



Tree Report for the proposed
Galway County Council Social Housing Project
in Portumna

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 **Instruction:** Beith Tree Consultancy has been instructed by Simon J Kelly Architects to carry out a survey of trees on and immediately adjacent to a site on the R352 St Joseph's Road, Portumna, Co Galway. The purpose of the survey is to provide the following information, in line with The British Standard BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction- Recommendations to accompany the planning submission:

A schedule of the relevant trees to include basic data and a condition assessment including.

- Tree Species
- Tree Height
- An overview of the trees physiological and structural Condition
- Tree categorisation in line with BS 5837:2012 A, B, C, or U.
- Recommended root Protection Area

- 1.2 **Relevant guidance:** The British Standard BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction- Recommendations provides a framework for considering trees in the planning process. It gives guidance on categorising the qualities of trees in order to enable decisions to be made as to which trees are appropriate for retention within the development. It then advises on options for protecting retained trees during all phases of the development.

- 1.2 **Overview:** The proposed development is to construct a new social housing scheme on behalf of Galway County Council that will contain a number of dwellings and apartments.

- 1.3 The proposed social housing scheme would be constructed on what is currently agricultural pasture located approximately 600m from the town of Portumna, Co Galway. To the east of the site are the gardens of adjacent dwellings that front onto the R352 St Joseph's Road and onto the N65 St Brendan's Road. To the south of the site is road frontage onto the R352 St Joseph's Road with associated footpath. The western boundary is bordered by the garden of a private dwelling. The north the site is bordered by a mature whitethorn/blackthorn hedgerow that stretches for the width of the site.

1.2.1 The site is not within a designated Conservation Area, and no trees on site are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

1.2.2 Three Ash trees require removal from site due to poor physiological and structural health and 1 mature Ash requires removal to facilitate the construction design.



2 TREE SURVEY

2.1 **Site visits:** I undertook the survey on the 10th February 2025. The weather was overcast at the time but still with good visibility enabling clear observations of the trees.



View along the southern boundary looking west on the R352 St Joseph's Road.



View along the southern boundary looking east on the R352 St Joseph's Road.



Image of the northern boundary of the site looking northeast.

- 2.2 **Surveyed trees:** The tree survey schedule along with its accompanying explanatory notes, Appendix 1, provides details of 9 individual trees and a continuous hedgerow.
- 2.4 **Tree root protection areas:** The measurements for the tree root protection areas are included within the tree survey schedule and provide details of the extent of area required around retained trees to provide adequate protection.
- 2.5 **Tree protection plan:** The tree protection plan (TPP), Appendix 2, shows the position of the trees surveyed as well as protection and precautionary measures necessary to successfully retain trees.
- 2.6 **Limitations:** My survey was of a preliminary nature and did not include any detailed tree safety inspections. All my observations were taken from ground level.



3 Methodology

- 3.1 **Method:** The site for the proposed social housing scheme was surveyed in accordance with the British Standards Publication, Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations (BS 5837:2012).

Numbered tags were attached to trees to identify them individually. See pic 1. Soil type was not assessed.



Pic 1. Tree tag example.

- 3.2 **Collection of basic data:** I collected measurements and recorded observations of each tree from ground level.
- 3.3 **Categorisation of trees:** The Survey Schedule and Tree Protection Plan detail my recorded measurements and observations. In addition, each surveyed tree, group and hedge line was awarded one of the following four categories, based on their quality, value and suitability for retention:

Category A – high

Category B – moderate

Category C – low

Category U – unsuitable for retention

Trees categorised 'U' should be removed due to their condition and/or short life expectancy. Category 'C' trees should be retained where possible or where it suits a development layout but there is a general presumption that they can be removed to facilitate development. These trees can be adequately replaced with suitable landscaping.

Trees in categories A, B or C were also awarded a subcategory to indicate the significance or value of their presence:

- 1 Mainly arboricultural qualities
- 2 Mainly landscape qualities
- 3 Mainly cultural values, including conservation.



4 Findings of the Survey – Northern boundary



Image taken looking northeast along the northern boundary.

This section of the site contains a continuous native hedgerow that stretches from east to west along boundary dividing existing pasture fields. The species mix is predominantly whitethorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), these are the taller trees in the image above and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) these are the lower more dense trees.

