



Tree condition survey of 6 trees
at
Little Court, Charvil Lane, Sonning, RG4 6TH

Surveyed by
Ben Abbatt

Dip. Arb. (RFS), BA (Hons), MICFor, MRICS, CEnv
Arboricultural Association Registered Consultant

Report date
20th June 2024

Client
S Pavey
Little Court
Charvil Lane
Sonning
RG4 6TH

Report reference
J1544

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Institute of
Chartered Foresters



CEnv
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1. Instruction

- 1.1 I was instructed by S Pavey to carry out a tree condition survey of 6 no. trees, paying particular attention to any features that may pose a significant hazard to persons or property, and to produce a tree survey report including the provision of management recommendations with priorities.
- 1.2 The tree condition assessment is to be carried out in relation to the landowner's duty under the Occupier's Liability Act 1984 and common law. Presumption for tree management will be in favour of retention of the tree(s) where appropriate.
- 1.3 The client has raised concerns relating to the trees including their condition and proximity to the highway, dwelling and garden. In particular, I have been asked to consider T6 birch and its suitability for retention.

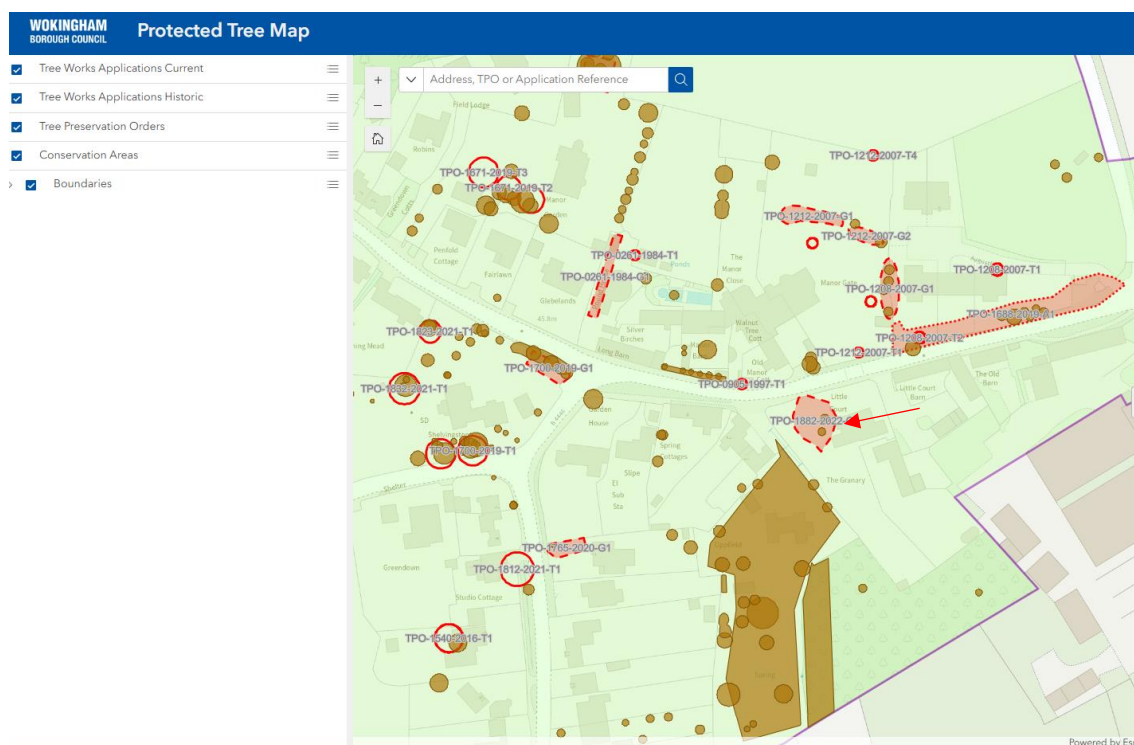
2. Site details

- 2.1 Little Court is south of Charvil Lane, Sonning. The site is relatively flat. The dwelling is a Grade 2 listed building¹.
- 2.2 The trees subject to the survey stand on the frontage to the property adjacent to the highway.

¹ <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101117421-little-court-sonning>

3. Statutory controls

- 3.1 The online mapping tool provided by Wokingham Borough Council, accessed on 20th June 2024 identifies that the site is subject to Conservation Area controls and Tree Preservation Order 1882-2022. See image SAL1; red arrow identifies the site.



SAL1 Image from council website².

