Sylva Consultancy

expert arboricultural advice

ARBORICULTURAL REPORT

Land to the rear of Observatory Street (Gibson Building) Walton Street Oxford Oxfordshire

January 2023

Ref: 24006

Prepared by Fiona Bradshaw MICFor; RFS DipArb; M.Arbor.A; Tech.Arbor.A

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Arboricultural Association Fellow Member FE593

Fiona Bradshaw
MIcFor (Arb); Dip. Arb (RFS); F.Arbor A; Tech Arbor.A
[redacted]

Institute of Chartered Foresters Registered Consultant

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Registered in England, Company No. 06787424.
Registered Office: The Oxford Boaters Box, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 7AH'.

PHONE 01865 872945
EMAIL mail@sylvaconsultancy.co.uk
WEBSITE www.sylvaconsultancy.co.uk

CONTENTS

APPENDICES

1. INSTRUCTIONS

1.1 Instructions have been received to carry out an arboricultural survey in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 on land to the rear of Observatory Street, Oxford (Site Location Plan Appendix 1). This report advises on tree constraints to enable an informative approach to planning decisions.

1.2 The trees were inspected on the 14th December 2024. The weather was dry, and visibility was good.

1.3 The tree survey assessment was carried out in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations' and good arboricultural practice. This is a basic data collection exercise and a record of the trees condition at the time of surveying.

2. TREE PROTECTION

2.1 A desktop study of information posted on Oxford City Council (OCC) website details that the site is located adjacent to North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area and Walton Manor Conservation Area. In addition, the website reveals that no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) are present on trees located within or adjacent to the site.

2.2 It has been assessed that trees T1, T2, T3, T4 & G1 are subject to the provisions of the Conservation Area Legislation.

2.3 Trees in a Conservation Area that are not protected by a TPO are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Anyone who ***cuts down, uproots, tops, lops, wilfully destroys or wilfully damages a tree*** in a Conservation Area (if that tree is not already protected by a Tree Preservation Order), or causes or permits such work, without giving a section 211 notice (or otherwise contravenes section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is guilty of an offence, unless an exception applies.

2.4 The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, provides statutory protection to birds, bats and other species that inhabit trees. These have the potential to pose additional constraints on the use and timings of works that may occur to trees located at or adjacent to the site. These issues are beyond my expertise, and it is strongly recommended that appropriate advice is sort prior to the implementation of any works considered within this report.

3. TREE INSPECTION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Trees identified within the above site survey drawing were assessed visually from ground level by a person qualified and experienced in arboriculture.

3.2 Whilst this report considers amongst other things, the trees structural condition, it does not form a detailed health and safety inspection. However, where significant defects are visually identified, remedial works may be included within the tree survey schedule. As a baseline, works that would be identified as part of a regular inspection carried out by a prudent landowner i.e., removal of deadwood or remedial works would not be highlighted in this report. However, should development occur it is recommended that the trees are re-inspected following final design, and a tree works schedule drawn up. This should consider Health & Safety and facilitative pruning in accordance with the design layout.

3.3 For clarity, all trees assessed are identified by a reference number within the Tree Survey Schedules (Appendix 2 & 3) which corresponds with the Tree numbers. recorded on the Tree Constraints Plan (Appendix 4).

3.4 The tree species and their dimensions are recorded in the Tree Survey Schedule together with the trees age, physiological and structural condition and a category code in accordance with the guidelines set out in the British Standard 5837:2012.

3.5 Where a tree's crown is heavily asymmetrical, the crown radius for each cardinal compass point is given. Together with the height and direction of growth of the first significant branch and the canopy height above ground level, this provides a good guide to the size and outline form of the tree. The estimated life expectancy in context of the species is provided as guidance only. In some instances, an alternative life expectancy has been provided than what is recommended within the British Standard 5837:2012. This alternative life expectancy guideline is based on my experience and the current age and environment that the tree is growing in.

3.6 Details of the root protection area around each individual tree is provided within Appendix 3 and illustrated on the Tree Constraints Plan (Appendix 4) to assist in the assessment of the site layout and the likely impact of construction works proposed within close proximity of the trees that are to be retained.

