

Tree Inspection Report

Site: Elm Court, Truro

4 March, 2018

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FE01194

Contents

Tree Inspection Report – Elm Court

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Client Brief	5
1.2	Site visit	5
2	The Site	6
2.1	Description of the site	6
2.2	Desk Study results	6
2.3	Survey results	6
2.3.1	Ivy	6
2.3.2	Prunings and other green waste	7
2.3.3	Phytophthora	7
2.3.4	Boundary responsibilities and neighbour relations	7
2.3.5	Hedges	7
2.3.6	Tree protection.....	8
2.3.7	Roadside vegetation management.....	8
2.3.8	Planting opportunities	8
2.4	Limitations:	8
3	General Advice	9
3.1.1	Reinspection recommendation:.....	9
3.1.2	Young tree establishment	9
3.1.3	Young tree maintenance.....	9
3.1.4	Trees and strimmers	9
3.1.5	Trees and Bonfires	10
3.1.6	Trees and the highway.....	10
3.1.7	Responsibility for boundary vegetation.....	10
3.1.8	Cornwall Council Practical Guidelines for young tree care	11
3.1.9	Cornwall Council Orchard advice	11
3.1.10	Included bark	11
3.1.11	Standards of tree work.....	11
4	Appendices	13
4.1	Appendix 1. Historic OS Map showing approximate location of the site	13
4.2	Appendix 2 Tree Protection Issues	15
4.3	Appendix 3 Photographs.....	17
	Photos 1 & 2 – T1 showing overhang and context	17

Photos 3 – T1 showing bark bleeding on NE quarter	18
Photo 4 – T4 showing extent of basal decay and reaction wood	18
Photos 5 & 6 G8 showing proximity to building	19
Photos 7 & 8– Tree T11 showing natural graft and cable brace.	20
4.4 Appendix 4: Tree Inspection Assessment Schedule.....	23
4.5 Appendix 4 Site Map.....	31

1 Introduction

This report details the findings of a survey of trees on the site:

Elm Court, Truro

1.1 Client Brief

Elm Court is managed by a management committee. They are looking for a safety audit and 5 year tree management programme to present to their AGM in early March

Site has an Area tree preservation order (1973)

Site adjoins Truro Conservation Area

Consider maintenance and aesthetic issues as well as safety.

Planning consent granted in 1966 with 1st block built in 1970

1.2 Site visit

Date and time of survey **16 February 2018, am**

Weather: **Dry, bright sunshine, light-moderate wind**

Surveyor: **Colin Hawke**

2 The Site

2.1 Description of the site

The site comprises a 1970's development of 2 blocks of flats and their grounds which are managed by a management committee on behalf of the residents. The first edition OS map (Appendix 1) appears to show the site as the grounds of Truro Veian. There are a number of large mature specimen trees on the site and its boundaries that pre-date the development plus many more that are contemporary with or more recently introduced or naturally occurring. These are supplemented by shrub beds and hedges.

In places the boundaries are ill defined with steep drops below. There is an electricity substation on the site which is surrounded by a rendered block built wall which is not very attractive against which on some sides has been trained a Wisteria which must greatly improve its appearance in the summer.

2.2 Desk Study results

Legal Protection:

Tree Preservation Order	Yes*	Conservation Area	Adjoining
Felling Licence	Not applicable		

* See Appendix 2 for details

For more information about tree protection please visit the Cornwall Council website: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-advice-and-guidance/trees/#protect>

For information about felling licences please visit the Forestry Commission website: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-fellinglicences>

Services

There are a number of street lights on or adjacent to the site, the electricity substation and various overhead cables nearby (see site map)

2.3 Survey results

No safety works were identified although there were priority management works identified that are needed to avoid future problems. Full details are set out in Appendix 2 however there are a number of general observations as well:

2.3.1 Ivy

Ivy does not generally cause problems for trees and is a valuable habitat providing an important nectar source and nesting and feeding sites for birds. Occasionally trees are unable to prevent ivy from growing to the extremities of the tree and then the additional 'sail area' of the ivy can increase the risk of tree or branch failure. Often the decision to control ivy on trees is one of 'cosmetics'. I would advocate a moderate approach, tolerating ivy in most cases but controlling it in situations where it is beginning to dominate a tree and then trying to maintain diversity across the site.

2.3.2 Prunings and other green waste

The site clearly generates quantities of prunings and other green waste. This is currently disposed of under trees and shrubs out of site. However this material is generated faster than it can breakdown and in areas the accumulated material is making management of the site difficult and is a potential problem for the plants as well as potentially harbouring vermin. I would recommend that suitable sites are identified to:

- compost the lighter materials and the resulting compost spread on shrub beds
- store prunings and larger woody material temporarily to await collection and disposal or chipping to be used on site as a mulch for trees and shrubs
- store chippings to compost prior to spreading.

2.3.3 Phytophthora

Phytophthora is now wide spread across Cornwall and has the potential to affect a wide range of species. However in a garden context, Rhododendron is the most common host.

