Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment

For trees at

New Farm, Felton

On behalf of

Steve Demmery

Inspected and prepared by

Ben Rose BSc (Hons) MSc DipArb(RFS) MICFor RCArborA
Chartered Arboriculturist
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9th March 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

This report has been commissioned by Steve Demmery who is the prospective purchaser of the subject property, New Farm, 15 Upper Town Lane, Felton, BS40 9YA.

A check of the North Somerset Council online mapping system confirms that the site is within a conservation area, and that none of the trees at the property are protected by a tree preservation order (TPO). During the site visit I noticed that yew trees are a characteristic of Felton with several prominent trees in the vicinity.

1.2 Brief

The report is based on a visual assessment of the trees. The brief is to carry out the following:

1. A preliminary site survey to include recording of relevant tree information and site layout.
2. A desktop assessment of risk of tree-related subsidence (i.e. checking local soil maps).
3. A check for tree preservation orders.
4. Recommendations for any necessary tree works.
5. Inspection of all significant trees in order to meet the duty of care under the Occupiers Liability Acts (HMSO 1957 & 1984).
6. Produce of a report formally presenting the survey information, a plan of the site, the assessment of the trees and recommendations for immediate works.

1.3 Site visit

I visited New Farm on 9th March 2023 to survey the trees within normal influencing distance of the property. There was snow on the ground, but this did not present any constraints to the survey.

1.4 Limitations

Unless specifically instructed in writing this survey undertaken in relation to this mortgage application and mortgage insurance assessment (or any other survey) is a preliminary one in respect of the trees, soils and any other factors. The surveyor has not taken soil or root samples for analysis and all inspections were done from ground level. The report is valid only for typical weather conditions. Healthy trees or parts of healthy trees may fail in normal weather situations although the risk is significantly increased in storm conditions and as the consequences of such weather events are unforeseeable, Bosky Trees cannot be held liable for any such failures.

No reliance shall be placed on any comment(s) the surveyor may have made in respect of the structural integrity of any main structure or drainage system located on the premises to which this survey and report relates. You are advised that where man-made structures are involved you may need to obtain structural engineering and/or geotechnical advice.

The report refers to the condition of the tree(s) and an assessment of the site on the day that the evaluation was undertaken. The risk assessment has considered current site usage. New facilities or activities may change the patterns of site usage and hence necessitate a re-assessment of the trees.

Aerial tree inspection and the use of decay detection equipment are outside the scope of the survey. Should further assessment involving any of these be required it will be highlighted in the report.

This report should not be relied upon as a definitive assessment of current and or future subsidence risks but should be interpreted and utilised as a guide for Mr Demmery and his immediate mortgage lenders or buildings insurers based on the factual information available.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The tree plan

The tree plan (TP-1) shows the locations of the trees included in the survey, it should be noted that positions are approximate and based on site observations only. This plan is provided at the rear of the report.

2.2 The property

The property comprises a semi-detached two-storey dwelling which was constructed late C15 to early C16 with C20 alterations and additions.

We have not been made aware of any current structural problems with the property or the associated drainage system. I am unaware of any previous insurance claims made in relation to structural movements, defects or damage.

No obvious signs of cracking in the outer walls of the building were observed during the site survey. No other evidence of building subsidence has been provided to Bosky Trees. If you, or your advisors have any information to suggest that the property has or is suffering from any structural defect, you should

(a) release the information to me, and

(b) seek the advice of a structural engineer, if you have not already done so.

2.3 Soil information

The Cranfield University Soilscapes map (Appendix 3) identifies this area as having freely draining slightly acid but base-rich soils. A definitive soil type and index properties (shrink/swell potential) can only be determined precisely by laboratory testing of soil samples. However, given the local geography, geology, soil characteristics and climate are all conducive to stable soil conditions and persistent soil moisture deficits are not anticipated.

2.4 Services

No information relating to the services has been provided. No information or reports relating to the condition of the drains have been made available. Inspection chamber covers have not been lifted or any other inspection of the drains made.

3 THE APPRAISAL

3.1 The treescape

Details of three individual trees, shrubs and climbers were recorded. Any shrubs, trees or climbers not recorded are considered not to be a risk to the building, its occupants or visitors. The yew tree (T1), cherry laurel (T2) and the privet (T3) are all considered to be within influencing distance[1] of the property. All three of these trees are likely to be younger than the building. The cherry laurel also has the potential to grow much larger.

3.2 Direct damage

In terms of the risk of direct damage from whole or part tree failure this is currently assessed as low. No indications of poor health or disease were observed or significant defects noted which may compromise the structural stability of the trees. On this basis no remedial works to address safety issues are considered necessary at this time. There is the little potential for disruption/displacement to hard surfacing (driveway and paving), but this is can be addressed easily by pruning of the offending roots if such damage were to occur.

