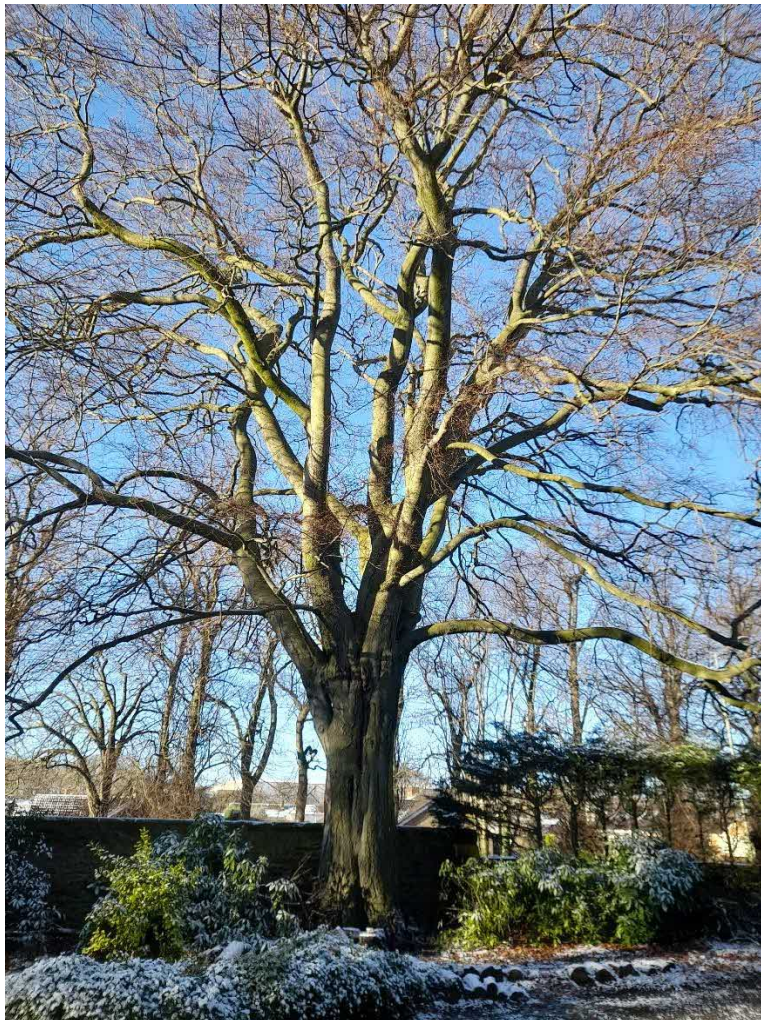




Arboricultural Assessment Of Trees at 2 North Lodge,
Chester le Street, Co. Durham, DH3 4AZ

Report 1037



For

Kathleen Healer

14 January 2023

Instructions and Introduction

1. I am instructed by Kathleen Healer of the above address to carry out an Arboricultural Assessment (AA) of trees growing within this residential site. I should determine the likelihood of structural failure of each tree, its condition, longevity and identify any mitigation measures. Such advice will help the client discharge their duties under the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984.
2. The primary driver for the inspection is the safety of road users and occupants of the site.

Scope of the report

3. The condition of the tree is based on the visual assessment of the tree using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) methodology, as devised by Mattheck (1991). Where any significant risk was expected within the next 5 years' notes were made regarding remedial action.
4. The inspection of each tree is confined to visual ground observations only.
5. The timescales for action are aligned with commonly used public documents ie; Durham County Councils Corporate Tree Policy;

Priority	Response
Priority A: Urgent Public Safety	From within 24 hours to one week depending upon the risk
Priority B: Non-urgent but essential work	Between 1 to 6 months depending upon risk and time of year
Priority C: Desirable	12 months where possible

DH3\$AZ

Image 1- Priority Timescales

6. Teesdale Heritage Trees has adopted the VALID Tree Risk Assessment methodology. The strategy explains the thinking behind managing risks from trees and how the inspection was conducted. The inspection was an on foot Basic Active Assessment, with the options of Detailed or Advanced Assessment.