If you suspect the presence of this disease on your premises, in England and Wales, you should immediately contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) on:

Tel: 01904 405138

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Web:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/high-profile-pests-and-diseases/phytophthora/>

[Phytophthora ramorum Practical guidance for parks and gardens.pdf](#)

Advice is likely to be to remove infected plants including roots and leaf litter etc as much as practicable and the arisings burnt. If on-site burning is not possible then the material should be bagged and transported totally enclosed to a site as close as possible for burning. However please contact APHA for current advice.

2.3.4 Boundary responsibilities and neighbour relations

Many of the boundaries are unclear and responsibility for the boundary vegetation is not necessarily apparent. I would recommend identifying boundaries clearly and agreeing with neighbours who is responsible for what and seeking their support for your chosen management options.

2.3.5 Hedges

Many of the hedges are no longer functioning well as hedges and consideration should be given to their ongoing management. Some will respond well to coppicing and then managing the regrowth through annual trimming whilst

others may be best removed and replaced by more suitable species. I would advocate a phased programme of rejuvenation and/or replacement.

2.3.6 Tree protection

As outlined in Appendix 2, it is not clear exactly which trees are protected. I have stated my interpretation but I would recommend that this be put to Cornwall Council and their agreement sought. With 'Area Orders' such as this the onus is on the local authority to demonstrate that any particular tree is protected.

2.3.7 Roadside vegetation management

Roadside vegetation should be managed as necessary on an annual basis to ensure statutory height clearances are maintained and that lights and signs are clear.

2.3.8 Planting opportunities

There are a number of opportunities to establish new specimen trees on site. I have identified some of these on the site map (Appendix 4)

2.4 Limitations:

Trees on adjacent property will have been inspected from ground level only; this inspection may have been limited due to available access and the report will highlight obvious defects only.

Due to the nature of trees and their surrounding environment, the findings of any inspection will remain valid for 12 months only unless otherwise stated.

3 General Advice

3.1.1 Reinspection recommendation:

1. I would recommend that a general non specialist inspection of all trees is included as part of regular site inspections to check for obvious problems such as storm damage, vegetation interfering with lights, signs, vehicles etc and specialist advice sought as necessary.
2. The following trees should be inspected on an annual basis by a specialist tree inspector: T1, T4, G7, T7, G8, G9, T8, T11 and T12
3. Other trees should be inspected on a two-three yearly basis by a specialist tree inspector.

3.1.2 Young tree establishment

Young trees and shrubs establish best when competing vegetation, especially grass, is suppressed or removed. This can be done by herbicide treatment and/or mulching 1m diameter around each plant. Mulch should normally be 100mm deep woodchip and may need to be hand-weeded or herbicide treated twice per year and replenished once a year. Weed control is normally required twice a year for the first 3 years until the trees are growing well and able to compete with the vegetation.

Guards to protect from rabbits and other animals may be required depending upon the site. These will need to be supported as appropriate for the site and size of plant and should be retained until plants are well established (nominally 5-10 years)

3.1.3 Young tree maintenance

Once established trees and shrubs may not require weeding and mulching other than controlling coarse weeds such as brambles and ivy periodically. However it may be advantageous to maintain mulched areas for cosmetic reasons and to avoid the risk of damage from machinery such as mowers and strimmers.

Stakes and ties, where used, need to be adjusted annually and removed at the beginning of the second or third growing season.

Formative pruning to improve the form of the tree and to avoid future conflicts with other site uses, eg paths, structures etc is best done early in the life of the tree and progressively (nominally every 4-5 years). For trees growing in groups this may only be required to perimeter trees.

Groups of trees may require progressive thinning to favour priority trees and remove poor and/or nurse trees.

3.1.4 Trees and strimmers

It has been estimated that more public trees die because of strimmer or mower damage than from vandalism and is still far too commonly seen. Even well-established trees can be damaged by strimmers. Although the bark may not appear to have been damaged the force of impact can damage the cells below the bark and lead to localised or widespread bark death.

Where trees are growing in grassed areas consider the following options:

- Leave an uncut area around each tree
- Mulch around the base of each tree to suppress vegetation
- Careful use of a herbicide to control vegetation (always read the product label carefully and use an appropriate herbicide as directed)
- Hand weed around each tree

3.1.5 Trees and Bonfires

Bonfires close to trees can cause long term damage to trees through the direct action of heat. Areas typically damaged are roots through heat transfer through the ground, stems through radiant heat and crowns above and near the heat source. This damage may not be apparent for some time but typically causes death of the bark damaged and associated dysfunction and death of connected parts of the tree.

Bonfires should be located well away from trees to be retained paying particular attention to likely rooting zones, overhanging branches, size of fire and wind speed and direction.

