



2021  
Visual Tree Assessment

59 St. Georges Road  
Cheltenham  
GL50 3DU



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**Site:** 59 St. Georges Road, Cheltenham, GL50 3DU

**Assessment Date:** Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**Compiled by:** Mr Adrian Phillips, CertArb (RFS)

**Instructed by:** Mr David Brooks

## 1.0 Summary

- 1.1** This Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) has been carried out from ground level, following methodologies available for the professional arborist to use.
- 1.2** The VTA method is a cosmopolitan and legally accepted method of tree control, interpreting the body language and warning signs, evaluating the trees defects and overall vitality/condition.
- 1.3** The 3 stages of a VTA are;
  - a) Visual inspection of the tree for defect symptoms and overall vitality.
  - b) If a defect is suspected on the basis of the symptoms, the presence or absence of that defect must be confirmed by thorough examination.
  - c) The use of specialist tree decay diagnostic equipment. Climbing arborist tree assessment and the quantification of results, through the use of a tree consultant.
- 1.4** Stages a and b are included in this VTA. Stage c will be noted in the information and the recommended works.

## 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1** Site visit taken place on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Weather conditions were acceptable. The VTA was compiled by Mr Adrian Phillips, CertArb (RFS) AAAC, who has over 30 years' experience in the Arboricultural industry.
- 2.2** All trees are located within the curtilage of the site address.
- 2.3** English and Latin names have been used for identification. Heights and spreads are in metres.

## 3.0 Planning Considerations

- 3.1 If the tree or site is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or falls within a Conservation Area all works will be subject to a formal planning application with your local council.
- 3.2 Cheltenham Tree Services provides a useful service and with your permission can take care of planning protocol.

## 4.0 Wildlife Issues

- 4.1 **Bats and Birds:**  
Under current legislation it is a criminal offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb birds and bats as per the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2001 & The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- 4.2 All tree work should be evaluated prior to its commencement. A comprehensive risk assessment should be produced covering all areas of Arboricultural works, environmental and wildlife issues.

## 5.0 Arboricultural Practice

- 5.1 Arborists and tree surgeons are highly specialised in their work place. Choosing a competent company can be difficult. In your procurement of work The Arboricultural Association offers you a comprehensive choice of qualified companies on their website [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk).
- 5.2 All tree work should be carried out to the highest standards enclosed in the British Standard 3998-2010 recommendations for tree work.

## 6.0 Maturity Guide

**Young: Definition:** Newly planted/ replanted/ replacement or adopted tree, not fully established; usually with good vigour.

**Semi-Mature:** Definition: Established; normally vigorous and increasing in height.

**Mature:** Definition: Well-established trees around the middle half of their lives and retaining good vigour. Achieving full height but their crowns still spreading.

**Late-Mature:** Definition: Fully established trees, generally retaining moderate vigour but growth slowing.

**Over-Mature:** Definition: Fully mature trees in last quarter of their lives, vigour declining.

**Veteran: Definition:** Very old; low vigour; liable to decline.

## 7.0 Terminology

### 7.1 Dead Wooding:

Definition: The removal of all dead, dying, damaged or diseased wood, larger than 50mm (2 inches) diameter at its base, from the crown of the tree.

Objective: Primarily to remove wood which would otherwise be naturally shed from the tree and in doing so could expose persons, property, vehicles etc. to an unacceptable risk.

### 7.2 Crown Lifting:

Definition: The removal of the lower limbs, branches or parts of branches (including any branch stumps) from a tree to a specified height above ground level.

Objective: To achieve a desired clearance above ground level to allow clear pedestrian/vehicular passage or to remove branches which would otherwise touch buildings/structures, or to clear sight lines.

### 7.3 Crown Thinning:

Definition: The removal of a specified percentage of the trees crown by pruning out secondary and small live branch growth from within to produce an even density of foliage around a well-spaced and balanced branch structure. Crown thinning should always include "dead wooding".