- 3.2 The TPO identifies one ash and two birch within the TPO and I understand that these trees are most likely to be T4, T5, and T6. Therefore, a Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 s16 Tree Works Application³ will need to be issued to the planning authority and 'Consent' received prior to tree works commencing relating to these trees. Such tree works identified within any Consent will normally need to be complete before a 2 year period from the date of the Consent. Additional information on the process can be found at the government website⁴. This tree condition survey can be used to inform such a Tree Works Application.
- 3.3 Alternatively, works may be exempt from notice as detailed in The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012 sections 14 (exceptions)⁵. Such exceptions are given as a s14 'Notice of Intent' and a 5 working day period for the planning authority to consider the matter and relate to the imminent threat of harm or damage. This tree condition survey can be used to inform such a s14 (5 day) Notice of Intent. On this occasion, no imminent threats were found.

² <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/c0ad4ce95f8e46cfb28bb8cb126eae0>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/605/regulation/16/made>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#making-applications-tpo>

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/605/regulation/14/made>

- 3.4 The remaining trees, T1, T2, and T3 are subject to Conservation Area. Therefore, prior to tree works being carried out to these trees, a Town and Country Planning Act 1990 s211(3) Notice of Intent⁶ will need to be issued to the planning authority and 'No objection' received or the expiration of the 6 week notice period. Such tree works identified within the s211 Notice will normally need to be complete before a 2 year period from the date of the Notice. Additional information on the process can be found at the Government website⁷. This tree condition survey can be used to inform such a s211 Notice of Intent.
- 3.5 Alternatively, works may be exempt from notice as detailed in The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012 sections 14 and 15 (exceptions).⁸
⁹ Such exceptions are given as a 'Notice of Intent' and a 5 working day period for the planning authority to consider the matter. In this instance, no tree works recommendations detailed in the tree condition survey for either tree surveyed would fall within these criteria.
- 3.6 Works in accordance with the Highways Act 1980, section 154¹⁰, overrides the town and Country Planning Act and can be implemented without reference to the planning authority. However, it is appropriate to inform the planning authority to avoid unnecessary waste of officer time investigating whether the works are exempt.
- 3.7 Remedial tree works in accordance with the Highways Act 1980 are not necessary in this instance as no imminent remedial works were identified which might affect the safe use of the highway.
- 3.8 The Forestry Act 1967 does not apply as the trees grow within a residential garden.
- 3.9 This document does not consider specific covenants.

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/211>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#making-applications-tpo>

⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/605/regulation/14/made>

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/605/regulation/15/made>

¹⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/154>

4. Limitations

- 4.1 The tree survey was carried out from ground level, with the aid of binoculars where appropriate, using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) process. The VTA process is used to identify significant tree features that may have significant bearing upon the condition (physiological and structural) and management of the tree.
- 4.2 Typical significant defects that are identified are referred to in Lonsdale, D., "Hazards from Trees, a general guide" (FCPG13) published in 2000 by the Forestry Commission, Lonsdale, D., "Principles of tree hazard assessment and management" published in 1999 and 2001 and reprinted in 2013 by the Forestry Commission, and Mattheck, C., "The body language of trees" published in 1994 by the Department of the Environment and 2015 by Karlsruhe Institute of Technology.
- 4.3 Reasonable access around the base of the tree is required to carry out a tree survey. Where this is not feasible, these parts of the tree may not be fully assessed. If a view of the entire structure of the tree(s) is limited, for instance by the properties in private ownership or obscured by vegetation, this is a limitation to the tree survey and some parts of the tree may not be able to be fully surveyed. In this instance access was available.
- 4.4 Trees are dynamic structures and as such their condition and health may change in a short period of time, particularly in relation to changes in their immediate environment and circumstances, and as such the survey relates only to the visible condition found on the day of the survey. Tree(s) should be re-surveyed on a regular basis so that the change in condition can be identified. An appropriate time period between surveys may be up to 5 years depending upon the species, condition of the trees, their maturity / size and the context within which the tree(s) grow. Recommendations for the period between surveys are given.
- 4.6 No soil investigations have been carried out.

5. Tree survey findings

- 5.1 The survey was carried out on 11th June 2024. S Pavey accompanied me during part of the site visit. The weather on the day of the site visit was clear, dry with low wind speeds.
- 5.2 The table of findings of the tree survey can be found in Appendix 1.
- 5.3 I have plotted the approximate tree position on Ordnance Survey data, Ordnance Survey data (licence AC0000849896), to correlate between the tree condition survey (Appendix 1), the tree survey plan (Appendix 2), and the specific trees surveyed on site. Position of the trees plotted is approximate on the tree survey plan and the specific trees will need to be identified through their approximate position shown on the tree survey plan, condition notes given in the tree survey text and the photographs in Appendix 3.
- 5.4 The Bluesky National Tree Map (NTM) data demonstrates the canopy cover of the local area and correlates with the approximate tree positions.