Tag 32 is a single mature Ash tree (*Fraxinus excelsior*) along this boundary. On the day inspection it was noted that a single upright stem had broken out of the crown of this tree and is now hanging over the northern hedgerow. Tag 32 will need to be removed to facilitate the housing project.

Tag 32 was numbered and classified as a tree of moderate-quality Category B,3 (as per Table 1 of BS5837:2012)

The hedgerow was classified as trees of moderate-quality Category B,3 (as per Table 1 of BS5837:2012)



Eastern boundary

While there are no existing on the eastern boundary it was noted on a previous survey of the site that there is Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) in the far northeast corner, this area was avoided on the day of inspection to help prevent any spread of this invasive species.

However, sitting very close to the site boundary in an adjacent garden is a large Leyland cypress (*Cupressus x leylandii*). This tree is located just to the south of the Japanese knotweed and there are overhanging branches into the site, approximately 5m from the boundary wall. See image below. This tree is indicated as T33 on the maps below but is not tagged or measured due to being in a neighbouring property.



Image taken of leylandii adjacent to the eastern boundary.

The southern boundary

Along the southern boundary with the R352 St Joseph's Road are 6 mature Ash trees and a single young Ash tree (*Fraxinus excelsior*), these trees are growing out of or immediately adjacent to the drystone wall.

The boundary itself consists of a drystone wall approximately 1m wide and 700mm in height, the height varies somewhat as some of the stones have fallen away. From tree Tag 25 heading east back to the southeast corner of the site the boundary is a block wall with capping stones and entrance gate with pillars.

Immediately adjacent to the boundary walls is a tarmac footpath with concrete kerb stones approximately 1.7m wide and beyond this is the tarmac of the R352 St Joseph's Road.

From Tag 27-Tag 31 there is some dense scrub extending to approximately 4m north into the site and this is 1.5m in height.



View of southern boundary looking southeast, scrub extending north into the site.

Tag 26, 29 and 31 were classified as trees unsuitable for retention category U (as per Table 1 of BS5837:2012).

Tag 25, 27, 28, and 30 were classified as trees of low-quality Category C,2 (as per Table 1 of BS5837:2012)



The western boundary

There are no trees to be included in the survey along this boundary. However, there is a young beech hedge (*Fagus sylvatica*) in an adjacent property in the far northwest corner of the site. Image below.



Bech hedge on the far northwest corner of the site in an adjacent property.



Appendix 1: Tree schedule and explanatory notes

Key; Category A trees, Category B trees, Category C trees & Category U trees. Trees to be removed in red text

Tree No.	Species	Tree Height (m)	Stem dia (mm)	Crown spread (m)				Height & Direction of 1 st Branch (mm)	Min. Crown Clearance (m)				Life stage	Physiological condition	Structural condition/ Preliminary management recommendations	Remaining contribution	Retention category	RPA R (m)
				N	E	S	W		N	E	S	W						
Tag 25	Ash	14m	302 280	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.1	1m West	1.5	1	2	1	M	Good	Main stem established above wall. Main stem divides at 1.2m into two primary ascending stems. Dense Ivy on major unions potentially covering defects. Buds and twigs in upper crown. Severe Ivy at base.	10+	C,2	5m
Tag 26	Ash	16m	235 235	3.6	4.1	3	2	600mm West	1	1	2.5	1	M	Fair	Two stems from ground level. Epicormic growth throughout the primary branch structure. Deadwood >50mm in the lower crown and deadwood < 50mm throughout the upper crown. Tree in decline due to Ash dieback.	-10	U	4m
Tag 27	Ash	16m	350	3	2.5	3.5	3.2	2m North	2	3	2.5	2	M	Good	Dense Ivy on the stem and primary branch structure potentially covering defects. Severe Ivy at base.	10+	C,2	4.2m
Tag 28	Ash	11m	152	1.5	1.3	2.1	1.6	3m West	4	3	3	4	Y	Good	None	10+	C,2	1.8m
Tag 29	Ash	13m	255 286 242 159	2.5	2.1	2.6	1.9	1.4. North	1.3	2	2	2	M	Poor	Multiple stems at ground level. Entire tree covered in dense Ivy, dead branches <50mm diameter 1m in length protruding from Ivy. No twigs or buds in the upper crown. Tree dead.	-10	U	6m



