

# Tree Condition Report

Durham Road Play Area,  
Wiltshire

8<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Job Ref: 0872

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I hope that this report provides all the necessary information, but should any further advice be needed please do not hesitate to contact me.

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## Introduction

### 1. Qualifications and experience

I have based this report on my site observations and any provided information and I have come to conclusions in the light of my experience. I have experience and qualifications in arboriculture, and include a summary in Appendix 'A'.

### 2. Instruction

I am instructed by David Briffett representing Wilpshire and Salesbury Parish Council (referred to as the 'client' from here on) to inspect the significant trees located in the at Durham Road Play Area and to provide a report to fulfil the following criteria:

- A schedule of the relevant tree to include basic data, tree location and a condition assessment.
- A tree risk assessment based on relevant targets, defects and likelihood of failure.
- A schedule of any subsequent work that may be required.

### 3. Relevant background information

Prior to the tree inspection, my client advised me that:

- Location described as "The trees are around the perimeter of the area the equipment area - trees are backing onto the rear of gardens then around the area and also the grassed area where the football post is"
- An inspection is needed as the client has "a duty of care" in ensuring the trees are as safe as reasonably possible.

### 4. Documents and information provided

My client provided me with copies of the following documents or information:

- Their email of instruction outlining the situation.
- Their email commissioning this report and agreeing to the T&C and cost.

### 5. Scope of this report

This report is only concerned with the prominent trees within or around the proximity of the site. It takes no account of any trees outside this remit or any building structural issues. It includes a preliminary assessment based on the site visit and any documents and information provided, listed in section 3 and 4 above.

The survey is based upon information that was available at the time of the inspection. Further inspections are necessary over time to give a fuller picture of the health of trees.

## 6. Mapping

I have not been provided with a topographical survey of the site. A digital ordnance survey map has been purchased and I have plotted the trees by the combined / individual use of land features, manual measurements, laser measurements and GPS. It is estimated that the accuracy is within 1-2m.

Site plans showing all tree locations and any relevant details can be found in Appendix 'C'.

## 7. Technical references

This arboricultural report is based on the following primary technical references:

- British Standards Institution (2010) BS 3998 Recommendations for tree work
- Lonsdale, D. 1999. *Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management*. The Stationary Office, London.
- Lonsdale, D. 2000. *Hazards from trees. A general guide*. Forestry Commission, Edinburgh.
- Matheny, N. P. and Clark, J.R. *A photographic guide to the evaluation of hazard trees in urban areas. 2nd Edition*. International Society of Arboriculture.
- Mattheck, C, and Breloer, H. *The body language of trees – A handbook for failure analysis*. The Stationary Office, London.
- Schwarze, F.W.M.R., Engels, J. and Mattheck, C. *Fungal strategies of wood decay in trees*. Springer, Berlin.
- Strouts, R.G. and Winter, T.G. 1994. *Diagnosis of ill-health in trees*. The Stationary Office, London.
- The National Tree Safety Group. 2011. *Common sense risk management of trees. Guidance on trees and public safety on the UK for owners, managers and advisers*. Forestry Commission, Edinburgh.

## Limitations

### 8. Survey

The inspection was carried out from ground level only and relates only to arboricultural aspects. All visual observations and recommendations, relate, to the condition of the trees on the day of the survey. The trees have been assessed with the aid of a Nylon mallet for the purpose of detecting changes in resonance which may indicate that further investigation is required. Where appropriate the use of advanced decay detection methods are used, primarily a digital resitograph. Any unusual weather conditions, changes in soil, soil levels and changes to surroundings may result in a dramatic change in the trees health.

### 9. Time limit

Due to the changing nature of trees and other site circumstances, this report and any recommendations made are limited to a 24-month period. Any alteration to the site and any development proposals could change the current circumstances and may invalidate this report and any recommendations made.

## 10. Tree health

Trees are dynamic structures that can never be guaranteed 100% safe: even in good condition they can suffer damage under average conditions. Regular inspections can help to identify potential problems before they become acute.

## 11. Justification of works

Where management action / tree surgery are recommended, this is based on maximizing the tree's safe useful life expectancy (SULE), given its current situation or the safety of persons and surrounding targets. A lack of recommended work does not imply that a tree is safe and likewise it should not be implied that a tree would be made safe following the completion of any recommended work.

## 12. Buildings

This report does not consider the structural condition of existing buildings, nor the impact of existing trees on their foundations. If there are concerns over such matters the advice of a structural engineer should be sought.

## Site visit and observations

### 13. Site visit

I carried out an unaccompanied site survey on 26/04/17. All my observations were from ground level without detailed investigations and I measured all dimensions unless otherwise indicated. I did not have access to trees outside the client's boundaries and have confined any observations to what was visible from within the client's property and any dimensions have been estimated. The weather at the time of inspection was clear, still and dry, with good visibility. I have taken various photographs of the site for reference and are kept on file, photos are added into the report only if they are needed to highlight a specific issue.

