



MARK WELBY
CONSULTING ARBORISTS

Tree Condition Assessment

Oakingham Place,
54-58 Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1EH

Reference: MW.2501.ORR.TCA
Client: Parish Arboriculture Ltd
Date: 8 January 2025



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1. Instructions and Terms of Reference

- 1.1. In January 2025, I was instructed by Parish Arboriculture to undertake a tree condition assessment of 3No. mature trees at Oakingham Place, 54-58 Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1EH, to ensure the risk from trees is as low as reasonably practicable and also to make management recommendations if appropriate. All other trees are newly planted and excluded from this assessment.
- 1.2. A ground-based assessment of the trees was undertaken to enable my client to fulfil their duty of care as defined by criminal¹ and civil law².
- 1.3. The National Tree Safety Group 2024 publication Common Sense Risk Management of Trees provides guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for owners, managers and advisers. A summary of the guidance can be found at ntsgroup.org.uk³.
- 1.4. The trees were assessed to discern their overall condition and to identify any unacceptable risk they may pose to persons and property.
- 1.5. In line with ARLAP principles (see section 2), where the level of risk is deemed unacceptable, remedial works are prescribed to reduce the risk to acceptable levels. Additionally, general management advice has been provided as and when appropriate.
- 1.6. The survey methodology is outlined in Section 3 of this document.
- 1.7. In addition to the relevant and appropriate formal qualifications, professional memberships and associated CPD, I am a LANTRA Professional Tree Inspector and authorised user of the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Assessment & Management system.
- 1.8. Any questions relating to the content of this report should be directed, in the first instance, to mark@mwelby.com or 01730 239492, quoting the site address and report reference number.

Statutory Protection

- 1.9. According to Wokingham Borough Council's online service⁴, there is a historic tree preservation order covering trees on the site, pre-development. The TPO reference is TPO-1116-2006.
- 1.10. However, the only relevant tree remaining from this TPO is TPO T5 (my tree #01). All other TPO trees within the site (TPO Nos. T1-T4 have been removed).
- 1.11. Whilst the TPO document states this tree is in the rear of No.52 and thus not within the site, it is highly probable that the tree has been mistakenly located or the boundary has been slightly

¹ Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

² Occupiers' Liability Acts of 1957 & 1984

³ <https://ntsgroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NTSG-summary.pdf>

⁴ <http://mydistrict.chichester.gov.uk/mycdc.aspx>

adjusted during development. Therefore, I conclude that my tree #01 is TPO T5 and thus, protected.

1.12. Please see Figs 1-3 for TPO details.

1.13. Therefore, an application must be made, and consent received from the council, prior to any work being carried out. There are exemptions to this that can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#limitations>

