

Arboricultural Method Statement

For

Phase 1 Garden Pathway Improvements, Stourhead

On behalf of

The National Trust

Stourton
Near Mere
Warminster
BA12 6QD

Report prepared by

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

- 1.1.1 This Arboricultural Method Statement report supports a planning application, submitted by the National Trust, for footpath improvement works including associated engineering and landscaping works at Stourhead in Stourton, Wiltshire (BA12 6QD).
- 1.1.2 This document accompanies an Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated 2nd February 2026.

1.2 Instruction

- 1.2.1 Bosky Trees has been employed to advise on the project design and specify suitable measures to protect retained trees during construction.
- 1.2.2 This method statement provides details of how planned operations near trees will be carried out. However, arboricultural supervision will be required if any unforeseen construction activity is to take place within or adjacent to the root protection area (RPA) of any of the retained trees at the site (the RPAs are indicated on the Tree Protection Plans). This supervision must be carried out by a suitably qualified arboriculturist. It is recommended that the project arboriculturist and the local authority's tree officer are informed of necessary works near trees as soon as they become apparent.

1.3 Contacts and responsibilities

- 1.3.1 **Project arboriculturist:** Ben Rose, Tel. 07872 609633; ben@boskytrees.co.uk
- 1.3.2 The project arboriculturist shall be responsible for independently monitoring the effectiveness of tree protection at regular intervals and report all findings in writing back to the client, the project site manager and the local planning authority. They may also be instructed to provide additional advice should unforeseen circumstances develop.
- 1.3.3 **Site manager:** TBC
- 1.3.4 The site manager must be provided with a copy of this document and a copy should be available be kept available in the main site office for quick and easy reference. It is the site manager's responsibility to pass on the information in this document to all construction staff and site contractors.
- 1.3.5 The Arboricultural Method Statement must be used as a reference source for site operatives in order to guide tree-related aspects of the construction process. A precautionary approach is required.

2 THE GENERAL APPROACH TO INSTALLING NEW SURFACING NEAR TREES

- 2.1.1 Trees are vulnerable to root damage caused by ground disturbance, direct injury of the trunk or branches, environmental change, pests and diseases. Construction work often exerts pressures on existing trees. A tree that has taken many decades to reach maturity can be irreparably damaged in just a few minutes by unwitting or negligent actions.
- 2.1.2 The project arboriculturist has worked with the project engineer and the landscape architect to devise a methodology for resurfacing the path network without damaging the trees in the gardens from the conception of this scheme. As such, the designs for the path build-up and the widths of the paths specified have been devised with the need for protecting adjacent trees in mind. The drainage strategy has also been designed to avoid pipework/trenching adjacent to paths in order to avoid damaging tree roots that we expect are present in the upper 600mm of soil.
- 2.1.3 Any new surface needs to be installed onto a hard base. Since the footpaths are already installed onto compacted stone sub-bases it is intended to reuse these. Therefore, there will not be the need for installing geocell sub-bases. Instead, it is proposed that the new surfacing is built up on top of the old surfacing so that the requirement for excavations, and the risk of damage to the roots of adjacent trees, is minimised. This approach has been specially devised to have a low impact on adjacent trees.
- 2.1.4 In most locations some of the old wearing course will need to be removed in order to prepare the ground for the new surface courses. Where there are obvious tree roots visible at the surface of the old path these must be left in place and worked around.
- 2.1.5 The new surfacing will require edging so that the surface courses can be compacted and properly laid. The edging will be of either steel or treated timber. There is a risk that the roots of adjacent trees could be damaged during the edging operations and so all edging will be installed in accordance with an agreed Arboricultural Method Statement (see section 4 for further guidance).
- 2.1.6 Vehicle use must be strictly controlled to ensure that soil compaction near trees is avoided (see section 6 for further guidance).
- 2.1.7 Before any heavy plant machinery is used on the site the project arboriculturist there must be a meeting between the project arboriculturist where the site manager will be made aware of the tree protection measures that will be required during construction. It will be the construction site manager's responsibility to pass on the information in the agreed Arboricultural Method Statement to all construction staff and site contractors.

