

Blowers Wood

APPLICATION
REFERENCE

APPLICANT

MC/23/0284 Redrow Homes

SUBJECT

Ancient Woodland and Public Right of Way

DATE

September 2024

1 Introduction

This Statement provides further detail in respect of the proposed approach for improving the usability of a length of a Public Right of Way (GB40) which runs from the Blowers Wood proposed development site (which is the subject of planning application MC/23/0284) through the Blowers Wood Ancient Woodland.

2 Context

The section of the Public Right of Way in question, which runs through the woodland itself, extends to some 35m. The section in question is shown on Figure 1 below and is circa 3 – 4 metres wide, with evidence in some areas of some form of aggregate material having been deposited and generally with limited evidence of surface tree roots.

There is an existing fence on the western side, with a gate a dog bin. Informal tracks run away from the formal PROW to the east and west through the Blowers Wood Ancient Woodland.

After exiting the Ancient Woodland the PROW continues for a further 70m, passing between two dwellings before arriving at Lambsfrith Close.

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Figure 1 – Existing PROW through Blowers Wood



Figure 2 – Existing PROW – example of historic surfacing

3 Proposal - Overview

Redrow Homes (the Applicant) acknowledge that some form of improvement to the PROW through the ancient woodland would be beneficial, in terms of improving the usability of that route for a range of occupants of the proposed Blowers Wood development and people moving through the area, in particular to access the services/facilities at Hempstead Valley which sits to the west of the proposal site.

The PROW sits outside the red line boundary relating to application MC/23/0284 and is outside the ownership and control of Redrow Homes. However as the PROW is a public highway Redrow's position is that they would be able to undertake works to that section of the PROW which is identified on the accompanying FPCR plan through an agreement under S278 or S38 of the Highways Act 1980. Redrow would therefore use that mechanism to undertake the works to improve the section of PROW running through the woodland.

Medway Council are then seeking to improve the circa 70m length of PROW which runs from the woodland to Lambsfrith Close. Redrow are content for the S106 agreed pursuant to MC/23/0284 to make provision for funds to be provided to allow for Medway to undertake reasonable improvement works to that section of the PROW, on the basis that those are funds which are redirected from other contributions sought through the S106 (for instance the sum being sought for improvements to Hoath Way).

4 Proposal - Design

The proposed design of the surfaced Public Right of Way through the Ancient Woodland is shown on 10745-FPCR-ZZ-XX-DR-L-0011 P05 by FPCR which is provided alongside this Statement.

The design would comprise a 2m wide geocellular supported path with stone infill and resin bound gravel surface. The surfacing would be installed above the existing groundline and contained with a timber retaining edge, secured by screw piles. The path would be formed using the Adweb three dimensional geocell system, details of which are provided in **Appendix A** to this Statement.

A timber handrail would be provided to the east, with low level lighting recessed into fence posts, with hit and miss timber fencing panels used to the east to help manage light spill. The lighting cable route would be dug using a compressed air system to form a trench with minimal impact on any tree roots which are present, if necessary under the supervision of an appropriately qualified Arboriculturalist. The use of a compressed air digging system to provide for cabling relating to lighting has already been accepted by the Council through the nearby Gibraltar Farm planning permission. It is proposed that the final detail of the lighting to be installed would be required and provided through means of a condition attached to any planning permission.

5 Other Example – Knights Park, Tunbridge Wells

Appendix B to this Statement provides images prior to and following the improvement of a PROW at the Knights Park development in Tunbridge Wells. As part of the development (originally established under planning permission 13/02885/OUT), a path through the Greggs Wood Ancient Woodland was surfaced and improved. At the entrance to the path from Blackhurst Lane, as detailed at Appendix B, a 3m wide self compacting gravel path using no dig construction and built above existing levels, was used. That type and extent of improvement works was considered acceptable by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in that instance and has resulted in a level and usable path for a distance of some 800m through that woodland.



Appendix A

Details of ADWEB system



Tree Root Protection

A guide to the selection
and specification of no
dig Tree Root Protection
systems using ABG
Abweb TRP



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Protecting our Trees

Trees are a valuable natural resource that are increasingly under threat from construction in the urban environment. As well as the obvious benefits to the environment of maintaining healthy trees they also provide aesthetic and resource qualities to any development.