6. Discussion

- 6.1 I believe T6 birch has a progressive decline in its canopy. The tree survey for the development (221703) of the dwelling identifies “*peripheral dieback*” for T6 (T1 in the report PB/AIA-22/10.12¹¹ dated 12th October 2022). The current canopy of T6 has a diminished leaf density compared to other trees of the same species in the local area. There are gaps between branches which is abnormal compared to other trees of the same species in the local area. There is more deadwood within the canopy of T6 compared to other trees of the same species in the local area. Bearing in mind the prior surveyed condition and the current condition, the vitality of the trees has diminished. I anticipate that this decline is progressive as the vitality has got worse and therefore, in the medium term, it is foreseeable that the tree will die off and require removal. Refer to Appendix 3 and images SAL2, 3, and 4.
- 6.2 T6 is screened from public view. Please refer to Appendix 2 for the viewpoint positions along Charvil Road where only the upper canopy is visible from viewpoint 2. Appendix 3 shows photographs taken from viewpoints 1 & 2. Viewpoint 1 essentially views trees T1, T2, and T3 with T6 hidden from view. Viewpoint 2 views trees T4, T5, T3, T2, and T1 with T6 hidden behind the trees with only the upper parts of the canopy visible. Refer to Appendix 3 and images SAL6 and 7.
- 6.3 The Bluesky NTM data calculates that there are 516 trees within the polygon area. T6 is one of these tree features. Loss of T6 would mean that 515 tree features would remain. Replacement tree planting would add a tree feature back into the landscape in the medium and long term. Refer to Appendix 2.
- 6.4 Loss of a single tree feature is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the character of the local area. It is normal for the landscape to have trees removed from the landscape and new trees to grow and become more prominent over time. A forestry term to describe such a process is ‘continuous cover’. In arboricultural terms, I understand this to mean the gradual removal and replacement of trees within the landscape with an effective retention of trees over time providing visual amenity. The loss of T6 would be part of this process. The development of T1, T2, and T3 becoming more prominent as the develop is also part of this process. A replacement tree for T6 would also be part of this process over time.
- 6.5 Material from T6 is causing the lead in the roof structure to become discoloured and slippery. This is a maintenance hazard when carrying out roof cleaning works, principally due to the canopy of T6 overhanging the dwelling.
- 6.6 To conclude, in my consideration of the site, its location, use, frequency of occupation, the condition of the trees, the condition of T6, the limited public visibility of T6, the impact of the loss of T6 on the local landscape character, I believe that it is reasonable for T6 to be removed and a replacement tree planted.

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https://publicaccess.wokingham.gov.uk/PublicAccess_Live/Document/ViewDocument?id=FC02A74759D811ED9CEE C821589EDE9F

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Remove T6 birch and plant a replacement tree to maintain the medium and long term landscape character.
- 7.2 Other tree works identified as part of the survey should also be implemented to aid the retention of these trees in the landscape where feasible.
- 7.3 Resurvey of the trees ought to be complete by the 1st November 2027. Resurvey dates assume implementation of the tree works recommended within the timescales given. Resurvey is important as the condition of trees alters over time. Resurvey assumes the entirety of tree works recommended to be complete within the timescales given.