3 SURFACE PREPARATION

- 3.1.1 The levels of the paths will generally need to be increased so that digging down into the soil profile is avoided however the levels of the paths will also be influenced by the drainage strategy. The project engineer will identify areas for cut and fill, however these will be minor level changes and significant tree roots ($\geq 25\text{mm}$ in diameter) must be retained where cut outs are required and the level of fill will also be minor (generally less than 100mm).
- 3.1.2 Level changes or slopes must comply with the constraints attached to the construction exclusion zones. This means that any soil excavations must take place outside of the fenced areas identified on the Tree Protection Plans.

- 3.1.3 In most locations some of the old wearing course will need to be removed in order to prepare the ground for the new surface courses. This operation will be carefully carried out under the supervision of a banksman and where there are obvious tree roots visible at the surface of the old path these will be left in place and worked around.

4 EDGING

- 4.1.1 The edging will be mainly treated timber boards approximately 45mm thick however steel edging will be used in the more formal parts of the garden.
- 4.1.2 The edging will need to be set at an appropriate level to allow the new surfacing to be laid up to it and in some cases this will require excavations. Excavating at the edge of any of the paths will need to be carried out with care to avoid damaging significant tree roots (roots $\geq$ 25mm diameter). Where such roots are encountered the wooden board may need to be cut so that it can be installed around the root. Where the board or metal edging cannot be cut to avoid the root flare or the root there will need to be a break in the edging.
- 4.1.3 The installation of edging will be covered during the initial toolbox talk by the project arboriculturist and effective ways of overcoming such constraints will be agreed with the contractor.

5 SITE COMPOUNDS AND MATERIAL STORAGE AREAS

- 5.1.1 There are two areas that have been identified for site compounds and material storage during Phase 1 works. These areas are identified on the accompanying Tree Protection Plans (Appendix 2) and on the Phasing Strategy Plan (LUC 15/12/25). The contractor access routes are also identified on the accompanying Tree Protection Plans and on the Phasing Strategy Plan.
- 5.1.2 If the contractor wishes to amend the proposals for site compounds, material storage or access routes they must agree this in writing with the Wiltshire Council Tree Officer (Shane Verrion).

6 VEHICLE USE

- 6.1.1 Soil compaction can occur quickly by vehicles passing over an area of soil. Compaction may cause reduced infiltration rates of water, poor drainage, reduced availability of water and reduced air and oxygen supply to roots. This leads to reduced root growth and, as a result, the health of the tree is affected. To avoid soil compaction, no vehicles should enter the fenced-off areas during construction operations.
- 6.1.2 Vehicle use will need to be restricted to designated routes identified on the accompanying Tree Protection Plans (Appendix 2).
- 6.1.3 Loaded dumper trucks have the highest potential to cause ground compaction and so their use must be restricted to existing hard surfaces. The skid steering of tracked vehicles can cause surface smearing which reduces gas permeability and water infiltration rates and thus causes harm to the living soil. Therefore, if any vehicle needs to turn on soft ground it will be necessary for thick plywood boards, plastic ground guards or metal sheeting to be put down so that the vehicle can turn on top of them.

7 TREE PROTECTION FENCING

- 7.1.1 Temporary fencing and/or barriers must be used during construction to protect retained trees situated near works areas. The locations of such fencing/barriers is indicated on Tree Protection Plans in Appendix 1 (TPP-Ph1-1 & TPP-Ph1-2). For effective tree protection, protective fencing must be installed before any heavy plant machinery is used on the site and must remain in place until completion of construction works (unless under arboricultural supervision). The fenced off areas will be designated as ‘construction exclusion zones’.
- 7.1.2 Tree protection fencing will only be required in the areas where construction works and construction access is required. In some parts of the site tree protection fencing will not be required due to topography (i.e. where there are steep banks at the edge of the path that will prevent vehicle use off the existing trackway).
- 7.1.3 It would be impractical and excessively expensive to use standard tree protection fencing as specified in BS5837:2012 alongside all sides of every path, instead temporary rope or tape fencing is proposed. A specification for suitable tree protection fencing is provided in Appendix 1.

