



DUCKWORTHS
ARBORICULTURE LTD.

ARBORICULTURAL REPORT

TREE CONDITION SURVEY

ST JAMES CHURCH
SOUTHLAKE
WOODLEY
BERKSHIRE
RG5 3LH

CLIENT: ALISON MULLENS

DECEMBER 2024

Ref: 06576 / 2024

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CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION4
 - 1.1 Instruction.....4
 - 1.2 Inspection information4
 - 1.3 Access.....4
 - 1.4 Qualifications.....4
 - 1.5 Insurance.....4
- 2 STATUTORY TREE PROTECTION5
- 3 GENERAL GUIDANCE.....6
 - 3.1 Protected Species6
 - 3.2 Management of Deadwood6
 - 3.3 Tree Work Good Practice.....7
- 4 SCOPE & LIMITATIONS.....8
 - 4.1 Scope8
 - 4.2 Caveats.....9
- 5 TREE SURVEY DATA10
- 6 TREE WORKS IN PRIORITY ORDER.....14
- 7 SITE PLAN.....15

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction

This Arboricultural Report has been commissioned by Allison Mullens, Church Warden on behalf of St James Church.

I have been asked to carry out a health and safety assessment of trees within the grounds of St James Church, Southlake, Woodley, RG5 3LH.

The report is to specify any necessary remedial tree works to address identified hazards from the trees whilst acknowledging and respecting their significance to amenity and ecology of the local area.

1.2 Inspection information

The trees were inspected on Thursday 28th November 2024 by Sarah Duckworth, Arboricultural Consultant.

On the day of the survey the weather was bright and sunny. Visibility was satisfactory.

Trees were inspected from ground level only. Non-invasive inspection equipment (mallet and metal probe) were used to assess the structural integrity at the base and trunk of individual trees where the visual inspection identified the need.

1.3 Access

The trees are growing on open space within a residential area, adjacent to the public highway and / or public footpaths. There is unrestricted public access throughout the year and in all weathers. Trees are therefore growing in areas considered to be growing in a high occupancy area.

1.4 Qualifications

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
- QTRA & VALID Licensed User

1.5 Insurance

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

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

2 STATUTORY TREE PROTECTION

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

I have confirmed on the Wokingham Borough Council website that at the time of this report, trees within the survey area are protected by Woodland Tree Preservation Order ref TPO-0003-1951.

No works should be undertaken to any trees on site without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority – Wokingham Borough Council.

CONSERVATION AREAS

St James Church is not within a Conservation Area.

FELLING LICENCES

Outside of domestic gardens, you must first apply to the Forestry Commission for a felling licence if you want to cut down trees containing more than five cubic metres of wood in any calendar quarter. However, there are exceptions to this rule. For example, you do not need a licence to fell trees in enclosed gardens or removing dead or dangerous trees.

The Forestry Commission usually requires felled trees to be restocked and does not normally grant licences to clear woodland permanently or to change woodland to agricultural use.

3 GENERAL GUIDANCE

3.1 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 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 and hedge cutting is highly likely to damage nests or cause them to be deserted.

3.2 Management of Deadwood

Dead and decaying trees are vital components of a properly functioning wooded ecosystem and play a key role in sustaining biodiversity and soil fertility. A balanced and healthy tree ecosystem features deadwood in various locations both on the ground and in the canopy. It is therefore undesirable to remove all areas of dead or decaying wood from the tree groups as this would harm the natural ecosystem. Standing deadwood, dead branches and other defects with ecological value have been retained where it is considered reasonable and safe to do so.

Where trees are removed, it will benefit the local ecology to leave a high stump (ideally 2-3m) as a standing monolith where it is safe a reasonable to do so, A percentage of the wood, (particularly wood that is already decayed) should be stacked and left on site for habitat value where possible (taking care not to restrict access for future surveys).