Appendices

Appendix 1: tree survey data

Tree Condition Survey

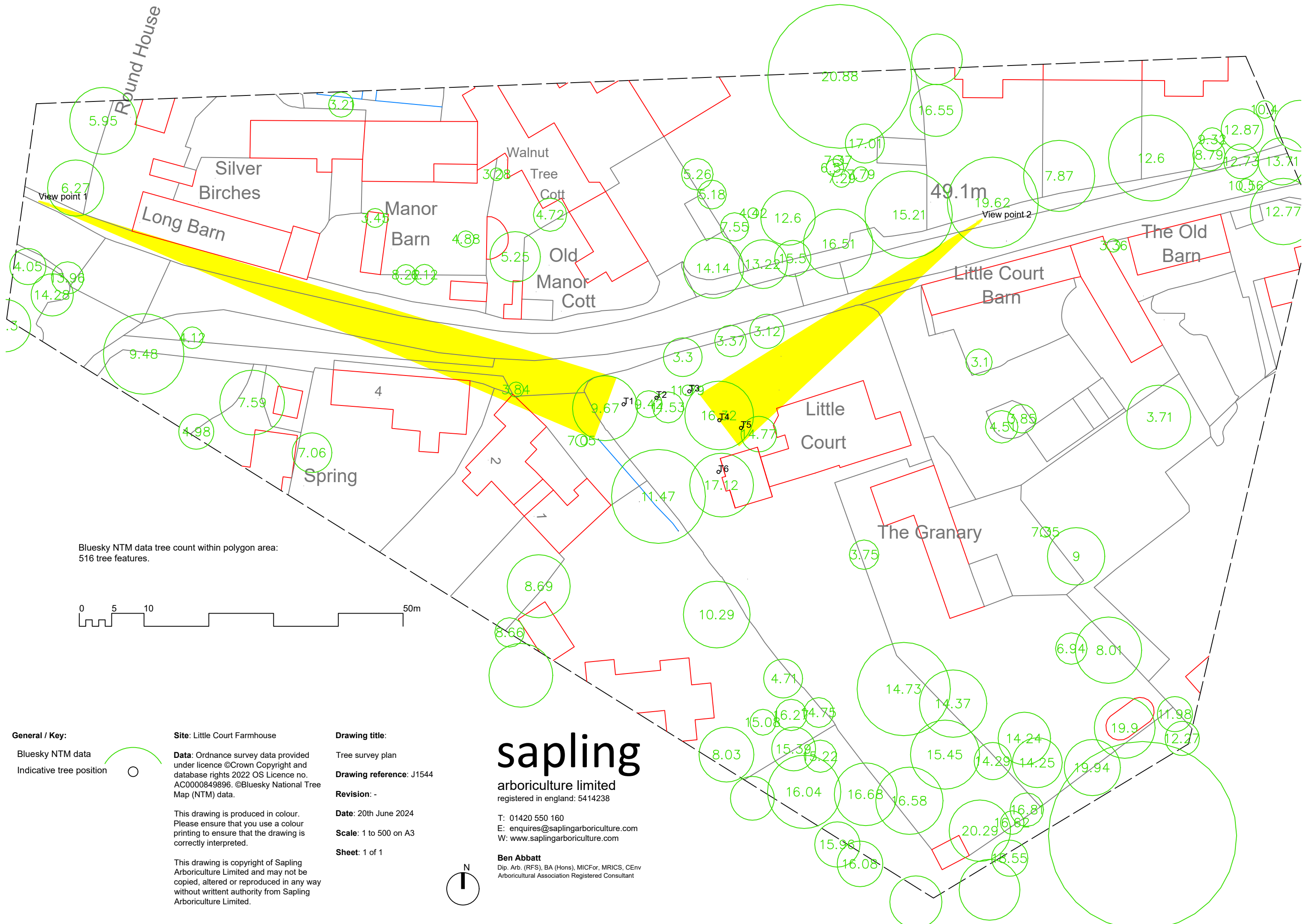
Site Little Court
Date of survey 11th June 2024
Job reference J1544
Surveyor Ben Abbatt
Resurvey To be complete by the 1st July 2027



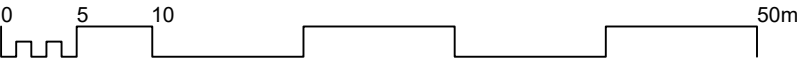
Designation	Reference number	Species	Height (m)	Age class	Physiological condition	Structural condition	Condition notes	Condition related tree works	Priority
T	1	Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	12.3	Young	Good	Good	~	No works required at the time of the survey.	~
T	2	Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	11.1	Young	Good	Good	~	No works required at the time of the survey.	~
T	3	Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	9.1	Young	Good	Good	Slightly suppressed by adjacent ash, T4.	No works required at the time of the survey.	~
T	4	Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	18.1	Mature	Fair	Good	Slight canopy decline commensurate with early stage ash dieback https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/ftth/pest-and-disease-resources/ash-dieback-hymenoscyphus-fraxineus/	Crown reduction to a final height of 17m with a 8m horizontal radial canopy spread. Reason: to promote a positive response by the tree to ash dieback to aid the retention of the tree in the landscape.	Low

Designation	Reference number	Species	Height (m)	Age class	Physiological condition	Structural condition	Condition notes	Condition related tree works	Priority
T	5	Birch <i>Petula pendula</i>	15.3	Mature	Good	Fair	Lean 11 degrees towards Grade 2 listed dwelling https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101117421-little-court-sonning . Bark loss at the base. Flattenting of tension root. Three main structural roots with commensurate increase in risk of shear crack failure at the base. Growing on possible old stump.	Crown reduction to a final height of 14m with a 3m horizontal radial canopy spread. Clear adjacent dwelling by 3m retaining. Reason: to reduce the risk of tree failure towards and / or direct damage to the Grade 2 listed dwelling.	Low
T	6	Birch <i>Petula pendula</i>	18.2	Mature	Fair	Fair	Canopy decline shown by reduced leaf density, gaps between branch units and deadwood. Lean by 7 degrees towards dwelling. Aberrant branch union at c4m. Residue affecting lead work on roof. Adjacent birch (2no.) to the west have previously fallen during high winds in cJuly 2004.	Remove. Plant replacement tree, for instance ornamental pear <i>Pyrtus calleryana</i> 'Chanticleer'. Position and species to be agreed with the planning authority.	Low

Appendix 2: tree survey plan



Bluesky NTM data tree count within polygon area:
516 tree features.