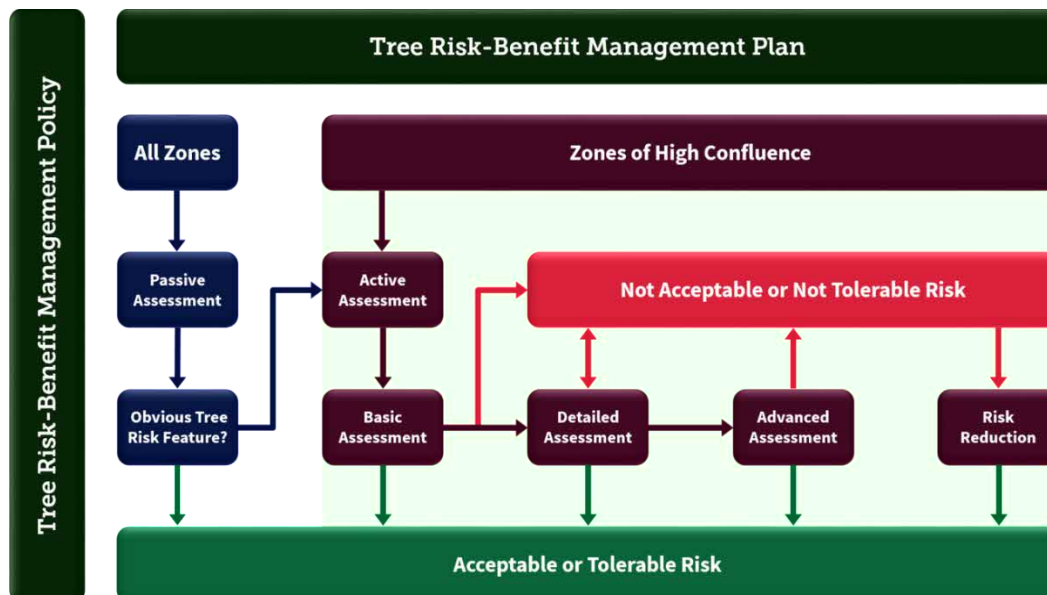


Image 2- VALID Strategy

7. Although every tree was inspected only those trees that require safety works were documented. This inspection does not cover tree management such as removing low branches, formative pruning of young trees or felling of low quality, non hazardous trees. The basis for works was tree features that could fail within a 5 year period and cause catastrophic injury/damage. For example, minor deadwood was not scheduled to be removed nor major deadwood that overhangs grazing land or low risk areas. Where trees require work, a prescription was given and a suggested timeframe indicating how urgent the works are.

Limitations of the survey

8. Survey details are based on the condition of the tree at the time of the site visit. This may mean that certain signs of pests or diseases may evade detection due to the season in which the site visit took place. Fewer pathogens can be observed in the winter. Some decay fungi only exhibit fruiting bodies annually and for a very limited period or may not reveal external signs until decay is advanced. Trees are living organisms and change over time. They may also be affected by changes in their environment, wind speed and physical damage. The survey details are therefore a mere snap shot of the condition of the trees on the day that they were visited. Trees can never be risk free, however the risks associated with trees are nationally very low – 1;10,000,000. With prudent management the risk to the public can be kept to a reasonable level. Landowners are provided with detailed advice about reducing their liability in a document published by The National Tree Safety Group – ‘Common Sense Risk Management of Trees’. <https://www.forestry.gov.uk/safetreemanagement>.
9. Further aerial inspections, invasive investigation or electronic assessment may form part of a works prescription.

Site visit

10. One site visit was carried out by Rodger Lowe on 14 January 2023.
11. Weather conditions on the day were bright and cold with light snow.
12. The data for each tree of note, is annotated in schedule (Appendix 1).
13. The locations of each tree are indicative only and species, stem diameter and crown spread are included to help identify individual trees. Each tree was also marked with a numbered metal tag attached to the trunk.

