

Tree Surveys

BS5837 – Pre Planning – Mortgage – Risk Management & Prediction

VISUAL TREE INSPECTION AND DECAY DETECTION AT WESTBOURNE HOUSE BASINGSTOKE ROAD



**Prepared on instructions from:
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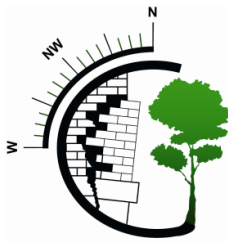
APPENDIX

1. Decay detection overview and results

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Instructions.

1.1.1 Tree Surveys are instructed by Beechwood Tree Care Ltd to visit and conduct a visual tree assessment and decay detection upon one cedar tree located at Westbourne House, Basingstoke Road, Riseley, RG7 1QS.

1.1.2 We are further instructed to provide a report on the structural and physiological condition, health and safety of the tree and to provide management advice following our investigations.

1.2 Background information.

1.2.1 Beechwood Tree Care Limited raised concerns over an old pruning wound with a vertical crack above and below the wound, as the tree is close to the highway and property it was recommended that the tree be subject to a visual inspection and decay detection.

1.3 Scope.

1.3.1 This report is concerned specifically with the structural characteristics and physiological condition of the tree we inspected. The primary purpose of this report is to establish the physiological and structural condition of the trees and formulate management proposals in line with industry best practice.

1.3.2 The basic visual tree survey process is a simple data collection process; it followed procedures comparable to those prescribed by (Lonsdale, 1999¹) and (Mattheck and Breloer, 1994²) and National Tree Safety Group 2011³ gathering visual information on such things as:

- Tree size, age and health
- Tree species
- External Biomechanical signs
- Previous history of pruning
- External signs of decay
- Field identification of fungi.

1.3.3 Where appropriate the process may then require data from further diagnostic tests such as:

- Maps of decay or cracking
- Vitality testing
- Root investigation
- Pathogen identification

1.3.4 Recommendations or options are then drawn up taking into account the type of site usage and the target area.

1.3.5 Please note: all abbreviations introduced in brackets are used throughout the report.

¹ Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management, DoE booklet Research for Amenity Trees No. 7, (1999)

² The Body Language of Trees, DoE booklet Research for Amenity Trees No. 4, (1994)

³ Common Sense Risk Management of Trees. National Tree Safety Group, The Forestry Commission 2011



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1.4 Plans and documents.

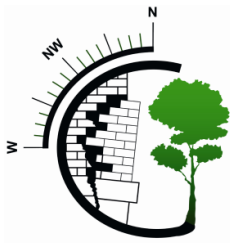
- 1.4.1 We have provided a simple screen shot to show the location of the tree at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Tree location Westbourne House. (Screen shot courtesy of Google maps 2026)



1.5 Site visit.

- 1.5.1 The site visit and tree inspection was conducted by Simon Holmes MSc. MICFor of Tree Surveys on 17 August 2026; weather conditions were dry and bright. Full access to the site was provided by the owner and Beechwood Tree Care Ltd provided a scaffold tower to inspect a wound on the main stem.
- 1.5.2 The information contained in this report covers only the tree that we examined and reflects the visual condition of the specimen at the time of inspection.
- 1.5.3 The tree was inspected from the ground with the aid of binoculars, a sounding mallet, stainless steel probe and an IML PD400 Resi drill, we also inspected a wound at 5.5 metres above ground level (AGL) from a portable scaffold tower.



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- 1.5.4 The visual tree inspection offers no guarantee, either expressed or implied, of the internal condition of the stem, furthermore, no warranty that problems or deficiencies may not arise in the future can be given.

1.6 Legal Status

- 1.6.1 The legal status of the tree was checked via Wokingham Borough Council interactive web site on 4 September 2026 which confirmed that the tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) number 0307-1989 and therefore, prior to undertaking any work on the tree, consent must be granted by the Local Planning Authority.

2. THE SITE.

2.1 Site description.

- 2.2.1 The tree is located within the front garden of Westbourne House, 6.6 metres from the front elevation, see Figure 2 on page 6. The site contains a detached two storey residential property with wrap around garden. The site is occupied and in constant use. The Basingstoke Road (B3349) is approximately 5 metres from the tree and is in frequent use. The tree is within falling distance of the property and highway.

3. SURVEY FINDINGS AND OPINION.

3.1 General.

- 3.1.1 The tree dimensions were recorded with the aid of a Nikon™ laser hypsometer and a rounded down diameter tape. The results are set out in the schedule below.

