



Holt Arboriculture

TREE CONSULTANCY

TREE CONDITION ASSESSMENT REPORT

30 Henley Wood Rd
Earley
Reading
RG6 7EE



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1 Introduction

1.1 Brief and Context

- 1.1.1 Alex Needs (the author) is a Chartered Arboriculturist (www.icf.org.uk) and Registered Consultant with the Arboricultural Association (www.trees.org.uk). He holds the Cardiff University Bond Solon Civil and Criminal Expert Witness Certificates and is an Accredited Mediator. He has a degree in Linguistics and holds both the Technician's Certificate in Arboriculture and the Royal Forestry Society Certificate in Arboriculture. He is trained to the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection standard. He has worked in arboriculture for over 20 years and since 2007 has been employed in principal arboricultural roles in both public and private sectors.
- 1.1.2 Holt Arboriculture Limited was instructed to assess the condition of two ash trees and make recommendations on future management.
- 1.1.3 The trees are shown in photos 1 to 8 at Appendix B.

1.2 Report Purpose

- 1.2.1 This tree risk management report confirms that the subject tree was visually checked to provide management recommendations.

This report includes:

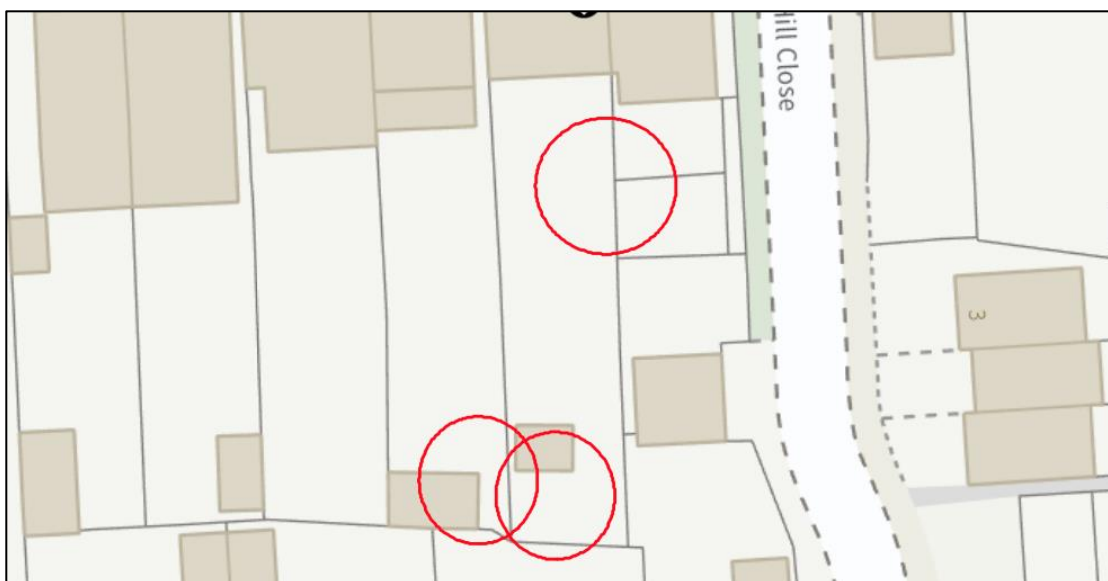
- Observations of the tree,
 - management recommendations,
 - tree location plan,
 - tree photography,
 - Appendices listing both report and tree assessment limitations.
- 1.2.2 This report informs the duty holder (the person or entity responsible for tree safety) of our advice on work recommendations, and guide the contractor in carrying out the works agreed for implementation by the duty holder. It is purposely brief to focus on identification and implementation, and does not include detailed background explanations. However, it is based on a detailed review of the current guidance and technical publications informing modern tree risk management.
- 1.2.3 Implementing the described intervention works within the timescales specified in this report will be important to demonstrate that reasonable and proportionate proactive measures have been taken to manage obvious significant risks of harm from tree failures.