Appendix 1: Tree schedule and explanatory notes

Key; Category A trees, Category B trees, Category C trees & Category U trees. Trees to be removed in red text

Tree No.	Species	Tree Height (m)	Stem dia (mm)	Crown spread (m)				Height & Direction of 1 st Branch (mm)	Min. Crown Clearance (m)				Life stage	Physiological condition	Structural condition/ Preliminary management recommendations	Remaining contribution	Retention category	RPA R (m)
				N	E	S	W		N	E	S	W						
Tag 30	Ash	15m	296	2.9	1.5	3.1	3.7	2m West	4	3	2.5	1	M	Fair	Dense Ivy covering the main stem and major unions potentially covering defects. Epicormic growth on primary branch structure. Crown bias to the west due to proximity of neighbouring tree. Severe Ivy at base.	10+	C,2	3.6m
Tag 31	Ash	12m	226	1.6	1.5	2.8	1.5	3m West	3	3	2.5	3	M	Poor	Dense Ivy on the main stem and primary branch structure potentially covering defects. Some epicormic growth on branches close to the stem. Deadwood >50mm on remaining branches throughout the crown. No twigs or buds in upper crown.	-10	U	2.7m
Tag 32	Ash	17m	693	6#	5	6.1	6	2m South	3	3	1.5	3	M	Good	Included union at 1.2m above ground level, 2 co dominant stems above. Dense Ivy covering the stem and major unions potentially covering defects. At 6m above ground level, hanging branch approx. 10m in length. Recent storm damage. Tree to be removed to facilitate development.	20+	B,3	8.4m
Hedge row	Whitethorn/blackthorn	6m avg	140	3	2	4	2	Ground level	0	0	0	0	M	Good	None	20+	B,3	1.8m

Appendix 1: Explanatory Notes

- **Suffix #:** Estimated dimensions
- **Tree No:** Prefix T= individual tree, G= group of trees, S= stump, H= Hedge No. = allocated tree number.
- **Species:** A tree's common name with its botanic name given below in italics. Where a positive identification cannot be made Unknown will be stated.
- **Tree Height:** Height in metres, recorded to the nearest half metre for dimensions up to 10m and the nearest whole metre for dimensions over 10m.
- **Stem Diameter:** Stem diameter in millimetres, measured in accordance with BS 5837:2012, rounded to the nearest 10mm.
- **Spread:** The crown spread measured from the centre of the trunk to the tips of the live lateral branches and rounded up to the nearest half metre for dimensions up to 10m and the nearest whole metre for dimensions over 10m, N= north, S= south, E= east and W=west.
- **Height & direction of 1st branch:** Is the height in meters of the first significant branch and its direction of growth (N, S, E, W). Note: this is not recorded if there is a uniform crown and no significant 1st branch.
- **Minimum Crown Clearance:** Is the height in meters from ground level to lowest branch at each cardinal point (N, S, E, W).
- **Life Stage:** Age is an estimated range based on visual indicators; it should only be taken as a provisional guide. NP= Newly planted (planted within the last 5 years); Y= Young (1st 1/3 of life expectancy), MA = Middle aged (2nd 1/3rd of life expectancy), M = Mature (final 1/3rd of life expectancy), V= Veteran (of special conservation value)
- **Physiological Condition:** G= Good – no significant health problems F= Fair – minor symptoms of ill health P= Poor- significant ill health
- **General Observations / Preliminary Management Recommendations:** Information based on visual observations that may influence management proposals or BS 5837 categorisation, where appropriate recommendations are offered. Key information and management recommendations in bold.
- **Remaining Contribution:** An estimate of the tree's remaining life span and contribution to site amenity, in years.
- **Retention Category:** The category and subcategory awarded the tree; it is an indication of a tree's condition and value. U– Unsuitable for retention A – High quality and value B – Moderate quality and Value C – Low quality and value. Subcategory: 1 – Mainly arboricultural values 2 – Mainly landscape values 3 – Mainly cultural values including conservation
- **RPA R:** Root Protection Area Radius, the radius (R) of circle (measured from centre of trunk) required to achieve the protection area (A), in metres. Annex D of BS 5837:2012.
- **RPA A:** Root Protection Area, the calculated area (A) required to protect root system, in m². Annex D of BS 5837:2012
- **Notes:** Only relevant features relating to physiological or structural condition and low branches that may help clarify the categorisation are recorded. If there are no notes, then the presumption should be that no relevant features were observed.



