

# Linton Farms, Cairnfold Farm.

## Tree Report

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Version 1.1

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## Summary.

RTS Forestry were commissioned by James Scullion of Linton Farms to carry out a tree survey to bS5837:2012 to inform the potential development to extend an existing agricultural shed by 30metres at Cairnfold Farm, Sauchen Aberdeenshire. The site occupies a raised position at the north of the farm and is prominent in the surrounding landscape.

In addition to the footprint of the extension access would be required around the side and rear for large agricultural vehicles to access fuel storage tanks.

The trees were inspected in September 2023. 8 individual trees were recorded in detail and 2 further trees were identified which would be (safely) unaffected by the proposed development. The trees are within a narrow shelterbelt – gradually widening further from the farm shed – roughly 12m in width and now containing two partial rows of mature trees.

The nearest tree is within 5m of the proposed extension.

The trees are mature beeches.

## 1. Tree Inspection and Assessment

Analysis of trees:

Refer to appendix 1 for full assessment.

The trees form the southern extent of a shelterbelt of mature beech trees. Eight trees were identified as potentially affected by the development and were subject to detailed inspection. The shelterbelt occupies an elevated position above Sauchen in Aberdeenshire and is significant in the local landscape. The shelterbelt appears on the earliest edition OS survey maps from 1869 and the condition and apparent age is consistent with trees deriving from the late 1800's. Age is estimated at less than 200 years and in excess of 100 years.

The soils are agricultural, reasonably fertile, sandy-gravelly loams. Soil fertility, moisture and rooting depth support good tree growth and long-term stability.

The trees were found to be in good health, in early old-age decline but with few significant defects (one tree had lost a major stem which had resulted in decay entering).

A farm track immediately adjacent to the shelter-belt is promoted for local public access (a link path to Sauchen is provided) and several members of the public were on the path at the time of survey.

## 2. Tree Antiquity

The shelterbelt appears on the 1860series Ordnance Survey maps. The regular, even health and condition of the trees now present suggest that these are the original plantings of this shelterbelt – perhaps 1830 or so. The trees are close to a classification of veteran status – although most do not (yet) have the deadwood and die-back which characterises veteran trees they are passed the

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vigorous stage of growth and are in early decline with thinning of the crowns, some small cavities and decay.

### **3. Potential and Value of Tree Retention.**

All trees to be retained are graded B. The assessment is made largely on the grounds of landscape (B2) and the trees contribution as a group to the shelterbelt which has a high prominence in the landscape and a degree of historical presence. The trees are all in decline and are unlikely to survive for a further 40 years before removal or substantial die-back.

### **4. Implications of Development.**

None of the trees lie directly in the development footprint. Trees numbered 1 & 2 are close to the proposed development and a high impact on the rooting area is predicted. The soil compaction during construction and during subsequent use is likely to lead to a rapid decline of these aged trees. Tree number 4 will be slightly affected by compaction during use. The tree stem is 10m from the development and the tree has a calculated root protection zone of 12m radius. However the impact will be relatively minor – with only a small percentage affected and retention is feasible.

## **6 Potential Replacement Planting**

There is an existing, substantial gap in the shelterbelt immediately to the north of this group. There is an opportunity to carry out replacement planting with trees of a suitable size and with protection from deer, rabbits and voles.

## **7 Protection.**

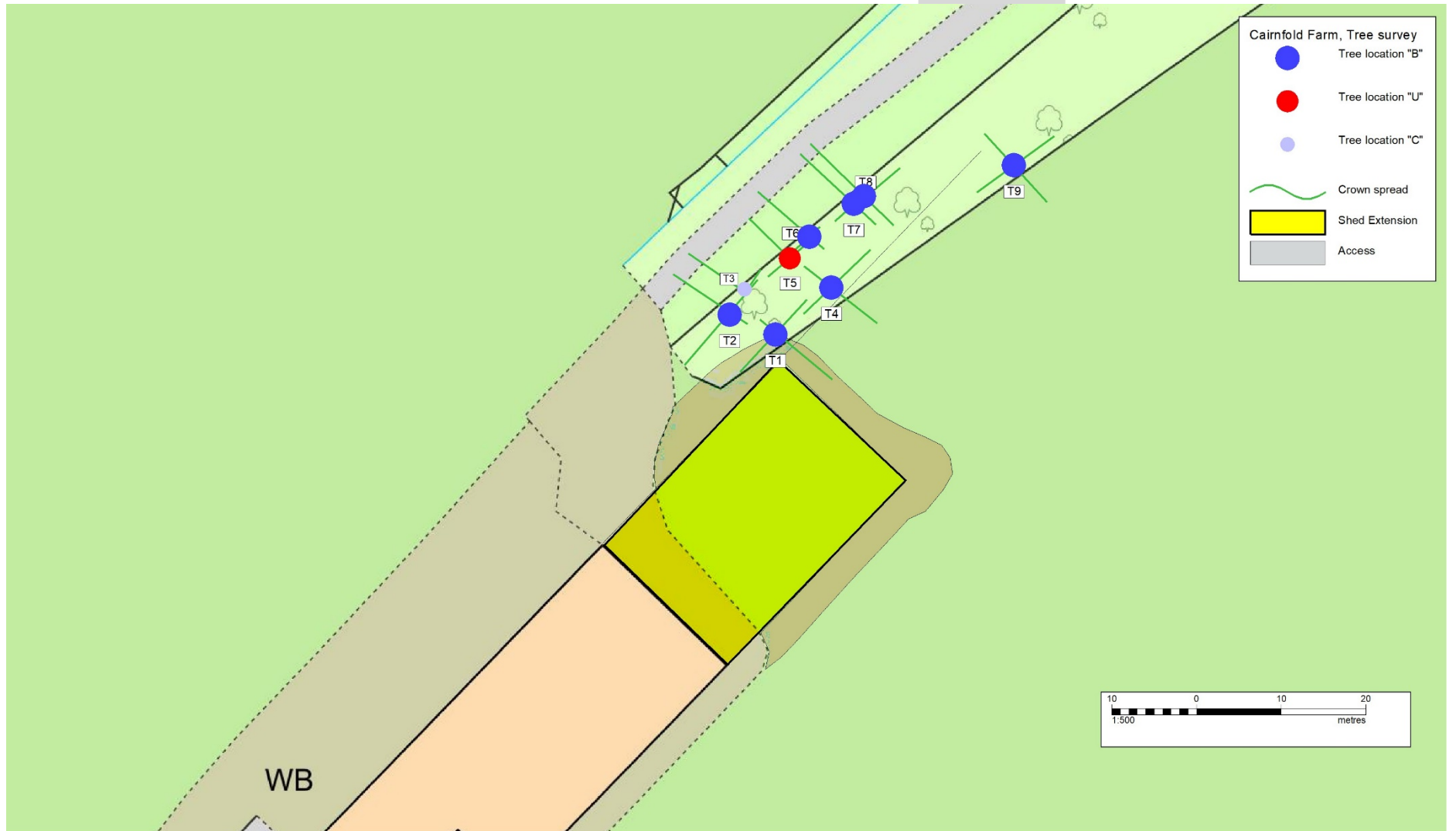
All trees are exposed to potential root damage through compaction during construction work or storage of materials or machine movement within the rooting zones. The development will also result in long-term machine movement closer to the trees and a long-term protection is also recommended. The erection of permanent post and wire fence or post and board fence is recommended to ensure protection throughout construction and subsequent use. These should be 9m from the closest retained trees – nrs 4 & 5.