Problems arise when construction takes place in areas around tree root zones; compaction of soils and damage to soil structure from vehicular traffic can prevent valuable water and air from reaching the roots starving the tree of vital resources and leaving it open to decay. Alternatively excavation within the root zone can physically damage the root structure affecting the health and life expectancy of the tree.

The protection of trees during construction is now often written into planning consent for new developments in accordance with BS 5837: Trees in Relation to Construction: Recommendations (2005) which recommends that there be a tree root protection area within which construction should not be permitted.

Arboricultural Practice Note 12: Driveways Close to Trees (APN12) gives guidance on above ground, no dig construction techniques in and around trees and advocates the use of geocellular blanket systems, such as Abweb TRP.

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Abweb TRP in Tree Root Protection

Abweb TRP offers a practical alternative to traditional methods of construction of paths, roads and parking areas in and around trees. It is used to protect the root structure of the tree from damage caused from the compaction of the local soils as a result of vehicular traffic. Traditional methods of construction tend to be invasive and can affect tree health by damaging the root structure.

The Abweb TRP system is a no dig solution preventing damage to the tree root structure during the installation process. Abweb TRP is quick and easy to install, reduces construction time and in many instances greatly reduces the depth of imported stone required saving time and money and reducing the environmental impact of the project.

Abweb TRP is geocell mattress which is expanded on site and then filled with a clean no-fines stone; the strength of the system comes from the containment of the stone within the structure although unlike traditional construction this is achieved without compacting the stone and the subsequent loss of permeability. It is manufactured from strips of high density polyethylene HDPE cross welded to form cells, the strips can be perforated if required to allow the lateral movement of air and water through the structure. The porous surface also ensures water and air can carry essential nutrients to the tree roots.

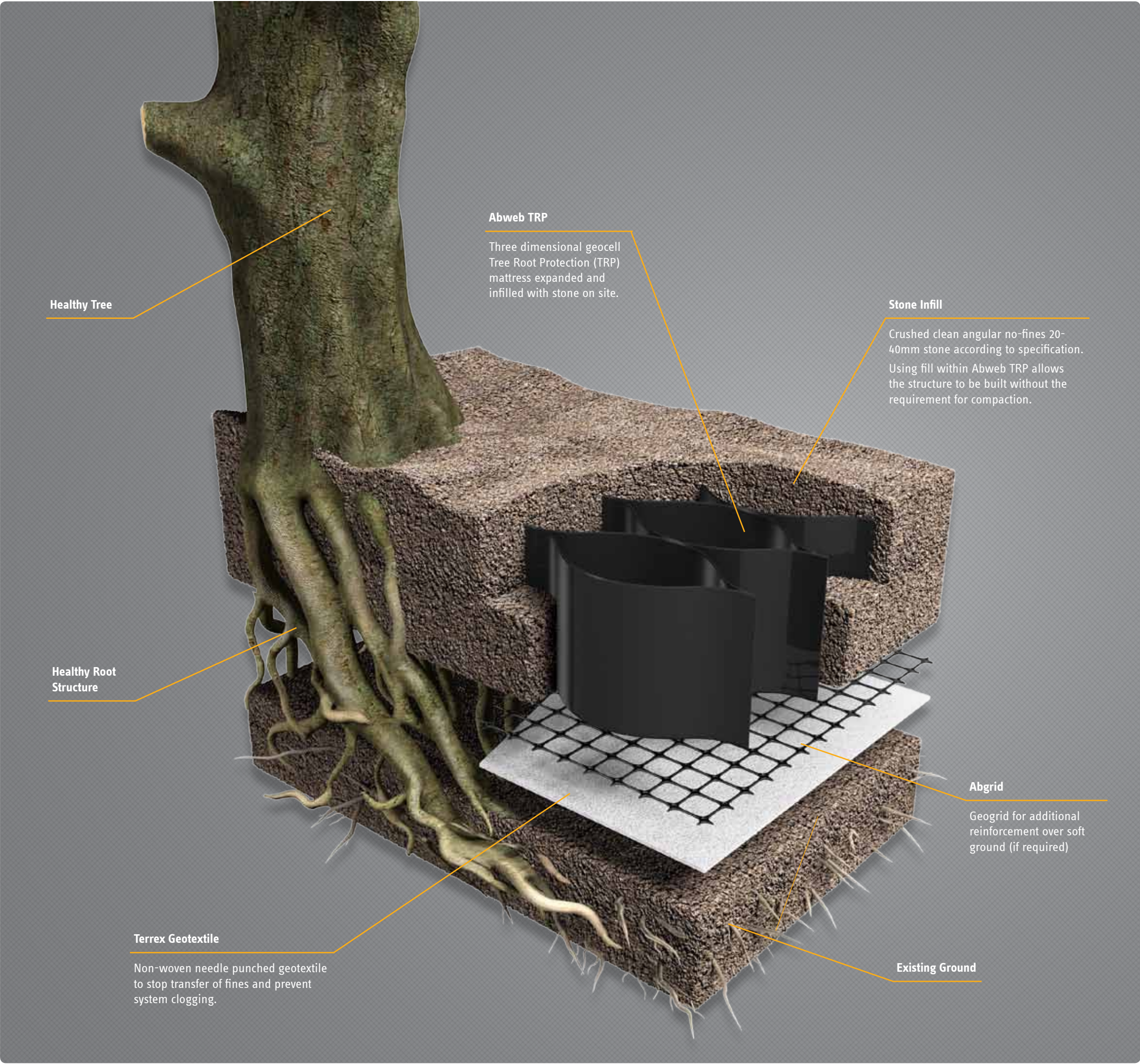
Beneath the Abweb TRP is a non-woven geotextile positioned to prevent any fines washing through and ultimately clogging the system thereby preventing the water and air from reaching the roots over the life time of the tree.