Tree Schedule

Tree Number	Tree Species	Height (m)	Diameter (mm) @ 1.5m AGL	Crown Spread Av	Age Class
T1	Deodar Cedar	18	810	16m	Mature

Key: m = metres mm = millimetres AGL = above ground level est = estimated Av = average

3.2 Findings and opinion.

- 3.2.1 There was no visible sign of movement around the base of the tree. There was no evidence of rootplate movement, no mounding or soil heave was observed, and the root zone appeared stable within the surroundings at the time of inspection. A small yew tree obscured the ground level inspection on the east side of the stem. There were no fungal fruiting bodies at ground level or on the main stem of the tree.
- 3.2.2 The buttressing is typical of the species, and the bark is true to type and firmly attached. Surface level roots are visible and have distressed the tarmac, this can be seen in Figure 3 on page 6.
- 3.2.3 We examined the stem at ground level with a stainless-steel probe, nylon mallet and IML Resi PD400 decay detection drill. The stainless-steel probe did not detect any areas of decay and when sounded with the mallet, no hollow intonations were heard up to 1.8 metres AGL.



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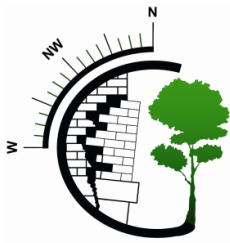
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Figure 2. Cedar in front garden.



Figure 3. Root activity under tarmac.





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- 3.2.4 Four drillings were conducted with the IML Resi drill at the cardinal points to assess the stem for decay or cavities and a control drilling was undertaken at 1.5 metres AGL. No significant cavities were detected. Low amplitude was recorded behind the bark as a result of the soft vascular tissues. Isolated areas of low amplitude were recorded on the north and east sides. These areas are small and do not appear to be coalescing, the most probable cause is radial cracking or small isolated areas of decay. The control test did not reveal any decay or cavities at the test location.
- 3.2.5 The main stem has a natural taper to the first branches. A small branch wound is visible at 5.2 metres AGL on the east side along with a vertical wound above and below the branch wound that has the appearance of a crack, see Figure 3 below. The main stem has a trident like appearance where the main stem subdivides with two co-dominant stems at 5.2 metres AGL, see Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Wound and bark defect.



- 3.2.6 The branch wound and crack were examined from a scaffold tower using a stainless-steel probe and IML PD400 Resi drill. The branch wound is hard and is occluding with no evidence of decay see Figure 4 above. The bark crack was also examined, probed and drilled, it is shallow and has the appearance of a bark inclusion, see Figure 5 on page 8. The IML drilling (results included at Appendix 1), no evidence of decay was detected. A slight fall in amplitude was detected in drilling 7 that is associated with the bark inclusion.



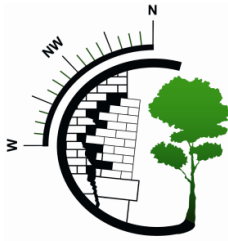
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Figure 5. Bark crack examination.



- 3.2.7 There are several unusual lateral limb unions and utility lines passing through the canopy, see Figure 6 on page 9. The physiological attributes of trees provide a general indication of vitality and may include but are not limited to, needle colour and density, incremental growth and fruit (cone) production and when the crown was observed through binoculars the crown attributes were typical of the species with no major deadwood or physiological decline, see Figure 6 on page 9.



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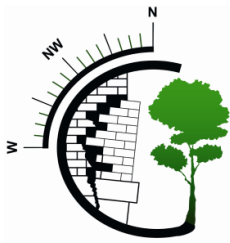
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Figure 6. Utility lines and unusual branch union



4. CONCLUSIONS.

- 4.1.1 Deodar Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) is generally a poor choice for a small urban front gardens in the UK because it is ultimately a very large, long-lived Himalayan cedar with substantial rooting and canopy requirements. They are capable of reaching 20 to 35 metres in height and have a canopy spread between 12 to 20 metres with exceptional specimens exceeding these dimensions. As the canopy ages it becomes broader with sweeping branches that descend as it matures, and with the trident form this will exaggerate the natural characteristics.



