Tree Survey Report

GARDENERS COTTAGE AND BEECHGROVE
WOODLANDS PARK
DURRIS
ABERDEENSHIRE

August 2020

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Tree Survey and Report relates to trees and woodland areas surrounding the neighbouring properties at Gardeners Cottage and Beechgrove, Woodlands Park, Durris, Aberdeenshire.

The survey and report were commissioned by Drew Hendry of Gardeners Cottage. The extent of the survey area was identified during a site meeting.

The survey and report set out to achieve the following objectives.

1. To undertake visual inspection and risk assessment of the trees surrounding the properties.

2. To make recommendations for tree management necessary for reason of safety and good Arboricultural practice.

Tree inspections were undertaken on the 5th August 2020 by Arboricultural Consultant, Struan Dalgleish. Weather conditions at the time were bright and sunny.

The locations of the trees recorded have been estimated and plotted onto the Tree Survey Drawing in Appendix 1.

A description of the trees and recommendations for their management are provided in spreadsheet format in Appendix 2 - Tree Survey Schedule.

Explanation of the findings and recommendations are provided in this report.

Author's qualifications: Struan Dalgleish is a Chartered Forester (MICFor) and Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv). He holds an Honours Degree in Forestry and is a Professional Member of the Arboricultural Association. He has over twenty-one years' experience of arboriculture at a professional level.

1.1 Limitations

1. The findings and recommendations contained within this report are valid for a period of twelve months from the date of survey unless otherwise stated (i.e. until 5th August 2021). Tress are living organisms and subject to change. Where they occur in proximity to areas of human access or occupancy, they require to be subject to regular and routine inspection for reasons of safety and good management.

2. Whilst every effort has been made to detect defects within the trees inspected, no guarantee can be given as to the absolute safety or otherwise of any individual tree. Extreme climatic conditions can cause damage to even apparently healthy trees. Re-assessment may therefore be required after extreme weather events.

3. The recommendations relate to the site as it exists at present, and to the current level and pattern of land use. The degree of risk and hazard may alter if the site or its surroundings are developed or changed, and as such may require re-inspection and re-appraisal.

4. The report relates only to those trees identified on the attached Tree Survey Drawing and Tree Survey Schedule. Trees outside the survey area were not inspected.

5. The extent of basal decay where noted was tested using a nylon hammer and hand-held auger. A detailed assessment of the internal condition of the trees was not undertaken.

6. Where dense vegetation obscured parts of trees full and thorough tree survey may not have been possible. Assessment was made based on the visible parts of trees only. Obscuring growth may require to be cut back, and re-inspection undertaken. Aerial inspection to provide a closer view of the upper parts of trees maybe required.

7. This report has been prepared for the sole use of the owners of the Gardeners Cottage and Beechgrove, and their appointed agents. Any third party referring to this report or relying on the information contained herein does so entirely at their own risk.

2.0 TREE SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The tree survey process sets out to assess the risk associated with the tree by firstly identifying any person or object that could be injured or damaged should a tree or part of a tree fail.

Where trees have potential to cause harm or injury, they have been subject to detailed visual inspection, undertaken from ground level. If this reveals any defective part(s) the probability of failure and the potential for damage that this would cause are assessed.

Smaller trees, or trees within less frequently accessed areas have been subject to a less detail 'walk through' inspection. This set out to identify any obviously hazardous trees or pertinent management issues.

Recommendations for tree works or further inspection required for reasons of safety have been provided with the surrounding land use intensity in-mind.

To aid identification trees have been tagged with uniquely numbered aluminium identity tags nailed to the lower trunk.

Tag numbers range from **277 to 318**. On occasion a a single tag may refer to a group of trees.

Thirty-nine (39) large trees and four (4) groups of smaller trees were recorded in this way.

The approximate positions of these trees have been plotted onto the supplied Land Ownership drawing. Positions are estimated and intended to be indicative only.

3.0 TREE SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 General Description

Both properties are surrounded by a diverse range of dense mature coniferous and broadleaf trees, including large, mature trees historically planted within the grounds of the nearby Durris House.

1. Species and Age

The oldest trees are likely to be in-excess of 150 years and include conifers with a North American origin including Low's fir (*Abies concolor var. Lowiana*), Californian red fir (*Abies magnifica*), western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menzesii*), and western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). These often make large and impressive specimens, with several firs noted as in-excess of 30m. The Low's fir and four Californian red firs were previously recorded as among the tallest of their species in the UK.

Two good specimens of oriental spruce (*Picea orientalis*), a cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) and a monkey puzzle (*Araucaria araucana*) were also recorded near the driveway. Smaller, untagged ornamental trees along the driveway include a golden variety of cypress (*Chamaecyparis spp.)* and Japanese umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys verticillate*).