General / Key:

Bluesky NTM data
Indicative tree position

Site: Little Court Farmhouse

Data: Ordnance survey data provided under licence ©Crown Copyright and database rights 2022 OS Licence no. AC0000849896. ©Bluesky National Tree Map (NTM) data.

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Drawing title:

Tree survey plan

Drawing reference: J1544

Revision: -

Date: 20th June 2024

Scale: 1 to 500 on A3

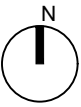
Sheet: 1 of 1

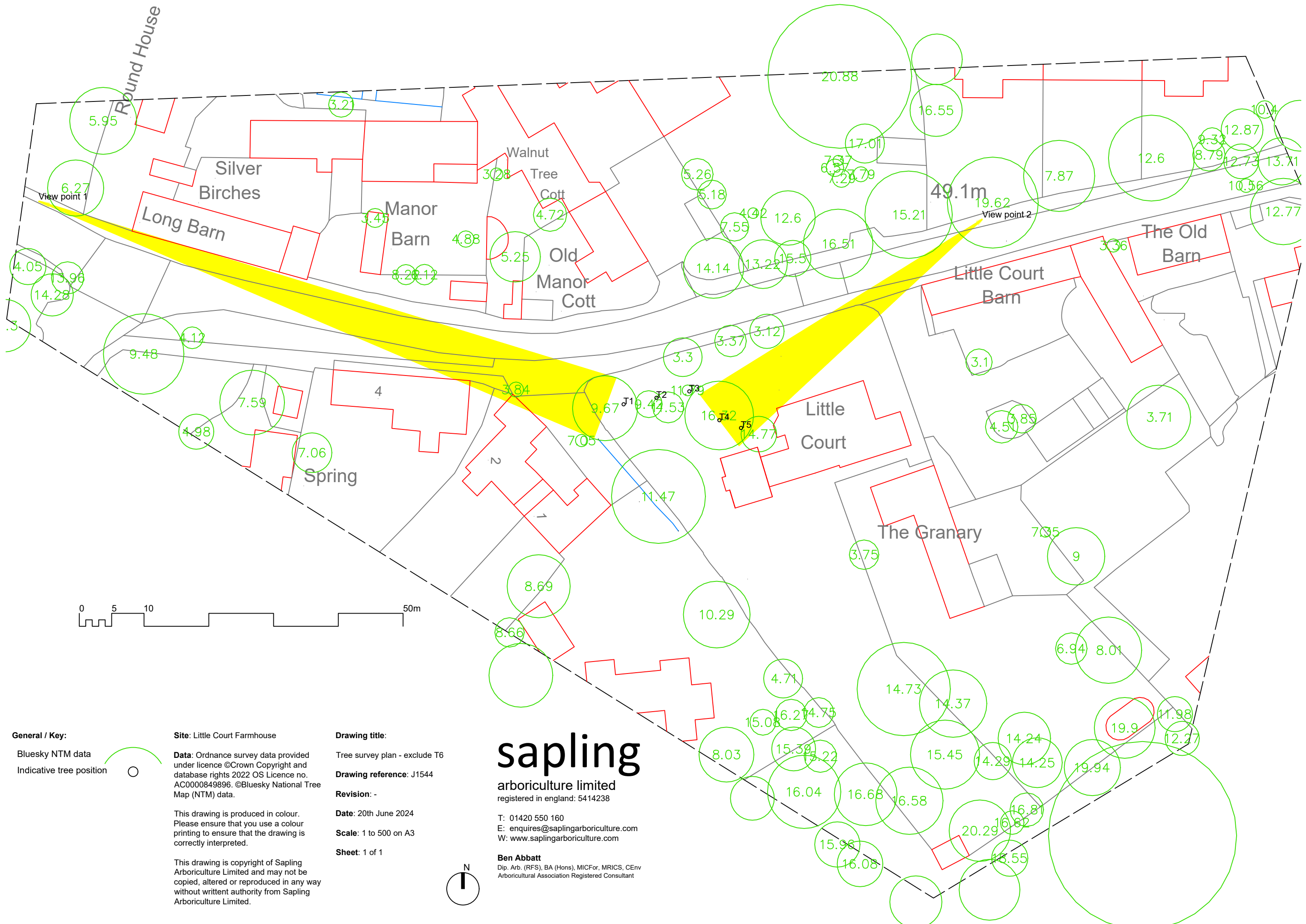
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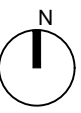