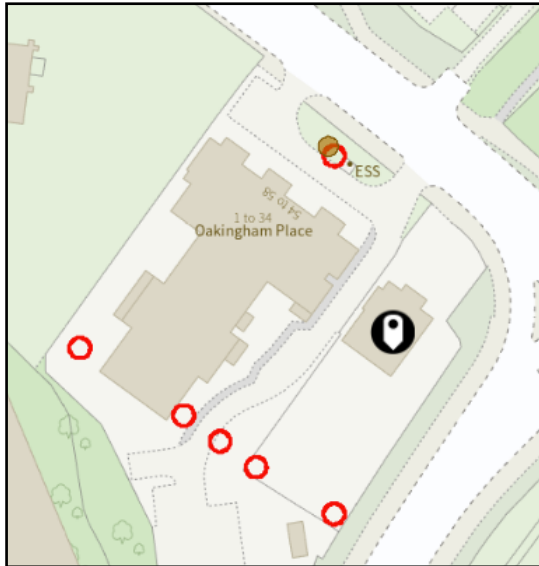


Fig 1: Extract from WBC online TPO map

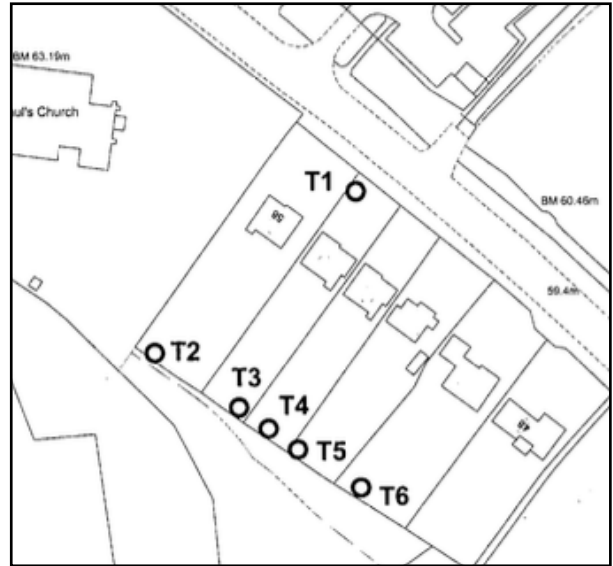


Fig 2: Extract from WBC TPO-1116-2006

<u>No. on Map</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Situation</u>
T1	Douglas Fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	On land to the front of 56 Reading Road
T2	Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	On land to the rear of 58 Reading Road
T3	Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	On land to the rear of 56 Reading Road
T4	Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	On land to the rear of 54 Reading Road
T5	Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	On land to the rear of 52 Reading Road
T6	Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)	On land to the rear of 50 Reading Road
Grid Ref : SU 806 689		

Fig 3: Schedule extract from WBC TPO-1116-2006

1.14. Any works shown in red on the appended schedule will require consent.

2. Tree Owner Responsibilities

2.1. We have a duty of care to manage the risk from our trees. That duty requires that we should be reasonable, proportionate, and reasonably practicable when managing this risk. What this means is that there is a balance we need to strike between the many benefits trees provide, the risk from them, and the cost of managing the risk. By taking a balanced approach, we don't waste resources by reducing risk (and losing the benefits) where risk is already acceptable.

- 2.2. The Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) is an internationally recognised approach to making risk management decisions where risks are imposed and have benefits. ToR identifies Broadly Acceptable and Unacceptable levels of risk. Between these two risks is a region where the risk is Tolerable if it's 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable' (ALARP).
- 2.3. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that at the core of ALARP "is the concept of "reasonably practicable"; this involves weighing a risk against the trouble, time and money needed to control it".
- 2.4. Public safety is not the only concern when deciding how to manage trees. Other broader concerns, such as ecological, landscape and aesthetic values, must also be taken into account.
- 2.5. This tree assessment has been carried out using ALARP principles and applying them to tree management. Risk reduction work will be given priority when risk is highest, and where it's most cost-effective. As the overall risk from tree failure is extremely low, carrying out a formal assessment of every tree, every year or every other year isn't always reasonable, proportionate, or reasonably practicable.

3. Methodology

- 3.1. A *Detailed*⁵ inspection was carried out for all the recorded trees.
- 3.2. The assessment was carried out from ground which is easily accessible. Climbers, undergrowth, and basal growth were not removed, and hedgerows were not cut to get a closer look unless there were obvious 'triggers' (such as ivy removal on large old trees next to a highway) to justify the costs of this work, in which case it will be specified in the work schedule.
- 3.3. The Visual Tree Assessment (VTA)⁶ process is used, along with current best tree assessment practice. VTA has been the conventional method of assessment used in surveying and inspecting trees for many years. This term describes a general approach to tree surveying using visual observation and recording, combined with experience and knowledge of tree biology and structure, to draw conclusions about tree condition. The VTA system is a systematic approach that guides the assessor through a process from initial biological and mechanical observations through to diagnosis, using knowledge of failure criteria.
- 3.4. No tissue samples were taken, nor were any internal investigations undertaken (unless noted).
- 3.5. If I believe any risk reduction work is necessary, it is specified. It is also decided whether the tree remains part of the standard formal assessment cycle or is monitored and assessed more frequently.