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- 4.1.2 Roots can create conflicts in urban areas, and such damage is visible in the adjacent tarmac. In the surveyor's opinion planting deodar cedar too close to residential properties eventually results in excess shading, branches encroaching the property, restricting light to windows and recreational spaces and ultimately pressure to prune or remove the tree. As cedar age they become difficult and costly to manage and do not respond well to repeated pruning. The trees' location to the north of the property will result in a loss of ambient light only.
- 4.1.3 It is not possible to accurately age the tree however based upon its size (canopy and stem dimensions) is considered to be 100 to 125 years old.
- 4.1.4 The tree has potential for further growth and is considered to be within 1/3rd of the mature (final) dimensions. The damage observed to the tarmac will continue and therefore at some stage remedial works will be required to restore or replace it. Replacing it with a flexible porous surface will help to reduce the need for frequent maintenance.
- 4.1.5 The unusual canopy appearance may have resulted from insect damage, deliberate pruning or a severe weather event that resulted in the tree developing co dominant leaders leading to the trident like appearance.
- 4.1.6 The physiological indicators are normal indicating the trees vascular system is functioning normally. The needle size and distribution indicate a normal level of vitality, and the decay detection tests did not detect any significant decay at the test locations.
- 4.1.7 Most mature trees contain defects, frequently significant, many of which have not been detected, and they fail comparatively rarely under normal conditions. The question arises as to what will trigger failure. This is impossible to predict however, it is generally a particular (not necessarily unusual) environmental condition. For example, trees are well-adapted to withstand wind however, if subject to a loading to which they have not adapted, they may fail such as was experienced in the hurricane of 1987.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1 Works required.

- 5.1.1 Any branches obstructing the utility wires must be pruned back to create a minimum 500-millimetre clearance, where the branch(es) are adjacent to overhead electric wires this may require a greater clearance and the utility supplier will set the specification. The work should be undertaken within 6 months of the date of this report.
- 5.1.2 The dog leg branch shown in Figure 6 should be removed to prevent premature failure. This work should be undertaken within 6 months of the date of this report.
- 5.1.3 It would be prudent to have the tree visually inspected by a qualified tree surgeon on an annual basis and in particular after any severe weather event.
- 5.1.4 The tree should be fully re-inspected in 3 years.



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6. ARBORICULTURAL STANDARDS.

- 6.1 All tree works recommended should be carried out in accordance with British Standard BS 3998:2010 Tree Work Recommendations and should be undertaken by a properly qualified and experienced tree contracting company. It is advised that they should carry public and products liability insurance of £5 million cover.
- 6.2 Trees are dynamic structures and therefore subject to many changes. Wind loading, if sufficiently high enough, can blow over the healthiest of trees. Where decay or root structure is compromised there is an increased risk of failure and therefore regular inspection is recommended.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Holmes'.

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APPENDIX 1

Resi PD400: The Resi is a mechanical drilling machine with a constant drive, which measures the drilling resistance and rotational speed along a needle, when inserted into the tree. The result is displayed on a digital panel and stored electronically at a scale of 1:1, measurement is in metric units.

The drilling and advance rate may be varied for hard or softwoods. The drilling resistance is correlated with the mechanical properties, and defective areas that have developed within the tree may be detected and assessed.

Examples of defects detected by the Resi may be dysfunctional areas such as internal cracks, areas of decay and hollowing. Remaining wall thickness may be determined to a depth of 400 millimetres. The instrument is adept at detecting the early stages of decay in white rots as well as detecting brown rots at an early stage.

