



Fulford-Dobson Associates Ltd
ARBORICULTURAL CONSULTANCY

TREE HAZARD SURVEY

King George's Field
Pound Lane
Sonning
Berkshire
RG4 6XE

May 2026

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Client	Sonning Parish Council
Surveyor	Jasper Fulford-Dobson
Survey date	28.05.26
Report issue date	01.06.26



1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction and project brief

I have been instructed by Sanjeev Bhardwaj, Chair of Recreation and Environment for Sonning Parish Council, to undertake a hazard survey of all trees at King Georges Field (Sonning Recreation Ground) and provide recommendations for risk mitigation in the interests of their duty of care.

1.2 Limitations

The copyright of this document resides with Fulford-Dobson Associates unless assigned in writing by the company. It is for the sole use of the named client and relates only to the defined scope, survey area and trees therein.

Trees are living organisms subject to change by a range of factors. Therefore, the authority of this report ceases when any site conditions change or pruning or other works unspecified in the report are carried out to, or affecting the subject tree(s), whichever is the sooner.

The statements made in this report do not take account of the effects of extremes of climate, vandalism or accident, whether physical, chemical or fire. I cannot therefore accept any liability in connection with these factors, nor where prescribed work is not carried out in a correct and professional manner in accordance with current good practice.

1.3 The author

I am a Fellow and Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association and a Chartered Environmentalist with 35 years' experience. I hold the Arboricultural Association's Technician's Certificate, National Diploma in Arboriculture and the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection Certificate. I am also a Cardiff University (Bond Solon) Certified Expert Witness.

I have worked in principal roles for local government tree/forestry departments and arboricultural contracting firms in London, the Thames Valley and San Jose, California USA. Between 2008 – 2023 I was English Heritage's appointed tree and woodland inspector covering over 100 historic properties across the Eastern, London and Southern regions.

I specialise in tree hazard surveys & risk assessments, wood decay mapping (using acoustic tomography & resistance microdrilling), Tree Preservation Orders, arboricultural impact assessments for planning applications, tree root damage claims and the strategic management of trees and small woodlands for private, corporate and public sector landowners.

2. The survey

2.1 The survey area

The survey area forms the gardens around the property of Brookland House, as defined by the red line around the plan on page 8.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The survey was carried out as a basic visual inspection from ground level with the aid of a monocular, nylon sounding hammer and 60cm long steel probe. No trees were climbed, no samples were analysed and no detailed wood decay assessments were undertaken (such as ultrasound tomography or resistance microdrilling). Where reasonably practical, ivy and undergrowth was pushed aside to enable close-up inspection of trunk bases.
- 2.2.2 All dimensions have been estimated and are for guidance only.
- 2.2.3 Survey information was recorded via a GPS enabled handheld device operating OTISS software. This subscription-based software provides users with licenced access to UK Ordnance Survey and Google maps.
- 2.2.4 Trees were plotted, whether individually or as groups and where a sufficient level of risk was identified mitigation measures were prescribed.
- 2.2.5 Most trees have been identified with yellow plastic numbered tags. These are recoded in the "Survey notes" column of the survey table and are different to the tree number marked on the tree plan.
- 2.2.6 It was not possible to view all trees from all angles and where access was obstructed by dense undergrowth such as trees in hedgerows, it was not possible to undertake a closeup inspection of the trunk base and buttresses. In all cases judgements have been made according to what could be seen of the tree at the time.
- 2.2.7 Deadwood provides a valuable niche habitat for a host for fungi, epiphytes, invertebrates, birds and mammals and is a typical feature of veteran trees. However, it can also be a hazard where there is a target present. In the interests of being selective with regards to risk assessment it has been loosely categorised as follows: -
- Minor (approx' <50mm diameter and/or <1m long) – (insignificant impact)
 - Moderate (approx' 50-100mm diameter and/or 1-3m long – (recoverable injury or damage)
 - Major (>100mm diameter and/or >3m long) – (significant injury or damage)