General / Key:
Bluesky NTM data
Indicative tree position

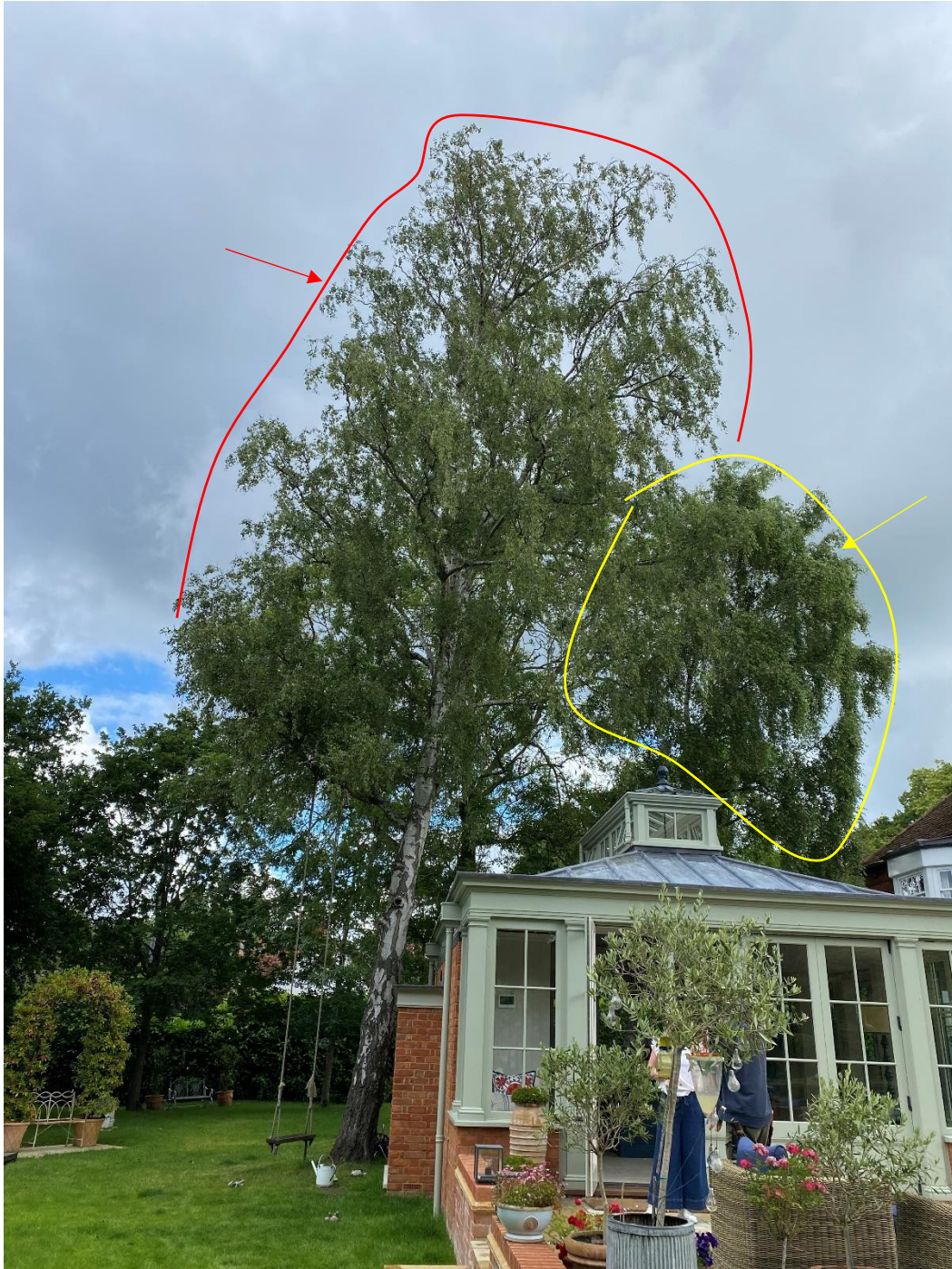
Site: Little Court Farmhouse
Data: Ordnance survey data provided under licence ©Crown Copyright and database rights 2022 OS Licence no. AC0000849896. ©Bluesky National Tree Map (NTM) data.
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Drawing title:
Tree survey plan - exclude T6
Drawing reference: J1544
Revision: -
Date: 20th June 2024
Scale: 1 to 500 on A3
Sheet: 1 of 1

