

## A34 Sprint Walsall – Tree Mitigation Version 4.0 December 2020

### Outline – what is Sprint?



1. The full cross-city Sprint route

1. The West Midlands is growing rapidly, with the population due to expand by a further 444,000 people and see an additional 50,000 jobs created in the region by 2035.
2. Sprint represents a solution to the growing needs of the regional public transport network through enhanced connectivity and reduced travel times on a more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable travel option for the West Midlands.
3. This improved transport system will greatly enhance connectivity and improve travel times, creating a more efficient, cost effective and sustainable travel option for the West Midlands.
4. A milestone project for the region, Sprint is being delivered by Transport for West Midlands and forms part of the region-wide ambition to improve the public transport experience. Sprint will integrate with other schemes such as the Midland Metro tram and HS2 High Speed rail service to create a truly integrated network.
5. Sprint has been designed to make journeys more reliable and sustainable and will generate:
  - Dependable timetables and potential journey time savings of 20% at peak times
  - Additional and extended bus lanes to minimise congestion

- Enhanced confidence in and use of public transport
  - State-of-the-art bus shelters, designed to improve passenger safety and comfort.
6. Sprint is a key element of creating an environmentally friendly transport network and will see the introduction of zero-emission, multi-door vehicles, supporting the West Midlands Combined Authority's commitment to tackle climate change and Birmingham's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2041.
  7. The ambition for Sprint is to deliver a network of seven enhanced bus routes, with the first part of the scheme connecting Walsall to Solihull and Birmingham Airport along the A34 and A45 routes respectively.
  8. Sprint will operate alongside existing services, with the 34km route expected to carry over 30 million bus trips a year. It will also deliver an estimated £200 million in economic benefits through improved connection to local businesses and places of work.
  9. This cross-city route will be delivered in two phases, the first of which will see improvements to infrastructure including delivery of new and extended bus lanes. It will also see the installation of 95 cutting-edge bus shelters with CCTV and enhanced real-time customer information, better seating and more accessible, cleaner and greener busses.
  10. The majority of the infrastructure will be implemented by mid-2022, with a limited service operating in time to support the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.
  11. Following the Games, the second phase will deliver the remaining infrastructure along the A34 and A45, with the full network due to be operational by 2024.

### **What works are being undertaken?**

12. To ensure that the right infrastructure is in place, some work will need to be undertaken on and around the A34 between Walsall and Birmingham.
13. This includes the need to provide new and extended bus lanes and priority measures, changes to some kerbs, repositioning and upgrading of bus shelters, and in some cases removal and replacement of trees and vegetation along the route.
14. The tree loss associated with the project represents an opportunity for a large-scale co-ordinated regional tree planting scheme which can help to address strategic weakness in the existing tree stock and develop opportunities to promote greater and more resilient canopy cover into the future.
15. In addition to new tree planting a wide range of other mitigation measures including careful reuse of arisings<sup>1</sup>, new habitat creation, improved proactive management of

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<sup>1</sup> Arisings: the cut wood left after tree surgery (felling or pruning)

existing valuable habitats such as local woodlands and veteran trees could all be supported as part of the project.

### **How many trees are likely to be impacted? How were they identified?**

16. TfWM fully understands the importance of ensuring sufficient canopy cover in the area and the Sprint designs have been adjusted to minimise the impact on surrounding trees as fully as possible.
17. Across the full cross-city Sprint route, around 1,000 trees will be planted by TfWM, to complement the Sprint corridor improvements.
18. We are committed to only removing trees where absolutely necessary and have identified a total of 13 individual trees, and 3 groups of trees (totalling 36 trees) that will require removal within Walsall's local authority area. Of these, only 4 individual trees will be affected by Phase 1, the remainder affected by Phase 2. See appended plans for further illustrative details.
19. It is important to note that TfWM has worked closely with a specialist contractor to undertake a dedicated tree analysis, identifying the location, type and number of trees affected by the project.
20. All discussions on the removal, replacement and replanting of trees have been taken in consultation with Walsall Council's dedicated tree officer and a member of the ecology team.

### **How are we approaching the replacement of trees?**

21. While a total of 36 trees will be removed current plans allow for TfWM to fund the planting of approximately 100 replacement trees<sup>2</sup> within Walsall's local authority area. Of these, approximately 50 will be planted within 100m of the main A34 route on Birmingham Road.
22. This figure has been reached through replacement planting on mainly a 3:1 basis, as agreed with Walsall Council's tree officer.
23. Where possible, replacement tree planting will be undertaken prior to the removal of any existing trees and between November and March, with the first trees being planted ahead of the start of infrastructure works where this allows.
24. Trees not planted in this initial period will be allocated locations within the Park Hall and Gillity areas to the north of the site, along with other suitable locations which are yet to be identified.

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<sup>2</sup> This is based on standard nursery sized trees – should the plans change to accommodate larger sized trees in the future this figure may be reduced accordingly.

25. Dialogue is ongoing with Walsall's tree officer to ensure that trees which are planted in key areas will enhance local biodiversity and ecology.
26. We will liaise with WMBC to identify and locate each replacement tree and will gladly work with the Council on engaging with the local community and residents' groups.

**What will happen to trees that are removed?**

27. We're committed to ensuring that trees that are removed are suitably processed and repurposed to ensure that material is not wasted.
28. To this end, we want to actively work with Walsall Council to identify organisations that would benefit from materials. A few of our initial suggestions include:
  - Arranging with local schools for collection of materials to create conservation areas on their premises, or to send materials to children to create a 'bug hotel' at home – this could also be part of a wider community project that could be set up in local woodland
  - Chipping of material for use on Council-owned playgrounds
  - Providing chippings to local farms for animal bedding
  - Providing materials to dedicated outdoor education organisations
29. We would relish the opportunity to discuss these and any further plans with you in detail to find the most appropriate use of these materials.

**When will this activity take place?**

30. It is important that we can instil a sense of confidence within the community that new trees will be delivered and therefore we would like to begin planting as soon as possible, certainly before any major works are undertaken within WMBC's area.
31. Exact timings at this stage are still to be determined and we are working with our contractor to develop the overall delivery programme, but it is anticipated that works within the WMBC local authority area will take place from Spring 2021.