8 AGENDA FOR ARBORICULTURAL SUPERVISION

- 8.1.1 There will be a pre-commencement site meeting between the project arboriculturist and the construction site manager. During this ‘toolbox talk’ the arboriculturist will explain how trees could potentially be damaged by construction works and discuss how such damage can be avoided, and the agreed methodology for the works will be fully explained. The toolbox talk will also provide an opportunity for the contractor to raise any issues with working methods or features that they think could potentially impact the retained trees. At this point the location and suitability of the tree protection fencing will be checked by the project arboriculturist. A record of this meeting will be produced by the arboriculturist and this will be supplied to the planning case officer.
- 8.1.2 Supervision by a suitably qualified arboriculturist will also be required if any unforeseen construction activity is to take place within the root protection area of any trees retained on or near the site. The project arboriculturist and the local authority’s arboricultural officer should be informed of necessary works near trees as soon as they become apparent.

Table 1: Agenda for arboricultural supervision.

Item no.	Phase	Works description
1	Pre-commencement	Tree protection put in place.
2	Pre-commencement	Toolbox talk from project arboriculturist. Record of tree protection fencing check produced and submitted to the planning case officer.
3	Construction	Any unforeseen ground works near trees not listed within this document. Record of any additional arboricultural supervision will be produced and submitted to the planning case officer.

APPENDIX 1

SPECIFICATION FOR TREE PROTECTION FENCING

The location of the tree protection fencing that will be required is shown on the tree protection plan, (this is provided at the rear of this document). **For effective tree protection it is crucial that the protective fencing is installed before any heavy plant machinery is used on the site.** The tree protection fencing must remain in place until the construction works have been completed (unless under arboricultural supervision). The fenced off areas will be construction exclusion zones.

