

Tree Management, Duty of Care Report©

Site: St Cecilia's C of E School, Howlett Grove, Wokingham, RG41 1BJ

Client: c/o Chloe Franklin Date: 13/01/26 Surveyor: Danny Konstantinidis



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HERITAGE TREE SERVICES ABORICULTURAL DUTY OF CARE & MAINTINANCE SURVEY

Instruction:

Heritage Tree Services Ltd received instructions from Chloe Franklin to carry out a Health & Safety appraisal of trees at the above site in January 2026.

Inspection:

The Visual Tree Assessment (**VTA**) has been carried out in accordance to *Mattheck & Breloer 1994* and *Lonsdale 1999* methodology, *National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) 2021*, *Manual of tree statics and tree inspection 2016 Wessolly, L & Erb, M.* The Law of Trees, Forests & Hedges, Second Edition, *Charles Mynors 2011*.

The survey is carried out from ground level and catalogues trees on site with a potential negative impact, with works recommendations prescribed to reduce negative impact where reasonable & possible. Comment on ongoing and suggested maintenance will be made where necessary.

Where considered appropriate, the trunk may have undergone percussive hammering using a nylon mallet to assess hollowing, and basal features carefully prodded using a steel probe.

The potential Target Hazard factors are recorded and will dictate the level of risk in terms of size of part that may fail, likelihood of failure and human occupancy, dwellings and property, highways and pedestrian footpaths, etc-target area of occupancy.

The Works Priority Rating is concluded upon date of survey, and will be listed as an action relative to the score giving some measure of quantified risk, a timeframe to carry out works will be given by the arborist, according to criteria. Please see explanations in key below for clarification.

This document will be accompanied by a Tree Location Plan (**TLP**) to aid identification.

Site overview: Public access is limited into the immediate area of the tree due to a solid wooden fence surrounding the perimeter over & beyond the drip line of the tree. Tree T1 is positioned within a zone of high-occupancy use to the East (School), North (Public open space playground) South (Public car park). Management decisions should balance retention and ecosystem value with proportionate risk control focused toward the school & playground facing aspects.

Weather: Sub-zero. Clear sky. No notable wind speed at ground level.

Recommendation for next Visual Tree Assessment to be carried out in 36 months unless otherwise stated in survey recommendations.

Tree Group Hedge or Shrub N° Tag N°	SPECIES	AGE	H e i g h t S- VL	PHYSIO LOGICAL STATUS Good Fair Poor Dead	STRUCTUR AL STATUS Good Fair Poor Dead	ARBORICULTURISTS OBSERVATIONS	RECOMMENDED WORKS	S.O.P + L.O.F + T.A.O 1-3	Action Relative To Score 3-9	Advised Time Scale In months from date of survey A-C
T1 No tag	Oak	M	M	D	P	Dead standing habitat snag. Previously weight bias pruned to the East. Buttress roots on the Northern aspect are the only remaining intact dead roots. Nylon sounding hammer returns the only semi positive tone from this area. Remaining cardinal points, all return low resonance, indicating, bark delamination & hollowing where bark has fallen, exposing heartwood. Likely advanced decay leading to hollowing that may now lead to catastrophic failure at base. The tree is 9.4m from Northern boundary fence, 14.5m from Eastern boundary fence, 18m from Southern boundary, & 18.3m from the Western boundary fence.	Further bias pruning to retain as many habitat features as possible. The minimum end height to aim for will be 9m on the Eastern stem & 7m on the Northern stem. This will bring the tree well within the compound area should catastrophic failure occur. The lower intact lateral branches can be reduced to lessen lever arm weight that may prematurely cause failure if left untouched. Careful consideration to structural condition when	3 2 3	8	B