Many pavement finishes are suitable for use over Abweb TRP including porous asphalt and porous block paving. In temporary applications there is usually no requirement for a pavement finish, the fill of the Abweb TRP acting as the surface.

Abweb TRP can be used in both permanent and temporary pavement constructions. In temporary constructions the system can be removed without damaging the roots once operations on site are complete.

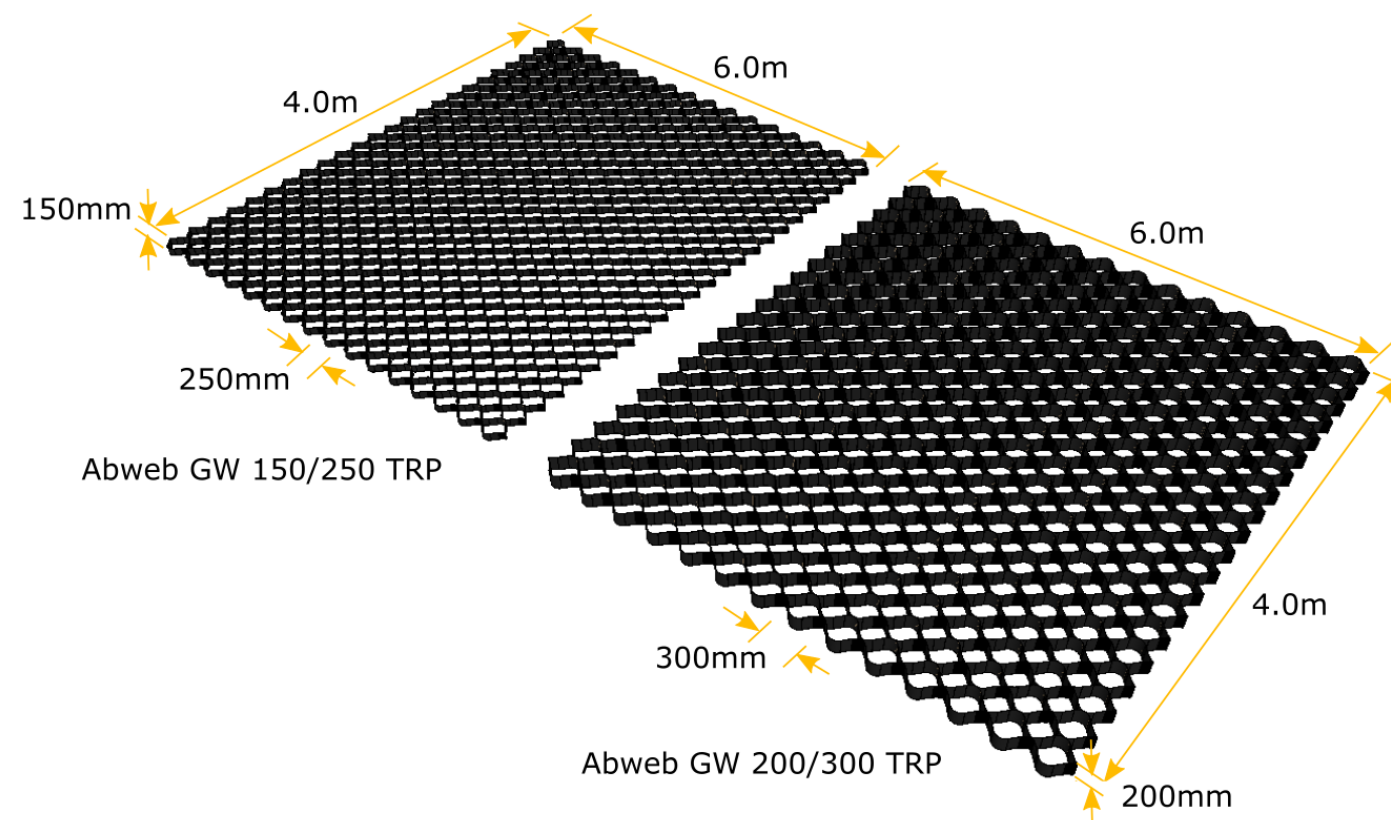
Abweb TRP is suitable for:

- Access roads and parking areas
- Driveways and paths
- Permanent woodland trails



Technical Information

Abweb TRP system comprises Abweb geocellular containment system which confines the fill material within the cell improving shear strength and bearing capacity. This is laid over Terrex NW9 needle punched non-woven geotextile which acts as a separation layer preventing material loss whilst allowing the free flow of water and nutrients to the tree root system



Further information is available at www.abgltd.com/tree-root-protection

Installing Abweb TRP

Before works commence

1. Ensure approval for use of Abweb TRP in this application from both local planning department and Tree Protection Officer.
2. Determine the limits of construction and proximity to the tree of the installation.

Site preparation

3. Remove all debris and areas of hard surfacing. Reduce site levels to permitted reduced dig to meet final levels. Soil compaction and tree root damage should be avoided.
4. Ensure the site is reasonably level and free from undulations. Level using sharp sand if required. Rolling and compaction is not advised.

Installation

5. Install approved edge retention system around perimeter of the installation area.
6. Lay Terrex geotextile across area of installation. Adjacent sheets should be overlapped by a minimum of 150mm.
7. Open out Abweb TRP pinning in place between the installed edging. It may be necessary to cut the Abweb TRP to ensure good fit. This can be done using a sharp knife.
8. Pin the perimeter of the Abweb TRP panels. The pins primary function is to ensure the cell apertures remain open during the filling process. Avoid damaging the tree root structure during the pinning process.
9. Fill the Abweb TRP working from the outer perimeter of the installation towards the tree. The filled area can be used as a working platform for the filling operation. The laid surface should not be rolled although light compaction can be achieved using a whacker plate.
10. Install the finishing surface as specified.

Installation of temporary access roads

Abweb TRP can be installed to form a temporary access or haul road that can be partially or completely removed once construction works have been completed.

11. Follow steps 1 through to 9 above
12. Install a second layer of Terrex geotextile above the Abweb TRP. The specification of this is dependent upon the specific site/traffic conditions and the grade can be advised by ABG Technical Department.
13. Place 100mm of approved aggregate over the geotextile. Suitable aggregate is again site specific and advise should be sought.

Decommissioning

14. Once the road is no longer required remove the top layer of aggregate and replace with the final finishing layer. Alternatively the entire road construction can be removed taking care not to damage the tree root structure during the removal process.
15. Abweb TRP can be recycled after use. Seek specific local advice on recycling.



About ABG

ABG is a market leader in the design, development, manufacture and technical support of high performance geosynthetic systems for use in a wide range of civil engineering, environmental and sustainable building applications.

Formed in 1988 and based in Meltham, in the heart of the West Yorkshire Pennines, ABG have developed a reputation for developing quality products and delivering outstanding customer service. The ability for rapid product development ensures that the most innovative, up to date and cost effective solution can be found for many engineering problems.

Technical support on ABG systems is provided by the highly trained technical department, many of whom are Chartered Civil Engineers. The support extends to full design services, design validation, feasibility studies, cost advice and advice on meeting regulatory requirements.