3.1.6 Trees and the highway

Trees and other vegetation should be managed to prevent it interfering with the public highway, including bridleways, byways, footpaths etc. Generally the following clearances are required although this may vary in particular circumstances. If in doubt please seek advice from the local highway authority:

- Public roads (especially classified roads): 5.2m clearance above the carriageway
- Bridleways and cycleways: 2.5m clearance above the surface of the bridleway
- Footpaths and pavements: 2.1m clearance above the path

Additional clearances may be required to ensure adequate visibility on bends, and of signs and signals and room for pedestrians to use verges. For further information please see <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/3628255/Cornish-Highway-hedge-leaflet-web-2010.pdf>

3.1.7 Responsibility for boundary vegetation

The responsibility for trees and hedges normally rests with the landowner and/or occupier.

Where the boundary is a Cornish hedge responsibility may be unclear. Deeds may provide information but often they are joint responsibility and it is advisable to discuss tree management with the neighbour. NB modern residential fences against a Cornish hedge may not be the legal boundary. Seek legal advice if necessary.

There is a common law right to cut back overhanging vegetation to the legal boundary (subject to legal consents as necessary, eg tree preservation order

consent). As the arisings belong, technically, to the landowner/occupier, they should be offered back.

Highway boundaries normally belong to adjoining landowner/occupier and are not the responsibility of the highway authority, even if it has been erected as part of the accommodation works for highway schemes. Highway authority responsibility does not normally extend past the base of the hedge. Therefore any trees growing on top of, or on the face of the hedge would be the responsibility of the adjoining landowner/occupier. If in doubt contact the local highway authority.

3.1.8 Cornwall Council Practical Guidelines for young tree care

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/trees-hedges-and-woodland/practical-guidelines-for-young-tree-care/>

3.1.9 Cornwall Council Orchard advice

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/trees-hedges-and-woodland/apples-and-orchards/orchards-selection-and-planting-new-trees/>

3.1.10 Included bark

Recent research has shown that included bark (which is a sign of poor physical attachment) is associated with a lack of stress upon the union such as when movement is restricted by branches etc above the union. When the restriction is removed the tree reacts by laying down reaction wood and, over time, a normal union is formed. However during this reaction process the union is at a greater risk of failure. It is therefore important to not remove the natural grafts and braces above these unions or, if they fail, decay or have to be removed then the unions should be reassessed and remedial surgery considered.