					The tree is measured as 14.3m in height on the upper most Eastern remaining crown & 11.8m from the highest Northern stem point. This Veteran tree is a vital habitat feature within the surrounding landscape. Within UK planning policies, (NPPF para 193(c) the NPPF glossary defines 'ancient or veteran tree' and 'irreplaceable habitat' this tree is categorised as being an irreplaceable habitat. As such, efforts should be made to retain standing for as long as possible. This will be achieved via pruning works to a height that will not impact the play area to the North & the School field entrance to the East. Distances from other targets beyond the fenced off area are well beyond the reach of the tree, should catastrophic failure occur.	works is carried out, will be made. A harder reduction scale may be considered favourable during the time of works, if it is thought that this will likely increase the useful working cycle of standing deadwood habitat beyond that of a lesser reduction in height & lateral spread. Debris to be stacked & laid within drip line. <i>As an ongoing project, it may be an idea to bring interested classes of children into the compound to look for self set Oak seedlings. This will of course require risk assessment due to the nature of the area. If suitable seedlings are found, these can be carefully dug up to bring on in the school grounds with the view of planting out as succession trees.</i>			
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HEALTH & SAFETY KEY	Explanation
T, G, H or S	Tree or Group numbers on enclosed list – (T = tree; G = group; H = hedge; S = shrub). Tree location within plot - hash tag (#) signifies tree outside boundary or in alternative ownership.
Species	Defined in Common & or Scientific names.
Height	Measured in meters above ground level. – Small (S) = 4 – 6. Medium (M) = 7 – 14. Large (L) = 15 – 23. Very large 23 +
Spread	Canopy measured in meters from main stem in cardinal directions: North, South, East and West.
Age & Life Stage Status	Y: Young tree, recently planted, which could be relocated, if required, measuring less than 150mm in diameter at 1.5m. SM: Semi mature tree, establishing well, and within the first ⅓ of its lifespan. More growth required before reaching maximum potential. EM: Early mature tree at almost full height and within ⅔ of its lifespan. If healthy, crown and stem increment will continue. M: Mature fully-grown tree, unlikely for tree height, crown width or stem diameter to increase. LM: Late-mature tree declining in vigor and size, and possibly entering senescence, with potential defects and duty of care implications. Vet: Veteran aged senescent tree with possible habitat/ecological value, or of significant historic/cultural worth. Dead: Dead tree not classified as Veteran status yet still retainable for possible ecological/habitat benefit.
Physiological Condition Status	GOOD: General satisfactory conditions of health observed for species overall, due to good vitality and leaf cover/size with possible minor deadwood present. A maintenance prescription may be recommended for continued safe useful life expectancy. FAIR: Tree displays some deterioration issues, or stress factors, i.e. minor die-back with moderate deadwood, discolored leaves, crown thinning, damage or disease. Remedial action likely to be recommended to assist the safe retention and recovery of tree, to reduce the risk of failure. POOR: Tree displays major deterioration or stress issues, i.e. sparse foliage, pest infestation, extensive crown die-back and major deadwood rendering its retention a risk. Recommended remedial works, or full removal, likely to resolve problems and reduce risk of failure. DEAD: Deceased or dying tree that has, or will become, a risk factor to retain.
Structural Condition Status	GOOD: Few significant structural defects noted for species. Possible maintenance prescription recommended for safe useful life expectation. FAIR: Tree may exhibit possible issues i.e. storm damage, decay, cavities. Maintenance prescription likely to reduce risk of failure. POOR: Tree displays major structural defects, i.e. significant root damage, cracked limbs, major deadwood rendering its retention a risk. Recommended remedial works, or full removal, likely to resolve problems and reduce risk of failure. DEAD: Deceased or dying tree that has, or will become, a risk factor to retain.

Observations	Ivy severing: When the severing of ivy is recommended, it is expected that a Section, is, cut from as close to ground level as practical, & again at approximately 1m above ground level. Removing the cut section. Particular attention is required when caring out these works, so as not to cut the bark of the tree! Deadwood defined as: TWIGS: Twigs up to 10mm diameter MINOR DEADWOOD: Minor deadwood between 10mm to 40mm in diameter 500mm in length & over in length MODERATE DEADWOOD: Moderate deadwood within 45mm – 70mm in diameter 1 meter in length & over in length MAJOR DEADWOOD: Major deadwood over 70mm in diameter over 1 meter & over in length Significant deadwood removal: <i>Removal of dead material that has A diameter larger than 45mm & 1 meter in length.</i> Root Condition: The visual assessment of the rooting area, taking into consideration any evidence of physical damage, soil compaction or heave, excavation work and/or drainage problems. Stem Condition: The visual assessment of the stem and main scaffold branches observing any visible faults and wounds, and other exterior signs which may suggest possibility of internal faults. If decay is suspected, a sounding hammer may be used. Leaf & Bud: The visual assessment of the amount and condition of foliage cover, and/or bud development, when compared against the foliage of the surrounding trees of the same species.
Recommended Works	The arboriculturalist' s recommendations for prescriptive works and requirements for re-inspection or testing.
Hazard Rating System:	Hazard Rating: calculated by assessing three criteria on a scale of 0-3, i.e. (i) Size of part commented on minor = 1 significant = 2 major = 3 (ii) Likelihood of failure unlikely = 1