Several large and mature beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), oak (*Quercus robur*) and a yew (*Taxus baccata*) are also likely to date back to the time of earliest planting.

In more recent times, several Grand fir (*Abies grandis*) and western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) have been established or self-seeded onto the site. A number of these now make large and vigorously growing individuals, occurring in dense groups.

Self-seeded sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) continues to establish and commonly occurs between and beneath taller trees and along the woodland edge.

A large quantity of rhododendron is also present beneath the canopy. This forms a sprawling mass in places making access to the base of some trees difficult. It generally appears to be the invasive species, *rhododendron ponticum*. Confirmation of species could be made when in flower in the spring.

2. Ownership Boundaries

Many of the trees recorded by the survey occur within the ownership boundaries of the two properties, with concentrations of large trees within the woodland garden south west of Gardeners Cottage and adjacent to the driveway north east of Beechgrove.

In addition, 4 large and tall conifers within falling distance of the grounds of Gardeners Cottage were recorded within adjacent land to the west and south owned by Mr Andrew Reid, highlighted in yellow on the Tree Survey Drawing.

The ownership of the area of dense woodland to the south of the properties was unconfirmed at the time of survey. This contains a large number of tall trees and appears to have received little management in the past years. Enquiries as to who owns the land are on-going.

3.2 Tree Condition and Recommendations

The survey identified a number of issues relating to the health and condition of the trees.

These are noted in the Tree Survey Schedule and highlighted below.

Recommendations for management necessary for reasons of safety and good Arboricultural practice have been provided. .

A timescale for the completion of works has been given.

1. Beech 277

This large, recently dead tree overhangs the driveway to Gardeners Cottage and should be removed for reasons of safety.

This work should be undertaken within 3 months.

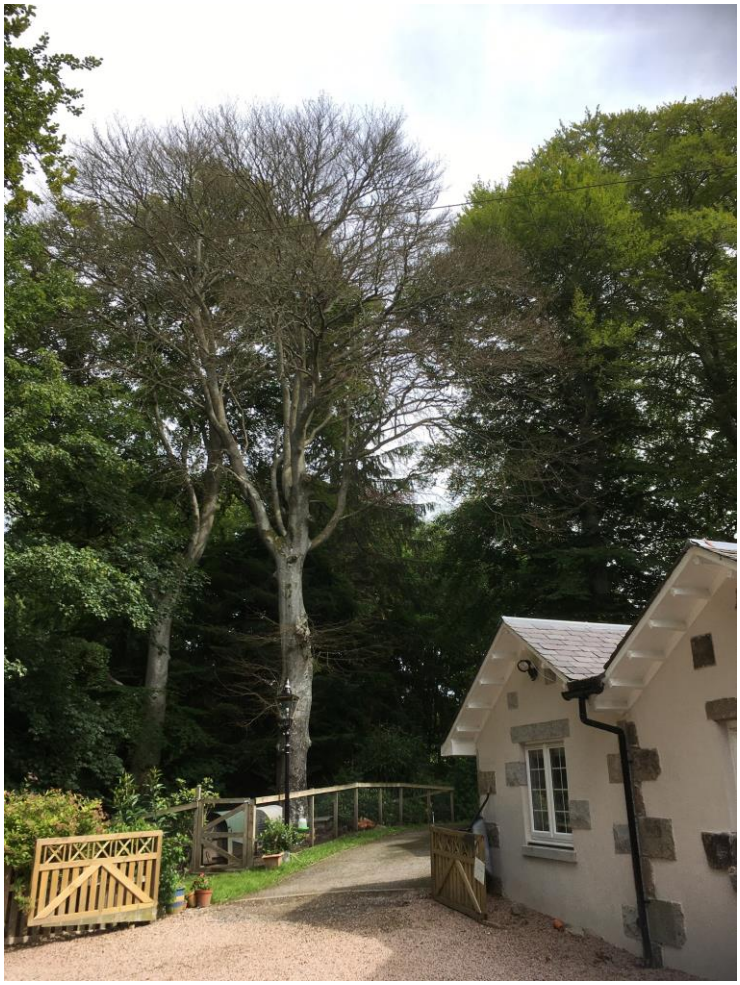

Photo 1 – Dead beech 277.

2. Group 282

The trees within this group occur on the steep embankment north west of Gardeners Cottage. Several self-seed, semi-mature sycamore, ash and beech form the dense canopy. Dense regeneration of young trees and rhododendron occurs beneath the canopy.

The removal of rhododendron and thinning of young trees could be undertaken to encourage the development of better trees and create a diverse woodland area. This work could be carried out within 12 months and at 10 yearly intervals thereafter.

Photo 2 – Dense embankment of rhododendron and self-seeded trees. Periodic removal of rhododendron and thinning of young self-seeded trees could be undertaken to enhance the quality of individual trees within this group.