1.3 Survey Method

- 1.3.1 I assessed the trees using the industry recognised Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) methodology. VTA is a non-invasive method used to evaluate the health and structural integrity of individual trees. By examining the roots, trunk, branches, crown, buds, and leaves, VTA provides insights into the overall tree health and vitality. This included looking at the trunk and crown from a distance for any obvious signs of poor health and structural weakness. Where access allowed, I also looked at the base of the trunk for obvious signs of structural defects and/or instability. I used a small torch to look inside cracks, crevices, and cavities. I scanned the upper crown with binoculars to assist in the identification of potential hazards. I probed and tapped the trunk from ground level to establish if there were any obscured features that were relevant to the assessment. This check did not extend to probing beyond what I could reach from ground level.
- 1.3.2 Intervention work is specified based on a checking frequency of about five years, and an assessment of the following failure factors: tree health, structural defects, history of failure, predisposition of the species to failure, recent changes or disturbance, prevailing ground conditions affecting stability, and exposure to weather.
- 1.3.3 All observations were of a preliminary nature and did not involve any climbing or detailed investigation beyond what was visible from accessible points at ground level. Where there was restricted access to the base of a tree, its attributes were assessed from the nearest point of access. All dimensions were estimated unless otherwise indicated.

1.4 Statutory tree protection

- 1.4.1 I have reviewed the available information on the Wokingham Borough Council website and note that both trees are protected by TPO ref. TPO-1614-2017. Any works will require application to, and permission from the Council.



Extract taken from Woking Borough Council website on 19/05/2025

2 Observations, discussion, and recommendations

No.	Species	Height	Diameter at 1.5m approx	Spread (m)	Age class
T1	Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)	18m	60cm	N 8, E 8, S 2, W 5	Mature
Observations					
		<u>Rooting area:</u> No access to the land to the south, however within the garden of 30 Henley Wood Drive, and the adjacent property there were several garden buildings within the rooting area of the tree. No evidence of recent root plate movement. <u>Lower trunk:</u> Extensive decay evident on the southern side of the basal and lower trunk. Cavity within base approx. 200mm deep. Longitudinal scar from 2-5m on northern side with a partially occluded branch stub scar at top. <u>Trunk and scaffold branches:</u> Lean to northeast. Partially obscured by foliage. Observable areas did not reveal any cavities, large broken limbs, or large diameter deadwood within the crown. Branch architecture is typical of the species. <u>Outer branches & buds/foliage:</u> Asymmetrical crown weighted to north. Reasonable foliar cover and extension growth, with no discernible impact from Chalara Ash Dieback disease (<i>Hymenoscyphus fraxineus</i>). No significant areas of dieback or deadwood, beyond what is typical of the species.			
Discussion					
		The tree has a significant structural issue at the base and lower trunk. Whilst access was limited, I was able to lean over with a probe and find that there was a cavity at the base and other higher areas of active decay to a height of approximately 1.5m. It is likely that the decay has spread both upwards into the trunk and downwards into the roots. It is also likely that the column of decay will coalesce with the earlier damage on the north aspect. I do not consider that crown reduction is a suitable method of mitigating against the hazard due to the extent of the dysfunctional wood, and the location of the tree growing over well used residential gardens.			
Recommendations					
		Fell tree and replace.		Priority	Resurvey
		Suggested replacement species: - Field maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) native - Silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) native - Whitebeam (<i>Sorbus aria</i>) native - Bird cherry (<i>Prunus padus</i>) native - Sweetgum (<i>Liquidambar styracifua</i>) non-native - Indian bean tree (<i>Catalpa bignoniodes</i>) non-native		3 months	N/A