	quite likely = 2 very likely = 3 (iii) Target area occupation Infrequent use = 1 Frequent use = 2 Structure beneath or continual use = 3 Where size of part and likelihood of failure are high but target occupation is exceptionally low a non-intervention course of management may be advised bringing an exception to the formula rule.	
Action relative to score =	No maintenance required = 1-2 = (very low) Maintenance advisable = 3-5 = P3 (low) Maintenance required = 6-7 = P2 (medium) Implement specified works urgently = 8-9 = P1 (high) Text colour of recommended works relative to operations = Monitoring/further investigation. Preventative/Duty of Care works. Removal works. Remedial/maintenance actions (some of which may be recommended to reduce likelihood of future damage to property).	Guidelines for monitoring/re inspection: ** Reinspection will be recommended within a given timeframe, using the following guidelines, usually within 24 months: • With / without leaf • When fungal fruit bodies in evidence • When Ivy severed • With aerial inspection • Any reports generated or observations noted by the arborists on site should be submitted to (Heritage tree services Ltd) HTS
Advised Time Scale In months from date of survey =	UAR : Urgent action required. A = 1-3 months: Action required as a matter of Duty of Care Obligations. B = 4-6 months: Action advised as Duty of Care obligations or ongoing management/best practice. C = 7-12+ months: Action recommended as Duty of Care obligations or ongoing management /maintenance.	These time scales are not exact. But work recommended within these should be carried out as soon as reasonably practicable in order to retain validation of prescriptive works within the report.

Legalities:

- Duty of Care – in England and Wales under the common law of duty of care, the person or organisation responsible for trees must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions, that could reasonably be foreseen, which would be likely to cause harm to persons or property.
- Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984 – these Acts place a duty upon the occupier to take such care as is reasonable to ensure that visitors to their land shall be safe from harm.
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – this Act places a duty on every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected by the day-to-day activities of the business are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.
- Implications of the Legal Framework – the person or organization responsible for these trees thus has a legal obligation to take reasonable measures to review the condition and any risks posed by the trees in their care, and if expert advice is sought in this regard to follow these recommendations. Failure to do this may lead to a claim of negligence under common law or prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

References:

- British Standard 3998 (2010) Tree Work
- Mattheck and Breloer (1994) The Body Language of Trees
- Lonsdale (1999) Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management
- National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) (2021)
- Manual of tree statics and tree inspection 2016 Wessolly, L & Erb, M

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Specific - Trees

All tree inspections, unless specified, have been undertaken from ground level and using non-invasive techniques. Comments contained within the report on the condition and risk associated with any tree relate to the condition of the tree at the date and time of survey. Please note that the condition of trees is subject to change. This change may occur, but is not limited to biological and non-biological factors as well as mechanical/physical changes to conditions in the proximity of the tree. Trees should be inspected at intervals relative to identified site risks and in accordance with relevant HSE and Central Government guidance. Heritage Tree Services Ltd can provide further information on this matter if required.

Validation of information and recommendations for works in this report is 18 months from the date at the top of this report.

Please note: no statutory control checks have been undertaken (unless specified). Where tree surgery works have been identified these works are based on the assumption that planning is approved. No tree works should be undertaken prior to determination of this application without up-to-date confirmation of the Tree Preservation Order / Conservation Area Status of the vegetation. All works should be undertaken in accordance with the appropriate Duty of Care. This should include, for example, site specific risk assessments and due diligence inspections for the presence of protected species.

Any comment relating to 3rd party trees has been made without full access to the tree(s). Should these trees have any impact on the proposed development we would advise you to instruct us to contact the 3rd party and undertake further inspection work.

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