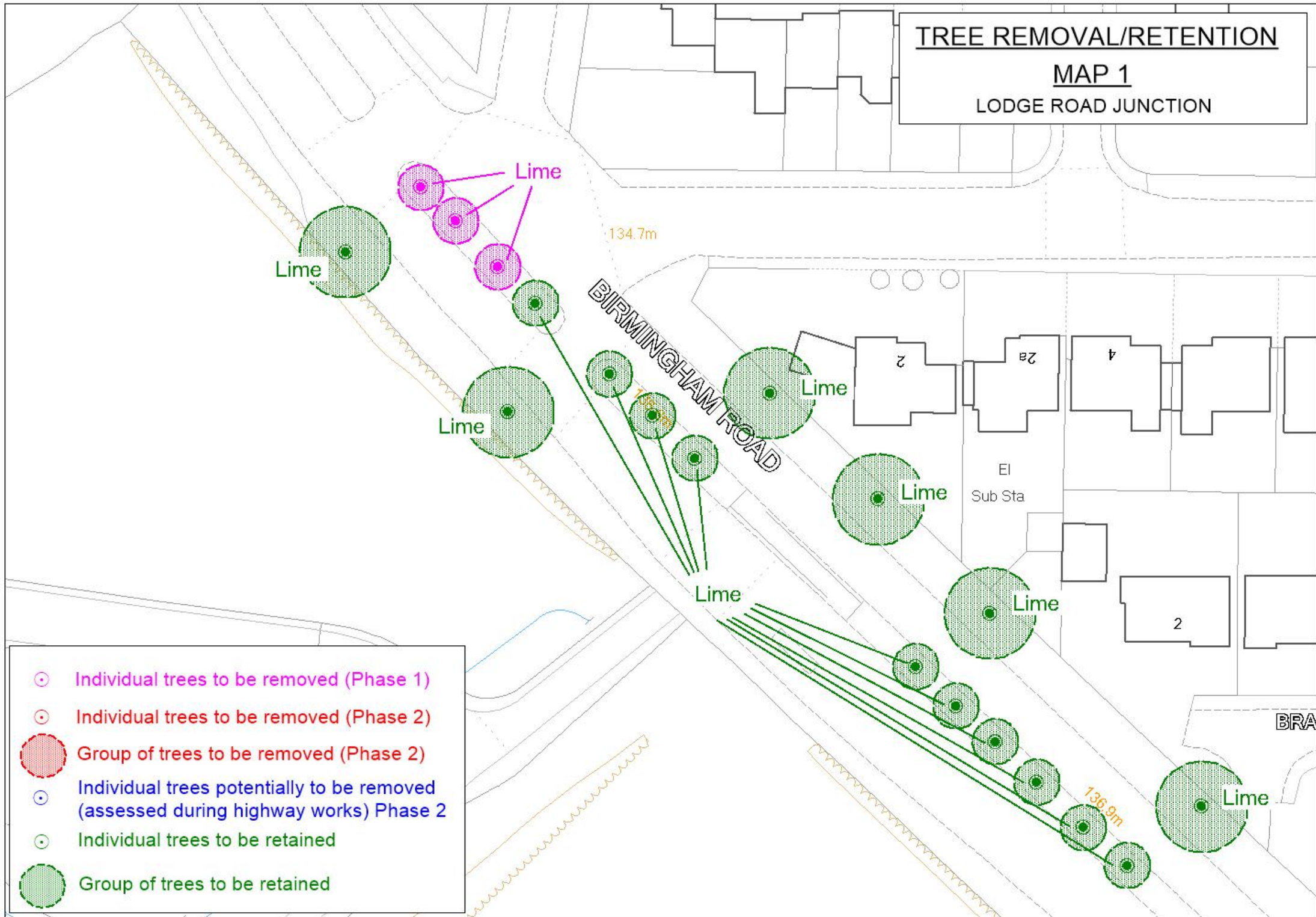
**Will this need to be paid for through Council Tax or other public funding?**

32. No. An agreement has been reached between TfWM and WMBC to fund the acquisition of replacement trees and fund their maintenance for three years.

# TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

## MAP 1

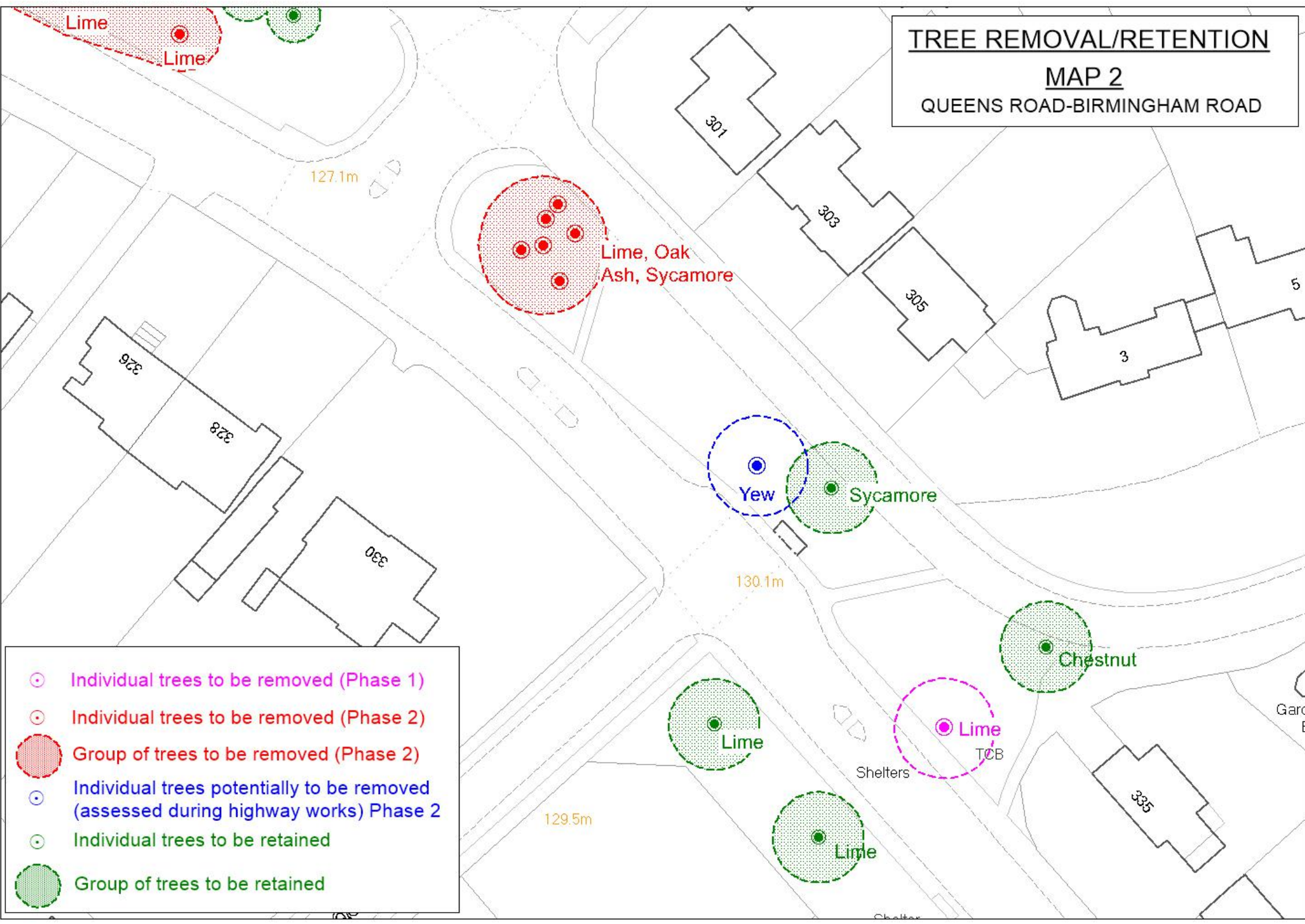
LODGE ROAD JUNCTION



**TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION**

**MAP 2**

QUEENS ROAD-BIRMINGHAM ROAD

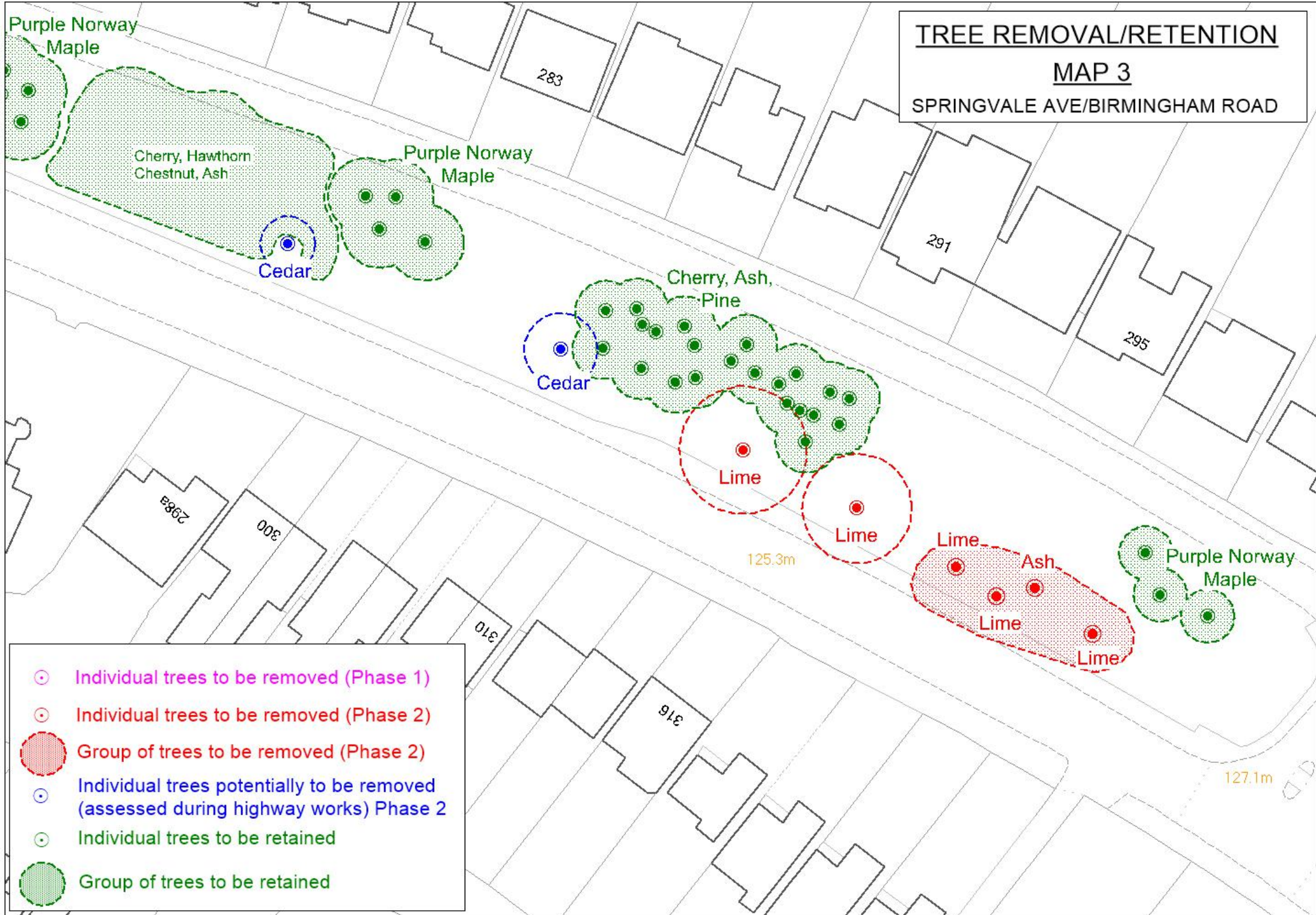


- Individual trees to be removed (Phase 1)
- Individual trees to be removed (Phase 2)
- Group of trees to be removed (Phase 2)
- Individual trees potentially to be removed (assessed during highway works) Phase 2
- Individual trees to be retained
- Group of trees to be retained

# TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

## MAP 3

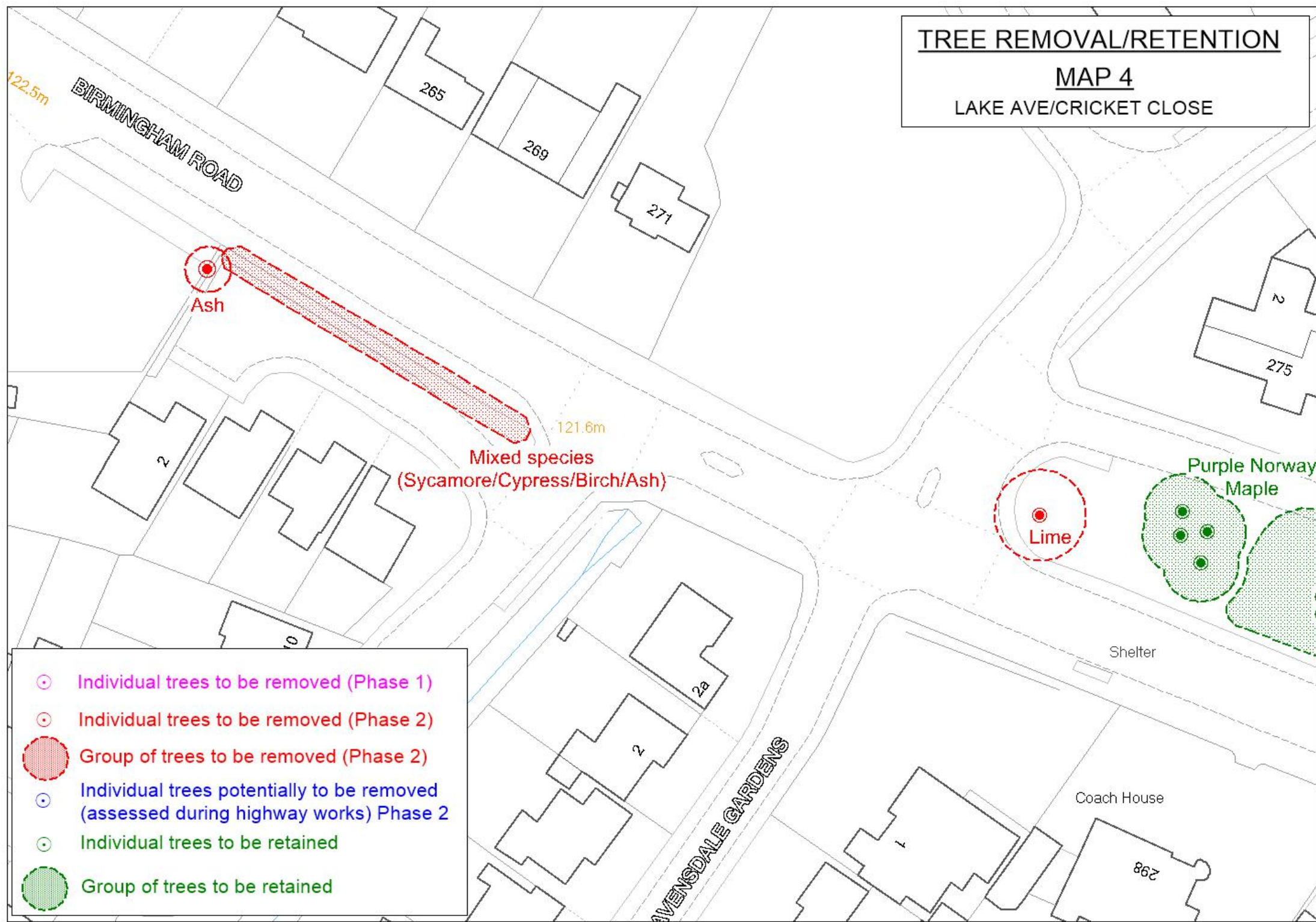
SPRINGVALE AVE/BIRMINGHAM ROAD



# TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

## MAP 4

LAKE AVE/CRICKET CLOSE



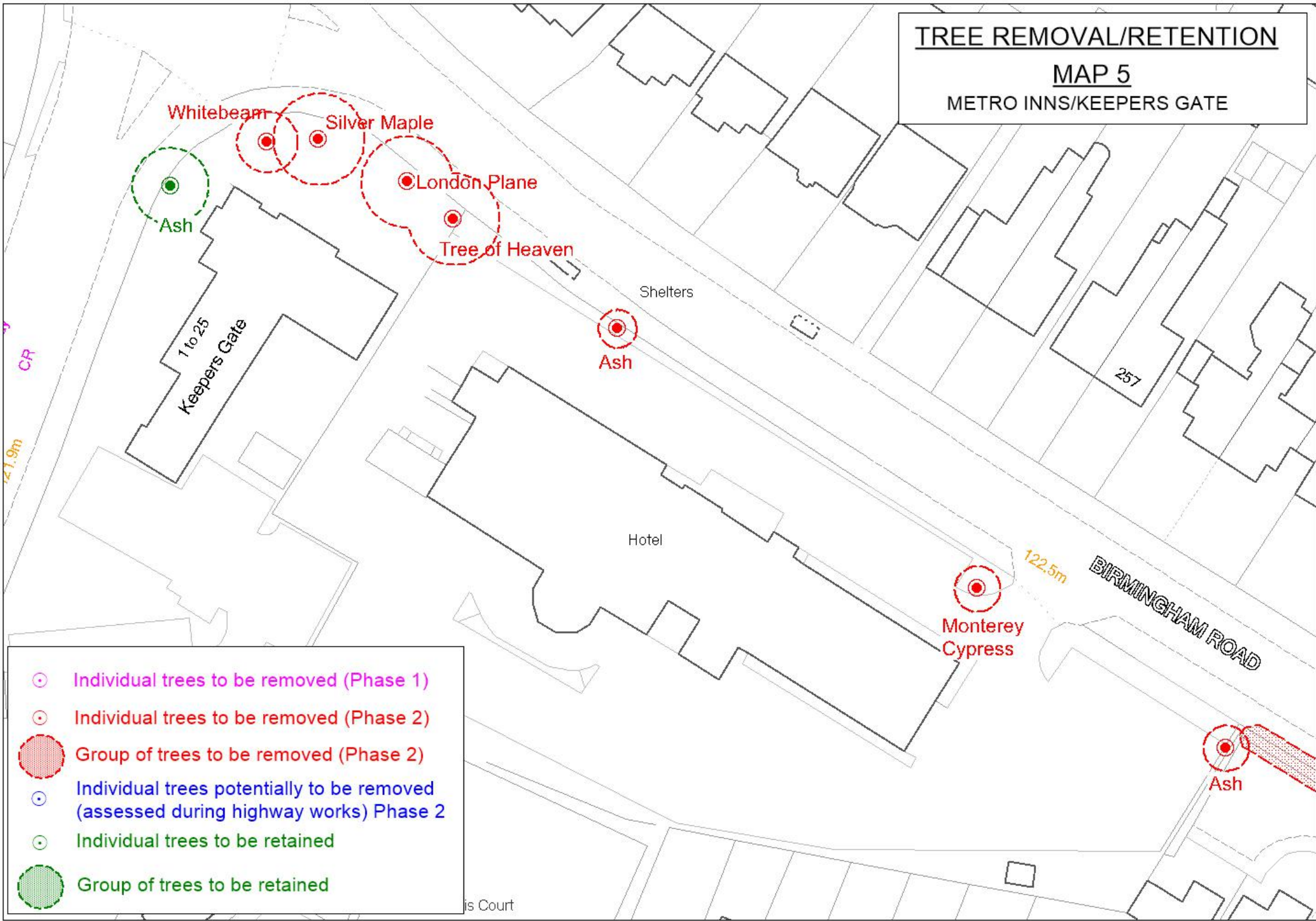
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- Individual trees potentially to be removed (assessed during highway works) Phase 2
- Individual trees to be retained
- Group of trees to be retained



**TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION**

**MAP 5**

**METRO INNS/KEEPERS GATE**

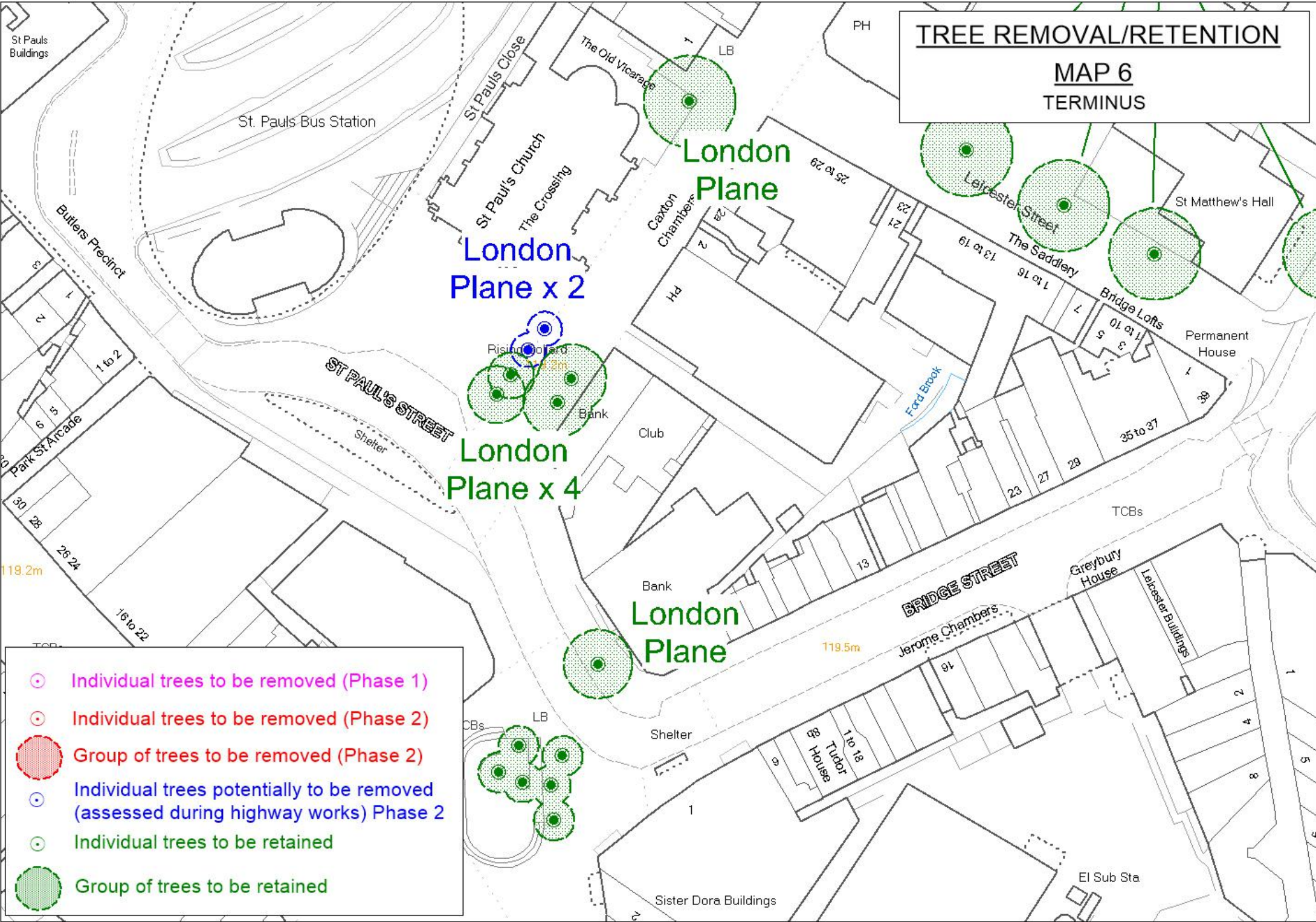


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# TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

## MAP 6 TERMINUS

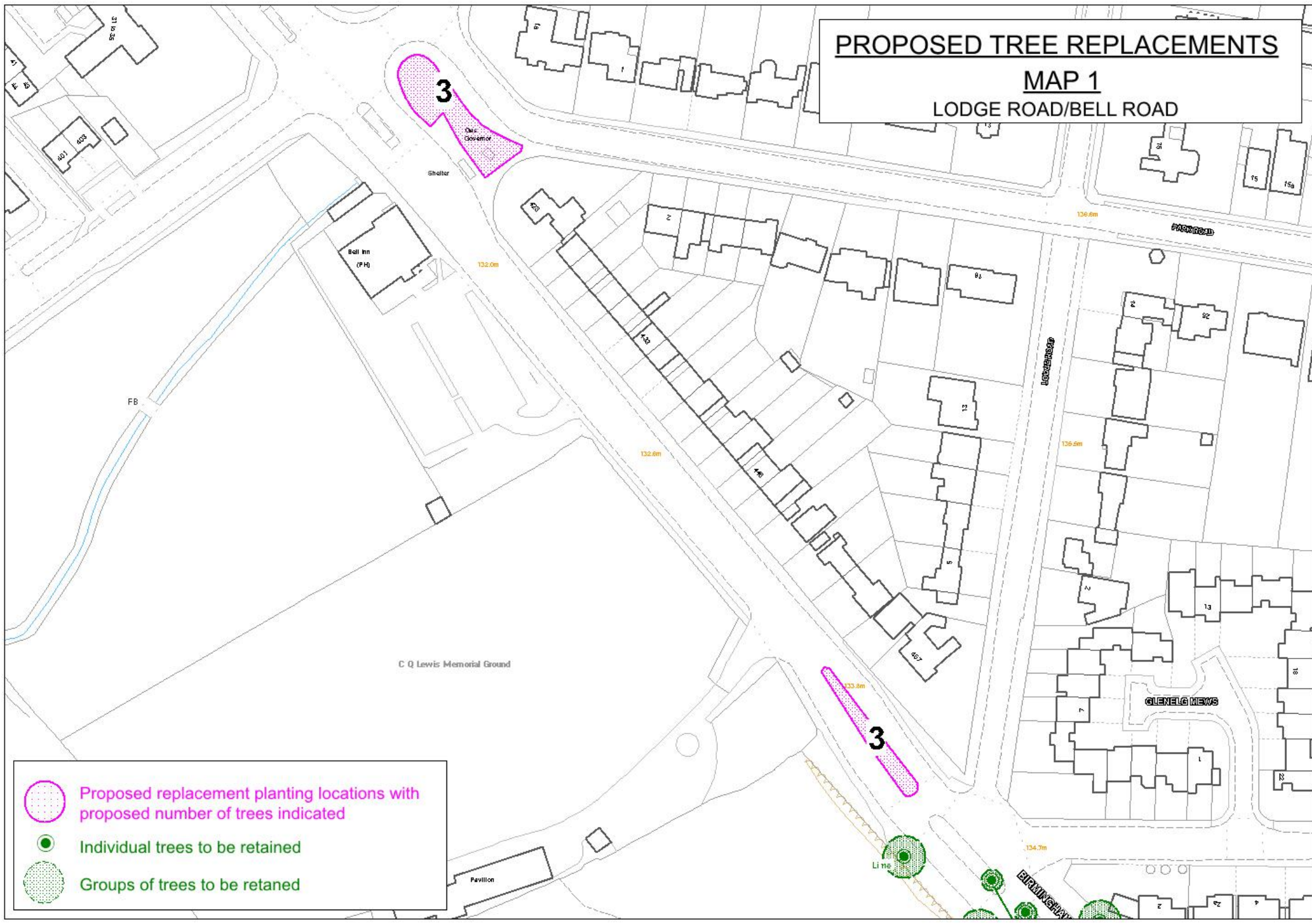


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- Individual trees potentially to be removed (assessed during highway works) Phase 2
- Individual trees to be retained
- Group of trees to be retained

# PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

## MAP 1

LODGE ROAD/BELL ROAD



Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated



Individual trees to be retained

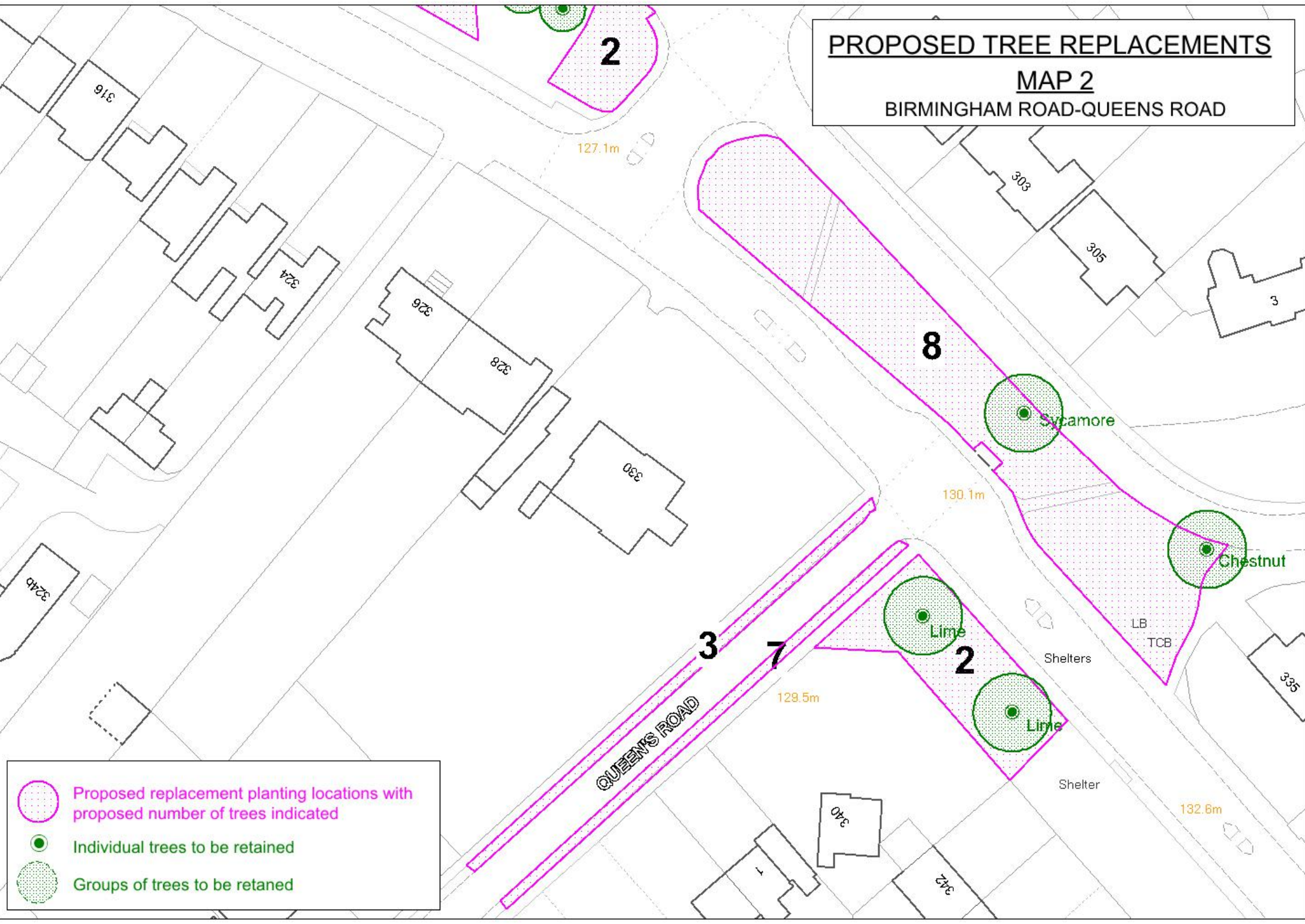





Groups of trees to be retained

# PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

## MAP 2

BIRMINGHAM ROAD-QUEENS ROAD

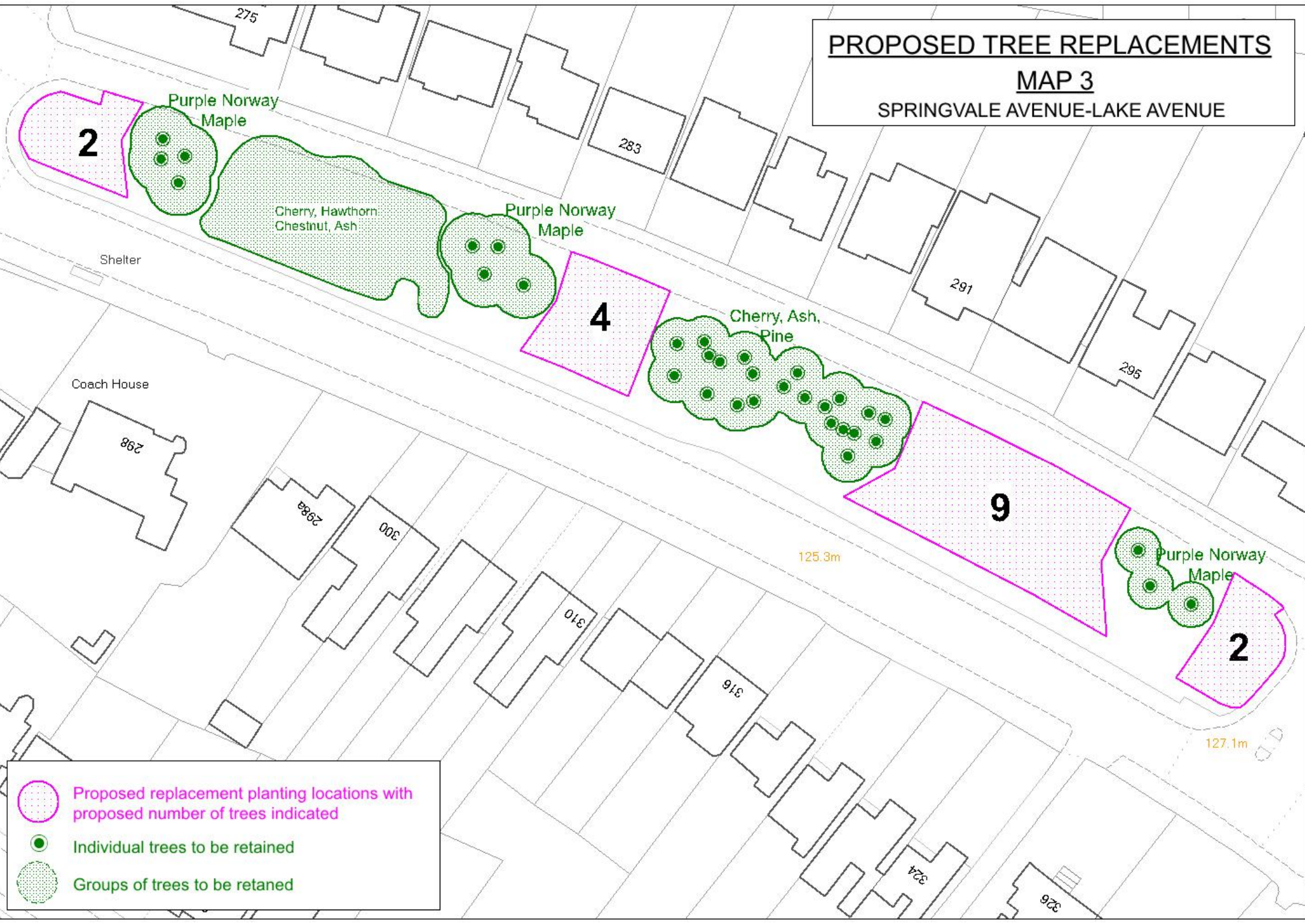