4. SITE DESCRIPTION AND OBSERVATIONS

4.1 The site is located to the south of Observatory Street and occupies a spacious plot with the survey area dominated by the existing Gibson Building. Residential gardens are adjacent to the northern boundary with the grounds of Green Templeton College to the east.

4.2 A total of four trees, three groups and one hedge have been recorded within this assessment.

A summary of the trees in each of the four categories is provided below:

BS 5837 (2012) Category	No. of Trees	No. of Groups	No. of Hedges	Tree Number
U	**0**	**0**	**0**	
A	**0**	**0**	**0**	
B	**4**	**0**	**0**	**T1,T2, T3, T4**
C	**0**	**3**	**1**	**G1, G2, G3, H1**

4.3 Trees assessed as category 'U' trees are of such condition that any existing value would be lost within 10 years, and which should, in the current context, be removed for reasons of sound arboriculture management. However, if category 'U' trees are placed in an inaccessible location such that concerns over public safety are reduced to an acceptable level, it may be preferable or possible to defer this recommendation.

4.4 Category 'U' trees are not considered within this report as there is an expectation these trees would be removed under good arboricultural management regardless of development occurring.

4.5 To summarise trees assessed as category 'A' trees are considered as trees of high quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 40 years; Category 'B' trees of moderate quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 20 years with Category 'C' trees considered as low quality with a life expectancy of at least 10 years (or young trees with a stem diameter of less than 150mm). Please refer to Appendix 2 'Cascade Chart' for full details of the tree quality assessment.

4.6 The tree stock is confined predominantly to the rear gardens of the residential properties at Observatory Street. One tree (T1) is located in the ownership of Green Templeton College with groups G2 & G3 growing in planters around the Gibson Building.

4.7 The most significant trees within the potentially developable area are the category 'B' trees. Notwithstanding this merit must also be given to the contribution that the lower grade trees and groups provide to the site. As such it is recommended that due consideration regarding their retention, should development occur is undertaken as they have the potential to provide useful softening and screening to the site.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 With regard to development the BS5837:2012 recommends that the default position should be that structures are located outside the root protection areas (RPA) of trees to be retained. However, where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the tree(s). In addition, the BS5837:2012 further states that there is the need to avoid misplaced tree retention; for example, to attempt to retain too many trees on a site may result in excessive pressure on the trees during the development work and subsequent demands for their removal post development.

5.2 The BS5837:2012 recommends that the root protection areas (RPA's) for trees should initially be plotted as a circle centered on the base of the stem. Where pre-existing site conditions or other factors indicate that rooting has occurred asymmetrically, a polygon of equivalent area should be produced.

5.3 The arboricultural survey has identified that existing site constraints have influenced the root protection areas of trees T2, T3, T4 & G1. As such the rooting area of these trees have been adjusted. The modified RPA's has considered the expected morphology and disposition of roots, site topography, including levels, drainage and the likely tolerance of the trees to root disturbance based on factors such as age, condition and past management (BS5837:2012 Section 4.6.3).

5.4 General observations note that the category 'B' trees surveyed are pleasant features adjacent to the site. Consequently, it is recommended that the design takes the constraints of these trees into consideration. In addition, post development concerns, such as future growth and fear and apprehension of the proximity of these trees should also be assessed during the design stage.