Objective: The objectives of crown thinning may be varied:

- d) Temporarily reduce the amount of light loss to persons and or property adjacent to the tree.
- e) Temporarily reduce the amount of leaf surface area which may be "caught" by the wind which may result in the tree being blown over.
- f) Compensate for damage to the root system.

### 7.4 Crown Reduction:

Definition: The reduction in height and/or spread of the crown of a tree leaving it balanced. Crown reduction should always include dead wooding.

Objective: To make the crown of the tree similar by reducing the length of the limbs/branches back to a suitable point which will promote the growth of new shoots, that being a branch notch, node or back to a branch collar but retaining the flowing line of the branches. As far as is practicable the crown should be left balanced and aesthetically pleasing bearing in mind the natural form/habit of the species.

Crown reduction may be undertaken for varied reasons:

- a) Reduce the size of a tree which has outgrown its available space.
- b) Reduce the water demand of the tree.
- c) Prevent trees interfering with overhead lines/cables.
- d) To balance a misshapen tree.

### **7.5 Removal of Epicormic/ Basal Growths / Shoots / Ivy:**

Definition: Epicormic growths/shoots are adventitious shoots which 'burst' out from the base main trunk or branches of trees and proliferate during the months of May-August. They are often called 'suckers', 'frith', 'feathers' etc. and are usually less than 10mm in diameter.

Objective: In most instances, removal of epicormic growth is undertaken purely for aesthetic reasons, i.e., to achieve a tidy appearance. In some instances, however, it is necessary to keep epicormic growth under control to avoid obstructing the passage of pedestrians and vehicles, to enable unobstructed vision to highway users and to allow inspection of the structure of the tree.

### **7.6 Formative Pruning:**

Definition: The pruning of a tree (usually a young tree) to achieve a desired shape or form.

Objective: To produce a tree which will develop into:

- a) A structurally sound tree
- b) Be aesthetically pleasing
- c) Suited to surround available space and conditions
- d) Have a balanced crown that will require little corrective pruning

### **7.7 Low Branches:**

Definition: Any branch which hangs lower than 2.2m, over a walkway, open space or 4.5m over a roadway/access road, which constitutes as a hazard. Low branches could damage vehicles or pose a high risk of impact to the upper body (mainly the head area).

### **7.8 Inspect / V.T.A.:**

Definition: To undertake a climbing inspection of the tree and record findings.

Objective: To provide the Client with relevant, factual information in writing to enable decisions to be made on the safety of the tree and any appropriate remedial works.

### **7.9 Tree Removal:**

Definition: To remove the above ground parts.

Objective: The objective(s) of removal may be wide ranging, commonly:

- a) Tree is dead/dying/diseased
- b) Tree is unsafe
- c) Tree is an inappropriate species for the site

## 7.10 Ash Dieback:

The Common Ash (*Fraxinus Excelsior*), is one of Britain's most prolific native trees and accounts for around 12% of our broadleaf woodlands, as well as being found in parks and gardens. A fungus commonly known as Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus Fraxineus* / *Chalara Fraxinea*), originating in Asia has worked its way across Europe with devastating effect, reaching our shores around 2007. It is now thought that within the next 30 years, we will see a 75% mortality of this iconic tree species and although there is no cure for the disease, some trees have shown a resilience.

### **What to look for:**

The first signs of infection are the decrease in leaf size in the upper canopy with premature leaf loss. Lesions can also appear, around the stem base which can be difficult to spot. In a short time, the tree will look like it is dying, hence the name Ash Dieback. Once infected, trees become brittle and vulnerable to secondary pathogens which can lead to more pressing complications. This will not only minimise the risk of damage or injury caused by the tree, but also demonstrates responsible tree management, preventing foreseeable harm in accordance with your legal Duty of Care.