Site Notes

14. Two trees were considered to warrant assessment beyond a simple visually assessment -T476 and T477, both mature Beech trees.
15. T476 has suffered bark loss due to fire damage but the damage at this stage appears superficial with saprophytic fungi consuming the dead bark and sapwood. The impact on the heartwood at this stage is negligible.
16. Of more concern is the fate of T477, a magnificent mature Beech that contributes significantly to the street scene. The canopy is full and symmetrical with very little deadwood and no obvious defects. However, there are three sites around the base that have fruiting bodies at the soil interface. These fruiting bodies belong to a root decay fungus Giant Polypore (*Meripilus giganteus*).
17. This fungus is particularly dangerous as it hollows out the roots, degrading tensile strength whilst still conducting water via the root sapwood. The tree can appear in rude health with a full canopy immediately prior to the whole tree uprooting, particularly whilst in leaf.
18. Once infected the tree sometimes gradually declines, shedding twigs, branches then limbs, but more commonly the tree uproots, often in summer, when the sail area is increased to wind exposure by the appearance of the leaves.
19. A VALID tree risk/benefit assessment was carried out and the risk was Not Tolerable.
20. Some reassurance can be had from the fact that the tree is still standing following 3 major storms in the last 12 months and I conclude that the infection is relatively new, but my recommendation is to remove this tree as the targets are very high value (A167) and the effect of the infection is well documented.



Image 3 – Uprooted Beech host to Meripilus. Photo shows anchorage root hollowed out by the fungus



Image 4 - Example of a fresh fruiting body of Meripilus

Permissions

21. We have checked (online) with Durham County Council to see if any Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) or Conservation Areas status applies. As can be seen from the GIS screen shot below, a majority of the site is covered by an Area (Area 5) TPO titled North Lodge. The area designation protects all the trees existent at the time the TPO was made. Unfortunately the publicly available information does not give a date for the TPO.