⁵ <https://ntsgroup.org.uk/>

⁶ Mattheck & Breloer 1994

4. Limitations

- 4.1. It is recommended that the status of the trees is checked before any work is undertaken.
- 4.2. In the UK, a felling licence is required under the Forestry Act (1967) for any tree removals, although some exemptions do apply.
- 4.3. Where measurements have been included in the schedule, they are estimated and thus for notional reference only.
- 4.4. Where necessary, binoculars have been used. No climbing inspections have been carried out. No analysis of soil samples was undertaken, and the condition of root systems was only investigated by way of a surface visual inspection, light excavation around the buttress (if expedient) and assessment of the tree(s) overall vitality.
- 4.5. This record reflects the condition of the trees at the time of the assessment only. Trees are dynamic structures that vary in condition with time and they can be impacted by environmental conditions such as extreme weather events.

5. Observations and Recommendations

- 5.1. The Tree Schedule is appended and includes individual observations and recommendations for tree work.
- 5.2. A reassessment is recommended for 2.5 years.
- 5.3. A broad priority is assigned to any work prescribed.
 - 1. **Urgent**- Work should be carried out immediately to avoid likely harm or damage
 - 2. **High**- These trees present features that indicate the risk of harm or damage occurring is unacceptable. Recommended for completion within 3 months.
 - 3. **Medium**- These trees may present a risk that is not tolerable or have been prescribed work under good management. Recommended for completion within 12 months.
 - 4. **Low**- This work will have been prescribed as good management and has no timescale.
- 5.4. Please note that disturbing a nesting bird or roosting/breeding bat is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended). The nesting season runs from approximately March to August, but it is always best to check the trees before working. If in any doubt, please seek specialist advice.

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Appendix





i. Tree Assessment Schedule



Tree Assessment Schedule

Client: Parish Arboriculture Ltd
 Ref/Site: Oakingham Place, 54-58 Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1EH
 Date: 2025.01.08
 Surveyor: Mark Welby DipArb(RFS), TechCert(ArborA), FARborA, RCarborA



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TPO / Conservation area trees work is **red**: consent required

Priority: **Urgent**- Immediate; **High**- within 3 months; **Medium**- within 12 months; **Low**- No timescale/good practice/management advice

*NOTE: Remove poorly attached deadwood: deadwood is a valuable habitat that can persist on some species for decades, and must be retained if possible. Where included, this specification requires the arborist's judgment and applies to all deadwood over 25mm diameter.

This report refers to the condition of the tree(s) and property on the day of the survey. The trees were assessed from ground level only. The assessment of tree health/condition is based on a standard industry-accepted method of Visual Tree Assessment (VTA). No invasive or destructive tests were undertaken and no soil or root samples were analysed off-site. Trees are dynamic organisms and their condition can change rapidly due to circumstances such as (but not limited to) storms and other extreme weather such as drought, accidents/vandalism, pests and diseases and nearby building & maintenance works. It is recommended that any significant trees are inspected professionally on a regular basis and, where safety issues have been raised, annual inspections are typically recommended. I cannot be held liable for any tree or branch failures arising from changed circumstances.

Ref	Species	Stem Diameter (est cm)	Height (est m)	Survey Notes	Recommendations*	Reassess	Priority
01	Pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	90	16	Mature specimen. Notably asymmetric and weighted over adjacent garden. Parking area within 10 m of tree. Branches over site have been cut back. Ivy dominant on stem. Significant stem decay which progresses from the stem base up the main stem for at least 7 m. Decay is to the side of prevailing winds and tree is highly likely to fail and thus presents an unacceptable risk. Note: tree cited as being in 'advanced stages of decline' in the Impact Assessment by Keen Consultants submitted with the planning application to develop the site. The document reference is 1291-KC-XX-YTREE-TreeSurvey-and-ImpactAssessment-Rev0, dated 2020.	Remove tree. Retain lower stem for habitat if desired		High
02	Cherry plum 'Pissardii' (<i>Prunus cerasifera</i> 'Pissardi')	30	6	Decade and hollow stem. Within falling distance of highway.	Remove tree		High
03	Common holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>)	30	6	Slightly asymmetric. Ivy on stem. No obvious risk features or defects	Sever ivy at base	2.5 years	Medium



ii. Tree Location Plan

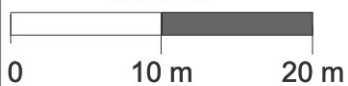




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iii. Photographs





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