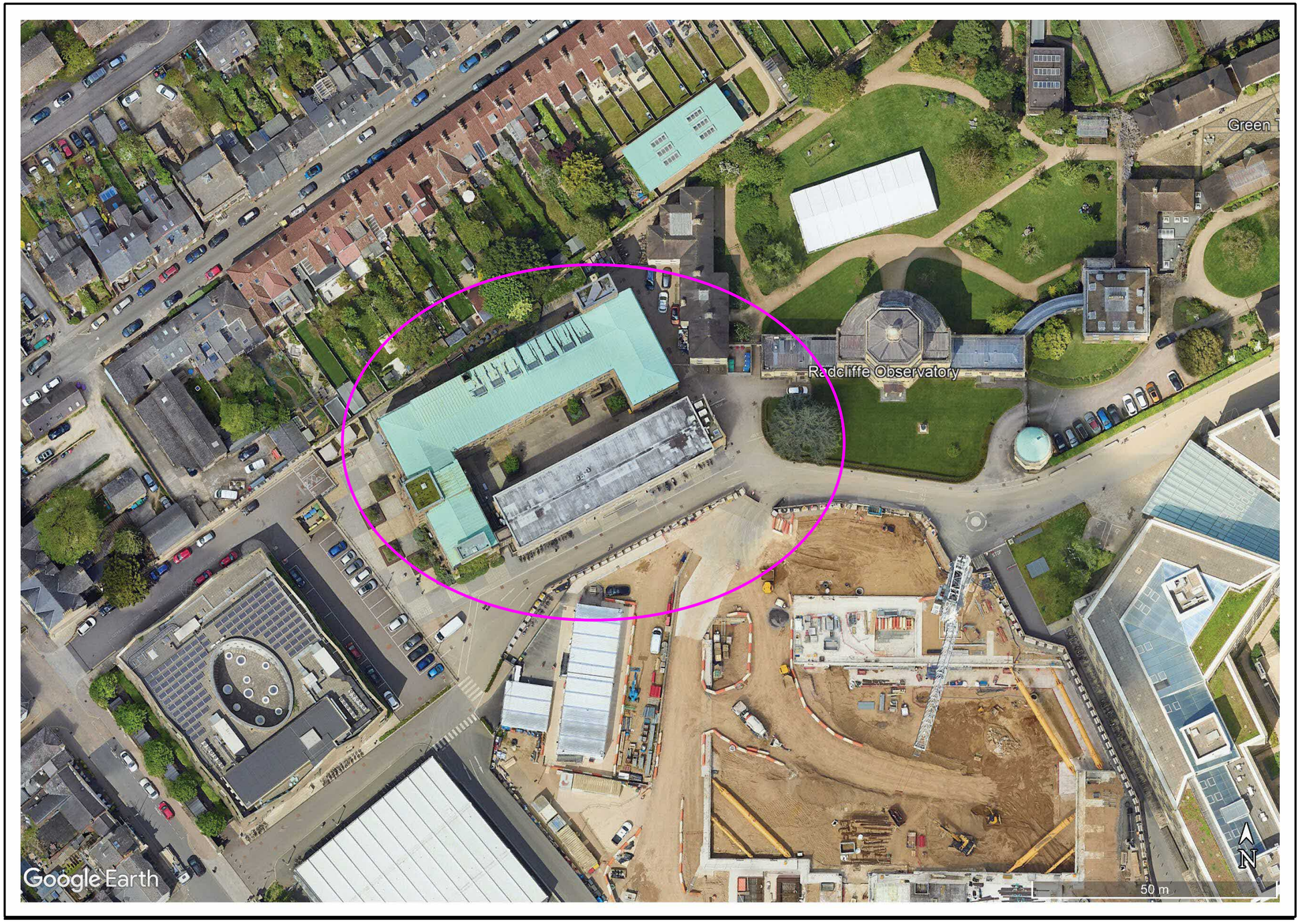
5.5 The groups and hedge that have been recorded as category 'C' trees indicate their landscape value is reduced when compared to the category 'B' trees. Notwithstanding this consideration for the retention of these groups and hedge should be given to provide continued screening and tree cover to the site.

5.6 To assist further with the design process it is recommended that the following is taken into consideration: the existing root protection areas of trees to be retained; continued future growth requirements of retained trees; juxtaposition with buildings & amenity spaces and the routing of new services. Provision to ensure that there are suitable areas for mitigating tree planting should also be explored. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

5.7 It is anticipated that Oxford City Council will require the submission of an arboricultural implications assessment (AIA) to accompany any future applications for development at the site. The AIA should consider the effects of any tree loss required to implement the design and any potentially damaging activities proposed in the vicinity of retained trees. Such activities might include the removal of existing structures/hard surfacing; installation of new hard surfacing; installation of services and location and dimensions of proposed excavation or changes in ground level. In addition to the impact of the permanent work account should be taken of the buildability of a scheme in terms of access, adequate working space and provision the storage of materials.