It is likely that over time the yew tree (T1) will cause direct damage to the adjacent retaining wall. Currently there is a hairline crack in this wall and as the base of the tree grows incrementally this damage is likely to become progressively worse. However this process will take years, and there are various ways that the wall could be repaired without needing to cut the tree down.

Figure 1: The yew tree is likely to cause cracking of the retaining wall over time.

[1] INFLUENCING DISTANCE
In this report, influencing distance is defined as the distance given in the Kew Root Survey (Cutler & Richardson 1989) at which 75% of all cases of damage for a given genus or species has been recorded. In the case of large forest type species the 90% distances is used. The 75% distance is recommended by Gasson & Cutler (1998) who consider that to use the 100% distance to define the influencing distance is a misuse of the data. Where a species of tree is encountered that is not listed in the Kew Root Survey, the influencing distance is estimated using the Kew Root Survey data for similar species with respect to size and scale.

The crown of the yew tree currently overhangs the house, and it is advised that the branches closest to the building are pruned to prevent damage to the roof and guttering.

3.3 Indirect damage

There is no evidence to suggest that building subsidence is currently occurring. I have not carried out any excavations to confirm soil characteristics but reference to the Cranfield University Soilscapes map identifies this area to have a low clay related ground movement potential. Clay related soil shrinkage is unlikely to be extensive in the area and as such the risk of subsidence associated with soil drying by tree roots is not significant.

As the trees are younger than the building the risk of ground heave following their removal is likely to be very low. A structural engineer will be able to advise further on this matter.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Tree management works

On the conclusions drawn from the appraisal, no remedial works are considered necessary to reduce the potential for subsidence damage. However, I have recommended that the yew tree is pruned to give clearance from the roof of the house.

The extent of the pruning works are identified in Figure 2, and further details of the recommendations are provided in the accompanying tree schedule.

Table 1: Recommended pruning works for the trees.

Tree No.	Species	Recommendation	Category[2]
T1	Yew	Prune to give 1m clearance from the house and shape to give the tree a balanced crown outline (refer to Figure 2). Also, sever ivy at base using hand tools only.	2
T2	Cherry laurel	Maintain at a desired size by regular trimming.	2

Since the two trees that have been recommended works are located in a Conservation Area it will be necessary to inform the local authority prior to carrying them out. Therefore, I advise that an application for works to protected trees is made to North Somerset Council, and that it is accompanied by a copy of this report. You can notify the council or a tree surgeon will do that on your behalf.

[2] Category 1 = Health and safety or assessed high risk of causing or contributing to subsidence, this work must be undertaken.

Category 2 = Other reasons of a lesser significance, such as prudent arboricultural management, rectification of structural defect, highway / footpath clearance, pests & diseases, etc. lower risk of structural damage.

Figure 2: The extent of the recommended pruning is indicated with the yellow dotted line.

If works are intended, I recommend that quotations are obtained by specialist arboricultural contractors who possess a minimum of £2,000,000 of Public & Products insurance cover and appropriate Employers Liability cover. Details of professional contractors can be found in the Directory of Approved Contractors provided by the Arboricultural Association (https://www.trees.org.uk/ARB-Approved-Contractor-Directory).

4.2 Future monitoring

Trees are dynamic structures and should be subject to regular inspection by a competent person to assess their physiological condition and structural stability. A further inspection of the trees should be made within 5 years of this report or sooner should any signs of ill health, disease or damage be observed or following periods of extreme weather.

Checks should be made for cracks in the building and for blocked or leaking drains. The appearance of any building defect should always be investigated promptly. If damage to the property does occur at a later date that could have been caused by adjacent trees I advise that the building insurers are informed and they are instructed to communicate with the tree owners' insurers. The matter may well require further investigation to make sure that the matter is fully addressed. If vegetation is implicated then often effective early removal of trees will stabilize the situation at little cost. Always contact a qualified structural engineer or arboriculturist before considering tree removal.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Mortgage and insurance implications

There is currently no known structural damage to the building, and in my opinion the trees represent no imminent risks to people or property. Based on the current information available to me and my own site appraisal, in my opinion there is no arboricultural reason to refuse a mortgage or insurance on the property due to tree risk issues.

