Appendix 4

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Report on poplar trees at Sinfin Central Business Park Sinfin Lane, Derby

October 2005

1 Instructions

1.1 I was asked by George Elliott of Elliott's Garden Services, Derby, on behalf of Evans of Leeds, to inspect a row of about 40 poplars along the road frontage at the above address.

1.2 I was asked to have a word with the security guard on arrival on site. The security guard also pointed out a row of ten Lombardy poplars adjacent to a boundary at right angles to the road, next to a public house and car park, which he thought might also need to be inspected while I was there, and this seemed sensible.

1.3 I inspected the trees on 17th October 2005.

2 Description of trees

2.1 There are 32 black poplars (*Populus nigra*) and 4 Lombardy poplars (*Populus nigra* 'Italica') along the frontage with Sinfin Lane and 10 Lombardy poplars along the other boundary. These are illustrated approximately on the appended sketch plan.

2.2 All these trees appear to be of similar age, probably about 50 years, or perhaps a little more. The Lombardy poplars in the row of 10 appear to have been cut off at a height of about 2.5 to 3m about 40 or more years ago. They are now between 16 and 20m tall, with stem diameters between about 65 and 75cm at breast height. They are all multi-stemmed from the height at which they were cut in the past, and one (No.6) has split at the point where it was cut off, leaving only one half of the tree intact. This happened several years ago, and the tree does not appear to be unsafe at the moment.

2.3 I test bored 6 of the 10 Lombardy poplar trees (using a small diameter drill) and found, as expected, that all had some decay in the centre; although this was not extensive enough to make them likely to fail at the present time.

2.4 No.9 in this row has also suffered some damage to the base of the stem and has more extensive decay than the others, although it did not appear to be clearly unsafe at the present time.

2.5 There is a gap in this row, between Nos. 8 and 9, where one tree has fallen or been removed at some point in the past, and there also been some additional trees beyond No.10 at one time.

2.5 All 36 trees in the row adjacent to Sinfin Lane have been cut off at a height of between 4and 5m on a regular basis, most recently about 10 years ago. Most of the trees are now between 12 and 14m tall, with numerous long thin branches arising from the point at which they were cut 10 years ago.

2.6 Cutting trees like this tends to result in some decay developing from the point where they are cut, in addition to weakening the tree for a few years while they are growing new branches, which allows any decay which is present to extend more readily. Poplars are one of the poorest types of tree with regard to their ability to resist the spread of decay.

2.7 The new branches which grow after trees have been cut in this way have a tendency, when they become large enough, to pull away from the older branch from which they have arisen. This is particularly (but not only) the case if the there is some decay present. Loss of branches in this way is likely to commence within the next few years if the trees are not cut back again.

2.8 Test boring a sample of these trees indicated the presence of some decay in the main stems; in addition to any near to the point where they have been cut.

2.9 Tree No.6 is adjacent to a street light, which it is starting to obscure, and Nos. 7-14 are adjacent to a bus stop and brush against the buses which stop there.

3 Assessment and recommendations

3.1 At the present time, the trees along the road frontage provide an effective screen between Sinfin Lane and the Business Park and add considerably to the amenity of the locality.

3.2 However, none of these trees appears to have a very long further safe useful life expectancy, and the trees along the road frontage will need to be either heavily pruned or removed in the near future.

3.3 It is always difficult to replace rows of trees of uniform age and species without causing at least some temporary loss of amenity. The options in this case appear to be:

a.) remove all trees and re-plant with new trees (in a similar or more varied pattern) possibly using some extra-large trees in this planting

b.) remove some trees and prune the others (in similar fashion to previous pruning) and plant some new trees. Prune again after about five years (to prevent undue shading and suppression of the new trees), remove more trees, and plant some more. Repeat at intervals of 5 years until all the existing trees have been replaced (which should be within about 15 years).