3. Beech 283

This mature beech tree overhangs the car parking area outside Gardeners Cottage. It grows from a low boundary wall which has partially collapsed, possibly at least partially due to the increase in girth of roots.

The crown of the tree appears fairly dense with an amount deadwood within the interior.

Crown cleaning has been recommended due to the close proximity of the tree to the house and parked cars. This involves the pruning-out larger pieces of deadwood, and poorly formed branches, while retaining the overall shape of the tree.

This work should be undertaken within 6 months.

Crown cleaning results in a light thinning of the crown, reduces the hazard from falling branches and increases the flow of wind through the canopy.

Any work to repair the wall will require to be carried out carefully to avoid damaging tree roots.

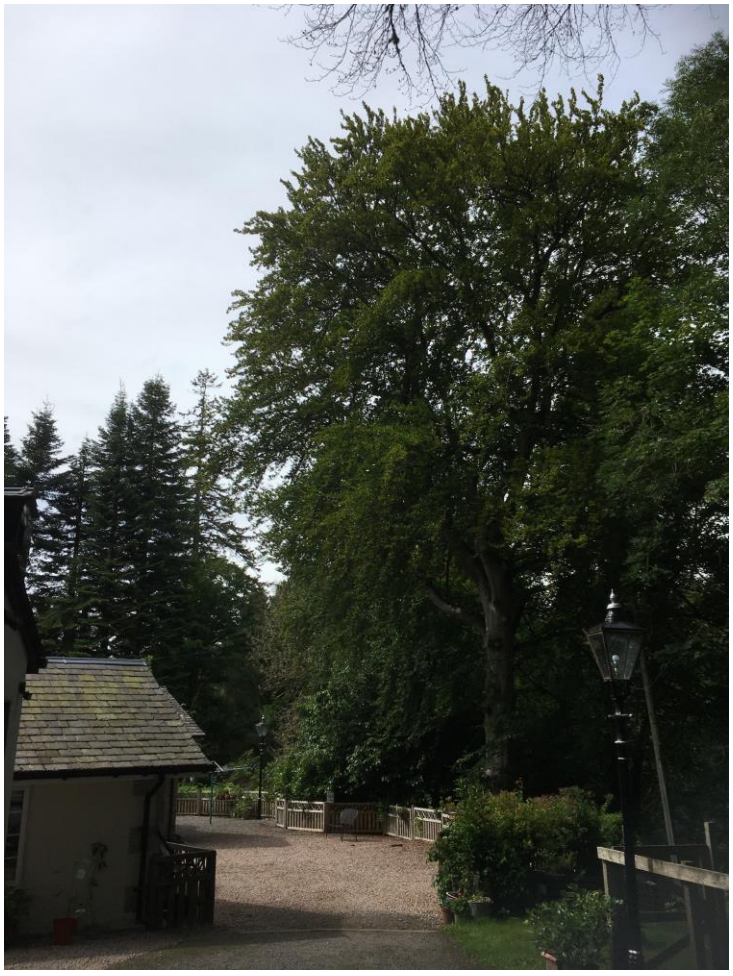

Photo 3 – Crown cleaning of beech 283 would reduce the risk of falling branches.

4. Californian red fir 301, Oriental spruce 305 and Douglas fir 306

These 3 trees occur within the area of unconfirmed ownership. Poor quality and in the case of 301 potentially unstable smaller trees occur at the base of the larger conifers.

Removal of the smaller trees is recommended, and in the case of the Douglas fir, also rhododendron.

The works will maintain access for routine tree inspection of large trees and help maintain their form and appearance of the conifers.

The works should be carried out within 6 months.

5. Oak 314 and 315

The poor-quality, semi-mature Douglas fir cross's the trunk of 314 and should be removed to maintain the form of the oak.

A broken hanging branch, fallen from oak 315 is suspended above the driveway in the crown of an adjacent holly. This should be removed.

This work should be undertaken within 6 months.

