



Tree Officer Report

Officer: Nick Timlin

Date: 13/01/2026

Application Number: P2025/0792

Location: Land East Of Minyrawel, Pen Yr Alltwen, Rhos, Pontardawe, Neath Port Talbot

Case Officer:

Tree officer comments

In support of the application the applicant has provided a tree survey to BS5837:2012 standards.

An assessment of the report is as follows.

Tree Officer Comments

Submitted Arboricultural Information: A Tree Survey to BS5837:2012 has been provided (Treescene Ltd., inspected 15 September 2025). A site layout drawing shows the proposed access and plots. A Green Infrastructure Statement accompanies the application.

Arboricultural Baseline

Boundary trees to the north and east define the site, including high-quality specimens:

- T6 – Oak (*Quercus robur*), Category A, mature, good condition (estimated remaining contribution >40 years)
- T10 – Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Category A, mature, good condition (>40 years)
- T3 – Beech, Category B, fair condition (20–40 years)
- T4 – Sycamore, Category B, fair condition (20–40 years, multi-stem)
- T5 – Oak, Category B, fair condition (20–40 years; ivy limits full inspection)

Development–Tree Conflicts

Tree No.	Species	BS5837 Category	Development Element Affecting Tree	Conflict Type	Additional Notes on RPA Condition
T6	Oak	A (High)	Plot 01 driveway and slab	RPA encroachment; canopy overhang	Northern boundary adjacent to existing road – RPA likely partially



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						compromised by hard surfacing and reduced rooting volume
	T10	Beech	A (High)	Plot 02 footprint and garden	RPA overlap; canopy shading	Same northern edge condition – limited rooting environment
	T3	Beech	B (Moderate)	Access road alignment	Direct RPA loss	Road construction will sever roots; existing verge may already restrict rooting depth
	T4	Sycamore	B (Moderate)	Access road and turning head	RPA loss	Verge and kerb likely limit rooting; compounded by new hard surfacing
	T5	Oak	B (Moderate)	Access road	RPA loss	Similar compromised rooting environment due to adjacent highway



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T14	Beech	B (Moderate)	Plot 03 garden boundary	Partial RPA overlap	Retained but future pressure for pruning due to shading
T15	Sycamore	B (Moderate)	Plot 04 garden	Minor RPA overlap	No current hard surfacing conflict
T16	Oak	B (Moderate)	Plot 05 garden	Minor RPA overlap	Offsite tree – less direct impact but proximity risk
T18–T21	Oak/Beech	B (Moderate)	Plots 06–08 gardens	Minor RPA overlap	Dense vegetation may buffer impact
T30	Oak	C (Low)	Plot 06 driveway	RPA overlap	Already suppressed; low long-term value
T31	Oak	B (Moderate)	Plot 07 garden	Canopy shading	No major RPA conflict

- Northern access road alignment intersects the RPAs of several northern boundary trees (T3, T4, T5).
- Plot 01 driveway/slab is shown close to or within the RPA of T6 (Category A Oak).
- Plot 02 footprint/garden and associated hard surfacing lie close to or within the RPA of T10 (Category A Beech).
- Hard surfacing and existing highway at the northern edge suggest partial pre-existing RPA constraints (compaction/limited rooting volume), increasing sensitivity to any further encroachment.



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TEMPO Assessment

Tree No.	Species	BS5837 Cat.	1a Condition	1b Retention	1c Visibility (future)	Total (w/ Part 2)
T3	Beech	B	3 – Fair	2 – 20–40 yrs	4 – Clearly visible	16 – Definitely merits TPO
T4	Sycamore	B	3 – Fair	2 – 20–40 yrs	4 – Clearly visible	16 – Definitely merits TPO
T5	Oak	B	3 – Fair	2 – 20–40 yrs	4 – Clearly visible	16 – Definitely merits TPO
T6	Oak	A	5 – Good	4 – 40–100 yrs	5 – Prominent	19 – Definitely merits TPO
T10	Beech	A	5 – Good	4 – 40–100 yrs	5 – Prominent	19 – Definitely merits TPO

Applying the TEMPO decision guide, T3, T4, T5, T6 and T10 each meet or exceed the threshold for 'Definitely merits TPO' (scores ≥ 16), with T6 and T10 scoring 19 owing to high condition, long retention, prominent visibility and foreseeable development threat.