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Appendix 1 Table 1

Cairnfold Farm, Sauchen, September 2023																		
Tree nr	Species	Height	Stem dia at 1.5m	Crown spread (m)				Height to first branch	Life stage	Observations	recommen dations	Remaining contribution	Category	Distance from proposed development (metres)		Root Protection Area(radius)	Compromise yes/no	Impact of development
		(m)	(mm)	N	E	S	W	(m)						to stem	to crown			
1	Beech	20	890	5	9	6	3	5E	M	Mature beech. Healthy, slight thinning of crown and some small die-back.Large scar on SE at 2m. Calloused. Crown has previously been lifted on SE side. Some smaller cavities and scars. No significant decay.	None	20+	B2	2.5	-3	10.5	yes	Remove tree
2	Beech	22	1180	6	3	9	8	6S	M	Large mature beech. Forked at 2.5m on west - fork is upright with a weak union. Healthy - no apparent decay.	None	20+	B2	7.5	6	14	yes	Remove tree
3	Beech	8	650	3	0	0	8	5W	M	Mature beech. Heavily over-shaddowed and supressed by neighbouring trees. Very bent form. Some cavities. 3 cavities with decay at 2m. Stem likely compromised. Healthy crown.	None	10+	C2	9	9	7.8	no	None
4	Beech	21	720/730	9	9	5	8	5E	M	Large tree - forked into two equal stems at 1m. Some small deadwood in crown but otherwise healthy. Slight scaring - no apparent decay.	None	20+	B2	10	6	12	yes	None
5	Beech	21	670	4	0	4	7	10W	M	Medium-sized beech. Large scar at 0m where tree has previously lost a large side stem. Large cavities with decay. Stem strength considerable compromised. Heavy bias over track/path. Crown healthy.	Fell	<10	U	11.5	10	8	no	None
6	Beech	22	730	2	3	5	7	6W	M	Medium/large tree. Scar on east. Pruning stub at 2.5m on west with decay (stub too short). Small percent deadwood in crown. Crowded / squeezed crown (between neighbours) -however overall healthy. Large branch on west overhanging track has decay .	Remove side branch	20+	B2	14.5	12	8.5	no	None
7	Beech	22	780	3	5	3	8	7W	M	Large tree - fairly upright form . Healthy, no decay, several small cavities on west side.	None	20+	B2	20	17.5	9.5	no	None
8	Beech	22	830	7	6	2	8	8W	M	Large, healthy. Unusually clean & straight bole. Large spreading crown. On edge of gap.	None	20+	B2	21.5	20	10	no	None
9	Beech	22	1000						M	Large healthy- many metres from development. No detailed survey.	None	20+	B2	35	30	12	no	None
10	Beech	22	1000						M	Large, scar plus decay (Lightning). Many metres from development. No detailed survey.	None	20+	B2			12	no	None
<p><b>General: All trees form the south-most extent of a larger shelterbelt. All trees are mature - beginning to die-back, approaching end-of-life. No understorey/younger trees.</b></p> <p><b>Farm track &amp; well-used path to west side of the group.</b></p> <p>Note Height to crown is height from ground level of the first branch followed by the compass point. "a" is all points.</p> <p>Life stage: Y - young; EM - Early mature; M - mature.</p>																		

Appendix 3 Location of trees.







Tree nr 5

