

DUCKWORTHS
ARBORICULTURE

TREE INSPECTION REPORT

65 HILMANTON
LOWER EARLEY
WOKINGHAM
BERKSHIRE
RG6 4HN

JUNE 2020

Ref: SCD 05386/2020

REPORT BY: SARAH DUCKWORTH

DipArb(RFS), TechCert(ArborA), M. Arbor.A, BA (Hons)
LANTRA Professional Tree Inspector

www.duckworthsarboriculture.co.uk



1. CONTENTS

2.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.1	Instruction	3
2.2	Qualification	3
2.3	Insurance	3
2.4	Tree Preservation Orders	4
2.5	Protected Species	4
2.6	Inspection information	5
2.7	Tree Work Good Practice:	5
2.8	Caveats	5
3.	ARBORICULTURAL INSPECTION DATA	6
4.	GALLERY	8

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Instruction

This Arboricultural Report has been commissioned by [REDACTED] Owner / Occupier of 65 Hilmanton, Lower Earley, RG6 4HN.

I have been asked to provide a report on the condition of a mature Ash tree growing on the rear boundary of the property. The Ash was formerly a twin stem tree. The smaller of the two large stems collapsed from ground level in 2016. The tree has more recently has shed a number of smaller branches causing some anxiety for adjacent residents. This report is to assess the future management requirements of the tree and identify any health and safety works which may be required.

The tree has been looked at in detail using the Visual Tree Assessment¹ the basis of which is the identification of symptoms produced by a tree in reaction to a defect, or area of mechanical stress.

VTA is a non-invasive method of examining the health and structural condition of an individual trees. Non-invasive inspection equipment (mallet and metal probe) were used to make an assessment of the structural integrity at the base and trunk of the tree where the visual inspection identified the need.

The report is to specify any necessary remedial tree works which may be required to address identified hazards from the tree whilst acknowledging and respecting its local significance to the amenity and biodiversity of the wider landscape.

This is an Arboricultural Report which considers tree matters only.

2.2 Qualification

Surveyor: Sarah Duckworth

- Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma
- Arboricultural Association's Technicians Certificate (with Distinction)
- LANTRA qualified Professional Tree Inspector
- Arboricultural Association Professional Member
- Consulting Arborist Society (CAS) Member and LANTRA endorsed 'Mortgage (Home Buyer) Tree Reports' Consultant.

2.3 Insurance

Sarah Duckworth t/a Duckworth's Arboriculture is insured with Hiscox Insurance

- Public Liability £10,000,000
- Professional Indemnity £2,000,000

¹ Mattheck and Breloer 1994

2.4 Tree Preservation Orders

I have confirmed on the Wokingham Borough Council online Mapping Portal that the Ash tree subject of this survey is protected as T5 of Tree Preservation Order 672/1994.

The property is not within a Conservation Area.