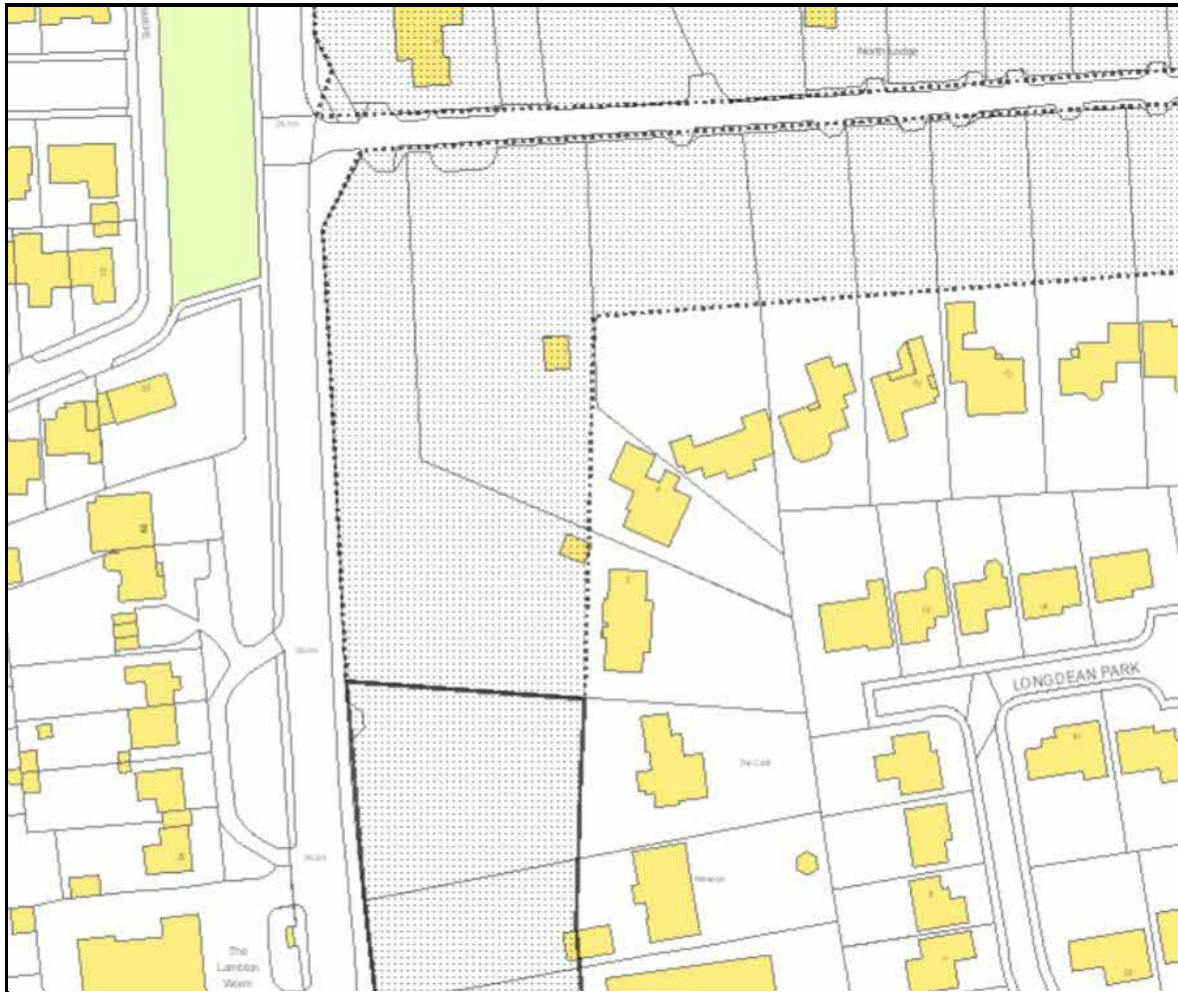


Image 5- TPO extent

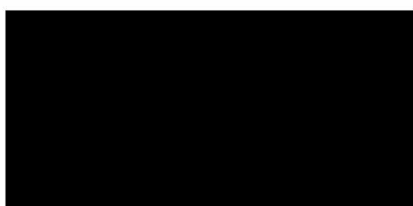
Habitats

22. The likelihood of bats using the tree as a roost or breeding colony is low. In the UK all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected and all bat roosts and bats are protected by European Law. All contractors and land owners have an obligation towards wildlife and it is recommended that tree works are carried out outside the bird nesting season (Nov-March) to minimise any encounter with nesting birds. If this is not possible a competent person must inspect all trees and hedges immediately

prior to their removal. If any active nests are observed all tree removal must wait until the young have flown the nest. Some species may have two broods per season.

Conclusion

23. The suggested works schedules can be seen in the Data Table at Appendix 1.
24. The next step would be to submit a formal planning application to Durham County Council to gain consent to carry out the works in Appendix 1.
25. T476 should be monitored for the presence of decay pathogens with the next tree inspection carried out in September 2028.



Rodger Vernon Lowe M.Arb.A



Appendices

Appendix 1 - Data Table

Appendix 2 – Condition Cascade Chart

Appendix 3 – Additional Photographs

Appendix 1

Tree No.	Species Common Name Genus species	Height (M)	Crown Spread (M)				Trunk Dia. (MM)	Age	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Estimated Remaining Contribution (Years)	Tree Quality Assessment	Observations	Suggested works	Ultimate Size For Species (M)		Works Priority
			N	S	E	W									Height	Spread	
T476	Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	29	10	10	10	10	1250	Mature	Good	Moderate	20+	B1	Decay present on stem. Fungal brackets visible on stem. Major bark wounding on stem. Fire damage. Turkey tail Fungal fruiting bodies where bark is damaged. Superficial damage at present but extensive bark loss will lead to cavity formation and susceptibility to aggressive decay pathogens	None	30	25	-

Tree No.	Species Common Name Genus species	Height (M)	Crown Spread (M)				Trunk Dia. (MM)	Age	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Estimated Remaining Contribution (Years)	Tree Quality Assessment	Observations	Suggested works	Ultimate Size For Species (M)		Works Priority
			N	S	E	W									Height	Spread	
T477	Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	24	12	12	12	12	1550	Mature	Good	Poor	10+	C1	Stem divides above 1.5m. 1x branch fused at 3m. Fungal brackets visible at base (<i>Meripilus giganteus</i>) in 3 locations	Apply for consent to fell	30	25	A
T478	Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)	9	3	3	3	3	220	Semi mature	Poor	Poor	<10	U	Low vitality. Declining. Stem divides above 1.5m. Major deadwood in crown.	Apply for consent to fell	22	16	C
T479	Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)	12	3	5	2	6	500	Semi mature	Fair	Good	20+	B1	Stem divides above 1.5m. 1x major deadwood branch in crown.	Remove deadwood	22	16	C