3 ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1 **Purpose:** This arboricultural impact assessment (AIA) provides an evaluation of the probable direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the trees and vice versa. It considers the characteristics and condition of the trees, with due allowance for their future growth and maintenance requirements.

3.1.1 Where necessary, impact mitigation measures are recommended in the arboricultural method statement (AMS).

3.2 **Tree removals and pruning:** Tree removals and pruning required by the development proposal are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1:

	British Standard 5837:2012 Category			
	A High Quality	B Moderate Quality	C Low Quality	U Poor Condition
Trees to be removed		1	0	3
Trees to be pruned				

The impact of the proposed development on local landscape character, privacy and screening will be low.

3.3 **Special precautions:** Protective barriers are required for the remaining trees onsite to guard against potentially damaging development proposals. See point 8 in the Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS).

The proposed development's impact on retained trees is Low.

3.4 **Temporary activities:** Temporary activities during construction, with the potential to damage retained trees, are considered below:

3.4.1 **Site access:** A new main entrance to the social housing scheme will be constructed exiting the R352 St Joseph's Road in Portumna. Impact: Medium

3.4.2 **Contractor car parking:** This is a large site with good opportunities to facilitate contractor parking. Impact: Low

3.4.3 **Workspace:** A large worksite with ample workspace for all associated activities. Impact: nil

3.4.4 **Storage:** The current site has space for dedicated storage for materials. Impact: nil

3.5 **Future pressure:** Future pressure to remove or substantially prune retained trees is considered below.

Pressure arises where trees have the potential to cause damage to nearby structures or hard surfacing. Additionally, occupants of any new buildings may also be adversely impacted by



trees retained in close proximity. Assessment of how the proposed development will be affected by the retained trees takes into consideration their future growth potential.

- 3.5.1 **Direct damage to structures:** All retained trees are sufficiently distanced from proposed structures to prevent direct damage from roots and branches. Impact: nil
- 3.5.2 **Shading:** Retained trees are sufficiently distanced from buildings to stop shading being a significant issue. The majority of the surrounding open spaces will benefit from direct sunlight at various times during the day. Impact: low
- 3.5.3 **Seasonal nuisance:** Falling leaves, fruit and flowers have the potential to cause seasonal nuisance on site. However, general good housekeeping will prevent this becoming a significant issue. Impact: Nil

3.6 CONCLUSIONS ON THE IMPACTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL ON LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The overall impact of the development on local landscape character is considered to be moderate due to the removal of 3 of the roadside Ash trees and a mature Ash on the northern boundary.

With the modifications recommended below implemented, I consider the proposal's overall impact on the local landscape character to be positive.

3.6.1 Modifications recommended to reduce impacts and accommodate trees:

- To compensate for the necessary removal of 3 Ash trees on the southern boundary of the site due to poor structural and physiological health and 1 mature Ash tree on the northern border to facilitate the construction design new tree plantings should be considered.

I would conclude that the current landscape plan will provide screening around the boundary for the proposed site and will compensate for the loss of these trees. A further step could be to plant some open grown trees if space allows as these will give greater benefits to the wider landscape.



4 ARBORICULTURAL METHOD STATEMENT (AMS)

1 Contacts: The main points of contact for this project are as follows.

Role	Name	Contact details
Main contractor	TBC	

2 Responsibilities: It will be the responsibility of the Main Contractor to ensure planning conditions attached to the planning consent are adhered to at all times and that a monitoring regime in regard to tree protection is adopted on site.

The Main Contractor will be responsible for ensuring employees and sub-contractors do not carry out any process or operation that is likely to adversely impact upon any tree on site.

The Main Contractor will be responsible for contacting the Project Arboriculturist where any issues are raised related to the trees on site.