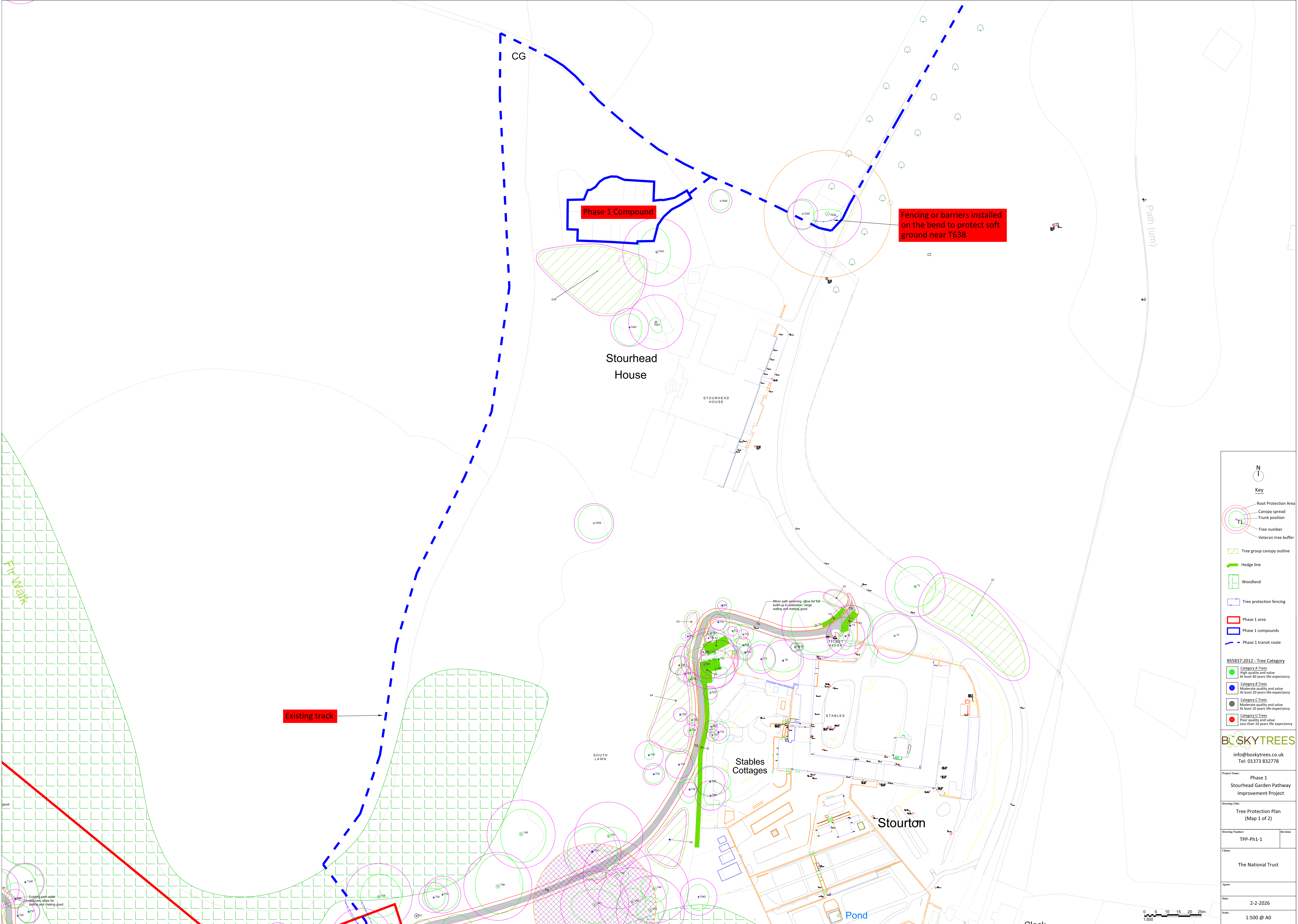
Fencing (or other forms of barrier) must be fit for the purpose of excluding construction activity and appropriate to the degree and proximity of work taking place around the retained trees. Since this is a relatively small and short-term project it will not be necessary to install metal fencing supported by a scaffold framework (as detailed in in Figure 2 of BS5837). Instead, it is proposed that Heras panels, cleft chestnut fencing, wire stock fencing, coloured plastic 'snow guard' fencing or simply coloured rope nailed to the top of wooden fence posts that have been driven into the ground would be suitable. In general fences of this nature are about 1.2m high, and they can be installed on standard fenceposts that are hammered into the ground. Whatever fencing method is used it is crucial that the fence is pinned to the ground so that the fenceline cannot be moved by contractors during construction.



Figure 1: The tree protection fencing for this project could be as simple as coloured rope nailed to wooden fenceposts as shown in this image.

Once the barriers have been erected the areas of land within the construction exclusion zone should be regarded as sacrosanct, and should not be removed or altered without prior consultation with the project arboriculturist and, where necessary, approval from the local planning authority. All-weather notices should be attached to the fencing with words such as: 'Construction Exclusion Zone - No Access'. Throughout the construction period attention should be paid to ensure that barriers remain rigid and complete.

Arboricultural supervision will be required whenever construction and development activity is to take place within a construction exclusion zone. This supervision must be carried out by a suitably qualified arboriculturist.



N

Key

Root Protection Area

Canopy spread

Trunk position

Tree number

Veteran tree buffer

Tree group canopy outline

Hedge line

Woodland

Tree protection fencing

Phase 1 area

Phase 1 compounds

Phase 1 transit route

BS5837:2012 - Tree Category

Category A Trees

High quality and value

At least 40 years life-expectancy

Category B Trees

Moderate quality and value

At least 30 years life-expectancy

Category C Trees

Moderate quality and value

At least 30 years life-expectancy

Category U Trees

Poor quality and value

Less than 10 years life-expectancy

BC SKYTREES

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Tel: 01373 832778

Project Name:

Phase 1
Stourhead Garden Pathway
Improvement Project

Drawing Title:

Tree Protection Plan
(Map 1 of 2)

Drawing Number:

TPP-Ph1-1

Client:

The National Trust

Agent:

Date:

2-2-2026

Scale:

1:500 @ A0