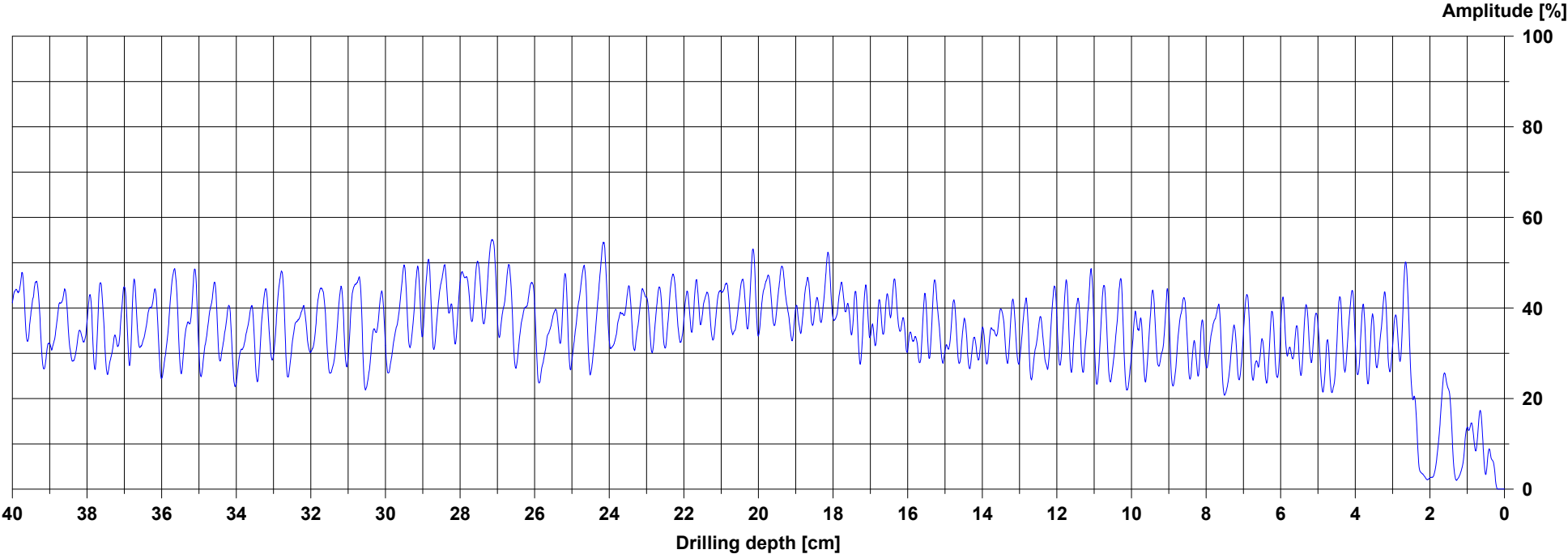
The drilling needle is specially formed and the tip is only 3 millimetres wide with a shaft diameter of 1.5 millimetres, thereby keeping internal damage to a minimum and reducing the risk of further fungal infection.

Interpreting these drilling readings:

The object data field (top left of each page) provides information on the date, depth, needle speed and site specific information. The assessment field (bottom left of each page) provides a detailed analysis of specific areas of dysfunction and is often colour coded. Readings are normally from right (entry into the tree) to left, with any specific comments in the box bottom right.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	5	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	81,00 cm
ID number	: Westbourne House	Needle state:	---	Level	: 150cm
Drilling depth	: 40,05 cm	Tilt	: 0°	Direction:	North
Date	: 17.08.2026	Offset	: 79 / 254	Species	: Cedar
Time	: 11:33:06	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location	: Westbourne House
Feed	: 150 cm/min			Name	: Beechwood T C