Tree Condition Assessment Report

No.	Species	Height	Diameter at 1.5m approx	Spread (m)	Age class
T2	Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)	18m	50cm	N 2, E 5, S 6, W 5	Mature
Observations					
		<u>Rooting area:</u> No access to the land to the south, however within the garden of 30 Henley Wood Drive, and the adjacent property there were several garden buildings within the rooting area of the tree. No evidence of recent root plate movement. <u>Lower trunk:</u> No indication of decay or cavities. Ivy obscured full view. The observable lower trunk was free from any significant defect and there was no exudation. I tapped the lower trunk to a height of approximately 2.5m with a nylon mallet and found no audible degradation in the internal wood, loose bark, or cavities. <u>Trunk and scaffold branches:</u> Partially obscured by foliage. Observable areas did not reveal any cavities, large broken limbs, or large diameter deadwood within the crown. Branch architecture is typical of the species. <u>Outer branches & buds/foliage:</u> Asymmetrical crown weighted to south. Reasonable foliar cover and extension growth, less dense than T1 with some areas of minor dieback possibly indicating early stages of Chalara Ash Dieback disease.			
Discussion					
		Whilst this tree has no discernible issues, it shares the space with T1 and has adapted its crown so that it is predominantly growing to the north. The removal of T1 will pose significant issue to T2, due to the sudden exposure to winds. To accommodate this, the tree would require a significant reduction in height and spread, which I do not consider is a practical solution given the extremely high likelihood that the tree will succumb to Chalara Ash Dieback in the next few years. Ultimately this would be an expensive and damaging crown reduction which will result in a smaller, less healthy tree with a limited lifespan. In my opinion a better option would be to take the opportunity to remove T2 and replace at the same time as the removal of T1.			
Recommendations					
		Fell tree and replace.		Priority	Resurvey
		Suggested replacement species: - Field maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) native - Silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) native - Whitebeam (<i>Sorbus aria</i>) native - Bird cherry (<i>Prunus padus</i>) - Sweetgum (<i>Liquidambar styracifua</i>) non-native - Indian bean tree (<i>Catalpa bignoniodes</i>)		3 months	N/A

Appendix A - Tree Locations



Appendix B - Photography

Photo 1: Showing T1 and T2 within a local setting.



Photo 2: Showing base of T1 and T2



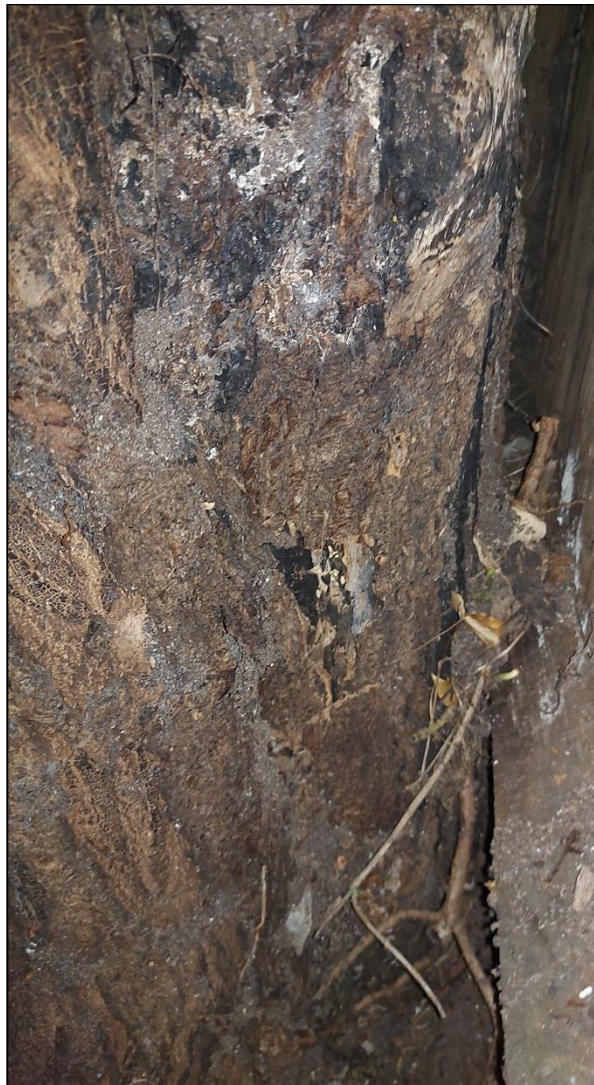
Photos 3 & 4: Decayed areas in lower trunk of T1.



Photos 5 & 6: Decayed areas in lower trunk of T1.



Photos 7 & 8: Decayed areas in lower trunk of T1.