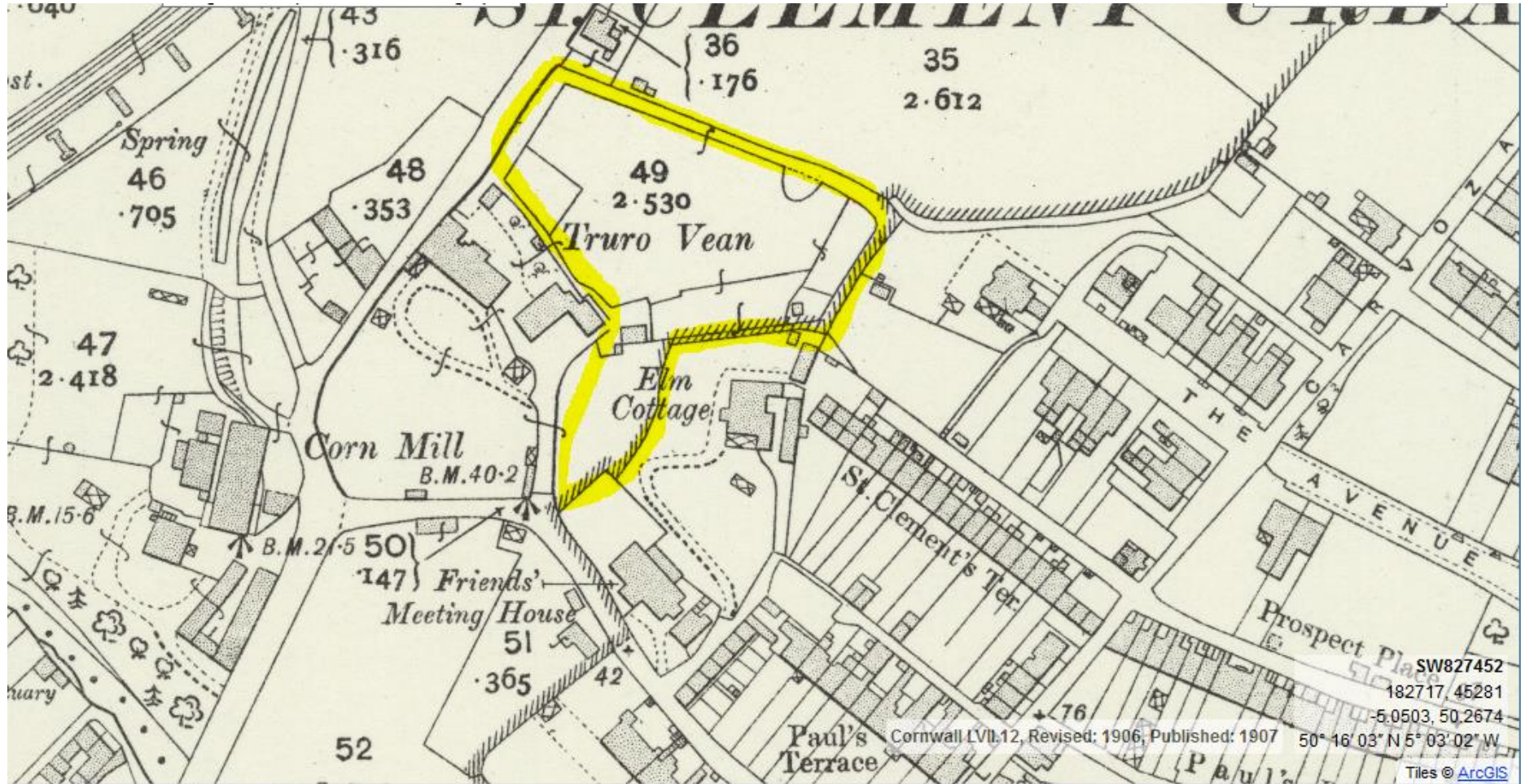
3.1.11 Standards of tree work

BS 3998-2010 Tree Works – Recommendations sets out the approach to tree work that should be adopted. It highlights how tree works are potentially damaging to trees and how decisions should be considered to minimise the impact on the trees. It also defines a number of technical terms which are now the industry standard.

The following extract highlights best practice guidance for pruning operations:

4 Appendices

4.1 Appendix 1. Historic OS Map showing approximate location of the site

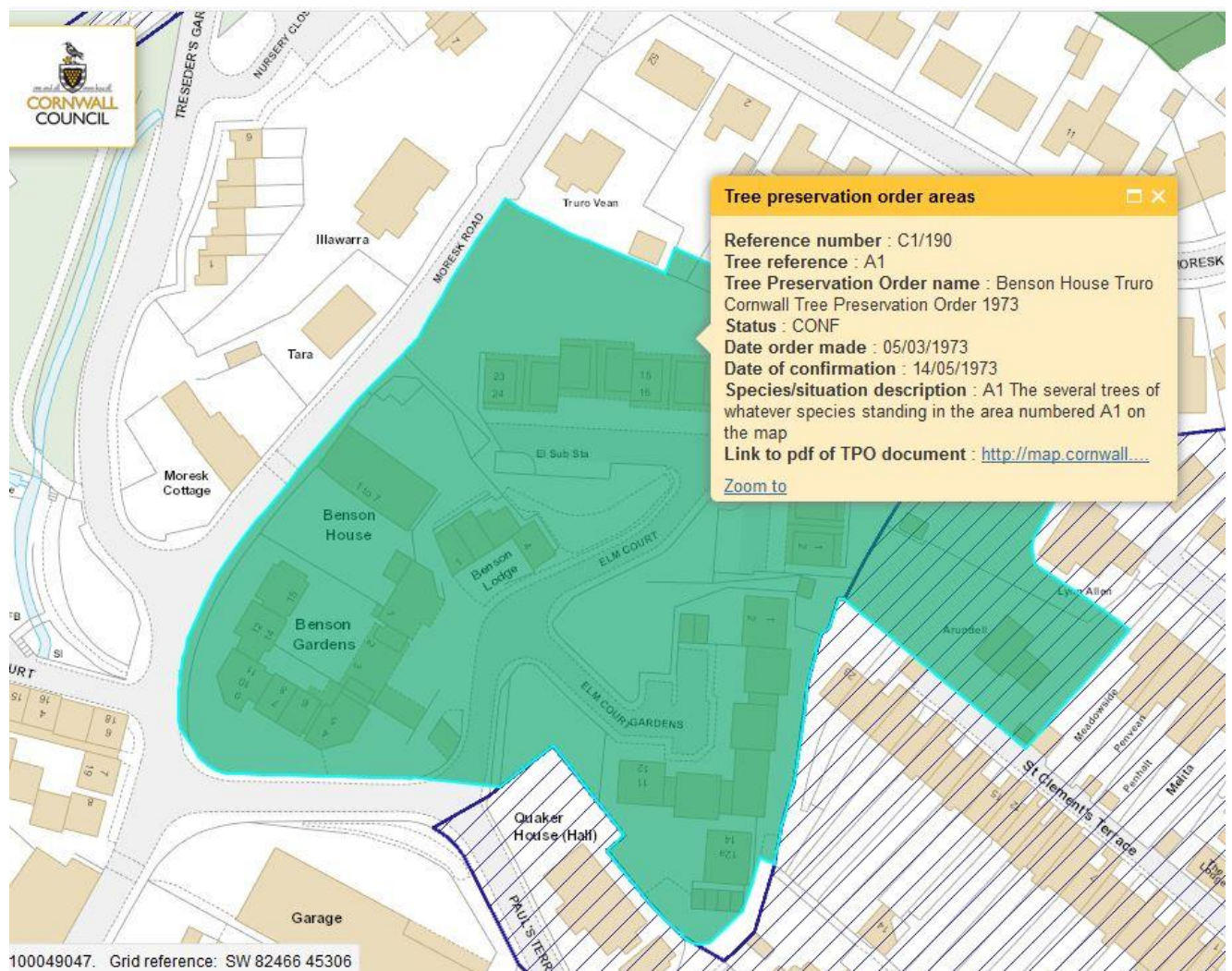




4.2 Appendix 2 Tree Protection Issues

The following extract from the Cornwall Council Interactive Mapping site shows the site is covered by A1 of the Benson House Truro Cornwall Tree Preservation Order 1973. This Order protects all those trees that were growing within this area at the time the Order was made. Thus only those trees over 55 years of age are protected. Ageing trees is not easy and as time goes on it can become increasingly difficult to determine which trees are protected. The onus is on the local authority to demonstrate that any particular tree is protected.

In addition the eastern boundary of the site abuts the Truro Conservation Area which provides additional protection to trees not covered by the Order.



I would suggest that the following trees are covered by the tree preservation order (these are shown in red on the inspection schedule – Appendix 3. See also the site plan):

T1	Copper Beech
T4	Cedar
T7	Sycamore
G9	Sycamore x2

T8	Sycamore
T9	Sycamore
T10	Sycamore
T11	Copper beech
T12	Sycamore
T13	Beech
T15	Cypress
T17	Holly

I would contend that the Leylandii (G6) are not covered as they were previously managed as a hedge. Also 3 sycamore (G7) may or may not be protected. All the other trees referred to are, I believe too young to be included in the Order. However I would advise that you seek clarification from Cornwall Council.

4.3 Appendix 3 Photographs

Photos 1 & 2 – T1 showing overhang and context



Photo 1



Photo 2

Photos 3 – T1 showing bark bleeding on NE quarter



Photo 3

Photo 4 – T4 showing extent of basal decay and reaction wood



Photo 4

Photos 5 & 6 G8 showing proximity to building



Photo 5

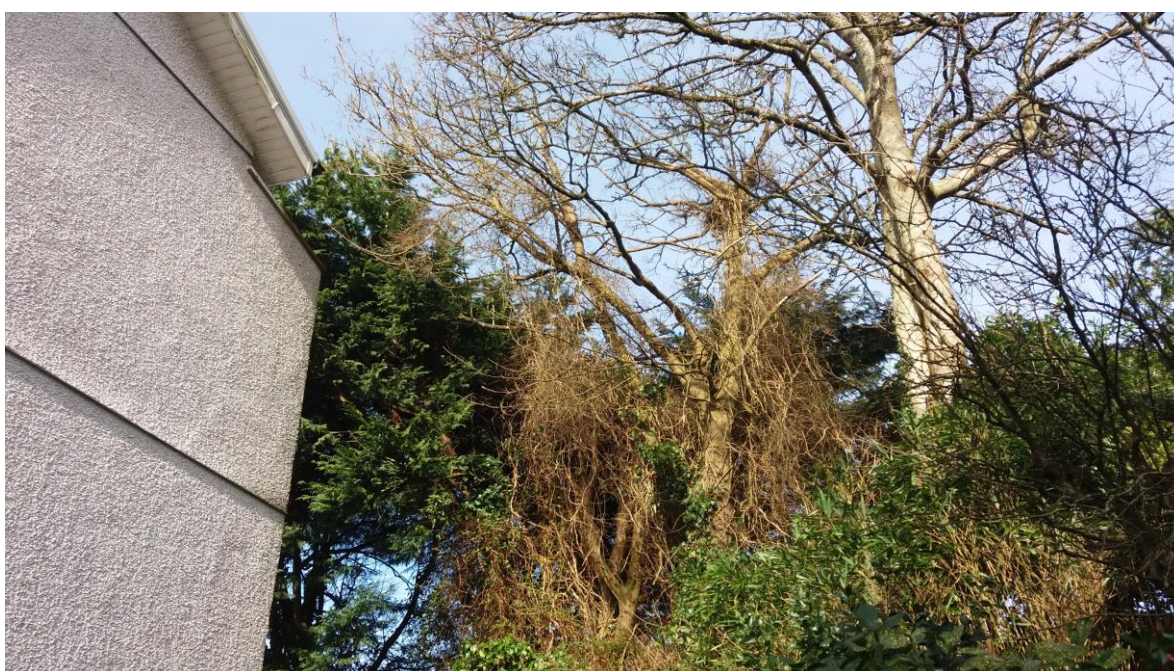


Photo 6

Photos 7 & 8- Tree T11 showing natural graft and cable brace.



Photo 7



Photo 8,

4.4 Appendix 4: Tree Inspection Assessment Schedule

Tree Inspection Assessment

Site: Elm Court Truro
Glenthorne Court
Client: Management Committee

Surveyor: Colin Hawke

Assessment Date 16 February, 2018
 Dry, bright sunshine, light-
Viewing Conditions: moderate wind

Trees in red are presumed to be protected. **Trees** in orange may be protected.