Conclusion

The submitted BS5837 tree survey for Pen Yr Alltwen, Rhos, Pontardawe provides basic data on species, dimensions, condition, and category grading for key boundary trees, including high-value specimens T6 (Oak, Cat A) and T10 (Beech, Cat A). However, it lacks critical BS5837:2012 components such as Root Protection Area (RPA) calculations and dimensions, a Tree Constraints Plan, and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) with a Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement.

These omissions mean the current information is insufficient to fully assess the impact of the proposed development on retained trees. This concern is heightened for the northern boundary



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trees, which are already growing in suboptimal rooting conditions adjacent to the existing road; any construction activity within their RPAs will have a significant adverse effect on their stability and long-term health.



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Tree officer recommendations

Given the insufficiency of detail, the planning authority should require a full BS5837:2012-compliant submission before any reserved matters or detailed design is considered. This must include: (i) a Tree Survey Schedule with all parameters listed at Clause 4.4.2.5; (ii) RPA calculations and plotted RPAs per Clause 4.6 and Annex D; (iii) a Tree Constraints Plan per Clause 5.2; and (iv) a complete Arboricultural Impact Assessment per Clause 5.4, identifying trees for retention/removal, all direct and indirect impacts (access road, driveways, services, level changes), and mitigation. It should also provide a Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement covering barriers/ground protection (Clauses 5.5, 6.2) and methods for any work within/adjacent to RPAs (Clause 6.1), with site monitoring by an Arboricultural Clerk of Works (Clause 6.3)

In parallel, and because access is being sought at outline stage, the authority should attach pre-commencement conditions to prevent irreversible harm before detailed design—specifically: (a) a Utilities/Drainage/SuDS routing plan demonstrating avoidance of RPAs, or trenchless/hand-dig methods if genuinely unavoidable (Clauses 7.7.1–7.7.2); (b) a Tree Protection Plan to scale, with dimensioned offsets from the base of each tree to fencing and photographic evidence within five working days of installation (Clauses 4.1, 5.5.1–5.5.3, 6.3); and (c) a No-dig method statement for any access/hard surfaces within or adjacent to RPAs (Clauses 7.4.2.1–7.4.2.7). Until these items are submitted and approved, the details contained within the current survey are insufficient to fully assess tree impacts, and determination should proceed on the basis of these conditions and further submissions

Make individual Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) for T3, T4, T5, T6 and T10 to safeguard long-term amenity and provide statutory control over future works.

Conditions

Condition – Utilities, Drainage & SuDS Routing Outside RPAs

No development, including demolition, groundworks, or site clearance, shall commence until a Utilities and Drainage Layout Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This plan shall:



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Show all proposed underground and above-ground services (including water, gas, electricity, telecommunications, and associated ducts), drainage infrastructure, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) features.

Demonstrate that all services and drainage features are routed entirely outside the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of trees to be retained, calculated in accordance with BS5837:2012 Clause 4.6 and Annex D.

Where avoidance is not possible, specify trenchless installation methods and hand-dig techniques in accordance with BS5837:2012 Clause 7.7.2, with entry and retrieval pits located outside RPAs.

Include dimensioned offsets from RPAs, trenchless method statements, and confirmation that inspection chambers, soakaways, and SuDS components are located outside RPAs.

No works shall commence until the approved plan and method statements have been implemented on site.

Reason: To prevent damage to tree root systems and soil structure, ensuring compliance with BS5837:2012 and the long-term retention of trees contributing to local amenity and biodiversity.

Condition Tree Protection Plan & Fencing

No development, including demolition, groundworks, or site clearance, shall commence until a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The TPP shall:

- Be prepared in accordance with BS5837:2012 Clauses 4.1 and 5.5.1–5.5.3 and:
 - Be to scale, state the scale and paper size, and include a scale bar and north point.
 - Show the location of protective barriers forming a Construction Exclusion Zone around all RPAs.
 - Show the extent and type of ground protection where construction activity cannot be fully excluded.
- Include:
 - Exact distances from the base of each retained tree to the protective fencing, dimensioned from fixed site features.
 - Details of barrier specification to BS5837:2012 Figure 2 (default scaffold framework and welded mesh panels).
 - All-weather signage stating “CONSTRUCTION EXCLUSION ZONE – NO ACCESS”.