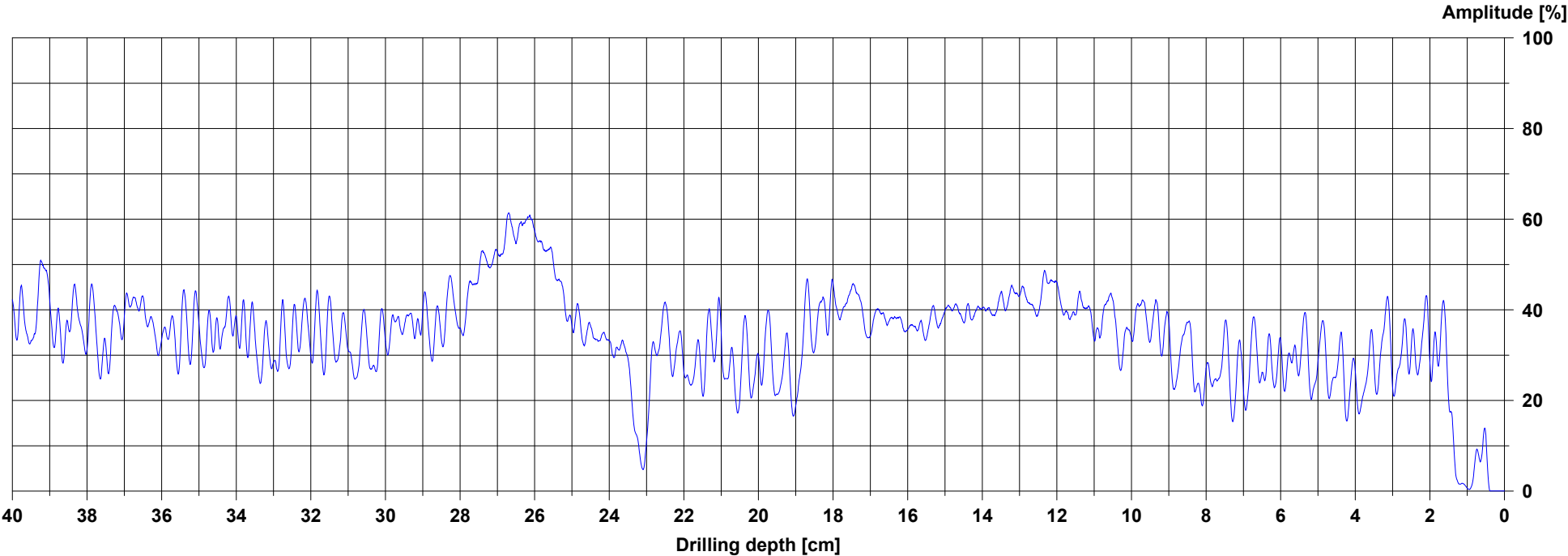
Assessment

Comment

Control drilling at 1.5 metres AGL. No significant decay at the test location. Good annual increment definition.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	7	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	
ID number	: Wound 2	Needle state:	---	Level	: 530cm
Drilling depth	: 40,07 cm	Tilt	: -1°	Direction:	
Date	: 17.08.2026	Offset	: 86 / 247	Species	: Cedar
Time	: 12:30:14	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location:	Westbourne House
Feed	: 150 cm/min	Name	: Beechwood T C		



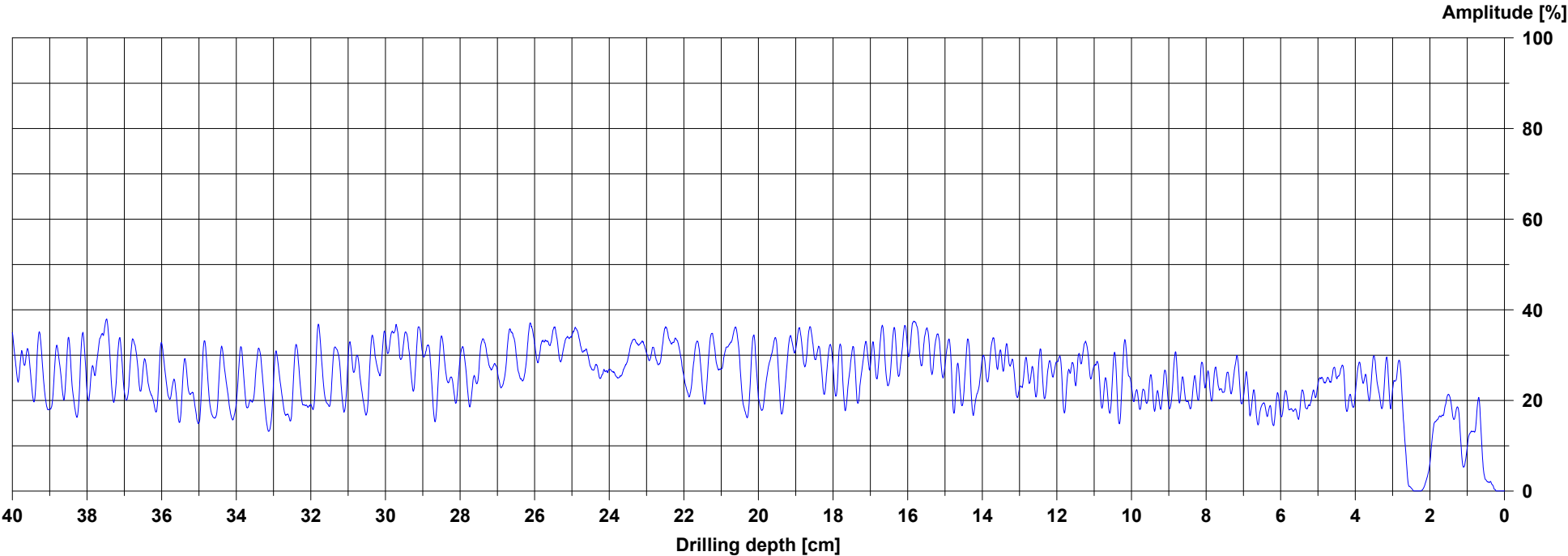
Assessment

Comment

Test just above stem wound circa 5.4m no significant decay detected. Sudden fall at 23cm due to stem inclusion.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	6	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	
ID number	: Wound	Needle state:	---	Level	: 500cm
Drilling depth	: 40,06 cm	Tilt	: 0°	Direction:	
Date	: 17.08.2026	Offset	: 103 / 247	Species	: Cedar
Time	: 12:23:16	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location:	Westbourne House
Feed	: 150 cm/min	Name	: Beechwood T C		