Appendix 1 - Tree Schedule

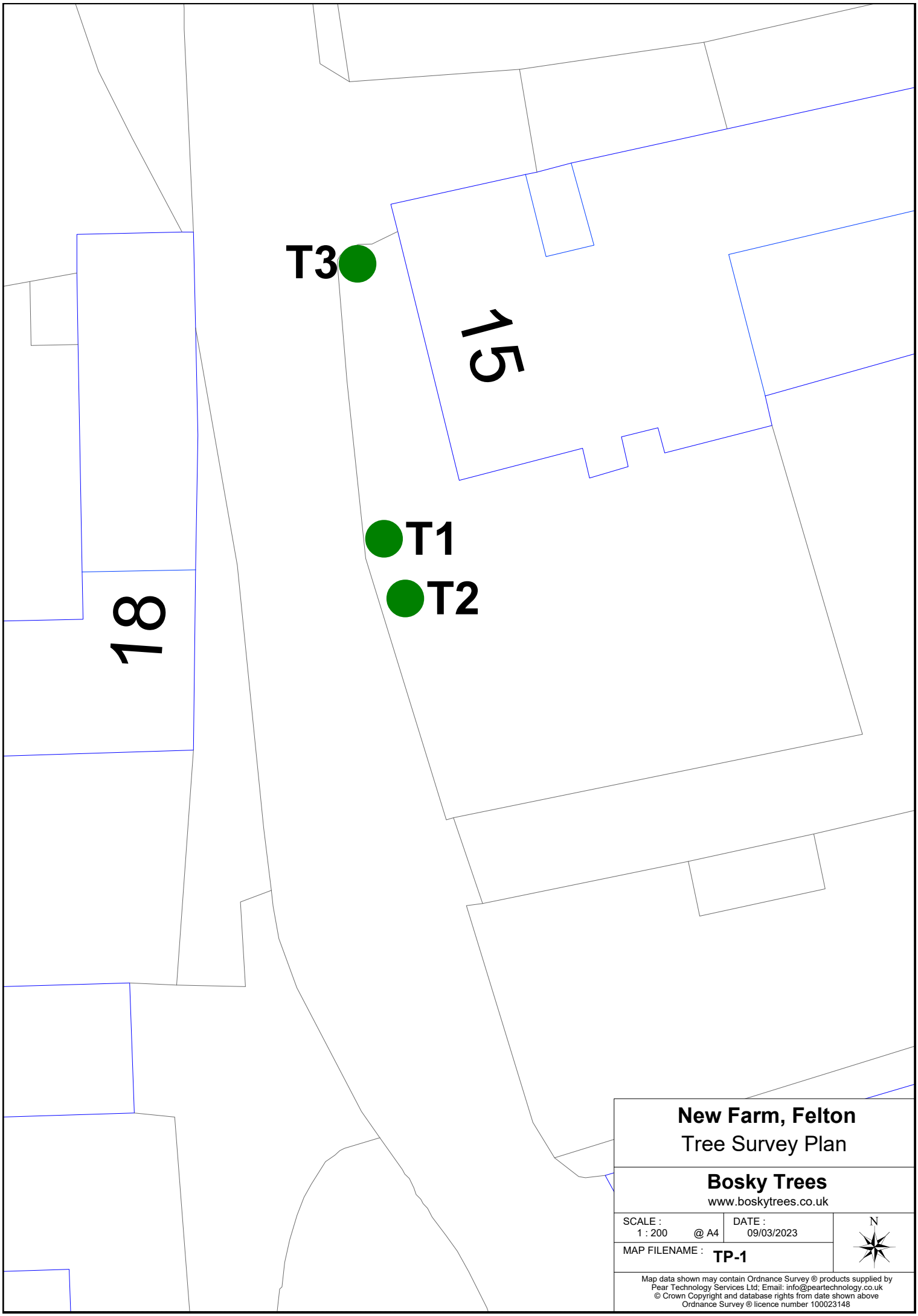
Site: New Farm, 15 Upper Town Lane, Felton

Surveyor: Ben Rose

Date of Survey: 9th March 2023

Tree Number	Tree Species	Height (m)	Stem Ø (cm)	Crown Spread (m)	Age Class	Overall Health	Distance to Structure (m)	Structural Condition and Site Notes	Recommended Management	Ownership
T1	Yew	13.0	81	12.0	M	G	4.7	There is a 1.2m retaining wall immediately to the west of the tree and a road on lower ground beyond. The trunk of the tree has a light covering of ivy up to 6m. The western side of the crown (over the road) has been cut back in the recent past, most likely to give clearance to suspended cables. Overall the foliage looks to be healthy. Part of the crown overhangs the roof of the adjacent house. No obvious significant defects.	Prune to give 1m clearance from the house and shape to give the tree a balanced crown outline (refer to photo in the report). Also, sever ivy at base using hand tools only.	O
T2	Cherry laurel	2.0	**10**	2.5	M	F	6.3	This is young regrowth from a cut stump. The tree has the potential to become much bigger.	Maintain at a desired size by regular trimming.	O
T3	Privet	3.0	**9**	2.0	M	G	1.0	One large stem and lots of smaller shoots. The height of the main stem has previously been cut back to 1.3m, but subsequently regrown.	No action required at present.	O