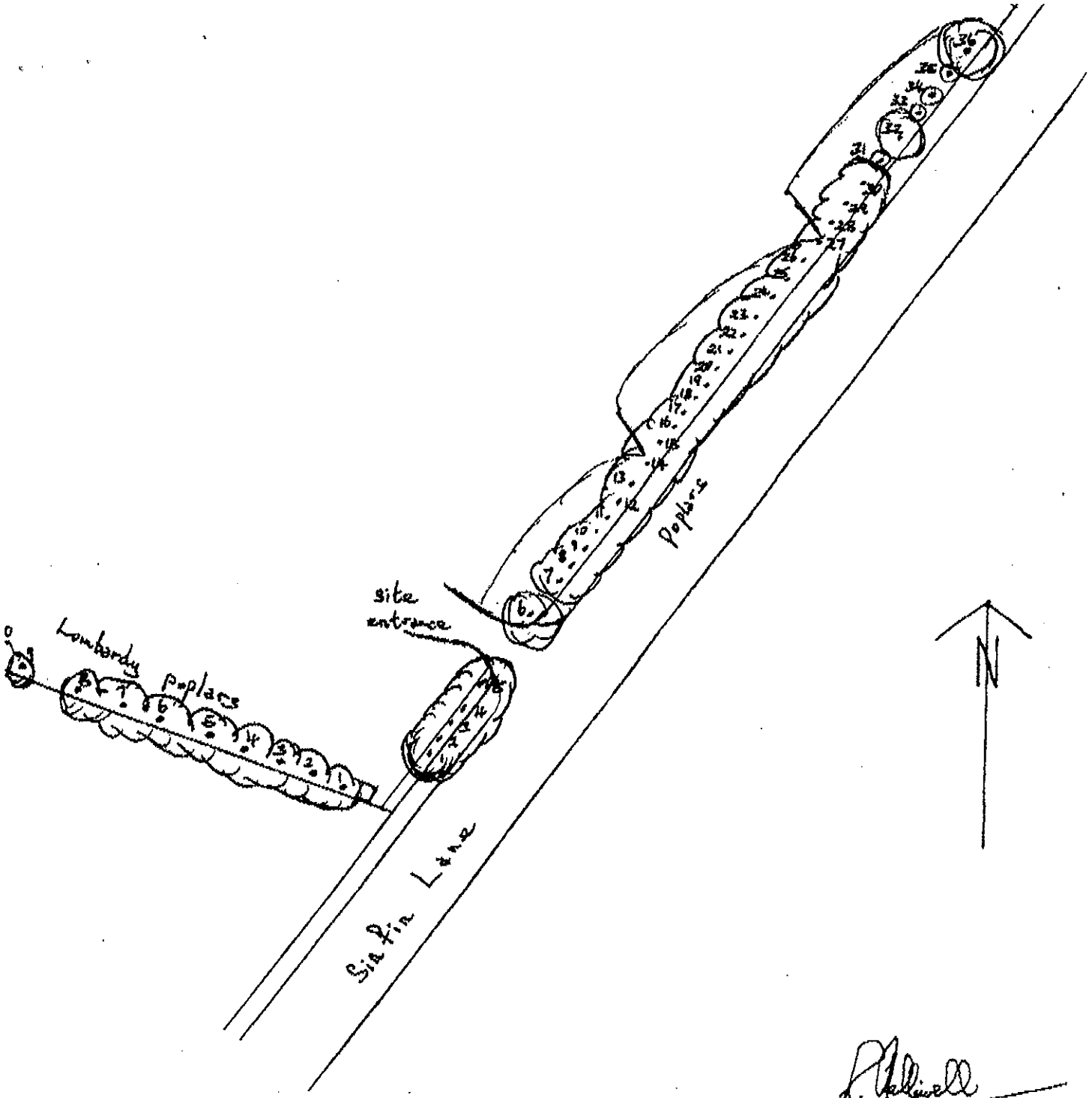
3.4 I am not sure if there is any latitude to plant a little further into the site, or if new planting must be as close to the boundary as the existing trees. A little more latitude would enable new planting to be undertaken more easily while retaining some of the existing trees, and would give scope for a slightly more interesting scheme.

3.5 Suggested species for planting might include small-leaved lime, Norway maple, sycamore, ash, oak, rowan, and hawthorn. There are other species which might also be appropriate, but I would advise against selecting species which are too exotic or unusual in appearance or mixtures of species which are overly complicated.

3.6 If option b) is adopted, I would advise removing Lombardy poplar No. 9 (in the row of 10) and trees No.9 (21cm), 13 (34cm), 14 (42cm), 18 (34cm), 22 (37cm), 24 (40cm), 26 (34cm), 31 (21cm), 33 (22cm), 34 (30cm), and 35 (23cm). It may be sensible to remove more trees than this, but this would depend at least in part on where the new trees are to be planted.

R Helliwell
18th October 2005

SINFIN CENTRAL
BUSINESS PARK,
DERBY



NOT TO SCALE

R. Halliwell

18.10.'05.