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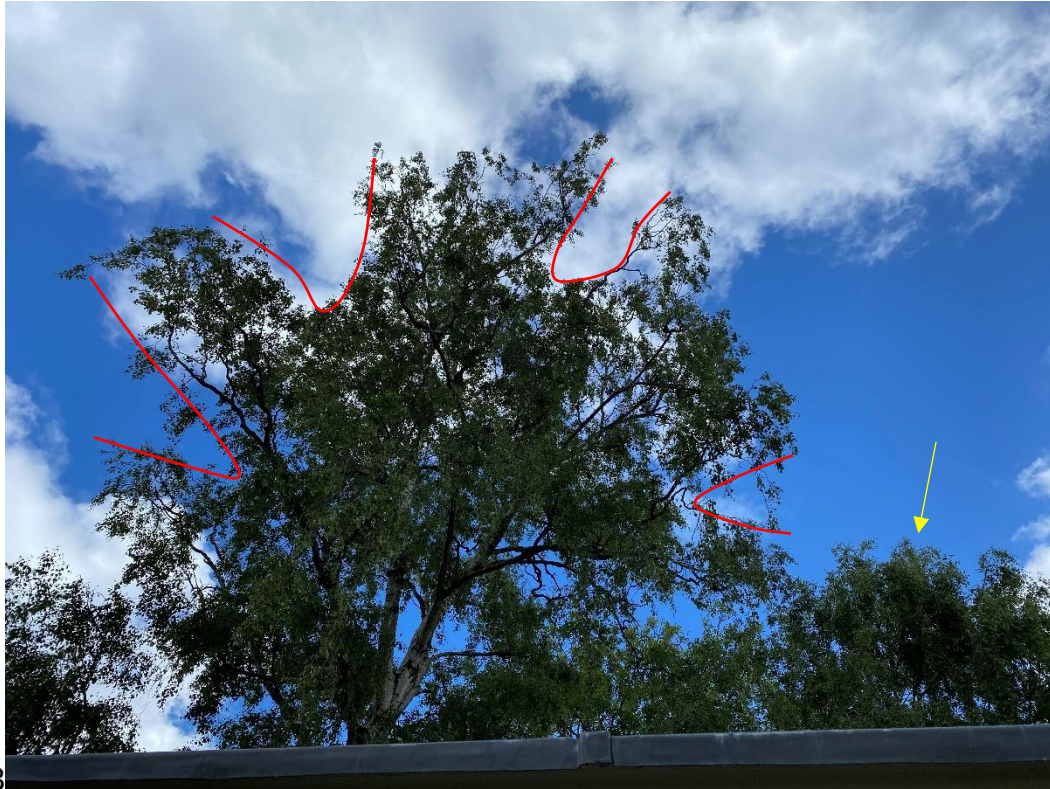
Appendix 3: photographs



SAL2 T6 identified by red arrow and T5 identified by yellow arrow. The density of foliage between T6 and T5 is evident with T6 having more sparse foliage.



SAL3 T6 with sparse foliage and gaps between branch units.



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SAL4 T6 with sparse foliage and gaps between branch units identified by red lines. Adjacent T5 identified by yellow arrow identifying normal canopy foliage density.



SAL5 Aberrant bark / union at c4m on T6.



SAL6 Viewpoint 1 with T6 not visible. T1, T2, T3 identified by green arrows. T4 identified by purple arrow.



SAL7 Viewpoint 2 with T6 providing limited contribution (red outline denotes extent of canopy visibility). Note, photograph taken from the north side of the road and therefore the position on the south side of the road perpendicular to the direction of travel of the road would have a diminished view due to the proximity of the adjacent building shown on the left side of the image. T1, T2, T3 identified by green arrows. T4 identified by purple arrow. T5 identified by yellow arrow.



SAL 8 Discolouration of the lead material to the dwelling. In the top left of the image, the normal state of the lead material.

Appendix 4: general notes

The tree survey can only be an assessment of the tree at the time of the survey and the tree(s) should be re-surveyed on a regular basis. An appropriate time period between surveys may be up to 5 years depending upon the condition of the trees, their maturity and the target(s). Recommendations for the period between surveys will be given.

As trees are dynamic structures their condition and health may change in a short period of time, particularly in relation to changes in their immediate environment and circumstances. Therefore, the survey is an assessment of the trees at the time of the survey only. If there is a significant change in the immediate environment and circumstances, then this should be brought to the attention of the arboriculturalist so that they may advise accordingly.

I have not specifically checked with the planning authority whether the site is within a Conservation Area or whether the trees are under Tree Preservation Order (TPO), but I have relied upon their published map information. Prior to any tree works confirmation of whether these legal restrictions apply to the site or trees ought to be sought from the planning authority. If the trees stand within a Conservation Area designated under the Town and Country Planning Act the LPA will normally require 6 weeks notice of intention to carry out any tree works as detailed in the survey. If the trees are under TPO then the planning authority will normally require an application for any tree works. Some tree works are exempt, for instance if the trees are dead or dangerous, and certain works can be carried out without application. It is necessary to give the planning authority at least five days notice prior to carrying out any of these tree works under these exemptions. This survey, with recommendations, can be used to support any such application or notice.

Wildlife issues are of significant concern to the general public. A balance has to be found between the protection of wildlife and the need for safety when managing trees. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1980) and Countryside Rights of Way Act (2000) give statutory protection to wild birds, bats, mammals, some invertebrates and plants. It is important to ensure that this legislation is properly considered when carrying out any works to trees.

