



Your Ref: 260774

Our Ref: RMT1187

Date: 12th June 2026

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Tree T13 – Veteran Tree Classification

I write in response to the suggestion that Tree T13 should be classified and treated as a veteran tree.

Tree T13 is identified within the Arboricultural Report as a category A tree. British Standard 5837:2012 states that a tree worthy of an A categorisation should be considered as follows:

“Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40years”

British Standard also details three subcategories 1, 2 and 3 which can be applied where it is considered appropriate and for a category A tree, they are as follows:

1	2	3
Trees that are particularly good examples of their species, especially if rare or unusual; or those that are essential components of groups or formal or semi-formal arboricultural features (e.g. the dominant and/or principal trees within an avenue)	Trees, groups or woodlands of particular visual importance as arboricultural and/or landscape features	Trees, groups or woodlands of significant conservation, historical, commemorative or other value (e.g. veteran trees or wood-pasture)

As a professional preference I do not generally apply subcategories because I am of the belief that providing a written description is a better and clearer method of reporting or simply the A, B, C or U categorisation provide an adequate overview. The exception to this is in the case of ancient veteran or veteran trees where I will supplement my comments with an A3 subcategory.

On this occasion an A3 categorisation of T13 has not been applied because it is considered to be a tree which is a particularly good example of their species, no foreseeable or observable structural impairments and relatively regular crown form.

When considering if a tree might be a, one of the initial requirements is that it has a girth which is an exceptional size for its species. As set out in 'Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management' (Lonsdale, Ancient Tree Forum, 2013), Figure 1.3 clearly demonstrates the relationship between girth, age, and developmental stage. For Common Oak (*Quercus robur*), a girth of 4.7m (1500mm stem diameter when measured at 1.5m above ground level) is typically required before a tree can reasonably fall within the veteran category. T13 has a diameter of 792mm which equates to a circa 2.5m, so it does not meet the girth size threshold.

Coupled with the girth size of a tree, veteran status should only be conferred on a tree where there are identifiable veteran characteristics, such as hollowing, significant deadwood, decay habitats, or retrenchment growth.

At the time of my visit T13 appeared to be in very good structural and physiological condition and there was no evidence to support the view that this is a veteran specimen. A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) conducted by The Ecology Co-op in October 2025¹ similarly identified no significant features that would indicate this status.

To assist in assessing whether T13 meets the veteran criteria, the established and tested system RAVEN 2 (Recognition of Ancient, Veteran & Notable Trees) has been utilised and can be seen at **Appendix 1**. As per the requirements of step one an age assessment has been carried out using the White Method which provides an age of circa 101 years. In relative terms this is not old for an Oak species and indicates a tree in its prime years. Notwithstanding that T13 is not considered an old specimen, step 2 has been considered, which requires that the specimen has a very large girth for its species. As has been explained above, this tree does not have large girth relative to its species.

Taking the evidence and data into account, it has been demonstrated that tree T13 should not be considered a veteran.

For completeness, Tree T13 is to be retained and protected as part of the proposed development. Its arboricultural value will be fully preserved, and no adverse impact on its condition, longevity, or contribution to the site will arise.

In conclusion, it is requested that the Local Planning Authority reconsider their comments in light of the evidence that has been provided.

Yours faithfully,



Robert Toll
Director
HND Urban Forestry - ND Forestry - MArborA
RMTTreeConsultancy Ltd

¹ The Ecology Co-op (2026). *P10586 Land North of Sun Lane Interim EcIA Issue Rev01*.

Appendix 1 - Recognition of Ancient, Veteran & Notable Trees – RAVEN 2



Recognition of Ancient, Veteran & Notable Trees – **R A V E N 2**

Step One - Age Assessment

Tree should be old relative to others of the same species

Compute age using White Method (use proxy species if necessary): min. 25% of species age required

Step Two - Size Assessment

Tree has very large girth for species*

Refer to *Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management* (Lonsdale, ATF 2013) at Fig. 1.3:
Chart of girth in relation to age and developmental classification of trees

*e.g. 4.7m for pedunculate oak (1500mm stem dia.)

Step Three - Condition Assessment: Primary Features

At least two of the following should be present (or refer to Step Four)

- ☐ Extensive decay (especially brown rot or exposed stem heartwood in relevant species), 400cm²
- ☐ Extensive hollowing
- ☐ Senescence
- ☐ Retrenchment

Step Four - Condition Assessment: Secondary Features

If no primary features are present, tree requires six secondary features to qualify

If only one primary feature is present, tree requires three secondary features to qualify

- ☐ Large quantity of dead wood in crown, 150mm dia.+
- ☐ Major storm damage, e.g. breakout wounds, broken spars 30cm dia.+
- ☐ Habitat spaces: decay holes and/ or crevices/ branch splits sheltered from direct rainfall
- ☐ Aerial rooting
- ☐ Sap run/ slime flux
- ☐ Water pool
- ☐ Bark loss (exceeding 400cm²) inc. due to lightning strike
- ☐ Fungi (especially notable or protected species)
- ☐ Other epiphytic plants, including ferns & significant presence of lichens or mosses

Step Five - Recognition Guide

- ☐ **ANCIENT**
Veteran tree with extremely large girth: age likely > 50% of estimated species maximum
E.g. pedunculate oak, 2m stem dia, average site: ca. 460 years old, ca. 50% of species max
- ☐ **VETERAN**
Relatively old & very large for species and qualifies under either Step Three or Step Four
- ☐ **NOTABLE**
Trees approaching veteran status under Steps One or Two

IF A TARGET IS PRESENT, ASSESS RISK USING *THREATS*

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