3.3 Tree Work Good Practice

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

In order to limit the harm to trees caused by the pruning operations, pruning work on live trees (aside from trees to be felled) should be undertaken in the summer months (July and August) avoiding periods of drought. No tree pruning work is advisable during the period immediately before or after leaf break (February to June) when the trees' energy reserves are most depleted.

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 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.

4 SCOPE & LIMITATIONS

4.1 Scope

All Trees have been looked at in detail using the 'Diagnosis of Ill Health in trees' and Inspecting Trees for Signs of Decay' methodologies described by R.G. Strouts and T.G. Winter¹.

My visual assessment is a non-invasive method of examining the health and structural condition of an individual tree. Non-invasive inspection equipment (plastic-headed mallet and metal probe) were used to make an assessment of the structural integrity at the base and trunk of each tree where the visual inspection identified the need. The lower stems of trees were tapped with a plastic-headed mallet to check for indications of internal decay. The differing sound intonation can often reveal some types of decay or hollow trunks. Any cavities in the base of the stem were probed with a steel rod to record depth and condition of residual wood.

The report is to identify visible defects trees and to specify any necessary remedial tree works which may be required to address identified hazards from the trees whilst acknowledging and respecting their local significance to the amenity of the residential development biodiversity of the wider landscape. Specifications for works are based on an assumed reinspection within two years.

This report is not a structural report, and it does not consider the structural integrity of the property and its use as such is invalid.

The report refers to the condition of tree(s) and an assessment of the site on the days the evaluation was undertaken. The trees were assessed from ground level only and were not climbed.

It was beyond the scope of this survey to sever and remove ivy or clear dense vegetation. Reasonable effort was made to access the base of each tree, however in some areas, dense vegetation and ivy prevented a full visual inspection of some trees - tree canopies and physiological health were still appraised.

The extent of the survey was limited to a survey of trees in the grounds of St James Church as requested by the client. Neighbouring properties were not entered or included in the survey.

It is the client's responsibility to ensure that this report covers all areas under the brief of the tree inspection and refer any concerns regarding this matter back to the Arboricultural Consultant.

¹ R.G Strouts & T.G. Winter, 'Diagnosis of Ill Health in Trees' Published for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, under license from the Controller of her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright 1994.

4.2 Caveats

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.

This report is a baseline survey and reflects the condition of the trees on the day of the survey. The report is valid for normal weather conditions only.

The survey looks for defects which may make the failure of all or part of the tree foreseeable. The report then makes recommendations for remedial works which would reduce the probability of failure where the hazard presented poses an unacceptable risk to persons or property. Healthy trees or parts of healthy trees may fail in normal weather situations, although the risk increases with storm conditions and, as the consequences of such weather events are unforeseeable, Sarah Duckworth (trading as Duckworths Arboriculture Limited) cannot be held liable for any such failures.

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 trees and surrounding ground conditions at the time of my visit. If the condition of the trees evidently changes or where tree(s) are subject to development or ground works within their rooting areas or extreme weather conditions, further inspection may be required.

This report is valid for two years from the survey date. A follow-on inspection of trees is due before 28th November 2026.

Trees can never be guaranteed 100% safe. Regular inspections by competent and / or suitably qualified arboriculturists will help identify potential problems before they become acute.