### 14. Brief site description

Durham Road is located in Wilpshire. The site is on the northern end of the road and surrounded by similar residential developments / other. The site consists of large grassed play area used for football etc and a fenced off children's playground. To the southern boundary there are residential gardens with open grassland to all other boundaries. No significant utility services were observed on site. No visual inspections of any services were made below ground level. The surrounding topography is relatively flat and the site is not particularly exposed. The majority of the mature trees are located to the north east boundary and are beyond the fence line of the sit, from the plans it appears that these trees are under the ownership of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, this should be check with land registry by the client. There is no known history on this site either personal nor from a third party.

### 15. Identification and location of the trees

I have illustrated the locations of the significant trees on the map included in Appendix 'B'. This plan is for illustrative purposes only and it should not be used for directly scaling measurements. All the relevant information on it is contained within this report and the provided documents.

## 16. Systematic method of assessment

I visually inspected the significant trees and recorded the information in the table in section 18.

I stress that my inspection was of a preliminary visual tree assessment (VTA) nature and did not involve any climbing or detailed investigation beyond what was visible from accessible points at ground level.

The methodology employed in the assessment of trees undertaken by GM Tree Consultants takes into consideration the following points (but not in any particular order of importance) by firstly carrying out a Visual Tree Assessment (VTA), this includes:

- A distance visual assessment of the tree taking into account the overall shape, form, foliage colour appropriate for the time of year and any other elements that do not appear normal for that particular species.
- The exposure to the weather. This can be due to it being a solitary tree or that surrounding tree cover could have been removed exposing it to 'new wind forces' acting on the canopy.
- The prevailing ground conditions. For example: soil erosion, ponding, soil characteristics and the impact on the tree, presence / lack of vegetation.
- Any information as to the trees history or history of the surrounding trees / landscape. For example: previously failed limbs, surrounding tree removal / failure, excavations, fruiting bodies seen.
- Knowledge of previous documented information of issues with a particular species. For example: tight union failure on Beech, poor compartmentalisation of Willow.
- The health and visual defects of the tree. For example: cavities, the trees 'body language', dieback, foliage irregularities, fungal brackets and deadwood.

From this information an assessment is made of the likelihood of the part/s most likely to fail in relation to the target / occupancy value within the trees failure area and recommendations are then made, these can include the following but is not exhaustive:

- Recommendations for further visual monitoring.
- Investigation with more advanced decay detection equipment such as: Resistograph, Picus, Thermal imaging.
- Remedial pruning / limb removal.
- Whole tree removal.
- Pruning for aesthetical reasons.
- Removal of significant deadwood.
- Or, no work may be needed.

The primary reasoning behind this method of assessment is to identify a foreseeable failure, make an informed decision and act on it within a specified time and know that the response is reasonable in relation to the target area and the financial resources available.



## Condition assessment

### 17. Tree dimensions

A detailed on site assessment of the trees can be found in the inserted survey sheets in appendix 'E'.

### 18. Tree assessment Summary

As a whole the trees are in good condition and none are in need of removal. Remedial pruning works are recommended, this primarily to remove any deadwood and to raise the height of the canopy branches to prevent encroachment and give clearance to head height and ride on grass cutting machines.

### 19. Photos



## Recommendations

### 20. Present requirements:

Any works required to establish acceptable levels of risk for the site and to maintain the tree in line with good arboricultural management are listed and should be carried out within the time scale indicated.

These lists of works are designed to highlight dangerous situations and are necessary for safety reasons or to establish high levels of arboricultural management to the existing tree.

REASONING: Proactive intervention rather than reactive to failure

## Other Considerations

### 21. Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and Conservation Area (CA)

A tree preservation order, referred to as a 'TPO', is an order made by a local planning authority ('LPA') in respect of trees or woodlands.

The principal effect of a TPO is to prohibit the: Cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage, or wilful destruction of trees without the LPAs consent. The cutting of roots is potentially damaging and so, in the Secretary of State's view, requires the LPAs consent.

Anyone who, in contravention of a TPO, wilfully damages a tree in a way that is likely to destroy it is guilty of an offence. Anyone found guilty of this offence is liable, if convicted in the Magistrates Court, to a fine of up to £20,000. In serious cases a person may be committed for trial in the Crown Court and, if convicted, is liable to an unlimited fine.

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historical interest with a character or appearance that is desirable to preserve or enhance. Trees may often contribute to the special character of the area.

All trees in a Conservation Area are subject to controls which enable the LPA to protect the special character of the area created by the trees. If trees have a specific Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on them, then the normal Tree Preservation Order controls apply.

You must give the LPA 6 weeks' notice, in writing, of your intention to do any work to trees in a Conservation Area. You must not carry out any work during the six week period, which starts from the date of receipt of your notification by the council, unless you receive written permission to do so.