The Main Contractor will ensure the build sequence is appropriate to ensure that no damage occurs to the trees during the construction processes.

3 Work sequence: To ensure the protection of retained trees, construction activities shall be sequenced as follows.

Phase	Description
1	Carry out tree removals
2	Install protective fencing to establish CEZ's (Construction Exclusion Zones)
3	Construction of the proposed development
4	Finished surfacing
5	Removal of protective fencing
6	Landscape works.

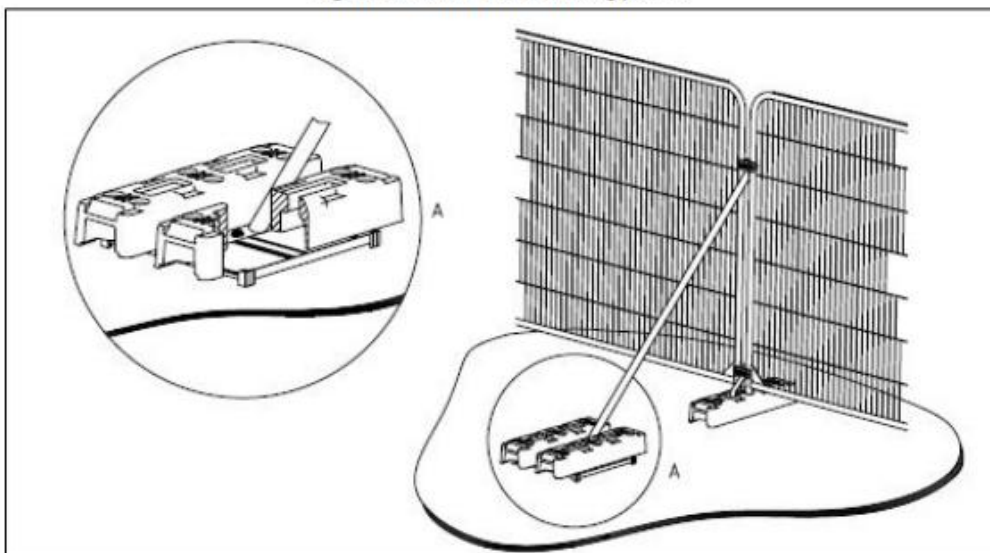
3.1 Tree work: The proposed tree works are set out in the structural condition/preliminary management recommendations column of the tree schedule in Appendix 1. The trees to be removed are highlighted with red text in the schedule and shown on the plan with a red crown fill.

3.2 Implementation of works: All tree works must be carried out with regard to BS 3998 Recommendations for Tree Work as modified by more recent research.



- 4 **Statutory wildlife obligations:** The Wildlife Act 1976 as amended by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, 2010, 2012 provides statutory protection to birds, bats and other species that inhabit trees. All tree work operations are covered by these provisions and advice from an ecologist must be obtained before undertaking any works that might constitute an offence. ^[1]_{SEP}
5. **Precautions outside RPAs:** Any risk to trees from activities outside RPAs, but close enough to have a knock-on impact, should be assessed during the day-to-day running of the site and appropriate precautions put in place to reduce that risk.
 - 5.1 **Prevention of soil contamination:** All cement mixing and washing points for equipment will be outside RPAs. Where the contours of the site create a risk of polluted water or toxic liquids running into RPAs, a precautionary measure of using heavy-duty plastic sheeting and sandbags with the ability to contain accidental spillages will be put in place to prevent contamination.
- 5 **Burning of waste:** No fires will be lit on site within 3m of root protection areas due to the danger of scorching leaves and branches of overhanging trees.
7. **Installation of new services:** The installation of new services within the RPA of any retained trees is not permitted.
8. **Protective barriers:** The protective barrier specified below is considered fit for purpose, taking into account the nature of adjacent activities and the value of the trees.
 - 8.1 **Barrier specification:** Welded mesh panels, 2m tall, on rubber or concrete feet. The fence panels should be joined together using a minimum of two anti-tamper couplers, installed so that they can only be removed from inside the fence. The distance between the fence couplers should be at least 1m and should be uniform throughout the fence. The panels should be supported on the inner side by stabilizer struts mounted on a block tray (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Barrier- Heras fencing panels





9. **Signage:** Attached to the protective barrier fencing, at various locations, will be laminated copies of the sign shown in Figure 4.