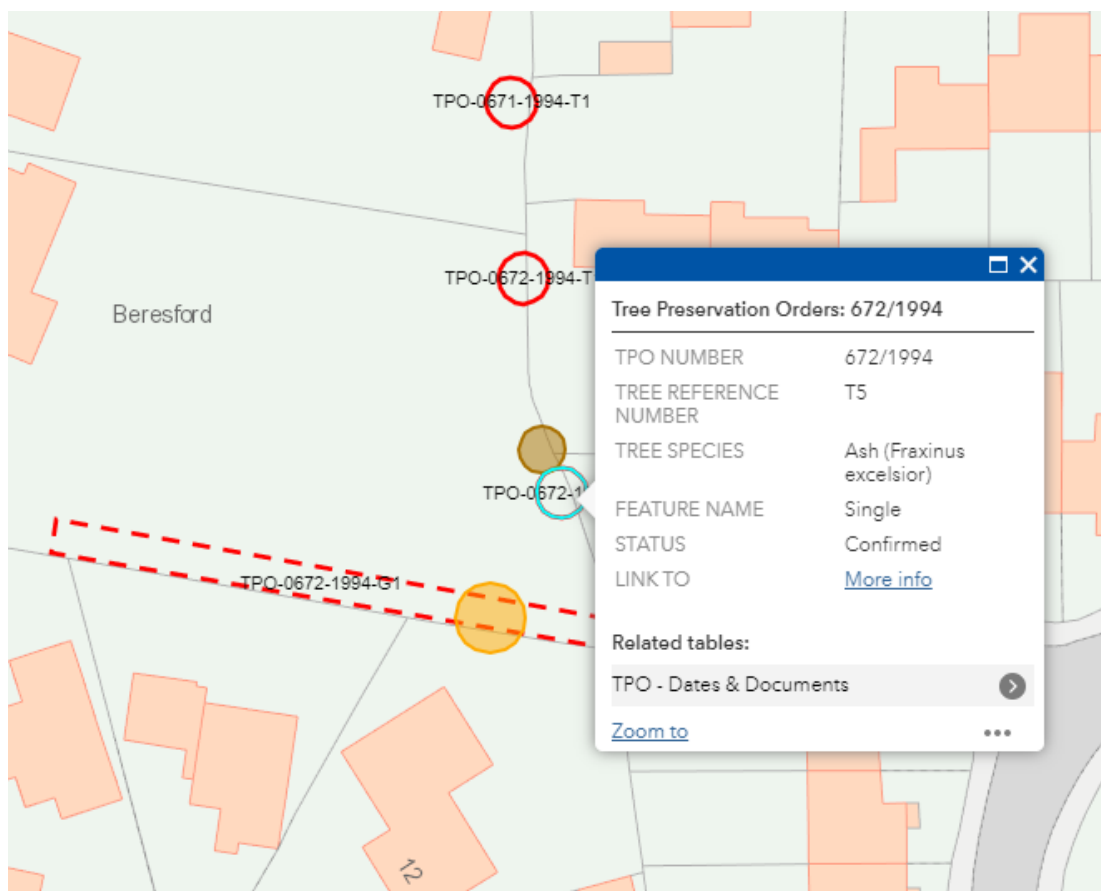


Figure 1 - Extract from the Wokingham Borough Council online TPO Map

2.5 Protected Species

In accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act - 1981, Conservation - Natural Habitats - Regulations 1994 and Countryside Rights of Way Act - 2000, you must consider the timing and type of and tree work operations including hedge pruning to avoid causing disturbance to any nesting or breeding birds or bat roosts that may be present within trees and hedgerows.

It is an offence (subject to exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure, or take, possess, or trade in any wild animal listed, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places.

Non-urgent major tree work involving tree removal or reduction and hedge cutting operations should not be undertaken during the bird nesting or breeding season, which is considered to be from 1 March to 31 July. However, depending on seasonal temperatures, some birds continue breeding into August and September.

All wild birds, their young, their eggs and active nests are protected under law. It is an offence to damage a nest intentionally while it is in use or being built. Tree work where birds are nesting is highly likely to damage nests or cause them to be deserted.

2.6 Inspection information

The weather was dry and overcast. Visibility was considered to be satisfactory. The tree was inspected from ground level only.

The rear garden at 65 Hilmanton is informally maintained in order to benefit local wildlife. There is a good deal of dense undergrowth around the tree and ivy and Russian Vine are growing up the trunk and throughout the canopy.

Vegetation was moved aside where possible to view the base and trunk but [REDACTED] did not want ivy cut or removed as he wishes to retain the vegetation where possible due to the habitat it provides for local wildlife. It must be recognised therefore, that a full visual inspection of the tree has been limited on this occasion by the dense vegetation and also the location of the boundary fence tight up against the tree base.

All defects noted in this report are evident and I consider sufficient to justify the proposed removal of the tree. Other defects may be present and a further assessment should be made at the time of the tree works (subject to the Local Authority's consent) to ensure the tree trunk is safe to retain as a monolith at this time.

2.7 Tree Work Good Practice:

All tree works specified should be undertaken in accordance with BS:3998 2010 'Tree Work Recommendations'.

Chippings arising from the work should not be piled around the bases of trees on or off the site. Wood, brash and any other arisings from the tree work should not be burnt on site.

You are advised to use a properly qualified and experienced company will be employed who carry Public and Products Liability Insurance with a minimum of £2,000,000 cover and the relevant Employers Liability Insurance. A List of approved contractors is available from the Arboricultural Association – www.trees.org.uk.

2.8 Caveats

Trees are dynamic living organisms subject to change, whose health and condition can be subject to significant change influenced by internal and external factors. The assessment, conclusions and recommendations from the report are based on the condition of the tree as assessed at the time of inspection and is valid for 18 months.

A Tree Inspection takes into consideration predictable seasonal variation of weather but cannot predict the response of the trees in the event of unpredictable (extreme) weather conditions. If the condition of the tree evidently changes or the tree is subject to extreme weather conditions before this date; further inspection may be required. No tree is ever absolutely safe due to the unpredictable laws and forces of nature.

For the purposes of this survey all dimensions of tree and its associated parts are measured using a laser measure or clinometer where possible. Where access is restricted measurements have been visually estimated unless otherwise stated. The report is for the sole use of the client and its reproduction or use by anyone else is forbidden unless written consent is given by the author.