Work which is not exempt and is carried out without formal notification or within the six week period without the written consent of the council is illegal. The LPA may prosecute offenders and fines of up to £20,000 for each tree may be imposed by the Magistrates Court in the event of offenders being convicted of an offence. If proceedings are instituted in the Crown Court fines are unlimited. There is a duty to replace any tree removed without permission.

***It has been confirmed by the client that there is a Tree Preservation Order / Conservation Area in force on some or all of the trees in question. It is strongly advised that prior to undertaking any work on the tree/s written consent is granted from the local authority via an application or through the planning process.***

## 22. Local authority details

For reference the contact details are listed below for the relevant councils planning department and / or the arboricultural (tree) officer.

Ribble Valley Borough Council  
Council Offices,  
Church Walk,  
Clitheroe,  
Lancashire,  
BB7 2RA  
Tel: 01200 425111,  
E-mail: [webmaster@ribblevalley.gov.uk](mailto:webmaster@ribblevalley.gov.uk)

## 23. Tree works

The management options noted in the survey data should be followed so to keep a maintained tree stock on and around this development site, particularly giving clearance from properties and over any adopted roads or footpaths.

## 24. Implementation of works

All tree works should be carried out to BS 3998 Recommendations for Tree Work as modified by more recent research. It is advisable to select a contractor from the local authority list and preferably one approved by the Arboricultural Association. Their Register of Contractors is available free from:

Arboricultural Association  
The Malthouse,  
Stroud Green,  
Standish,  
Stonehouse,  
Gloucestershire  
GL10 3DL, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1242 522152  
Email: [admin@trees.org.uk](mailto:admin@trees.org.uk)  
Website: [www.trees.org.uk/contractors.htm](http://www.trees.org.uk/contractors.htm)  
Fax: +44 (0)1242 577766

## 25. Local Arboricultural Contractors

If requested I can provide a list of reputable arboricultural contractors that have carried out work on previous projects.

## **26. Safety**

Tree works can be a hazardous profession, so it is important that all operatives have the necessary and relevant training, health and safety policy and valid forms of insurance.

## **27. Statutory wildlife obligations**

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, provide statutory protection to birds, bats and other species that inhabit trees. All tree work operations are covered by these provisions and advice from an ecologist must be obtained before undertaking any works that might constitute an offence.

## **28. Future considerations**

Any remaining trees should be inspected on a regular basis by a qualified arboricultural consultant and should not exceed a 5 year interval.

## APPENDIX 'A'

### Brief details of qualifications and experience of Gary Marsden

#### Qualifications:

- National Certificate in Arboriculture
- Foundation Degree In Science - Arboriculture
- BTEC Higher National Diploma in Arboriculture
- Certified Expert Witness by Cardiff Law School / Bond Solon
- LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection Award

#### Practical experience:

After qualifying at NC level in arboriculture I gained full time employment with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council as an Arborist / Climber (September 1998) where I gained a wide range of practical Arboricultural experience ranging from pruning, dismantling and planting.

In January 2004 I was promoted to Team Leader Arborist where I developed my skills in Arboriculture, leadership, organisation and prioritising workloads.

In August 2005 I was promoted to 'Arboricultural Officer' this job involves:

Health and Safety of all Arboricultural aspects

Inspection and scheduling of tree complaints

Tree surveys and report writing

Staff management

In July 2008 I set up my own tree consultancy company – GM Tree Consultants – which I am constantly developing and evolving.

#### Continuing professional development:

As a conscious effort to stay in touch with the progression in modern techniques and practices in the arboricultural industry, I attend seminars, receive regular arboricultural literature and maintain membership of professional bodies, examples of which are listed below:

- Arboricultural Association Professional Member since November 2006
- Professional Member of the Consulting Arborist Society since May 2009
- Quantified Tree Risk Assessment licensed user since October 2008
- Attendance of Arboricultural Association annual conferences
- Attendance of specialist short courses in relation to specific fields in arboriculture including: Tree Preservation Orders, Subsidence and mortgage reports, Planning legislation and Tree inspection methods and skills.
- Accredited as an Expert Witness by Cardiff University Law School / Bond Solon since December 2011

A detailed breakdown of qualifications and continued professional development training is available; please contact me directly for this information if requested.

## APPENDIX 'B'

- Site Location aerial photo taken from Google Maps showing site location



## APPENDIX 'C'

Inserted tree schedule and map showing all surveyed trees with comments and recommendations as appropriate

## APPENDIX 'D'

Correspondence with local arboricultural / planning officer

Alex Shutt the councils Arb Officer is aware of this survey being undertaken



**BS 5837 Surveys**

**Arboricultural Impact  
Assessments**

**Arboricultural Method  
Statements**

**Site Supervision**

**Visual Tree Assessments**

**QTRA Assessments**

**Expert Witness Reports**

**L.O.L.E.R Thorough  
Equipment Inspections**

**Mortgage Reports**

**TPO applications and advice**

