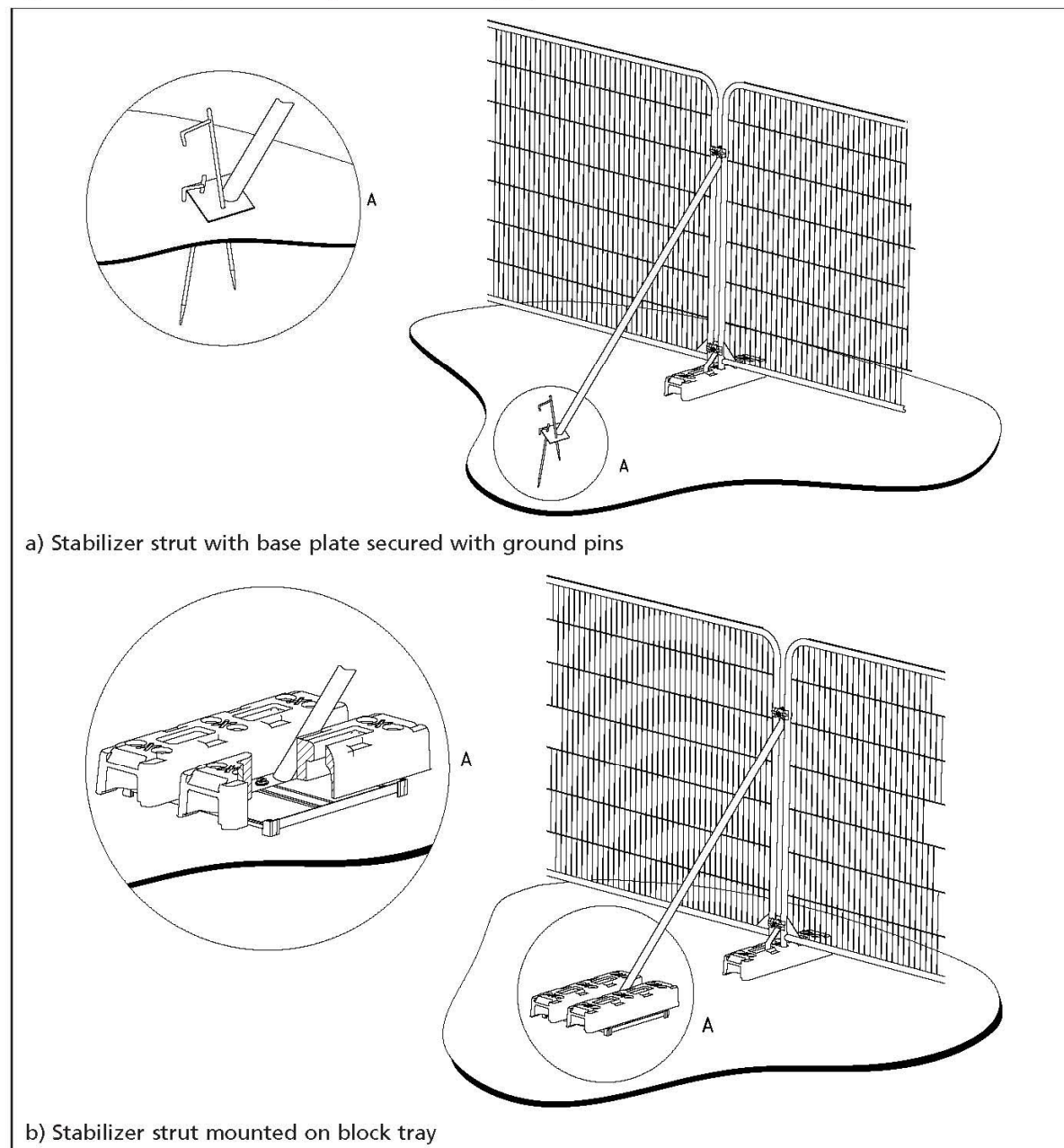


Figure 3 Examples of above-ground stabilizing systems



- 3.6 Tree protective barriers shall be installed and maintained throughout the construction phase by the main contractor, who shall be responsible for ensuring the fencing remains in place and is properly maintained. The fencing shall be installed in accordance with the *Tree Retention and Protection Plan*. Adjustment or relocation of the fencing during the construction phase shall be undertaken only following prior agreement by the arboriculturalist.
- 3.7 Wherever possible, tree protective fencing shall surround the entirety of the tree RPA. Where this is not possible, ground protection measures shall be utilised within designated operation zones to prevent damage to roots or compaction of soil. The locations of tree protective fencing and ground protection measures are detailed within the *Tree Retention and Protection Plan*.

Vegetation Removal

- 3.8 All remaining tree surgery works (i.e. stump removal) shall be undertaken in accordance with BS3998:2010 – Tree Works: Recommendations. Stumps shall either be stumpground or carefully pulled up and away from trees, taking care to check for larger entangled tree roots and cutting the stump away from these. Log piles shall be created in the site from the arisings to create new habitat.

Installation of Services

- 3.9 Wherever possible, the proposals utilise existing service routes. Any new drainage shall be sited outside of the RPAs of any trees. The new drainage shall be sited so as to be as far as possible from any tree stems.
- 3.10 Where the proposed routing of other new services such as electrical wiring impinges upon the tree RPA of any existing tree to be retained; the routing should be undertaken as a minimum standard in accordance with NJUG Volume 4, issue 2: '*Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees*'. A 'Manual Excavation Method' to be followed to carefully hand dug and route the apparatus most directly to and from the exterior of the RPA radius. Services are to be sleeved to ensure protection of the services and surrounding roots.