Tree No.	Species Common Name Genus species	Height (M)	Crown Spread (M)				Trunk Dia. (MM)	Age	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Estimated Remaining Contribution (Years)	Tree Quality Assessment	Observations	Suggested works	Ultimate Size For Species (M)		Works Priority
			N	S	E	W									Height	Spread	
T480	Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus)	16	3	5	5	6	550	Semi mature	Fair	Good	40+	A1	Stem divides above 1.5m. Branches encroaching upon building.	Apply for consent to crown lift to 5m.	22	16	C

Appendix 2- Category Cascade Chart

Category and definition	Criteria (including subcategories where appropriate)		
Trees unsuitable for retention (see note)			
Category U Those in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trees that have a serious, irremediable, structural defect, such that their early loss is expected due to collapse, including those that will become unviable after removal of other U category trees (i.e. where, for whatever reason, the loss of companion shelter cannot be mitigated by pruning) Trees that are dead or are showing signs of significant, immediate, and irreversible overall decline Trees infected with pathogens of significance to the health and/or safety of other trees nearby (e.g. Dutch elm disease), or very low quality trees suppressing adjacent trees of better quality <p><i>Note – Category U trees can have existing or potential conservation value which it might be desirable to preserve; see 4.5.7.</i></p>		
	1 Mainly arboriculture qualities	2 Mainly landscape qualities	3 Mainly cultural values, including conservation
Trees to be considered for retention			
Category A Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years	Trees that are particularly good examples of their species, especially if rare or unusual, or those that are essential components of groups or formal or semi-formal arboriculture features (e.g. the dominant and/or principal trees within an avenue)	Trees, groups or woodlands of particular visual importance as arboricultural and/or landscape features	Trees, groups or woodlands of significant conservation, historical, commemorative or other value (e.g. veteran trees or wood pasture)
Category B Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years	Trees that might be included in category A, but are downgraded because of impaired condition (e.g. presence of significant though remediable defects, including unsympathetic past management and minor storm damage), such that they are unlikely to be suitable for retention for beyond 40 years; or trees lacking the special quality necessary to merit the category A designation	Trees present in numbers, usually as groups or woodlands, such that they attract a higher collective rating than they might as individuals; or trees occurring as collectives but situated so as to make little visual contribution to the wider locality	Trees with material conservation or other cultural value
Category C Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150 mm	Unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories	Trees present in groups or woodlands, but without this conferring on them significantly greater collective landscape value; and/or trees offering low or only temporary/transient landscape benefits	Tree with no material conservation or other cultural value

Additional Photographs



Photo 1- extent of bark damage to T476



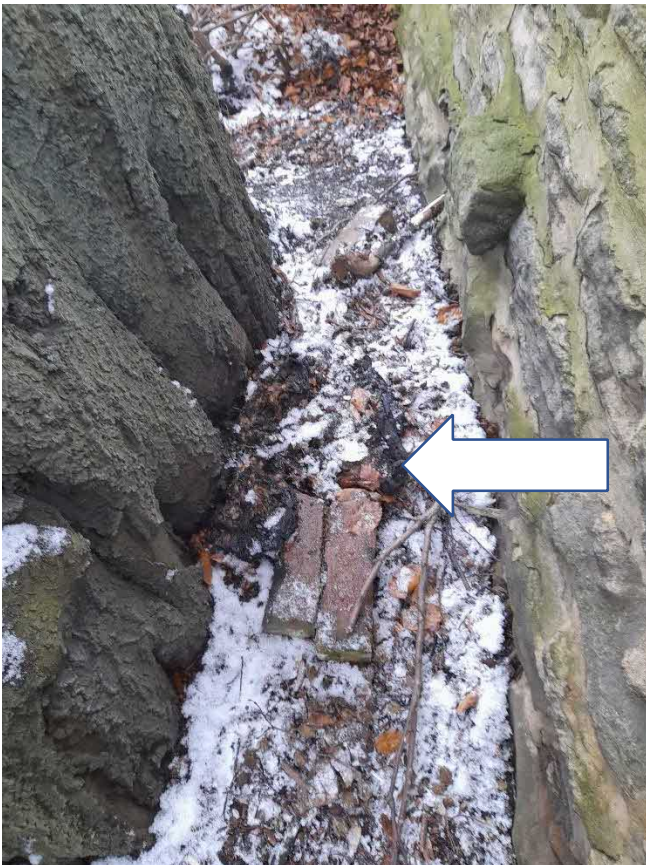
Photo 2 – T476 – Detail of Turkey Tail fruiting bodies (*Coriolus versicolor*)



Photo 3- T476. Arrow shows new bark trying to bridge damaged area.