Part of this support includes developing and driving knowledge within our active markets. This includes working with both local and international regulatory bodies on developing guidance and best practices on the use of innovative geosynthetics to solve complex engineering issues.

Contact ABG today to discover how ABG can help deliver a sustainable and cost effective solution to your engineering requirement.

Further Reading

- British Standards Institute (2005). *BS5837 – Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations*, BSI, London, UK
- Patch, D. & Holding, B. (2007). *APN12: Through the trees to development*. Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service, Farnham, UK
- Biddle, P.G. (1998). *Tree Roots and Foundations*. Arboriculture Research and Information Note I42/98/EXT. Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service, Farnham, UK.
- Dobson, M.C. (1995). *Tree Root Systems*, Arboricultural Research Information Note 130/ARB/95. Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service, Farnham, UK.
- Guidance for Trees: Conflict or Compliment? (R. Nicholson 2001). Arboricultural Journal No. 25.
- Helliwell, D.R. & Fordham, S.J. (1992). *Tree Roots and Tree Growth*. Reading Agricultural Consultants, Didcot, UK.

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Appendix B

Details of the Knights Park path improvements

ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE VERIFIED ON SITE PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF WORK. NO DIMENSIONS TO BE SCALED FROM THIS DOCUMENT.
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LEGEND

— S106 Boundary

- - - Footpath & Cycleway to Blackhurst Lane

P8	10/10/18	Route of footpath updated
P7	01/10/18	Route of footpath updated
P6	21/01/14	Red line corrections
P5	07/01/14	Re-titled
P4	06/01/14	Red line amended to KCC Title
P3	18/12/13	Sheet scaled to fit boundary, North point
P2	18/12/13	Amended to S106 Boundary
P1	16/12/13	First issue
Rev.	Date	Description

Development
KNIGHTS PARK

Drawing Title
PLAN 3 - BLACKHURST LANE
FOOTPATH & CYCLEWAY



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Status
PLANNING

File Ref.