2.3 KEY TO TREE SCHEDULE

Ref.	Unique identification number for each tree, group or wooded area, matches the tree location plan.
Species	Tree species: common name (followed by botanical name in brackets and italics).
Measurements	Estimated height in metres Estimated average crown radius in metres Estimated trunk diameter in centimetres (measured at 1.5m above ground level) Life stage listed as one of the following: - young, semi-mature, early-mature, mature, late-mature, (veteran*), ancient. Life Expectancy listed as one of the following: - Dead, <10 years, 10+ years, 20+ years, 30+ years, 40+years, 50+ years *All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient. A veteran tree may not be very old, but it has decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its biodiversity, cultural and heritage value (NPPF Nov 2018).
Vigour	Vigour (closely related to physiological health) categorised as follows: - Good, Fair, Poor, Declining, Dead.
Survey notes	Only relevant notes are taken in relation to significant safety concerns, actionable defects or reasons for future monitoring, risk control and/or tree work. May also contain a separate tree tag number if different from the tree number on the plan.
THREATS category	Categories of risk, as calculated using <i>Tree Hazard - risk evaluation and treatment system</i> (THREATS), Forbes-Laird 2010 (as amended). Categorised as follows: - 1 (insignificant), 2 (minimal), 3 (slight), 4 (moderate), 5 (significant), 6 (serious), 7 (extreme).
Recommendations	Self-explanatory. Work is generally only recommended to address significant hazards (risk management), statutory conflict, significant nuisance and/or to improve the long-term health of the tree(s) where practicable and/or financially viable. Where this cell is blank assume no work is recommended or required. Agreed scope of the survey may include other recommendations such as tree planting, woodland management and general landscape husbandry.
Timescale	Work priority: - recommended timescales for completion of tree work, driven primarily by urgency in relation to public safety but also to help with budgeting and site practicalities: -    Overdue or urgent (within 1 month). Highlighted RED in the schedule. Within 90 days (high priority work for reasons of significant personal/public safety). Highlighted AMBER in the schedule. Within 1 year (moderate-low priority work necessary to abate a personal/public safety issue, damage to structures, nuisance or to improve tree longevity). Highlighted GREEN in the schedule. NOTE: it may be more cost effective to have all this work undertaken at the same time (irrespective of recommended timescale/priorities) to avoid associated costs from multiple visits from the contractor.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Tree work recommendations are detailed in the schedule on page 8.

3.2 Tree work operations

- 3.2.1 Tree work operations should generally be carried out in accordance with BS:3998 (2010) *Tree work – Recommendations* by suitably competent and insured contractors.
- 3.2.2 The recommended work in the main survey table is generally the minimum required to reduce the risk of failure of the defective part of the subject trees. Where this might leave the tree visually unbalanced, further work may be suggested to address this. Where hazards have been identified in relatively unremarkable and low value trees, felling may have been suggested as a more pragmatic and cost-effective approach than pruning.
- 3.2.3 Prudent landscape husbandry involves sustainable preservation and conservation principles. In the case of trees and wooded landscapes, this means looking ahead many years into the future to ensure continuity and succession of the canopy coverage and its associated biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Therefore, where trees are felled, replacement planting should be undertaken with appropriate species and in suitable locations (“the right trees in the right places”).
- 3.2.4 Ivy growing on trees provides useful shelter and food source for a host of wildlife. However, it can also hide structural defects and add loading and wind-sail to the trees that support it. Where ivy control or removal is identified as being necessary, it should be done in such a way as to avoid cutting into the bark of the supporting tree. As a general rule, ivy should be controlled and/or removed on high risk trees or in frequently visited zones to ensure it does not obscure significant defects on buttresses, main trunks, forks, large branches and critical branch unions.