A key explaining each category is provided at the rear of the schedule



New Farm, Felton

Tree Survey Plan

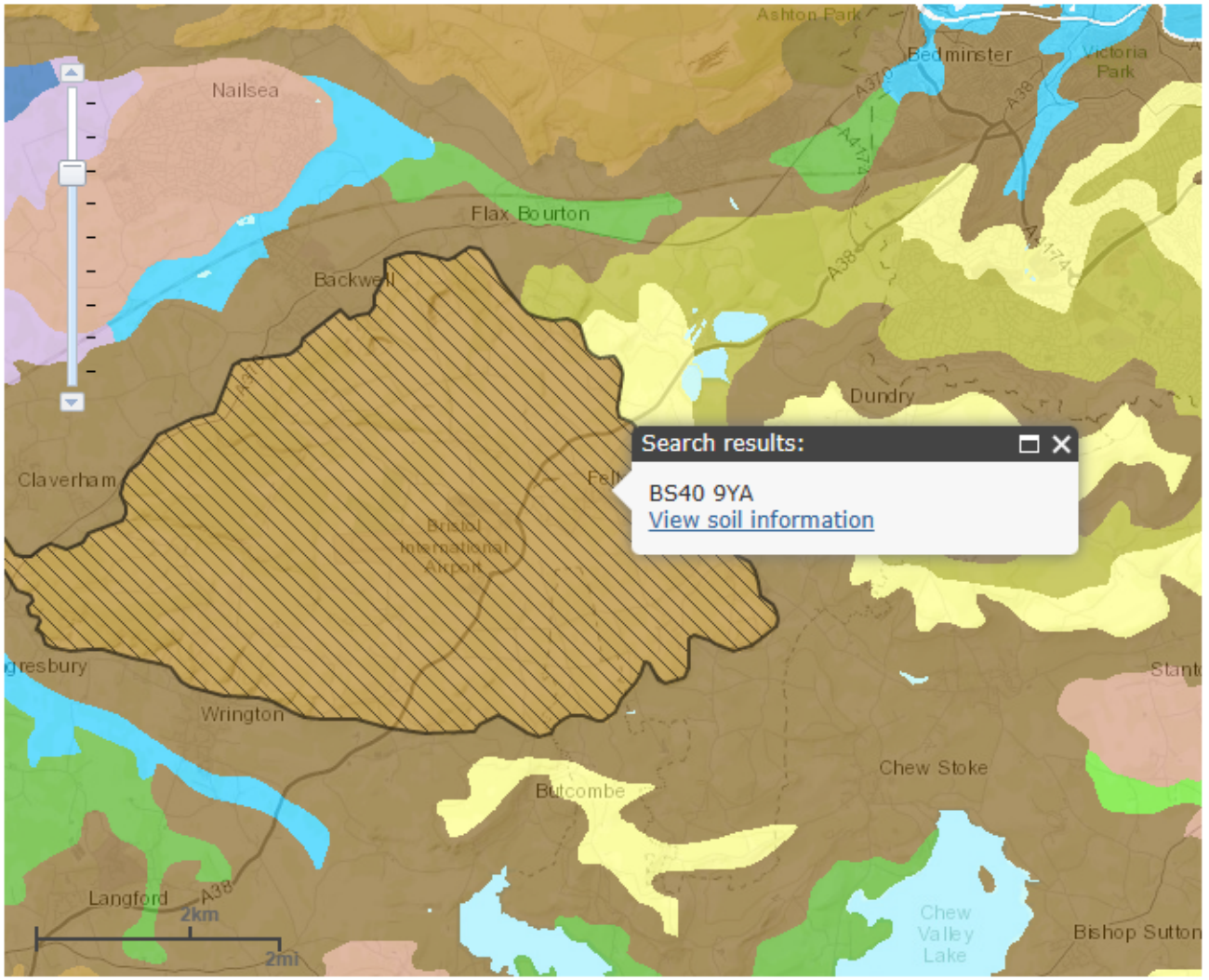
Bosky Trees

www.boskytrees.co.uk

SCALE :	DATE :
1 : 200 @ A4	09/03/2023

MAP FILENAME : **TP-1**

N



Adjust transparency

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Search

Soil information

Soilscape 7:
Freely draining slightly acid but base-rich soils

Texture:
Loamy

Coverage:
England: 3.1% Wales: 3.1%
England & Wales: 3.1%

Selected area:
40.2km^2

Drainage:
Freely draining

Fertility:
High

Habitats:
Base-rich pastures and deciduous woodlands

Landcover:
Arable and grassland

Carbon:
Low

Drains to:
Groundwater