

Planning Inspectorate Reference: APP/E0345/W/21/328974
Planning Application number: 200328/OUT
Site Address: Vastern Court, Caversham Road, Reading

Note on Vastern Road tree planting (following RT discussion of 3/5/22)

9.05.22

Species within the central reservation (newer planting) are an upright form of small-leaved Lime - *Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire'. Barcham Tree Specialists advise a mature height of 12-17m and describe the tree shape as 'regular, pyramidal shape'; Hiller's advise a height of 10m and spread of 5m after 25 years and describe the shape as 'uniformed broadly pyramidal'.

[For information, the older planting in raised brick planters near Caversham Rd/Vastern Rd roundabout are London Plane trees]

The 'Greenspire' cultivar was chosen as the central reservation is quite narrow and RBC didn't want the trees to overhang the carriageway - there are above ground constraints such as street lighting, highway infrastructure and signalised pedestrian crossings all of which provide constraints to any large canopy trees in that location. The trees were planted in specially designed tree pits bounded by 600mm deep root barriers on all sides to protect the adjacent surfacing and in view of adjacent services. Topsoil was provided under this depth hence further rooting environment available if roots spread down and outside the initial tree pit. Whilst rooting volume was potentially limited (which would limit species choice), the primary driver in tree choice was canopy conflicts.

The above demonstrates the need to provide a sufficient landscape buffer on the Vastern Road frontage of Vastern Court to accommodate large canopy trees (confirmed in the RT discussion as a minimum 10m from kerb) to avoid conflict with canopy, i.e. to provide space for the canopy, with a limited future overhang of the highway and to allow space until such time as the trees have grown sufficiently to make crown lifting to the statutory heights of 5.5m above the highway (if they grow over that) feasible. A wider buffer will also allow a potentially suitable soil volume for large canopy trees which is important to enable them to achieve their optimum size.

Culvert

With regards to the discussed culvert (which prevented large canopy tree planting at the front of 55 Vastern Road), a question was raised as to whether this impacted the appeal site. A culvert were also discussed during the processing of the adjacent site at 80 Caversham Road with the existing culvert shown by the dashed black line below:



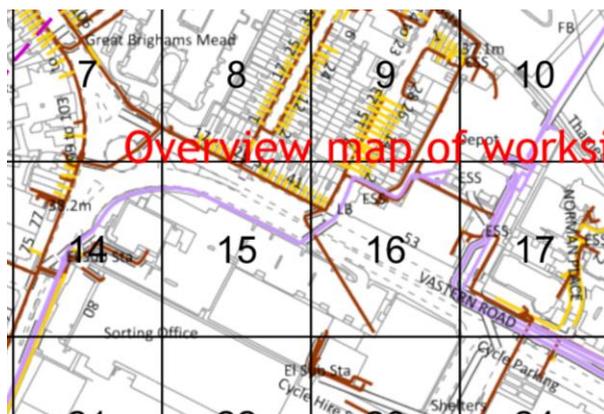
For information, following consideration of various options, that culvert is planned to be re-routed (along the blue line) as part of the approved development (all other routes were dismissed for various logistical reasons). This prevents the planting of large canopy trees on the Caversham Road frontage, as was originally requested and the preferred option. N.B. at the widest point of that approved development, the set back from the kerb edge is approx. 10m (landscaping is included within the red line) hence a 10m set back from the Vastern Road kerb edge on the appeal site would be consistent with this.

Neither this, nor the culvert running in front of 55 Vastern Road, impact the appeal site.

Services on Vastern Road (and Caversham Road) frontage of appeal site

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

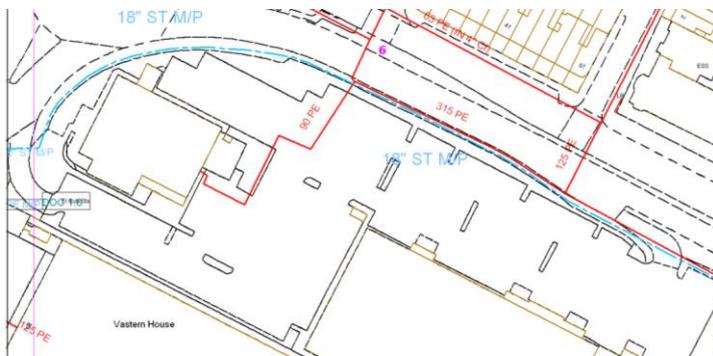
2-3.3kv cable (medium voltage) is shown by the purple line, running under the Vastern Road and Caversham Road pavements (highway land) in front of the location of Plots A & B:





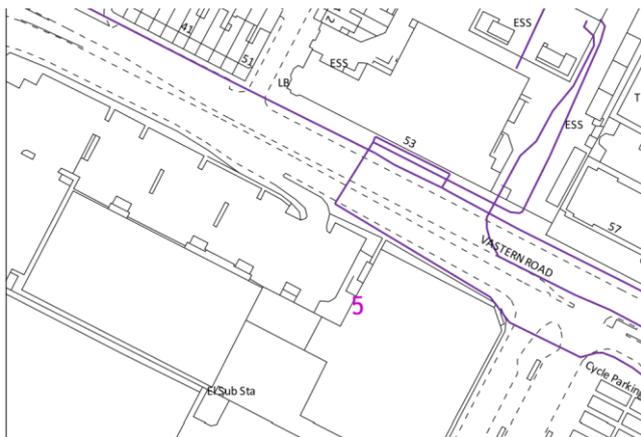
Southern Gas Network

Medium pressure main shown by the blue dashed line, running under the Vastern Road and Caversham Road pavements (highway land) in front of all Plots



Neos Networks

Purple line shows the route of a communications cable under the Vastern Road pavement (highway land) in front of the appeal site - roughly half of Plot C and all of Plot D



Thames Water

Water main (clean) is shown by the red line running under the Vastern Road and Caversham Road pavements (highway land)



Officer comment on services Vs Vastern Road and Caversham Road (corner) tree planting:

The presence of the services highlighted above places significant constraints on planting within the highway given required easements. Each utility company have their own rules, easements and working practices but are resistant to planting over services in case of damage by roots or in case access is required, hence there will need to be a set-back of building elevations to the south (into the appeal site) to allow the required tree planting outside of any easements. The required tree planting will therefore have to be accommodated within the red line of the appeal site. The precise potential location of trees, i.e. required distance from each service route, is unknown and the appellant has not explored this issue. It has therefore not been demonstrated that planting, as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (within Section 7 of the DAS - CD 1.55), can practically be implemented.