3.3 Legal tree protection and permissions

All of the trees are within the Sonning Conservation Area. Written notification will therefore need to be sent to Wokingham Borough Council 6 weeks before undertaking the recommended work (exceptions apply to essential clearance from buildings/utilities/infrastructure and the removal of dead branches). This report can be submitted with the notification, which is best done via the Planning Portal.

3.4 Wildlife habitat

None of the work recommended in this report is likely to affect protected wildlife, however, the appointed tree surgeons must carry out their own pre-start wildlife assessments (most notably for nesting birds, bats, dormice and badgers) and comply with current legislation and the standing advice from Natural England.

4. Tree risk management and future inspections

- 4.1 The HSE SIM 01/2007/05 *Management of risk from falling trees* advises that landowners have a duty to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that people are not exposed to risk to their health and safety. This does not mean that all trees must be individually examined every year. The level of risk is largely influenced by the nature of the target and tree risk assessment systems are driven by zoning targets and their frequency of use. It is therefore reasonable that trees in high risk or frequently visited zones should be inspected more regularly than those in low risk or rarely visited zones.
- 4.2 A balanced and proportionate approach to managing trees considers the significant contribution they make to the environment, biodiversity, human health and the quality of our surroundings. In addition to rural woodlands, copses and hedgerows trees that provide shading from high summer temperatures, filter pollutants and reduce stormwater run-off in villages, towns and cities are especially important for adaptation to our changing climate.
- 4.3 Responses to tree risk must therefore give due regard to these values and benefits in the widest sense. The knowledge and competence of an experienced and qualified arboriculturist will determine what mitigation measures are most suitable and whether the overall cost of risk control is proportionate. Good advice can therefore help avoid wholesale tree removal (which depletes our environment), inappropriate and damaging pruning (which causes high maintenance and potentially more dangerous trees) and the unnecessary costs associated with such work.
- 4.4 Risk zoning and formal inspections – as a general guide: -
- High risk trees and/or frequently visited areas should be inspected annually
 - Medium risk trees and/or moderately visited areas should be inspected every three years
 - Low risk trees and/or rarely visited areas should be inspected every six years
- 4.5 I recommend that the trees at King George's Field are formally inspected by a suitably qualified, experienced and insured arboricultural consultant every 2 years. In the meantime, they should be informally checked by the landowner after gale force storms (Beaufort Scale Force 8+), unusually heavy and persistence spells of rain and/or heavy snowfall.

Reports of concerns from neighbours and/or members of the public are an important element of informal observations and should be acted upon. If there is any doubt as to the condition of these or any other trees on the property, please do not hesitate to contact the author of this report.

TABLE 1

Tree survey schedule

Tree Survey Recommendations

Client: Sonning Parish Council
 Site: King George's Field (Recreation Ground)
 Ref: FDA1518



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Ref.	Species	Survey notes	Measurements	Recommendation	Work Timescale	Photo
T002	Lombardy poplar (<i>Populus nigra italica</i>)	Ownership unclear. Dense ivy & fence obstructing inspection of main unions.	Est height (m): 17 Est average crown radius (m): 3 Est trunk diameter (cm): 45 Life Stage: Early Mature Life Exp.: 30+ Years	Sever and remove ivy up to 2m clear trunk. Arrange access to neighbouring garden for further close-up inspection of the trunk base.	28-Aug-2026 (3 Months)	
T004	Sycamore x2 (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)	Ivy. Close to building.	Est height (m): 10 Est average crown radius (m): 4 Est trunk diameter (cm): 20 Trees: 2 Life Stage: Early Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Sever ivy.	28-Aug-2026 (3 Months)	
T005	Lime (<i>Tilia sp.</i>)	Tag 0440. Low branches obstructing access.	Est height (m): 17 Est average crown radius (m): 6 Est trunk diameter (cm): 40 Life Stage: Early Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Crown lift to 3.5m all around by removing small and secondary branches (<30mm diameter) only. REASON: to enable clear access.	28-Aug-2026 (3 months)	