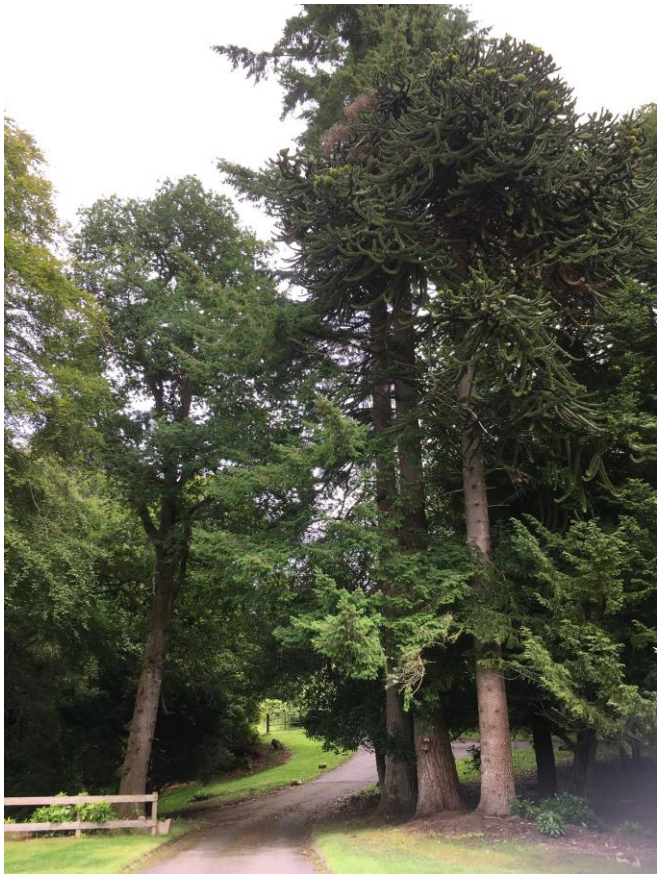

Photo 4 - Deadwooding and removal of a poorly preforming semi-mature tree would reduce the risk and improve the appearance of trees on the driveway.

6. Beech 316

This mature tree overhangs the driveway and woodpile at Gardeners Cottage and the garden boundary and lawn of Beechgrove.

The numerous small fungal fruiting bodies on the large wound on the lower trunk could be *Bjerkandera adjusta.* The trees is developing new wood around the margins of the old wound.

A significant amount of deadwood is present in the crown and crown cleaning has been recommended as described for 283 above.

Photo 5 - Crown cleaning would reduce the risk from falling branches.

7. Further Inspection of Tall Conifers

The close proximity of neighbouring trees and height of several conifers made visual inspection of the upper parts of these trees difficult, even with binoculars.

To obtain a better view and allow more detailed assessment of the upper parts of the tall conifers drone filming can be undertaken.

Recent failures of Grand firs 290 and 291 were noted to have occurred at poorly formed forks within the upper crown. Nearby similar tree 294 appears to have a poorly formed top and may be prone to failure at the point of defect.

Aerial inspection of tall conifers 297 and 301 would provide a more detailed inspection of the upper parts of these large trees which occur close to gardens.

This work should be carried out within 6 months.

Photo 6 - The use of drone footage would provide a more detailed inspection of the upper parts of tall trees which are difficult to see from ground level.

3.3 Arboricultural Standards and Consent

The trees within the site are subject to Aberdeenshire Council Tree Preservation Order AC TP0 36 (2016) Durris House and Woodlands.

Tree works should therefore only be undertaken following close liaison with and the consent of Aberdeenshire Council Planning Department.

Once approved, works should be carried out by a suitably competent and experienced tree surgeon in-accordance with BS 3998:2010 *'Tree Work – Recommendations.'*

3.4 Re-Inspection Frequency

Trees within areas of frequent access or occupancy require to be subject to regular and routine inspection for reasons of safety.

On site it is recommended that this be carried out and documented by a suitably competent and experienced Arborist on **an annual basis.**

Additional inspections maybe required in the aftermath of severe storms.

APPENDIX 1 - TREE SURVEY DRAWING

No Scale – Tree / Group positions are estimated and intended to be indicative only.

Key:

Approximate trunk position

Tree to be pruned / self-seeded trees removed from base.

Dead tree to be removed.

Edge of group of trees

APPENDIX 2 – TREE SURVEY SCHEDULE

TREE SURVEY SCHEDULE TERMS

Tag No.	Identification number of area of trees as shown on drawing.
Species	Common name of species.
Ht (m)	Height estimated in meters.
Dia (mm)	Diameter estimated at 1.5m above ground level in millimetres.
Max. Crown Spread (m)	Maximum crown radius estimated in meters.
Age Class	Stage in life cycle. Young, semi-mature, mature, veteran.
Condition	Good, fair, poor, dead.
Comments	General comments on tree health, structural condition and form, highlighting any defects or areas of concern.
Recommendations	Recommendations for management in the interest of safety and good arboricultural management.
Timescale	Timescale for undertaking recommendations.

TREE CONDITION CATEGORIES

Good	(1) Healthy trees with no major defects (2) Trees with a considerable life expectancy (3) Trees of good shape and form
Fair	(1) Healthy trees with small or easily remedied defects (2) Trees with a shorter life expectancy (3) Trees of reasonable shape and form
Poor	(1) Trees with significant structural defects and/or decay (2) Trees of low vigour and under stress (3) Trees with a limited life expectancy (4) Trees of inferior shape and form
Dead	(1) Dead trees