-  Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated
-  Individual trees to be retained
-  Groups of trees to be retained

# PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

## MAP 3

SPRINGVALE AVENUE-LAKE AVENUE

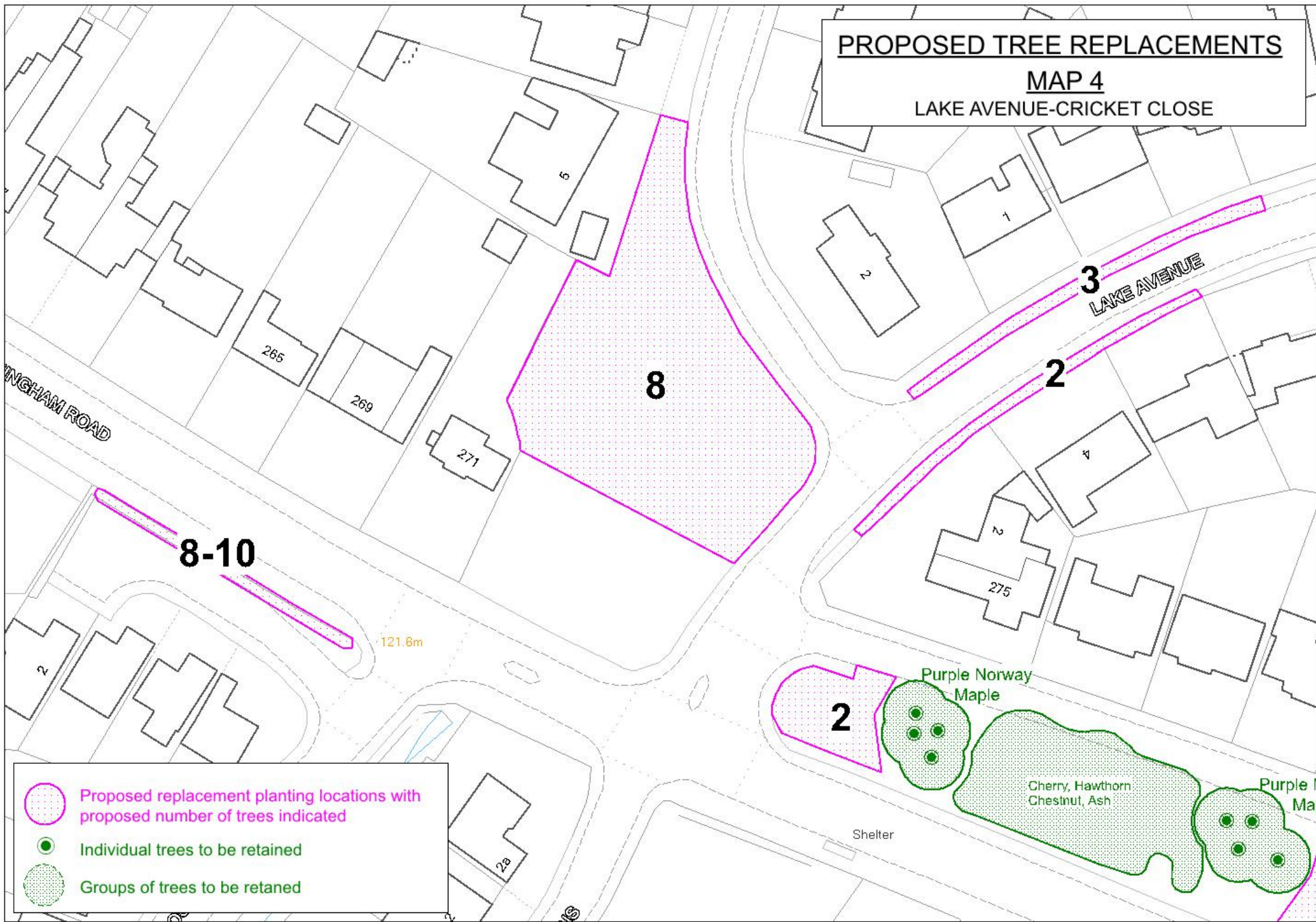





- Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated
- Individual trees to be retained
- Groups of trees to be retained

# PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

## MAP 4

LAKE AVENUE-CRICKET CLOSE

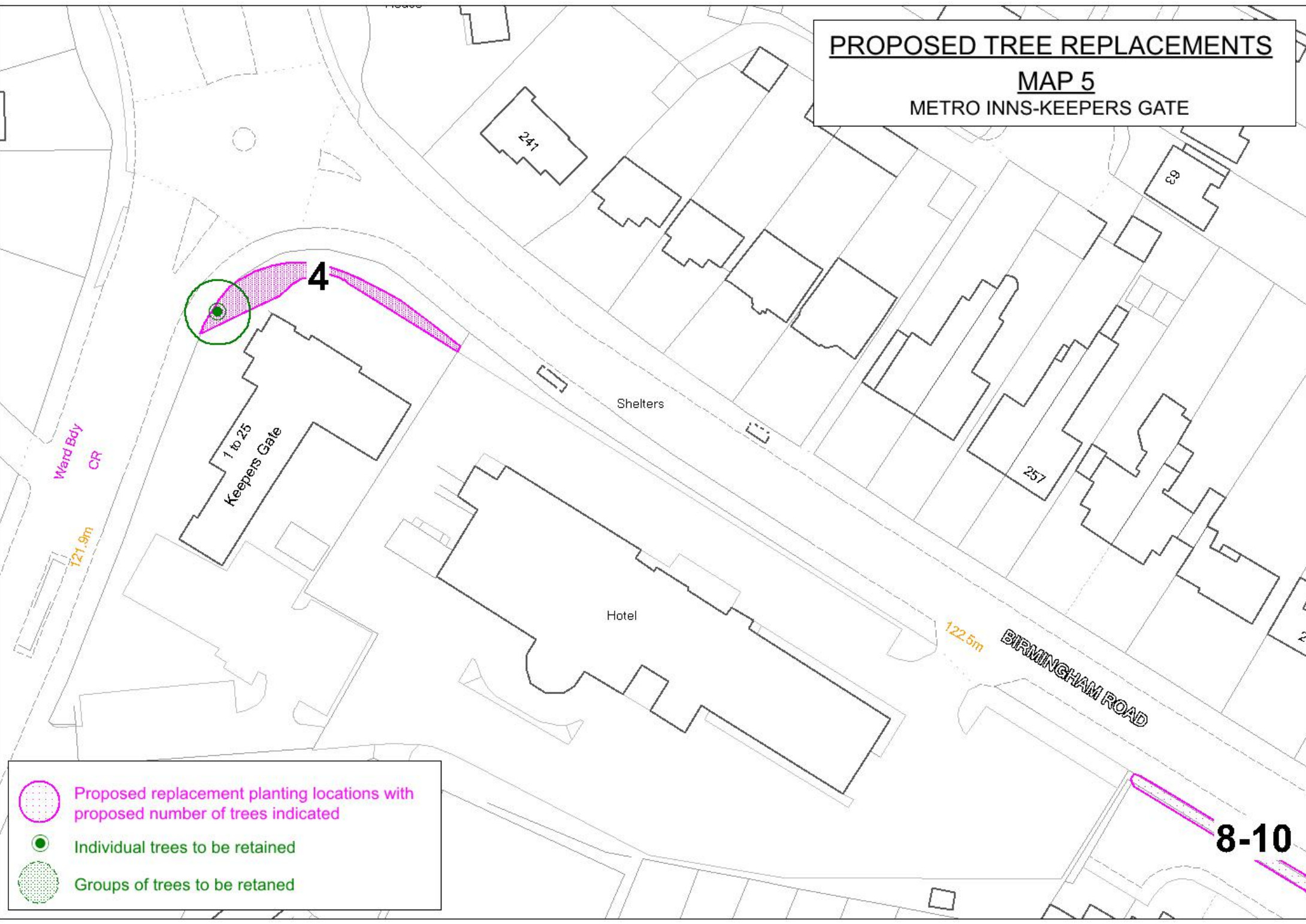


-  Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated
-  Individual trees to be retained
-  Groups of trees to be retained

# PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

## MAP 5

METRO INNS-KEEPERS GATE



Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated



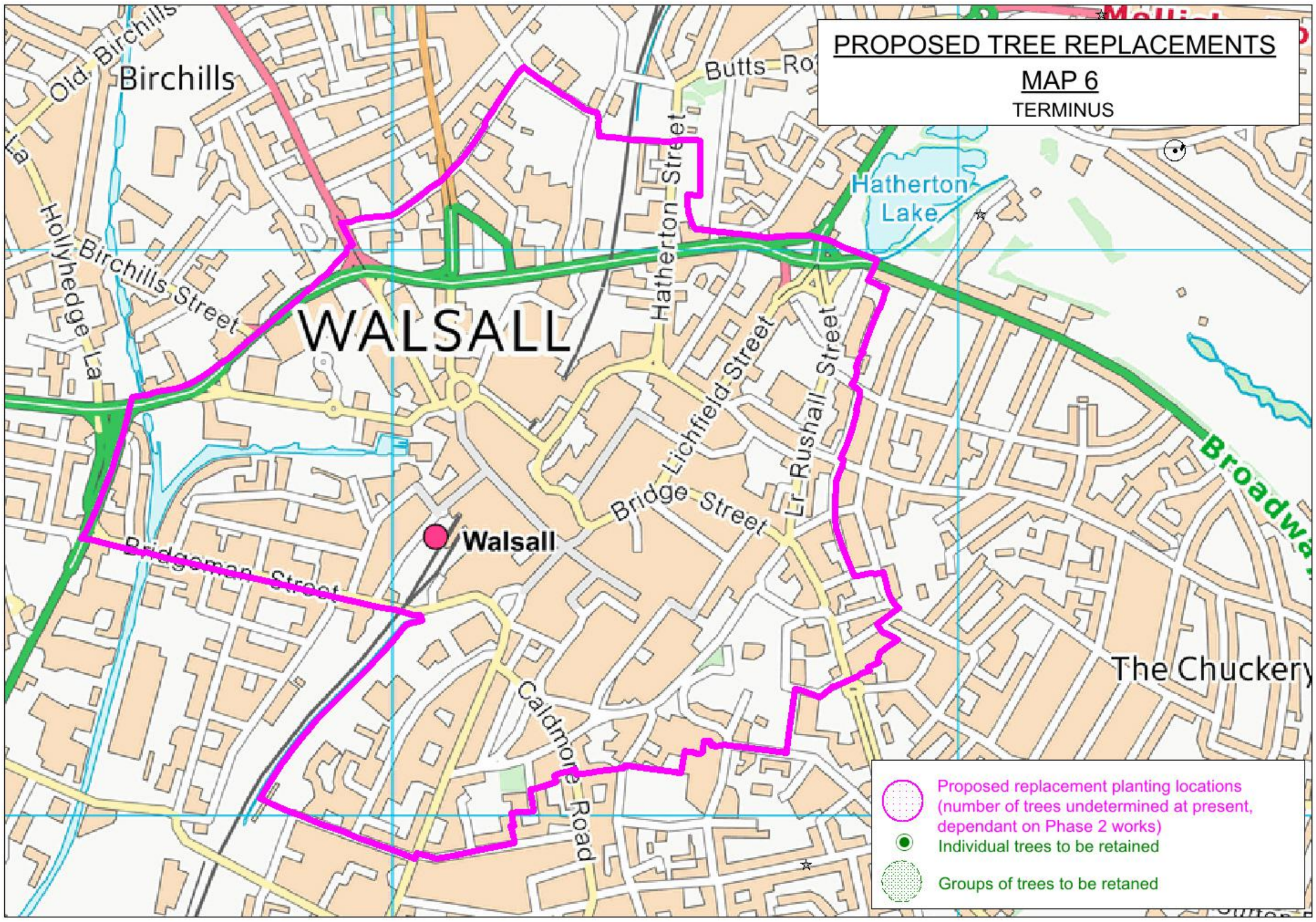
Individual trees to be retained



Groups of trees to be retained

**PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS**

**MAP 6**  
TERMINUS



**WALSALL**

Walsall

Hatherton Lake

The Chuckery

- Proposed replacement planting locations (number of trees undetermined at present, dependant on Phase 2 works)
- Individual trees to be retained
- Groups of trees to be retained