Ref.	Species	Survey notes	Measurements	Recommendation	Work Timescale	Photo
T011	English elm (<i>Ulmus procera</i>)	Standing dead tree within falling distance of bench.	Est height (m): 6.5 Est average crown radius (m): 2.5 Est trunk diameter (cm): 15 Life Stage: Semi Mature	Fell and remove (dead tree).	28-Aug-2026 (3 Months)	
T017	Horse chestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>)	Hazard beam on large branch growing out towards skate park.	Est height (m): 14 Est average crown radius (m): 8.5 Est trunk diameter (cm): 63 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 20+ Years	Reduced the height and spread of the noted branch only. Post pruning dimensions of the noted branch will be no less than 10m height and 5.5m radial spread (+/- 0.5m). REASON: safety.	28-Aug-2026 (3 Months)	
T019	Common beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	Large, long, loaded & rubbing lateral branches over bench on north side. Light tip-reduction would be prudent for safety reasons and result in negligible visual impact.	Est height (m): 18 Est average crown radius (m): 12 Est trunk diameter (cm): 75 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 20+ Years	Tip-reduce the noted lateral branches on the north side by no more than 1.5m. Post-pruning canopy spread on the north side will be no less than 9.5m (+/- 0.5m). REASON: safety.	28-Aug-2026 (3 Months)	
T021	Pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	Part broken small/medium branch hanging at 4m.	Est height (m): 11 Est average crown radius (m): 6.5 Est trunk diameter (cm): 35 Life Stage: Early Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Remove/recover broken branch.	28-Aug-2026 (3 Months)	

Ref.	Species	Survey notes	Measurements	Recommendation	Work Timescale	Photo
T022	Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>)	Low foliage & small branches obstructing access along path.	Est height (m): 10 Est average crown radius (m): 5.5 Est trunk diameter (cm): 28 Life Stage: Early Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Lift to 3m height clearance over the path (removing small and secondary branches only (<25mm diameter)). REASON: access.	28-Aug-2026 (3 Months)	
T023	Mixed species (<i>Mixed species</i>)	Low foliage over main vehicular access.	Est height (m): 15 Est average crown radius (m): 5 Est trunk diameter (cm): 40 Life Stage: Early Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Lift small and secondary branches to 4.5m over the vehicular access. REASON: access for vehicles.	28-Aug-2026 (3 Months)	
T013	Field maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)	Basal wounding and decay. Multi-stemmed with included bark unions. Crown reduction would be prudent for continued safe retention. Species characteristics and vigour suggests the tree will respond favourably.	Est height (m): 13 Est average crown radius (m): 6 Est trunk diameter (cm): 40 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 20+ Years	Reduce overall dimensions by 15% . Post pruning height of no less than 11m and radial canopy spread of no less than 4.5m (+/- 0.5m). REASON: to ensure continued safe retention.	28-May-2027 (1 Year)	
T018	Horse chestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>)	Ivy.	Est height (m): 18 Est average crown radius (m): 7 Est trunk diameter (cm): 60 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 20+ Years	Sever and remove ivy up to 2m clear trunk. Remove basal shoots up to 20cm above ground level.	28-May-2027 (1 Year)	

Ref.	Species	Survey notes	Measurements	Recommendation	Work Timescale	Photo
T024	Silver maple (<i>Acer saccharinum</i>)	Large mature tree with co-dominant stems in high frequency target zone. Basal epicormic shoots and ivy obstructing close up inspection of trunk base.	Est height (m): 20 Est average crown radius (m): 6.5 Est trunk diameter (cm): 58 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 20+ Years	Remove basal epicormic shoots and ivy up to 2m clear trunk.	28-May-2027 (1 Year)	
T025	Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)	Standing dead tree.	Est height (m): 11 Est average crown radius (m): 2.5 Est trunk diameter (cm): 28 Life Stage: Early Mature	Section fell to ground level (dead tree).	28-May-2027 (1 Year)	

PLAN 1

Tree location plan



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