

Simon Toomer
Rosemary Cottage, Stonehouse
GL10 2LG

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To whom it may concern

Birch tree at Stone Farm Barns, Leighterton, GL8 8US

I was asked to look at a birch tree (*Betula pendula*) at Stone Farm Barns by the property owners Kathie Thomas and Paul Ballard. I understand that they are intending to construct an access road to a garage and are concerned about the possible impact on the birch tree which they planted themselves around 28 years ago.

The tree shows good vigour with a full crown and has a diameter of around 45cm at 1.5m above ground. This is not easy to measure consistently due to several quite large un-occluded pruning wounds on the single trunk. These may limit the tree's life expectancy but are not currently a cause for concern.

Shallow excavation for the proposed road will pass within 3m of the trunk which is within the rooting zone. Any potential could be mitigated through use of an above-ground geogrid or similar means of eliminating the need to dig. However, this would likely result in awkward and unsightly slopes and be an expensive option for a tree of moderate amenity value.

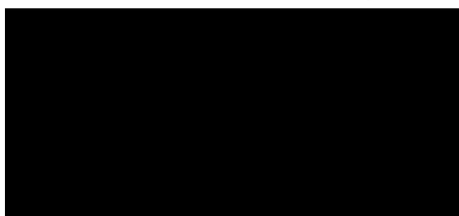
My recommendation would be to route the road as far from the tree as possible and keep excavation to the minimum required for light traffic use. I would also recommend planting two new trees to complement and eventually replace the birch at opposite ends of the grassed area. These should be species characteristic of the surrounding landscape and context. The following are suitable:

Field maple (*Acer campestre*)

Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)

Yours Sincerely



Simon Toomer MSc (Forestry), Dip. Arb. (RFS).