Fig 4.

Protective fences will remain in position until completion of all construction work on the site.

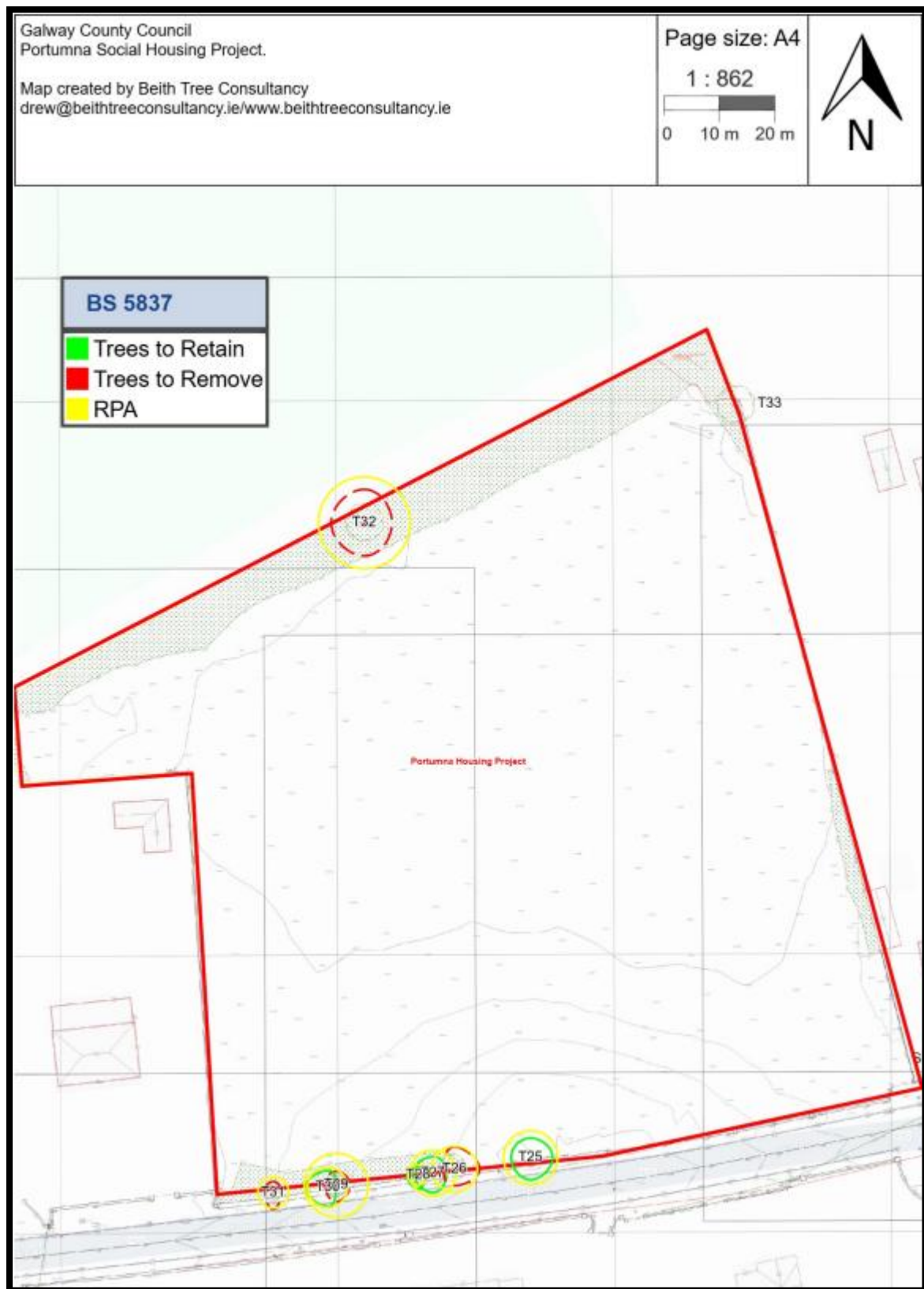


Tree Categorisation Plan





Trees to remove or retain





Tree Root Protection Areas.