APPENDIX 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN


Radcliffe Observatory
Google Earth
50 m
N

APPENDIX 2

TREE SURVEY DATA

KEY TO TREE SCHEDULE

Tree No:	Relates to individual trees, groups, hedges and woodlands as identified within the Tree Survey Schedule and Tree Constraints Plan 'T' prefixes have been used to identify individual trees. 'G' prefixes have been used to identify groups of trees. 'H' prefixes have been used to identify hedgerows. 'W' prefixes have been used to identify woodlands.
Species:	Common name
Height:	Estimated height expressed in meters
ST:	Stem diameter of the main trunk taken at 1.5m above ground level or in accordance with Annex C BS5837:2012.
Height in M of Canopy:	Information of the first significant branch and direction of growth in order to inform on ground clearance.
Abbreviations:	#: Estimated Ave: Average A.G.L: Above ground level SULE: Safe Useful Life Expectancy
Branch Spread:	Estimated crown radius expressed in meters, taken for each cardinal compass point.
Age Class:	Y Young - Less than one third of natural life expectancy MM Middle aged - One to two thirds of natural life expectancy M Mature - More than two thirds of natural life expectancy OM Over mature NP Newly Planted
Physiological Condition:	G Good F Fair P Poor D Dead

Notes:

Root Protection Area: This is a layout tool indicating the minimum area around a tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability and where the protection of the roots and soil structure is treated as a priority (detailed in paragraph 3.7 British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to Construction-Recommendations').

Young trees with a stem diameter of less than 150mm: Whilst the presence of young trees of good form and vitality is generally desirable (i.e those which have the potential to develop into quality mature specimens), they need not necessarily be a significant constraint on the site's potential (detailed in paragraph 4.5.10 British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to Construction-Recommendations').

CASCADE CHART FOR TREE QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Category and definition Criteria (including subcategories where appropriate)				Identification on plan
Trees unsuitable for retention (see Note)				
Category U Those in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years	Trees that have a serious, irremediable, structural defect, such that their early loss is expected due to collapse, including those that will become unviable after removal of other category U trees (e.g. where, for whatever reason, the loss of companion shelter cannot be mitigated by pruning) Trees that are dead or are showing signs of significant, immediate, and irreversible overall decline Trees infected with pathogens of significance to the health and/or safety of other trees nearby, or very low quality trees suppressing adjacent trees of better quality NOTE Category U trees can have existing or potential conservation value which it might be desirable to preserve; see ***4.5.7***.			Dark Red
	1 Mainly arboricultural qualities	**2 Mainly landscape qualities**	**3 Mainly cultural values, including conservation**	
Trees to be considered for retention				
Category A **Trees of high quality** with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years	Trees that are particularly good examples of their species, especially if rare or unusual; or those that are essential components of groups or formal or semi-formal arboricultural features (e.g. the dominant and/or principal trees within an avenue)	Trees, groups or woodlands of particular visual importance as arboricultural and/or landscape features	Trees, groups or woodlands of significant conservation, historical, commemorative or other value (e.g. veteran trees or wood-pasture)	Light Green
Category B **Trees of moderate quality** with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years	Trees that might be included in category A, but are downgraded because of impaired condition (e.g. presence of significant though remediable defects, including unsympathetic past management and storm damage), such that they are unlikely to be suitable for retention for beyond 40 years; or trees lacking the special quality necessary to merit the category A designation	Trees present in numbers, usually growing as groups or woodlands, such that they attract a higher collective rating than they might as individuals; or trees occurring as collectives but situated so as to make little visual contribution to the wider locality	Trees with material conservation or other cultural value	Mid Blue
Category C **Trees of low quality** with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150 mm	Unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories	Trees present in groups or woodlands, but without this conferring on them significantly greater collective landscape value; and/or trees offering low or only temporary/transient landscape benefits	Trees with no material conservation or other cultural value	Grey