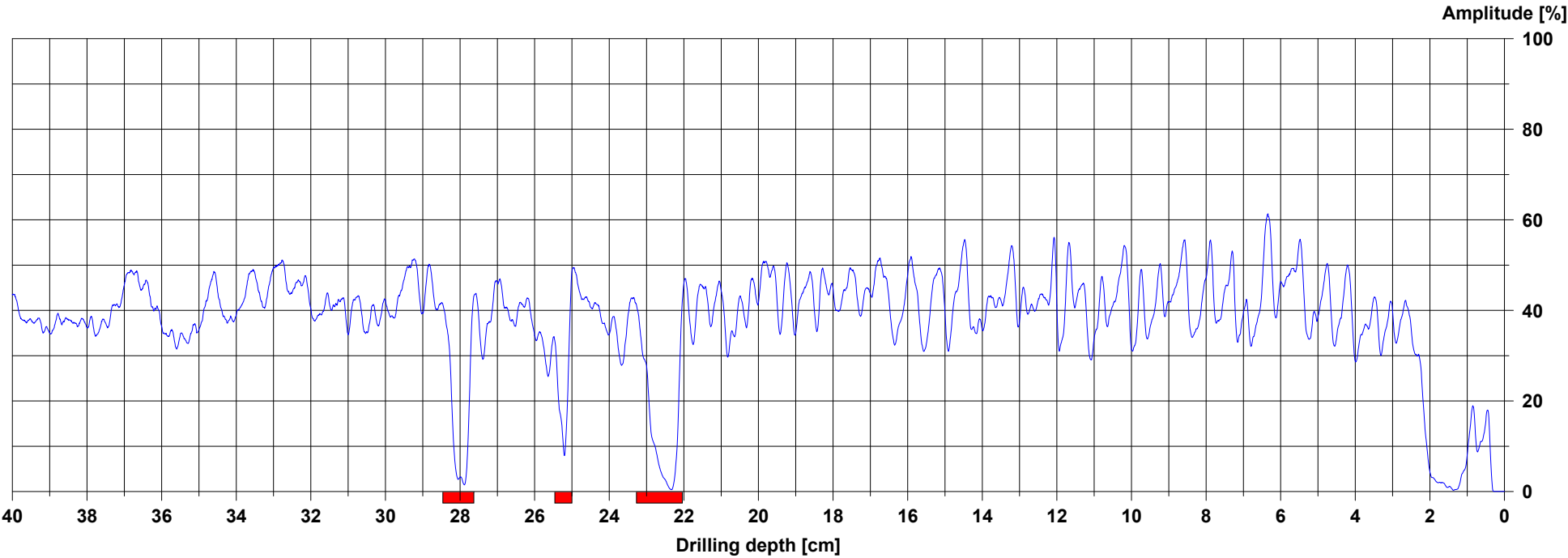
Assessment

Comment

Test just below the stem wound at 5.2m. No significant decay at the test location.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	1	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	81,00 cm
ID number	: Westbourne House	Needle state:	---	Level	: 10cm
Drilling depth	: 40,08 cm	Tilt	: 0°	Direction:	East
Date	: 17.08.2026	Offset	: 90 / 252	Species	: Cedar
Time	: 11:29:36	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location	: Westbourne House
Feed	: 150 cm/min			Name	: Beechwood T C