5 TREE SURVEY DATA

Ref:	Species	Measurements	Survey Notes	Condition	Recommendations	Photo
T001	Flowering cherry (Prunus Serrulata)	Height (m): 2 Crown Radius (m): 1N, 1E, 0.5S, 1.5W DBH (cm): 3 Life Stage: Young Life Exp.: 20+ Years	Small commemorative tree planted in 2019. Reasonable bud density and form.	Fair	No works identified.	
T002	Common beech (Fagus sylvatica)	Height (m): 16 Crown Radius (m): 5.5N, 6.5E, 7.5S, 7W DBH (cm): 70 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Base clear, bark intact. No fungal fruiting bodies evident. Single stem swept slightly south. No visible defects on base and trunk. Small wound on underside of first lateral branch on south side of canopy 5m above ground level. Good wound wood formation. Nest box strapped to trunk at 4.5m. straps are adjusted annually to avoid restricting trunk. Upper canopy resumes vertical growth. Foliage autumnal. Dense, good vitality. Low crown to 1.5m above ground level.	Good	Crown lift to 3m above ground level. Timescale: Optional	
T003	Lime (Tilia sp.)	Height (m): 11 Crown Radius (m): 4N, 5.5E, 5S, 4.5W DBH (cm): 37 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Uneven buttress root formation. Base partially obscured by dense epicormic growth. Where accessible bark intact. No fungal fruiting bodies evident. Included bark in branch forks from 2m and into higher canopy. Young tree so weaker forks are not a concern at this time. Broad canopy. Buds dense. Good vitality. Low crown to 1.2m above ground level.	Good	Remove epicormic growth. Cut back elongated branch overhanging footpath by 1.6m back to previous reduction point. Reduce lateral branches to create 0.5m canopy clearance to streetlight & lamp column. Crown lift around canopy to 2.5m reducing secondary and tertiary branch tips only. Timescale: 28-May-2025 (6 Months)	

Ref:	Species	Measurements	Survey Notes	Condition	Recommendations	Photo
T004	Horse chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum)	Height (m): 11 Crown Radius (m): 4N, 5E, 4S, 5W DBH (cm): 45 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Base clear, bark intact. No fungal fruiting bodies evident. No defects at base or lower trunk. Broad crown. Small to medium dead branches in lower central crown. 2m canopy clearance above ground level. Buds dense, good vitality.	Good	Remove deadwood. Timescale: 28-Nov-2025 (1 Year)	
T005	Horse chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum)	Height (m): 14 Crown Radius (m): 5N, 5E, 4.5S, 6.5W DBH (cm): 44 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Girdling root around West side of Lost trunk. Bark intact. No fungal fruiting bodies evident. Broad crown. Wound on slender branch in east side of crown caused by secondary branch breakage. Large lateral branch on West side over footpath and assuming apical dominance. 2m canopy clearance above ground level. Small to medium dead branches in lower central crown. Buds dense, good vitality.	Good	Reduce tips of large lateral branch on West side of crown by up to 3m in length and 1-2m of side shoots to check apical dominance in relation to main canopy. Remove deadwood and declining branch stubs in lower canopy. Crown lift secondary and tertiary branches to 3m over footpath only. Timescale: 28-Nov-2025 (1 Year)	
T006	Pedunculate oak (Quercus robur)	Height (m): 17 Crown Radius (m): 7N, 7E, 8.5S, 8W DBH (cm): 71 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Base clear, bark intact. No fungal fruiting bodies evident. No visible defects on base and trunk. Nest box strapped to trunk at 4m. Straps are adjusted annually to avoid restricting trunk. Foliage autumnal. Buds dense, good vitality. Canopy mostly over 2.5m. dead branch stubs throughout crown.	Good	Crown lift cutting a small number of low branch tips to 3m above ground level. Remove deadwood. Timescale: 28-May-2025 (6 Months)	

Ref:	Species	Measurements	Survey Notes	Condition	Recommendations	Photo
T007	Horse chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum)	Height (m): 14 Crown Radius (m): 6N, 6.5E, 7S, 4.5W DBH (cm): 62 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Wall 3m from base on North side and 4.7m on east side. Base clear, bark intact. Small girdling root on east side. Helical growth on trunk. Rapid growth bark cracks on trunk and branches. Large lateral limb on southeast side. Broad crown, slight asymmetry due to proximity of T006. Twin stem from 4m. Union satisfactory. Broad crown. Bud density and vitality good.	Good	Crown lift to create 2.5-3m canopy clearance above ground level. Timescale: 28-Nov-2025 (1 Year)	
T008	Crack willow (Salix fragilis)	Height (m): 16.5 Crown Radius (m): 10N, 8E, 8S, 5.5W DBH (cm): 66 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 20+ Years	Base clear, bark intact. Hammer test inconclusive due to thick corky bark. Large pruning cut on east side of trunk. Three way stem fork at 2m. Canopy formed of 5 principal branches topped around 8m. Dense regrowth up to 100mm diameter. Some shoots dead. Pollarded form increases risk of major branch breakage. Branch tips touching streetlight.	Poor	Re-pollard to 1m beyond previous reduction points leaving 1m stumps to reduce size of cuts and spread of decay. Timescale: 28-May-2025 (6 Months)	
T009	Cotoneaster (Cotoneaster sp.)	Height (m): 5 Crown Radius (m): 2.5N, 2E, 2.5S, 4.5W DBH (cm): 20 Stems: 2 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 20+ Years	Ivy clad large shrub/small tree. Short trunk angled low, close to ground for 1m. Cut b back over highway. Foliage dense, good vitality.	Fair	Cut back crown on south side by up to 2.5m to clear footpath. Timescale: 28-May-2025 (6 Months)	