Ref	Species	Age Range	Height Range (m)	Stem Dia. Range (cm)	Vitality	Observations	Recommendations	Priority
T1	Copper Beech	M	17-18	>100	G	<p>Close to and overhanging building below.</p> <p>Crown breaks at ~3m. Some bark inclusion in major fork but doesn't appear to be structurally significant.</p> <p>Has been pruned historically to clear roof and street light. Crown spread 6-7m.</p> <p>Some bark bleeding at base of trunk on NE quarter. Currently of minor significance but may signify onset of Honey fungus decay.</p>	<p>Light prune to give 2m clearance of light, pruning branches at point of origin.</p> <p>Remove in entirety 1 limb over roof. Will leave larger wound than desirable but should negate need for repeated pruning.</p> <p>Monitor basal decay</p>	<p>Man1</p> <p>Man1</p> <p>Man2</p>
G1	3 Beech	EM	3-5	20-30	?	Heavily lopped. 2 should recover but 1 may not	Consider supplementary planting to create a screen for the wall or install a framework against the wall and train the Wisteria to cover wall	Man3

Ref	Species	Age Range	Height Range (m)	Stem Dia. Range (cm)	Vitality	Observations	Recommendations	Priority
G2	Mixed elm /holly, hawthorn	EM	3-6	<10	G	Some holly topped @1.5-1.8m. Growing on top of Quarry face. Serves as an important screen and barrier to the drop. Elm currently healthy but will be subject to Elm Disease at some point.	Coppice all plants to encourage growth from the base and then manage to form a hedge. (NB temporary barrier will be required. Control ivy in new growth.	Man3 Man3
T2	Beech	EM	10-12	15-20	G	Nice form. Ivy has been removed.	No action	
G3	Sycamore	EM	8-10	15-20	G	Ivy dominating the crowns of several stems. NB steep drop below	Consider ivy management Consider thinning the group retaining the 2 best stems	Man1 Man3
G4	Sycamore, beech	EM	8-10	15-20	G	Sycamore overhanging the road . Too many stems for space	Thin sycamore group to leave the best 2 stems evenly spaced	Man3
T3	Beech	M	10-12	30-40	G	Has been pruned over lawn	No action	
T4	Cedar	M	~20m	111	G	Basal decay on north side 30-40cm wide x 40cm high. Buttressing either side is good. Decay appears to be isolated and not structurally significant. The trunk in this quarter is significantly flattened suggesting that the decay has been present for a considerable time.	No action. <u>Advisory</u> : Retain deadwood. This is a low risk and helps to dampen branch movement. Removal of significant amounts of deadwood can increase risk of branch failure. Fell the small sycamore (not protected) by the road sign behind this tree.	Man2

Ref	Species	Age Range	Height Range (m)	Stem Dia. Range (cm)	Vitality	Observations	Recommendations	Priority
						Trunk forks into 2 large trunks @ 5-6m Crown spread to East 15m, to west, 5-6m. Slight lean to east due to growth away from prevailing wind and competing vegetation. Large amounts of small deadwood in crown.		
T5	Sycamore	EM	10-15	G	G	On top of bank by road. Forks @ 1.5m into 2 major and 1 minor limb (minor limb grows over road)	Remove minor limb over road at point of origin. Sever ivy	Man3 Man3
G5	Cherry laurel	M	5-10	20-30	G	Many stems badly decayed. Growth over road and streetlight. Growth on north boundary hedge overhangs neighbours drive. Good screening group	Coppice stems on the road frontage and allow regrowth to establish and maintain as a low screen/hedge. Discuss management of north boundary with neighbour. Could be coppiced or reduced to form a hedge. This species will tolerate severe pruning.	Man1
	Roadside						Annual management of all roadside growth to maintain highway and light clearances.	Man2
G6	Leylandii	M	8-10		G	Has been managed as a hedge in the past but this has now lapsed. Some heavy reductions. Looks poor from the north but	Query whether protected. May not be as previously a hedge. Discuss management with residents and neighbour.	Man1 Man1

Ref	Species	Age Range	Height Range (m)	Stem Dia. Range (cm)	Vitality	Observations	Recommendations	Priority
						good screen from the south. Young beech hedge planted on hedgebank to rear.	Consider phased removal and replacement with a beech hedge. Start with those affecting the beech hedge. Manage beech as a hedge	Man2
G7	Sycamore x3	M	10-20-	30-40	G	Multistemmed growing on the boundary. Some growing over neighbour's garage have been topped.	Check who is responsible for these trees and agree management. Remove topped stems to point of origin. Remove regrowth Consider further pruning in 2-3 years	Man1 Man3 Man3 Man3
T6	Holly	EM	5-10	10-15	G	Dead hawthorn stem beside holly on boundary hedge	Check who is responsible for these trees and agree management. Remove dead stem. Consider hedge planting with neighbour	Man1 Man3 Man3
T7	Sycamore	M	10-15	20-30	G	Multistemmed. Has been topped historically but new crowns established.	No action	
G8	LEYLANDII	M	10-15			Appears to be on neighbour's property but overhangs grounds. Have been pruned. Clematis growing profusely in some stems	Discuss management with neighbour. Some reduction desirable (up to 3m) within 5 years.	Man1 Man3