TREE NO.	SPECIES			BRANCH SPREAD							COMMENTS		
	(Latin)			N	E	S	W				Preliminary Recommendations		
T1	Atlas Cedar *Cedrus atlantica 'Glauca'*	12	775	7	6.5	6.5	7.5	1.75n	MM	G	Growing on a grass area and in the ownership of Green Templeton College. Pleasant feature. No Work	20 to 40	B2
T2	Holly *Ilex aquifolium*	11	472#	3	3.5	3	3.5	N/A	M	F	Growing on third party land. Assumed ground level 1.5m higher than site. Tree height calculated from this. X2 stems. Measurements estimated. Stem estimated. No Work	20 to 40	B2
T3	Norway Maple *Acer platanoides*	9	400#	3	2.5	4.5	4.5	5	MM	F	Growing on third party land. Assumed ground level 1.5m higher than site. Tree height calculated from this. Canopy overhangs site. Level decreases. Dimensions estimated. Stem estimated. No Work	20 to 40	B2
T4	Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*	8	380#	3	4	3	4	N/A	MM	F	Growing on third party land. Assumed ground level 1.5m higher than site. Tree height calculated from this. Canopy overhangs site. Level decreases. Dimensions estimated. Stem estimated. No Work	20 to 40	B2
G1	Leyland Cypress *X Cupressocyparis leylandii*	10	650#	4	4	6	3	5	MM	F	Growing on third party land. Assumed ground level 1.5m higher than site. Tree height calculated from this. Canopy overhangs boundary. Dimensions estimated. Stem estimated. Eastern tree in group larger specimen. No Work	10 to 20	C2
G2	Olive *Olea europaea*	Ave 2.5	Ave 110	2	2	2	2	N/A	Y	F	Growing to the west of the Gibson Building. Growing in planters. Could be transplanted. Average dimensions recorded. Not a constraint. No Work	10 to 20	C2
G3	Amelanchier *Amelanchier sp*	Ave 4	Ave 120	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	N/A	Y	F	Growing within the Quod of the Gibson Building. Growing in planters. Could be transplanted. Average dimensions recorded. Not a constraint. No Work	10 to 20	C2
H1	Yew *Taxus baccata*	Ave 1.5	Ave 50	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	GL	Y	G	Third party hedge. Regularly maintained boundary hedge. Average dimensions recorded. No Work	10 to 20	C2