DUCKWORTHS
ARBORICULTURE

3. ARBORICULTURAL INSPECTION DATA

Tree Ownership		Site Address						
		65 Hilmanton, Lower Earley, RG6 4HN						
Tree Number		T5	Tree Species	Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)			Age	Mature
Dia @ 1.5m:	790	Height:	17	Canopy spread	N: 2m	E: 6m	S: 7m	W: 6m
Context		SITUATION: Growing on the rear (western) boundary and straddling the boundary fence. To the west there is a line of mature suppressed conifer trees within the garden of adjacent property 'Beresford'. Within the southern corner of the garden there are also a semi-mature Hawthorn and Ash, both around 40 years old, with swept stems and canopies heavily suppressed by adjacent trees but otherwise in good health.						
Target, setting, position in landscape.		The canopy of T5 (Ash) overhangs three adjacent residential gardens and the tree is considered to be growing in a HIGH occupancy area.						
Roots & Surrounding Ground		BASE: Base partially obscured by ivy and boundary fencing. Large tree, previously twin stem with two fairly even sized trunks from ground level up until 2016 when the northern-most trunk failed. Wood from the cleared stump remains on site. The base of the tree was evidently undermined by both a tight fork with area of bark inclusion and a central column of decay (see photo 6). The failure of the second trunk has left a large wound (680 x 1007mm) at the now asymmetrical base of the Ash (photo2). Some new bark growth around wound site but there is a large cavity centrally under tree which can be probed upwards to over 500mm. Audible decay. No fungal fruiting bodies visible. Frass and decay evident.						
Cracking, heave, compaction								
Buttresses								
Decay, ffb, physical damage, structural integrity								
Trunk		STEM: Stem partially obscured by ivy and boundary fence. Wound on south side of trunk at 910mm above ground level (100x400mm) Good ribs of growth around cavity. Organic matter built up in hole. Cavity can be probed downwards at least 400mm (at least as long as the probe – see photo 1) and this cavity is thought to connect up with the cavity previously mentioned on the north side of the base. Audible decay below this wound where accessible and elsewhere around lower trunk.						
Ffb, biotic/abiotic damage, exudates, structural integrity, slenderness								
Main Union		Epicormic growth from around 3m upwards on trunk.						
Ffb, decay, other plants, exudates, structural integrity		CANOPY: Branch forks obscured by ivy and climbing plants. Foliage dense and even. The tree has a history of branch failure with some tear out wounds visible around 30-40mm diameter which is a cause of concern for neighbours. Dense climbing plants throughout canopy.						
Primary Ascending Stems		Long, over-extended (etiolated) branch on southwest wide of the canopy extends well beyond that of the natural boundary shape and is supported within the branches of the adjacent trees within the neighbouring property. Branch union obscured.						
Biotic/abiotic factors, deadwood, structural integrity								
Main Branches		DISCUSSION: The visual inspection of T5 (Ash) was limited by the dense vegetation growth around and in the tree. [REDACTED] likes the tree and the habitat it provides for wildlife in his garden. However, the recent failure of a second stem and the evident, advanced basal decay means that the structural stability of the tree is permanently undermined. The decay is expected progress within the tree's base over time further weakening the tree.						
Biotic/abiotic factors, deadwood, structural integrity								
Twigs and Leaves		Given the significance of the defects noted, I do not consider it viable to retain the tree with a lesser reduction of the tree's canopy. The tree is currently supported by the etiolated lateral branch which extends into the canopies of neighbouring trees and by the weight of the Russian Vine on the south side of the canopy. The removal or reduction of these features is likely to increase the risk of stem failure.						
Biotic/abiotic factors.		I am therefore recommending that the tree be removed as it is a potentially hazardous tree in a high occupancy area. [REDACTED] would like to retain the tree in some form for the benefit of local wildlife, my recommendation is that the tree be felled to a 6-8m monolith and maintained for habitat value.						
		Following this work, the extent of decay within the tree's trunk should continue to be monitored to ensure the stability of the trunk as part of the ongoing garden maintenance for the property.						
Work Required		T5 Ash - Reduce to approximately 6-8m monolith and retain for habitat value.				Priority	3 Months	
		Retain younger Ash in southwest corner of property to replace the tree under the TPO.				Re-ins	36 months	
						Date	9 th June 2020	

4. GALLERY



Photo 1 – Cavity on south side with metal probe.



Photo 2 – Basal wound and cavity.



Photo 3 – Base of tree growing adjacent to boundary



Photo 4 – Tree canopy and vine.



Photo 5 – Line showing route of over-extended branch on southwest side of canopy, growing beyond natural canopy extents and resting in neighbouring trees. This branch is expected to be proving some support to tree stability making a light or partial reduction of the tree's canopy unviable.



Photo 6 – Cross section of wood from fallen trunk. Note asymmetrical base and central column of decay.