**Stage 1:** Identifying Ash trees with the onset of the infection.

**Stage 2:** Progression of obvious Ash dieback.

**Stage 3:** Significant dieback throughout the crown, requiring action.

**Stage 4:** Rendering the tree in a hazardous condition, posing a very high risk of failure.

**Stage 5:** Rendering the tree in a hazardous condition, posing a very high risk of failure with added pathogens.

## 8.0 Tree Risk Rating

### 8.1 Tree Risk Assessment = H – M – L

Tree safety management is about limiting the risk of harm from tree failure while maintaining the benefits of a green and tree enriched environment. The condition of a tree is not necessarily its Risk Rate. Instead, the Surveyor has first addressed the context in which the tree stands and identified the risk that they pose to people or property, based on their size and the likelihood they will cause harm or damage if it were to fail. This involves identifying the type of use directly beneath a tree, the surrounding area, or any static infrastructure all within the target zone if all or part of it were to fail.

### 8.2 High Risk Rating:

Buildings or static infrastructure (including power lines), highways, high volume traffic, vehicular, bikes, pedestrian etc. Areas of green space used for educational or leisure activities and public access (high volume of footfall). Car parking and activities, horses, livestock, recreational areas.

### 8.3 Medium Risk Rating:

Buildings, static infrastructure, highways, low volume traffic, vehicular. Bikes, pedestrians, areas of green space, gardens, parks, woodland with open access for educational or leisure activities.

### 8.4 Low Risk Rating:

Buildings, static infrastructure, pedestrians, or residents. Areas of green space, gardens, woodland, open access. Infrequent use.

## 9.0 Priority Codes

**Priority 1:** Urgent works to be addressed within 6 weeks or less.

**Priority 2:** Works that can be scheduled in within 6-12 months.

**Priority 3:** Works which are desirable but the completion of which is not related to issues of safety.

## 10.0 Cost

**10.1** A guide price will be included in the VTA for works recommended.

## 11.0 Limitations

**11.1** There is no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied that problems or deficiencies in the subject trees may not arise in the future. Trees are dynamic, living organisms and as such their health and condition can change rapidly.

**11.2 Re-inspection:** The health conditions and safety of trees should be checked regularly. 24 month inspections should include winter and summer site visits.

## 12.0 Report & Recommended Works

Item	Photograph	Species	Ht. (m)	Spread (m)	DBH (cm)	Description	Recommendations	Risk Rating	Priority Code
T1	 <p><i>Figure 1</i></p>  <p><i>Figure 2</i></p>  <p><i>Figure 3</i></p>	Sycamore (Acer Pseudoplatanus)	21	12	69	<p>Over mature tree located to the rear of the property. The tree and crown are overhanging the residents right of way, the River Chelt, the neighbours garden and the rear boundary wall. The stem base was free of visible defects, although difficult to facilitate a full stem base inspection, due to ivy infestation. To the North is the retaining riverbank wall. Due to the trees location, I would imagine that there is severe root pressure on the adjacent riverbank wall, which cannot be calculated but is almost certainly happening. This could lead to complete failure.</p> <p>The tree has an historic lean to the South (fig.3). I believe that this is a phototropic tendency and the tree is growing out towards the available light. The crown to the South is</p>	<p>Complete removal by sectional dismantling, leaving the stump at 1.5m in height and treated with Eco plug max growth inhibitor.</p> <p>Includes planning application to Cheltenham Borough Council for these works and this Visual Tree Assessment (VTA).</p>	H	2

Item	Photograph	Species	Ht. (m)	Spread (m)	DBH (cm)	Description	Recommendations	Risk Rating	Priority Code
	 <p data-bbox="296 654 386 678"><i>Figure 4</i></p>  <p data-bbox="296 1117 386 1141"><i>Figure 5</i></p>					<p data-bbox="1066 245 1423 821">widespreading and puts the rear garden in complete shade. Hard to facilitate a full crown inspection due to dead ivy, which is making the amenity situation a lot worse. I note that there is lots of squirrel damage within the crown, this will only lead to sporadic branch failure with a high risk to any static infrastructure or occupants to the rear garden.</p> <p data-bbox="1066 867 1423 976">In my opinion, the tree has outgrown its location and needs to be removed.</p>			

# 13.0 Tree Location & Site Plan