Ref	Species	Age Range	Height Range (m)	Stem Dia. Range (cm)	Vitality	Observations	Recommendations	Priority
G9	Sycamore x2	M	15-20	50-60	G	Overhangs the building	Prune to clear roof by 5m removing branches at point of origin (west tree 2 large limbs, east tree 3 limbs)	Man2
T8	Sycamore	M	15-20	40-60	P	2 stems. Vitality appears to be poor, especially the larger stem, but with no evident cause	Sever ivy Monitor condition in summer	Man2 Man1
T9	Sycamore	M	15-20	40-60	G	Appears to be on neighbour's side of boundary. Forks @~8m	Confirm ownership. No action	Man1
T10	Sycamore	M	15-20	40-60	G	Growing on top of retaining wall. Assumed to be neighbour's responsibility	No action	
T11	Copper beech	M	20-25	>100	G	Growing on top of retaining wall. Assumed to be neighbour's responsibility. Inspected from Elm Court only! Crown spread N, S & W ~9-10m Large impressive specimen which will cast heavy shade on garden. Any acceptable crown reduction would have limited impact on the amount of shading.	Owner should be informed of the need to review the integrity of the brace and seek expert advice as to the condition of the tree as a whole and the main fork in particular. They should also be advised that the natural braces within the crown are structurally extremely important and should not be lost without expert advice.	Man1

Ref	Species	Age Range	Height Range (m)	Stem Dia. Range (cm)	Vitality	Observations	Recommendations	Priority
						<p>Tree forks @ 5m into 2 major stems.</p> <p>Crown has historically been cable braced – presumably to support the major fork. It was not possible to view the condition of the fork fully.</p> <p>1 cable has failed completely and the other is rusty and slack. It is unlikely that this cable would be effective as a brace. However there is a natural brace below the cable plus others above. I do not suspect this tree to be a significant risk of serious harm from my limited access to inspect</p>		
T12	Sycamore	M	10-15	40-50	G	<p>On neighbouring ground. Twin stemmed. Some decay in fork. Crown overhangs roof.</p>	<p>Advise owner to investigate fork.</p> <p>With owner’s and TPO consent remove 1 small branch over the roof at point of origin or at boundary if owner’s consent not forthcoming</p>	<p>Man1</p> <p>Man3</p>
T13	Beech	M	15-20	70-90	G	<p>On hedgebank</p> <p>Forks @ 3-4m</p>	<p>Check who is responsible.</p>	<p>Man1</p> <p>Man2</p>