Ref:	Species	Measurements	Survey Notes	Condition	Recommendations	Photo
T010	Red oak (Quercus rubra)	Height (m): 14 Crown Radius (m): 7.5N, 5E, 7.5S, 7.5W DBH (cm): 56 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 40+ Years	Base clear, bark intact. No fungal fruiting bodies evident. Rapid growth bark cracks on trunk. Branching from 1.5m with large low lateral branch on southwest side on east trunk. Early areas of included bark in stem forks above. Condition currently satisfactory. Broad low crown Bud density and vitality good. 1m canopy clearance over lawn and 2m over footpath.	Good	Crown lift secondary and tertiary branches to 3m over footpath and 2m over lawn for maintenance. Timescale: 28-Nov-2025 (1 Year)	
T011	Prunus (Prunus sp.)	Height (m): 2.5 Crown Radius (m): 2 DBH (cm): 80 Life Stage: Mature Life Exp.: 20+ Years	Small commemorative tree. Reasonable bud density and form. Minor deadwood in East side of crown where suppressed by T010.	Fair	No works identified.	

6 TREE WORKS IN PRIORITY ORDER

Ref:	Species	what3words (Location Identifier)	Recommendations	Work Timescale
T003	Lime	///either.tests.zone	Remove epicormic growth. Cut back elongated branch overhanging footpath by 1.6m back to previous reduction point. Reduce lateral branches to create 0.5m canopy clearance to streetlight and lamp column. Crown lift around canopy to 2.5m reducing secondary and tertiary branch tips only.	28-May-2025 (6 Months)
T006	Pedunculate oak	///lion.mats.pines	Crown lift cutting a small number of low branch tips to 3m above ground level. Remove deadwood.	28-May-2025 (6 Months)
T009	Cotoneaster	///horses.over.linked	Cut back crown on south side by up to 2.5m to clear footpath.	28-May-2025 (6 Months)
T008	Crack willow	///charmingly.sting.bud get	Re-pollard to 1m beyond previous reduction points leaving 1m stumps to reduce size of cuts and spread of decay.	28-May-2025 (6 Months)
T004	Horse chestnut	///emerge.swept.insert	Remove deadwood.	28-Nov-2025 (1 Year)
T005	Horse chestnut	///blocks.herbs.dots	Reduce tips of large lateral branch on West side of crown by up to 3m in length and 1-2m of side shoots to check apical dominance in relation to main canopy. Remove deadwood and declining branch stubs in lower canopy. Crown lift secondary and tertiary branches to 3m over footpath only.	28-Nov-2025 (1 Year)
T007	Horse chestnut	///sleeps.rising.paying	Crown lift to create 2.5-3m canopy clearance above ground level.	28-Nov-2025 (1 Year)
T010	Red oak	///calm.owners.lasted	Crown lift secondary and tertiary branches to 3m over footpath and 2m over lawn for maintenance.	28-Nov-2025 (1 Year)
T002	Common beech	///feast.store.voices	Crown lift to 3m above ground level.	Optional

7 SITE PLAN

