

June 2020



Cedarwood
T R E E C A R E

Independent Arboricultural Consultancy

ADDRESS:

**Tree Report for Beech Tree at Staunton House, Staunton
For Annie Dyson**

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Site Staunton House is a former Manor House understood to date from 1780. Originally a single dwelling, it has been converted in to four separate residences, each with its own rear garden. There is a substantial Beech tree in the rear garden of no. 3. The crown spreads across the gardens of all four residences.

Brief: This report has been commissioned by Annie Dyson, who lives at Number 2. The report is written primarily to support an application for tree works consent.

Executive Summary: There is a substantial Beech tree in the rear garden of Number 3. It is close to the house and is regularly shedding branches several metres in length. There is considerable weight in the branches forming the crown. There is concern that the tree is too large for the setting, and due to its size and scale, it represents a safety issue. It has been pruned previously, removing many lower branches. There is scope for some further pruning. Whilst this is unlikely to be a longer-term solution, it is recognised to be a preference to felling at this time.

Proposal: Thin crown by up to 25% and reduce crown spread towards Staunton House by about five metres through targeted pruning.

Inspection Methodology: The tree was inspected from the ground using the principles of Visual Tree Inspection defined by Mattheck and recognised as Industry Best Practice. The tree was inspected to level two of the TRAQ inspection methodology. Level one is a brief walk-by used to assess safety across a population of trees. Level two is a more detailed walk around at ground level, and used for inspecting individual trees. Level three is used for specific trees where further information is needed. It includes climbing and use of decay-detecting equipment. The report author is a qualified user of TRAQ (Tree Risk Assessment Qualification).

The Tree

The Beech tree is understood to date from the time of the building of Staunton House, and is therefore about 240 years old. It is unclear whether the tree pre-dates the building of the house or was planted as part of site landscaping. It has a trunk with a diameter exceeding 2 metres and a crown spreading across the gardens of all four properties. The trunk forks at about 8 metres, forming five main leaders with several smaller leader. The main leaders each has a diameter of about one metre, observed from the ground. The tree was in good vigour at the time of the inspection.

Ivy has become established to about 8m, so that it is not possible to assess the condition of the trunk. However, within the crown, there are a number of dead branches with diameters exceeding 200mm. The tree regularly sheds branches in windy conditions. This includes both dead branches and branches still sustaining foliage. The applicant has been hit by falling debris. There is on-going concern of the implications if one of the larger branches was to fail.

It should be noted that no decay fungi were observed during the site visit. However, this is not unexpected, because the tree was inspected at the end of May. Fungi associated with decay in Beech, and especially *Meripilus* (which decays the roots) produces an annual fleshy fruiting body which is expected to be present in the autumn and winter months. In addition, the ivy may be concealing fruiting bodies. *Kretchmaria deusta* is also a threat to Beech. This presents as small tar-like fruiting bodies. However, the ivy would conceal any fruiting bodies of this.

A pruning solution is being explored, although there is a challenge in how this would be implemented. Some of the main leaders, including one over Number 2, have already been

extensively pruned including removal of lower lateral branches (see photograph 2). This has resulted in a significant gap between the foliage and the union of the branch and the main trunk. There is limited scope for further pruning without cutting back to the trunk, which would leave a large wound of about one metre diameter. This is highly undesirable, and contrary to best practice.

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Reference: Photographs (Note that images 6-8 were taken by the applicant).



IMAGE 1: The tree viewed from beyond the rear garden of 3 Staunton House.



IMAGE 2: The tree viewed from within 3 Staunton House, looking upwards. The blue arrows point to large dead branches present, the black arrow to a long branch over no. 2, which has limited potential for prune due to the lack of lateral growth. If there is too great a distance between foliage on a branch and the union of the branch to the trunk, there is a risk that future growth will not be sustained and the branch will die.



IMAGE 3: Looking in to the crown where it is near to 3 Staunton House. The aim is to prune the branch where the arrow is pointing.

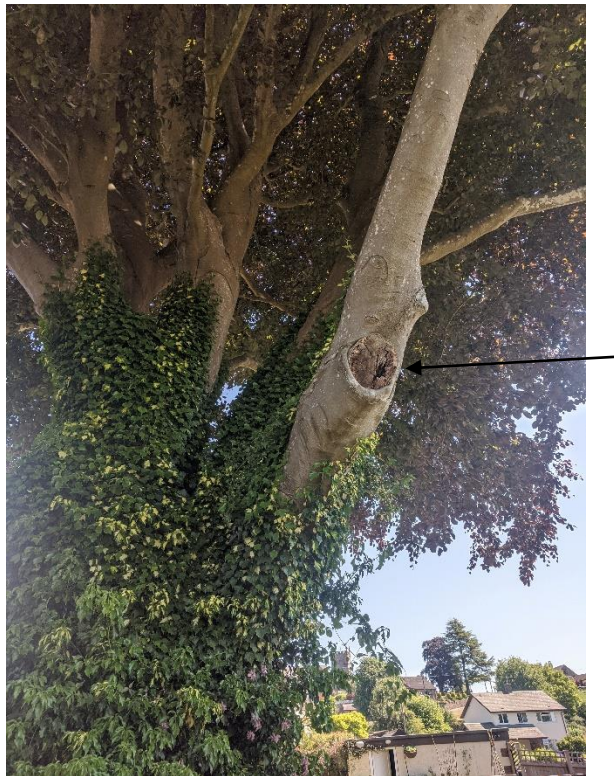


IMAGE 4: The tree viewed from within the garden of 3 Staunton House. Note that the ivy is covering the trunk and lower crown. Note also the wound and decay on the branch on the right.



IMAGE 5: The tree in relation to 3 Staunton House. Note how thick the ivy is at the base of the trunk.



IMAGE 6: A branch which landed in 3 Staunton House in spring 2020

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TREE CONDITION REPORT FOR BEECH TREE AT STAUNTON HOUSE, STAUNTON JUNE 2020



IMAGE 7: A branch in 4 Staunton House, spring 2020

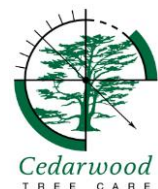


IMAGE 8: 2 Staunton House April 2020 following breeze.

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END OF REPORT

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