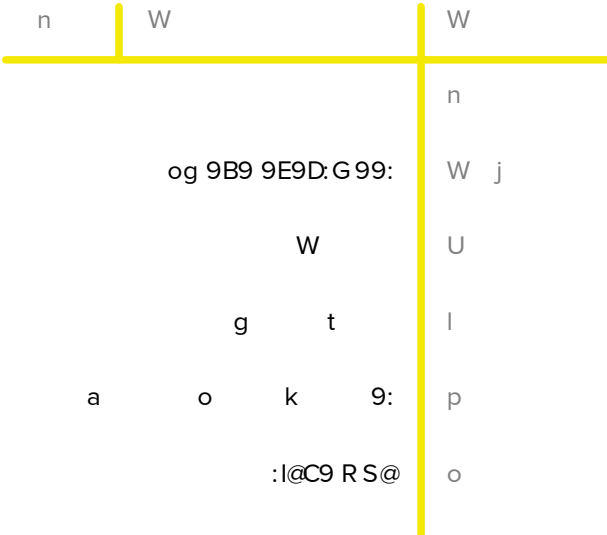
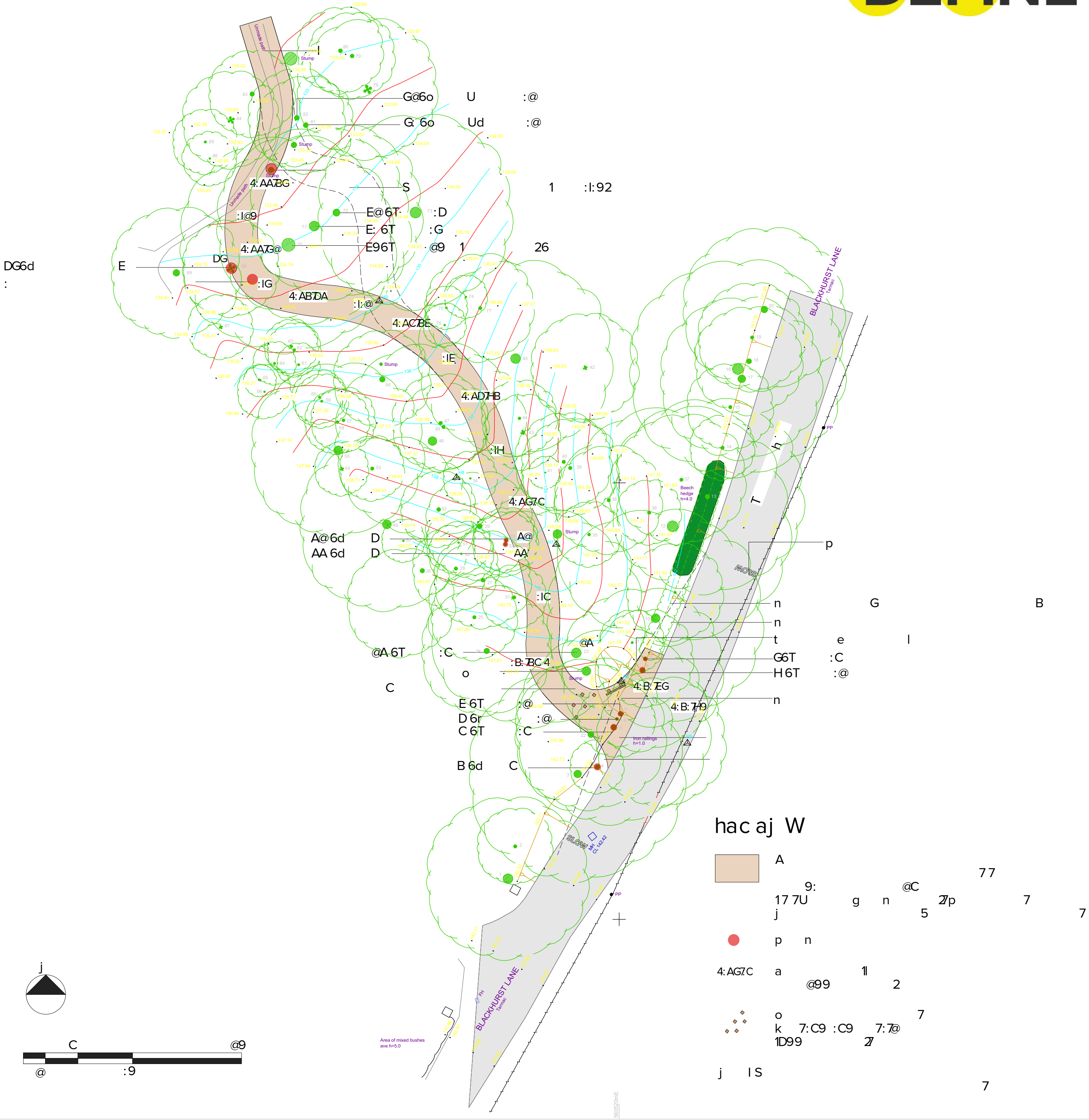
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Date
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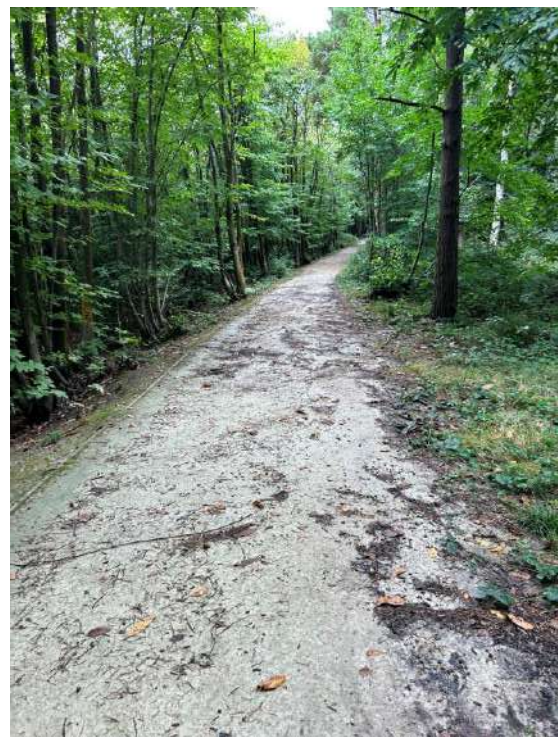




Entrance to the path from Blackhurst Lane prior to improvement works



Entrance to the park from Blackhurst Lane following improvement works



Examples of path surfacing