Barriers and ground protection shall be installed before any works commence and remain in place until completion of development unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Photographic evidence of the installed fencing and ground protection shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 5 working days of installation and at key stages of development (post-demolition, pre-construction, and prior to removal of fencing) in accordance with BS5837:2012 Clause 6.3.



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Reason: To prevent damage to retained trees and their rooting environment and to ensure compliance through monitoring, in accordance with BS5837:2012.

Condition – No-Dig Construction for Access Road & Hard Surfaces

Any approved access road or hard surfacing within or adjacent to Root Protection Areas (RPAs) shall be constructed using a no-dig specification in accordance with BS5837:2012 Clauses 7.4.2.1–7.4.2.7.

Prior to commencement of such works, a Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Method Statement shall:

Specify:

- Use of three-dimensional cellular confinement systems with permeable surfacing.
- Above-ground edge restraints (no excavation for kerbs or haunching).
- Measures to prevent soil compaction during installation, including temporary ground protection (BS5837:2012 Clause 6.2.3).

Confirm:

- No excavation into soil other than removal of turf layer by hand.
- Finished levels and drainage design to avoid waterlogging within RPAs.
- Compliance with BS5837:2012 recommendations for permeable surfacing and edge support (Clause 7.4.2.5–7.4.2.7).

Monitoring Requirement:

- Photographic evidence of no-dig installation stages shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 5 working days of commencement and at key milestones (e.g., after cellular system installation and before surfacing).
- Works shall be supervised by an Arboricultural Clerk of Works, with a signed report confirming compliance.

Reason: To safeguard tree roots and soil structure during construction of access and hard surfaces, ensuring compliance with BS5837:2012 and preventing irreversible damage to retained trees.

Condition – Submission of Full BS5837-Compliant Arboricultural Information



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Prior to the submission of any reserved matters or detailed design, the applicant shall provide a full BS5837:2012-compliant Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and supporting documentation. This shall include the following elements as required by BS5837:2012:

1) Tree Survey Schedule (Clause 4.4.2.5)

- Sequential reference number, species (common and scientific), height, stem diameter (Annex C), branch spread at four cardinal points;
- Existing height above ground of: (i) first significant branch (and direction), and (ii) canopy clearance;
- Life stage; general observations (structural/physiological condition) and preliminary management recommendations;
- Estimated remaining contribution (<10, 10+, 20+, 40+ years);
- Category grading (U, A, B, C) and subcategory (1, 2, 3).

2) Root Protection Area (RPA) Calculations & Dimensions (Clause 4.6 and Annex D)

- RPA radius and area for each tree, calculated per BS5837 formula ($12 \times \text{stem diameter}$), capped at 707 m²;
- RPAs plotted on the Tree Constraints Plan.

3) Tree Constraints Plan (Clause 5.2)

- RPAs and crown spreads superimposed on the proposed layout, showing below-ground and above-ground constraints.

4) Schedule of Trees for Retention and Removal (Clause 5.4.3)

- Trees to be retained, removed, and pruned clearly identified and marked on plan (including any access-facilitation pruning).

5) Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Clause 5.4)

- Evaluation of direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development (including any tree loss, ground level changes, installation of services), and mitigation measures.

6) Tree Protection Plan (Clause 5.5)



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- Location of protective barriers and ground protection; dimensioned offsets from fixed site features; and construction exclusion zones.

7) Arboricultural Method Statement (Clause 6.1)

- Detailed methodology for all works within or adjacent to RPAs, including excavation, surfacing, foundations, service installation, temporary ground protection (Clause 6.2.3) and barrier specification (Clause 6.2.2);
- Sequence of works and risk controls to avoid root damage and soil compaction.

8) Arboricultural Clerk of Works (ACoW) – Site Supervision (Clause 6.3)

- Appointment of an Arboricultural Clerk of Works prior to any works.
- A Site Monitoring Schedule shall be submitted and approved, detailing:
 - Pre-commencement inspection (confirming fencing/ground protection set-out to the approved TPP);
 - Key stages (e.g., service installation near RPAs, any no-dig surfacing lay-up, foundation works adjacent to RPAs);
 - Photographic evidence at each scheduled inspection;
 - Post-completion sign-off confirming compliance with the AIA, TPP and AMS.
- Monitoring reports (with dated photographs and plan references) shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority within 5 working days of each inspection.

Reason: To ensure the protection and long-term retention of trees on and adjacent to the site, with auditable supervision and evidence of compliance, in accordance with BS5837:2012 and relevant local planning policy