Assessment

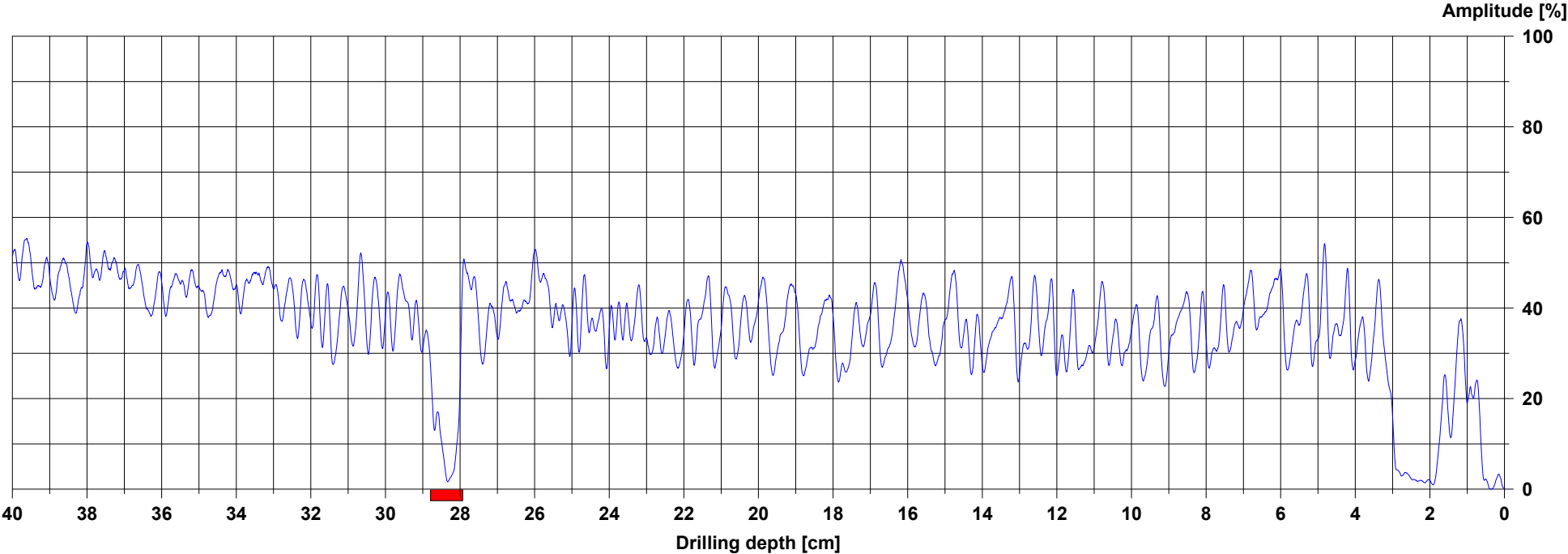
- From 22,04 cm to 23,27 cm : Decay
- From 25,00 cm to 25,46 cm : Decay
- From 27,63 cm to 28,46 cm : Decay

Comment

Three isolated areas of decay. East side close to ground level.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	2	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	81,00 cm
ID number	: Westbourne House	Needle state:	---	Level	: 10cm
Drilling depth	: 40,08 cm	Tilt	: 0°	Direction:	North
Date	: 17.08.2026	Offset	: 83 / 252	Species	: Cedar
Time	: 11:30:26	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location:	Westbourne House
Feed	: 150 cm/min			Name	: Beechwood T C