Appendix C - Report Limitations

1. The report and accompanying documentation are time limited, and, where considering reasonably foreseeable risks, this is a period not exceeding 12 months.
2. **Statutory protection:** Our visual check and assessment of the trees is for the purposes of risk management and has taken no account of any statutory protection such as Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Area, and Forestry Act, controls that may exist. These are matters that the duty holder must check before any works are undertaken and take due account of when implementing any recommendations. It would be normal for a contractor undertaking works to deal with these issues as a matter of course during the organisation of work programmes. Management recommendations need to be considered in the light of relevant constraints:
 - The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and
 - Where a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) applies to trees on the site, consent will be required from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for any proposed work to the trees, except where urgent safety works are required to address an immediate risk of serious harm. This process can take up to eight weeks.
 - Where the site is within a Conservation Area (CA), notice will need to be given to the LPA of any proposed work to the trees, except where urgent safety works are required to address an immediate risk of serious harm. The LPA will have six weeks to respond to the notice, after which, if no response is received, the works for which notice has been given can be carried out.
 - The Forestry Act 1967 states that where live trees are to be felled, a felling licence may be required from the Forestry Commission. This is subject to a number of exemptions and only applies where the quantity of timber in the trees that are to be felled, is equal to or exceeds 5 cubic metres.
3. **Ecology:** I advise that trees can be valuable ecological habitat, but I have no specialist expertise in this discipline and this report does not consider that aspect. Some of the trees identified for intervention works may be habitat protected.
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, requires that consideration must be given to the timing and type of tree work operations to avoid causing disturbance to any nesting or breeding birds or bat roosts.
4. **Checking frequency:** Our survey of the trees for the purposes of assessing their condition and work requirements is made on the basis that they will be re-surveyed within about 2-5 years (plus or minus six months) of the date of the last inspection, depending on location. The UK Health & Safety Executive advises that a system should be in place to: *“enable people to report damage to trees, such as vehicle collisions, and to trigger checks following potentially damaging activities such as work by the utilities in the vicinity of trees or severe gales.”* In practice, this means that consideration must be given to identifying and addressing tree hazards arising from storms and activities that could adversely affect tree stability, but the detail will vary with according to each situation and is a decision for the duty holder.

Appendix D - Tree Condition Survey Limitations

1. This is a preliminary assessment from ground level, and observations have been made from visual inspection of external features. Where appropriate, binoculars, trowel, mallet and fine manual metal probe have been used to aid the assessment. No invasive decay detection devices have been used in assessing trunk condition. No tree or soil samples have been taken.
2. Unless otherwise stated, measurements are approximate and recorded in metres (height and crown spread) and centimetres (stem diameter at 1.5m). Distances from the tree refer to the approximate distance from the edge of the base of the main trunk as assessed on site. Compass orientation, proportions and assessments of age are estimates.
3. The conclusions relate to conditions at the time of assessment. Tree growth is continual, and the effects of any debilitating factors may be progressive. Due to these factors, further periodic tree assessments may be necessary as appropriate.
4. The recommended tree works are not intended to address the potential failure of a tree or parts of a tree during extreme weather events that are capable of causing the structural failure of trees or parts of trees that are not faulted.
5. Following an extreme weather event, the report and accompanying documentation will no longer be valid unless confirmed and updated by a reassessment of the trees on the site.
6. The tree inspection is limited to the season in which the inspection takes place. When in the dormant period and trees are not in leaf, no assessment of foliar condition is possible for deciduous trees; however, twig, bud character and general crown condition are taken into consideration.
7. Fungal fruiting bodies that may indicate wood decay processes are not necessarily present at the time of the survey due to seasonal or other factors. Observations and comments regarding wood decay fungi may be accordingly restricted.
8. Where parts of the tree are obscured, for instance by ivy or debris, it is possible that structural faults may not have been observed by the surveyor. In these cases, where appropriate, works may be recommended to remove the obstruction prior to a subsequent inspection.
9. No account has been taken of the effects of leaves, fruit, exudation or insect activity associated with trees that may affect people or property, nor of toxicity or allergic properties, nor of root or other tree-related nuisance.
10. No documented information has been provided regarding the history of root disturbance or severance or changes in local ground conditions (soil levels, drainage patterns etc.) or the location of underground services.
11. This assessment does not relate to risks associated with subsidence, heave or other forms of disturbance associated with tree root growth or removal.