Bird nests were not identified whilst on site. However, any Arborist carrying out the tree works should ensure that there is no disturbance to nesting birds prior to the works being carried out. Further guidance upon the appropriate timing of the works can be sought from DEFRA, if necessary. Where nesting birds are found, further information should be sought from DEFRA 08459 33 55 77 or helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk. Prior to any works being implemented the tree contractor must identify whether there are any bats or birds using the tree as roost or nest. If such habitation is identified, then the tree contractor must obtain the necessary licence from Natural England (0845 601 4523 www.naturalengland.org.uk) to carry out the works.

A bat survey prior to tree works is not recommended, except where there is a high potential for habitat. During the tree works, the contractor should carry out the tree works with bats as an active consideration and follow the current industry best practice, e.g. Arboricultural Association Guidance Note 1 Bats in the context of tree work operations 2011, BS8596 Micro guide to surveying for bats in trees and woodland <https://shop.bsigroup.com/upload/273444/BSI-Bat-Microguide-UK-EN.pdf> which a competent tree contractor should be familiar with.

Biosecurity measures: To minimise the potential for contamination of the tree from other tree works it is appropriate to sterilise tools to be used before and after the works are implemented. Appropriate disinfectant includes Propellar or Cleankill Sanitizing spray. Loose debris is to be brushed off prior to treating with disinfectant to ensure appropriate application. See [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS028-guidance.pdf/\\$file/FCMS028-guidance.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS028-guidance.pdf/$file/FCMS028-guidance.pdf) for further information on Biosecurity and <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-9fjd2d> for disinfectant information.

Appendix 5: key to tree survey data

Desig	Designation (T is Tree, G is Group, H is Hedge, W is woodland, S is Stump)	
No	Tree number.	
Species	Species of tree.	
Height	Height measured in metres.	
Canopy spread	Canopy spread in metres is taken at the four cardinal points to derive an accurate representation of the crown.	
Height of crown	Height in metres of crown clearance above adjacent ground level.	
Age Class	Young	A tree considered to be less than approximately 20 years old.
	Middle aged	A tree in approximately the first 1/5th of its normal life span with apical dominance (rapidly growing with a clear main leader) and not yet fully at its environmental potential full height.
	Mature	A tree in its 2/5ths to 5/5ths of its normal life span with apical dominance lost and at its environmental potential full height.
Condition (Physiological and Structural)	Good	A tree of typical physiological and structural condition that requires only general tree works to facilitate its retention in the landscape.
	Fair	A tree of impaired physiological and / or structural condition that may require remedial and general tree works to facilitate its retention in the landscape.
	Poor	A tree of significantly impaired physiological and / or structural condition that will require remedial and general tree works to facilitate its retention in the landscape if feasible.
Recommendations	As per BS3998: 2010 Recommendations for Tree Works.	
Priority	Immediate	Works should be carried out immediately as the probability of harm or damage occurring is likely.
	High	These works are important to carry out as soon as reasonably possible and any budget available for tree management should be spent upon these trees before the moderate and low categories. Works in this category usually will relate to abatement of risk for harm and or damage to occur. Ideally works in this category are anticipated to be carried out within 1 month.
	Moderate	These works are important to carry out as soon as reasonably possible and any budget available for tree management should be spent upon these trees before the low categories. Works in this category usually will relate to abatement of risk for harm and or damage to occur and for the good arboricultural management of the trees. Ideally works in this category are anticipated to be carried out within 3 months.
	Low	Works in this category usually will relate to the good arboricultural management of the trees. Ideally works in this category are anticipated to be carried out within 12 months.
Re-survey	This is the time period in which it is recommended that the tree is surveyed again. This is based upon the condition of the tree, its location, previous, current and future management. It is normally expressed at a time period from the date of the report / survey, whichever is the sooner. If no time period is noted then the default period is one year.	

Appendix 6: surveyor qualifications and experience

Ben Abbatt has been involved in the arboricultural industry since the mid 1990s and has worked in a variety of roles within the industry, starting as a forestry contractor, progressing to the surveying and management of forestry and arboricultural contracts for a national forestry company and running the arboricultural section of a horticultural business overseas. Additionally, Ben has worked in local Government at Borough and County levels, providing planning related advice and managing Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas, as well as managing highways trees and contracts.

Since 2006, Ben has been the Director and Principal Consultant of Sapling Arboriculture Ltd.

Ben is a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF), Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), Society for the Environment (SocEnv) and the Arboricultural Association (AA), having been an Arboricultural Association Registered Consultant since 2006. He is also a member of the International Society of Arboriculture and the Royal Forestry Society.

He holds many arboricultural and forestry qualifications including the Professional Diploma in Arboriculture awarded by the Royal Forestry Society, the Technicians' Certificate awarded by the Arboricultural Association and an HNC in Forestry.

Ben is also a freelance trainer for LANTRA, delivering courses in Basic Tree Survey and Inspection and Professional Tree Inspection.



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