Photo 4- T477



Photos 5 and 6 - 2 of the 3 locations of fruiting bodies of *Meripilus giganteus* (Giant Polypore)

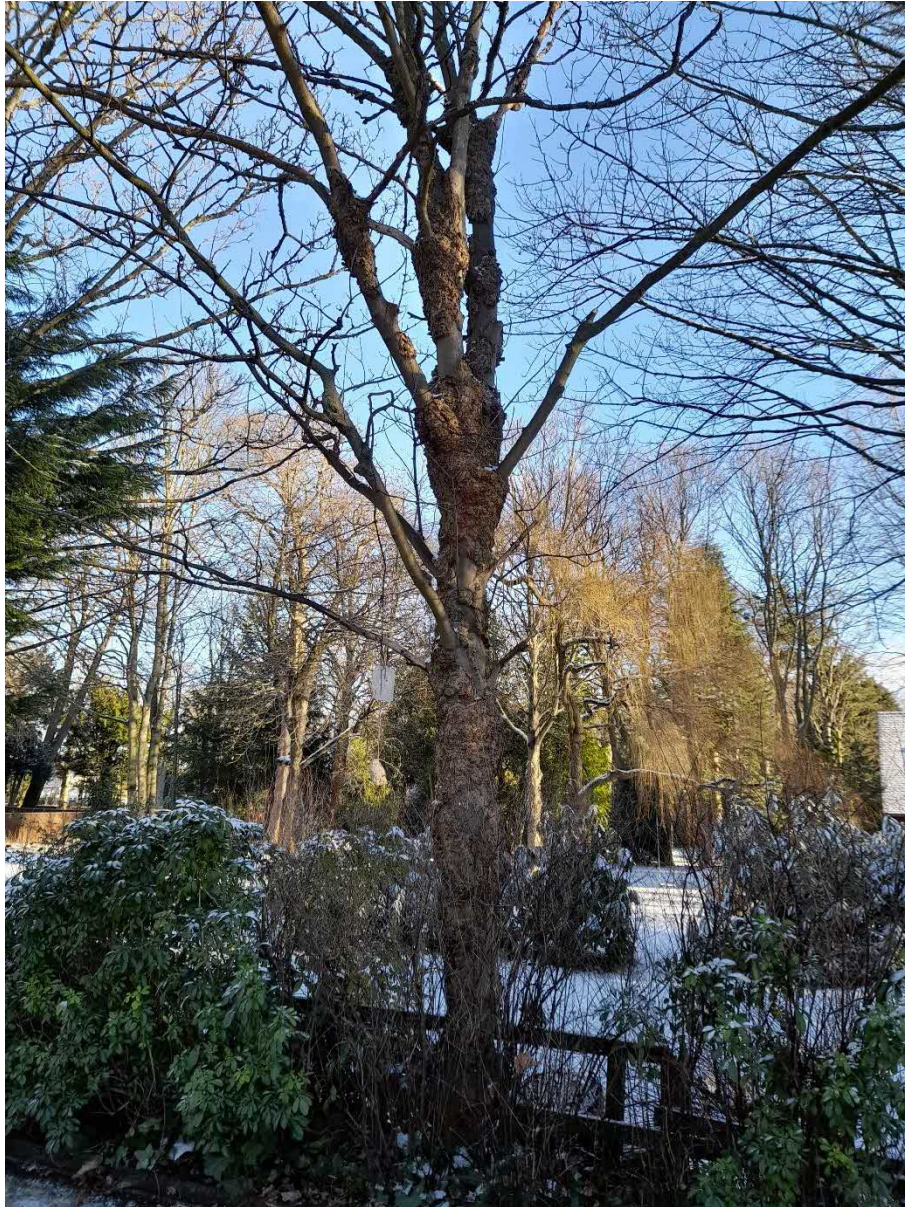


Photo 7 – T478.



Photo 7 – T480. Red lines indicate proposed pruning cut locations