Assessment

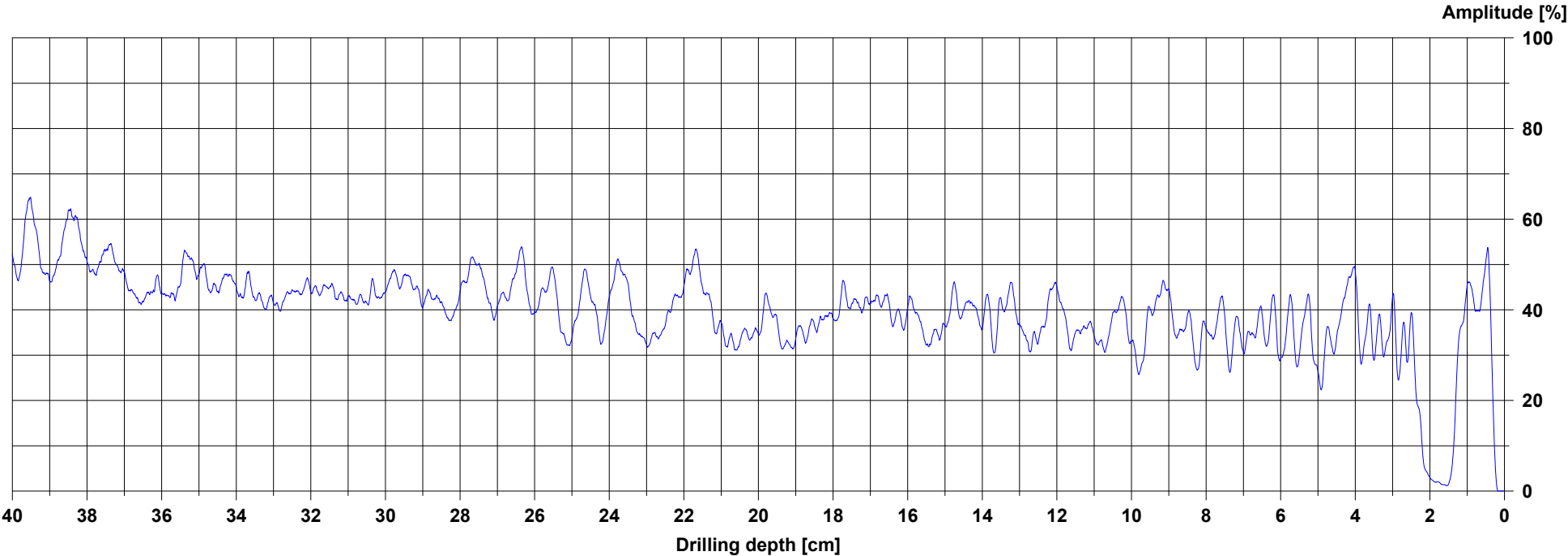
■ From 27,93 cm to 28,79 cm : Decay

Comment

Low density behind the bark due to vascular system. Isolated area of decay at 28cm north side close to ground level.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	4	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	81,00 cm
ID number	: Westbourne House	Needle state:	---	Level	: 10cm
Drilling depth	: 40,09 cm	Tilt	: -1°	Direction:	South
Date	: 17.08.2026	Offset	: 77 / 252	Species	: Cedar
Time	: 11:32:04	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location:	Westbourne House
Feed	: 150 cm/min			Name	: Beechwood T C



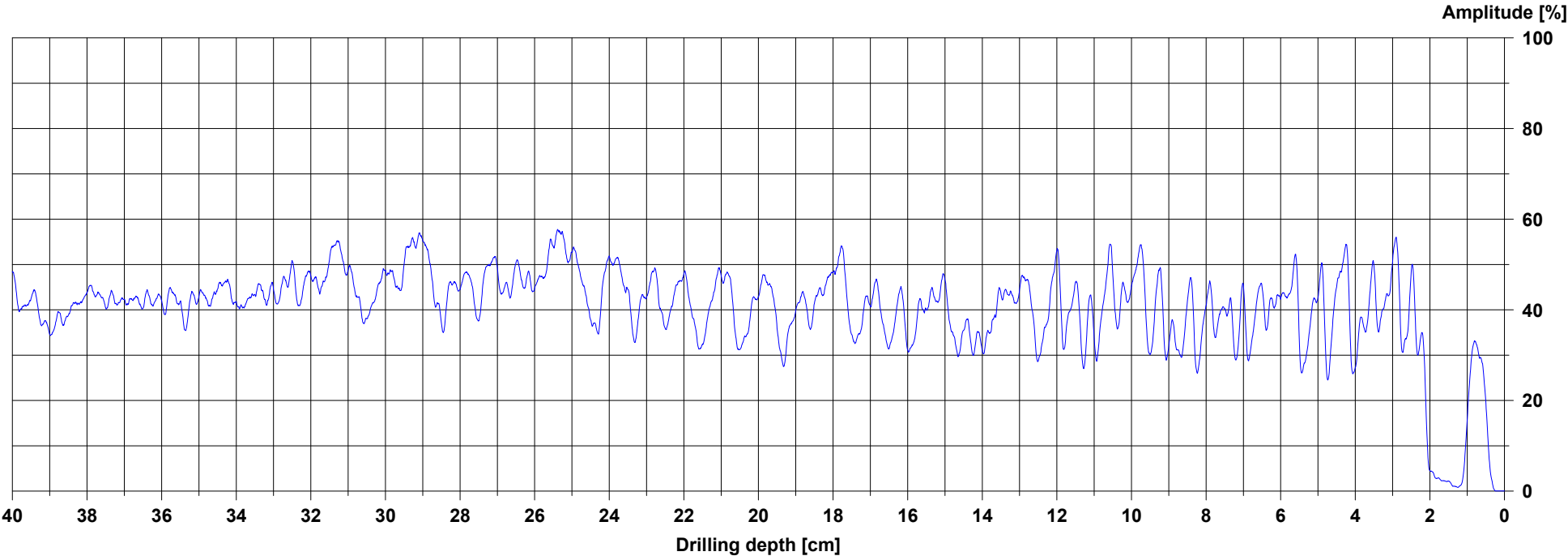
Assessment

Comment

Low amplitude behind bark due to vascular system. No significant decay at the test location.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	3	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	81,00 cm
ID number	: Westbourne House	Needle state:	---	Level	: 10cm
Drilling depth	: 40,10 cm	Tilt	: -1°	Direction:	West
Date	: 17.08.2026	Offset	: 83 / 256	Species	: Cedar
Time	: 11:31:13	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location:	Westbourne House
Feed	: 150 cm/min			Name	: Beechwood T C



Assessment

Comment

Low amplitude behind bark due to vascular system. Annual increment definition diminishes at 32cm. May be incipient decay or drill not running true.