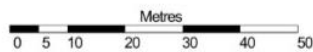
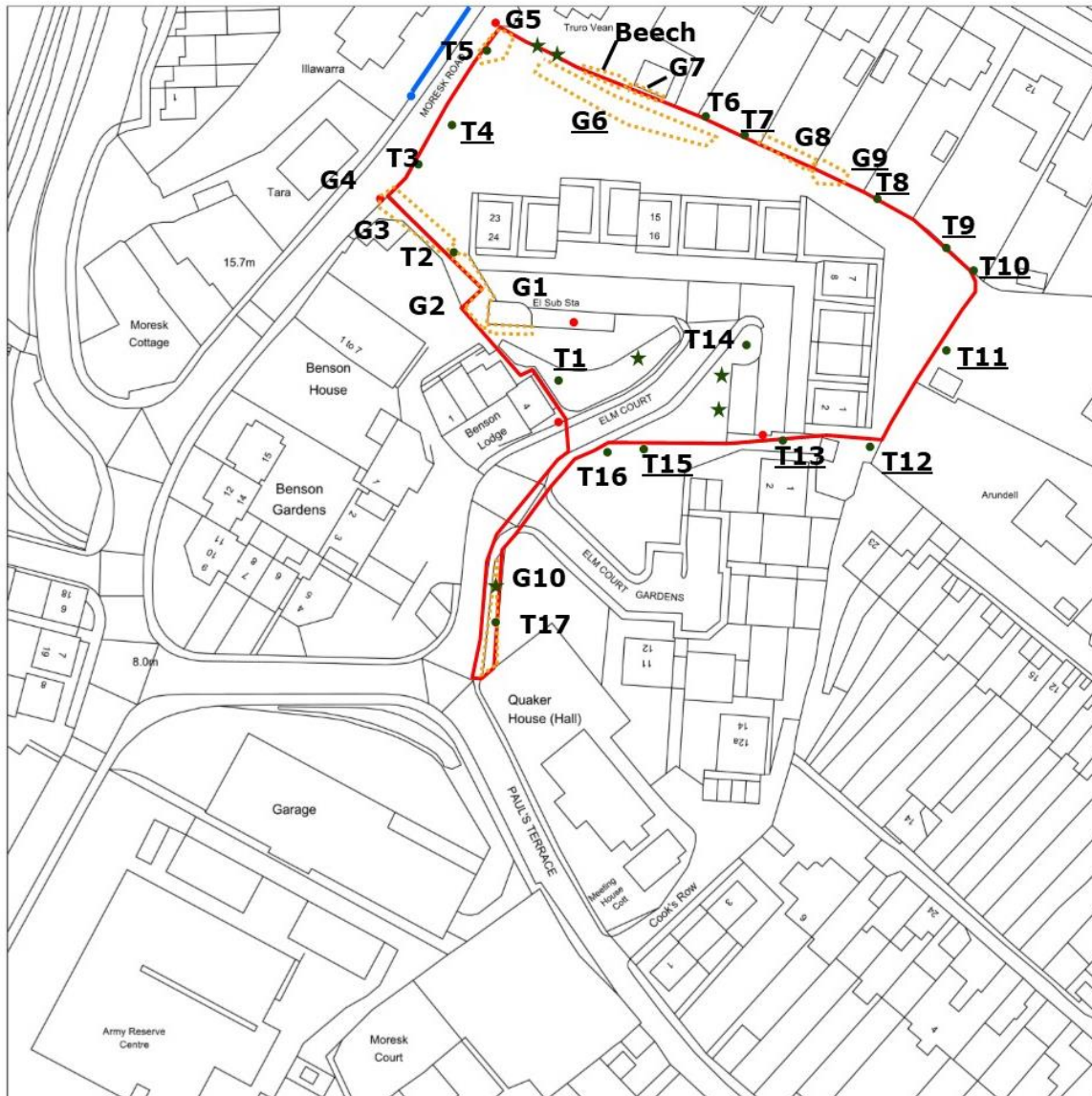
Ref	Species	Age Range	Height Range (m)	Stem Dia. Range (cm)	Vitality	Observations	Recommendations	Priority
						Overhangs roof of neighbouring building and 1 & 2 Elm Court	Remove lowest 2 small branches on west side to improve light from streetlight. Light crown raise to maintain 1-2m clearance of roof in summer.	Man2
T14	Cherry	EM	6-8	15-20	P	Crown dieback due to bacterial canker. Poor form	Establish replacement tree before removing tree in 2-3 years	Man2 Man3
T15	Cypress	M	10-15	70-80	G	On neighbouring ground	No action	
T16	Ash	M	10-15	20-30	G	On neighbouring ground Ivy dominated lower crown	No action	
T17	Holly	EM	5-10	<15	P	On boundary hedge Poor crown development	Would benefit from coppicing. Discuss management with owner (?)	Man3
G10	Rhododendron				P	Appears to be diseased possibly with Phytophthora ramorum.	Fell, burn arisings and replant with Phytophthora resistant plants.	Man2



HEADINGS & ABBREVIATIONS

REF:	REFERENCE FOR COMPARTMENT, GROUP or individual tree
AGE RANGE:	Y = YOUNG, SM = SEMI MATURE, EM = EARLY MATURE, M = MATURE, PM = POST MATURE
HEIGHT:Range	MEASURED Height OR ESTIMATED HEIGHT Range
STEM DIA:	STEM DIAMETER MEASURED OR ESTIMATED Range AT A HEIGHT OF BETWEEN 1.3 – 1.5 METRES
VITALITY:	A MEASURE OF PHYSIOLOGICAL CONDITION. D = DEAD, MD = MORIBUND, P = POOR, M = MODERATE, G = GOOD
Observations	Observations of significance to current or future safety and/or management and general comments of note
Recommendations	Recommendations for actions to be taken or considered
	S1 = Urgent Safety work to be actioned as soon as possible and may require immediate control measures
	S2 = Safety works which can be programmed within next 6 months (additional controls may be required beforehand)
	S3 = Safety works which can be programmed within next 12 months
Priority	Man1 = Management works that need to be addressed within 6 months, usually to address an actionable nuisance or a tree health/establishment issue
	Man2 = Management works that should be addressed within 12 – 18 months, Usually to address something that may become a safety issue, an actionable nuisance or impact on tree health/establishment
	Man3 = Management works that should be considered for programming into future work programmes if desired and affordable
WPD	Western power distribution (local electricity distribution company)
BT	BT – (Telecoms communication network)

4.5 Appendix 4 Site Map



Scale: 1:1250



Elm Court, Truro

Tree Safety and management audit

Supplied by: Colin Hawke
 License number: 100031961
 Produced: 09/02/2018
 Serial number: 1946121

- **Lamp-post**
- **BT Pole and cables**
- ★ **Planting opportunity**

Plot centre co-ordinates: 182668.45233
 Download file: Glenthorne Court.zit
 Project name: Glenthorne Court