APPENDIX 3

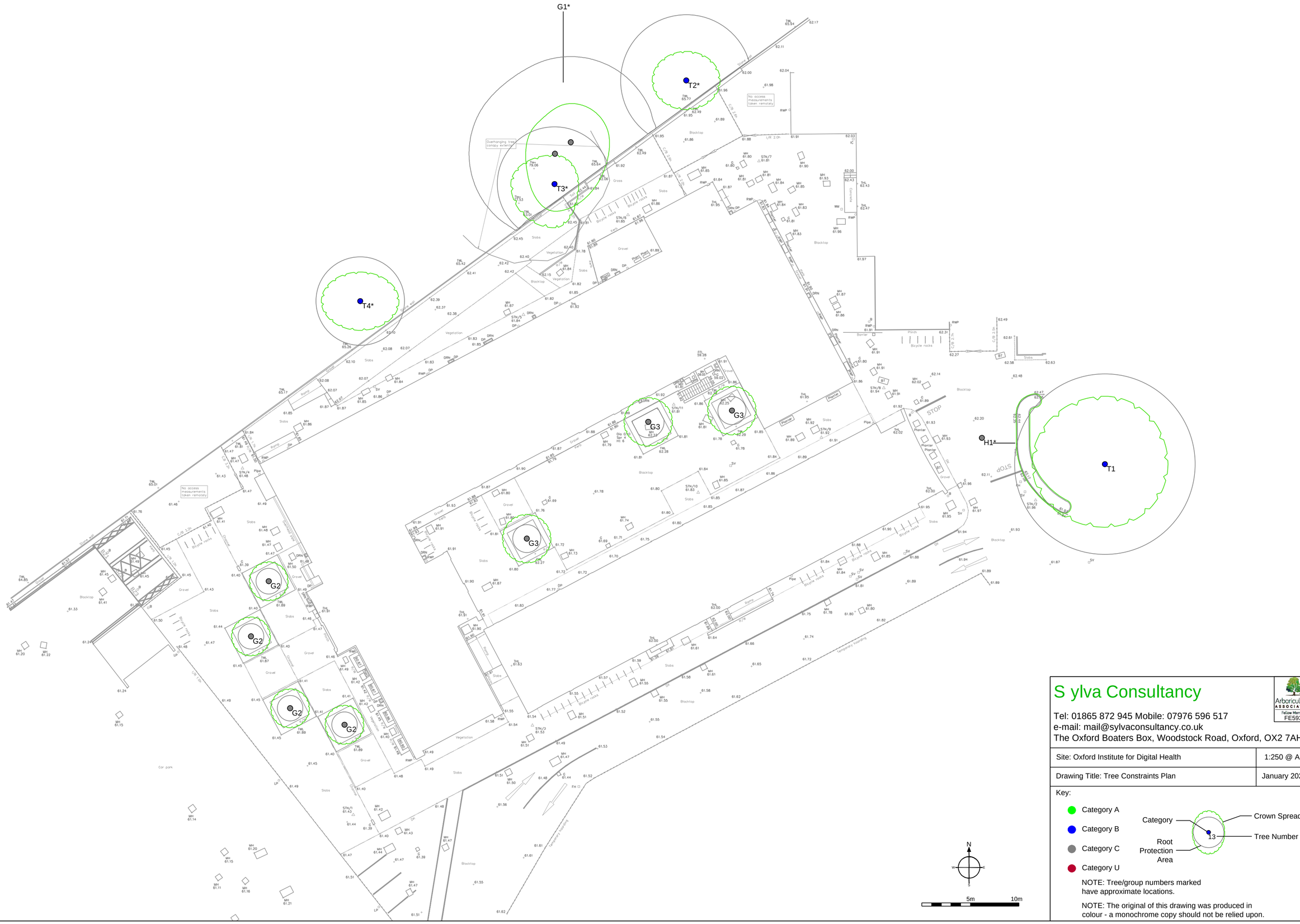
ROOT PROTECTION AREA

ROOT PROTECTION AREA

TREE NO.	SPECIES	NO. OF STEMS	SINGLE STEM DIA (mm)	2-5 STEMS					> 5 STEMS	ROOT PROTECTION AREA - RPA (RADIUS IN M)	RPA (M^2)	LIFE EXPECTANCY (EST YEARS)	BS5837:2012 CATEGORY
				STEM 1 (mm)	STEM 2 (mm)	STEM 3 (mm)	STEM 4 (mm)	STEM 5 (mm)	MEAN STEM DIA (mm)				
T1	Atlas Cedar 'Glauca'	1	775							9.30	272	20 to 40	B2
T2	Holly	2		400	250					5.66	101	20 to 40	B2
T3	Norway Maple	1	400							4.80	72	20 to 40	B2
T4	Ash	1	380							4.56	65	20 to 40	B2
G1	Leyland Cypress	1	650							7.80	191	10 to 20	C2
G2	Olive	1	110							1.32	5	10 to 20	C2
G3	Amelanchier	1	120							1.44	7	10 to 20	C2
H1	Yew	1	50							0.60	1	10 to 20	C2

APPENDIX 4

TREE CONSTRAINTS PLAN



S ylva Consultancy

Tel: 01865 872 945 Mobile: 07976 596 517
e-mail: mail@sylvaconsultancy.co.uk
The Oxford Boaters Box, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 7AH

Arboricultural Association
Fellow Member
FE593

Site: Oxford Institute for Digital Health	1:250 @ A2
Drawing Title: Tree Constraints Plan	January 2024

Key:

- Category A
- Category B
- Category C
- Category U

NOTE: Tree/group numbers marked have approximate locations.

NOTE: The original of this drawing was produced in colour - a monochrome copy should not be relied upon.

APPENDIX 5

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1

View of tree T1 (foreground) and the existing Gibson Building (background)

Photograph 2

View of the rear elevation of the Gibson Building.

Tree T4 (foreground) and G1 (background)

Photograph 3

View of group G2

Photograph 4

View of group G3

APPENDIX 6

QUALIFICATIONS

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Fiona Bradshaw

MicFor; RFS Dip Arb;F. Arbor.A; Tech Cert (Arbor.A)

I have over 25 years' experience of arboriculture and I am the principal consultant at Sylva Consultancy. I hold the Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma in Arboriculture and the Arboricultural Associations Technicians Certificate. I am a Fellow member of the Arboricultural Association and a professional member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, of which I am also a registered Consultant.

I have the benefit of both a local authority and private practice background and I am frequently instructed to provide advice and assistance relating to trees and the planning process. I am also experienced at compiling expert reports, providing evidence and also appearing as an expert witness at Public Inquiries.

I am committed to my continued professional development which is reflected in my regular attendance of seminars and workshops.