Tree condition survey of 2 trees

at

14 Curtis Road, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2SD

Surveyed by
Ben Abbatt

Dip. Arb. (RFS), BA (Hons), MICFor, MRICS, CEnv
Arboricultural Association Registered Consultant

Client
Ms N Wakefield & Mr D Smith
14 Curtis Road
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 2SD

Report date
18th November 2023

Report reference
J1513

Sapling Arboriculture Ltd

Holbache, Mount Pleasant Road, Alton, Hants, GU34 2RS

[redacted]

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1. Instruction

1.1 I was instructed by Mr D Smith to carry out a tree condition survey of 2 no. trees, paying particular attention to any features that may pose a significant hazard to persons or property, and to produce a tree survey report including the provision of management recommendations with priorities.

1.2 The tree condition assessment is to be carried out in relation to the landowner's duty under the Occupier's Liability Act 1984 and common law. Presumption for tree management will be in favour of retention of the tree(s) where appropriate.

1.3 The client has raised concerns relating to the trees including their condition, proximity to the highway and dwellings.

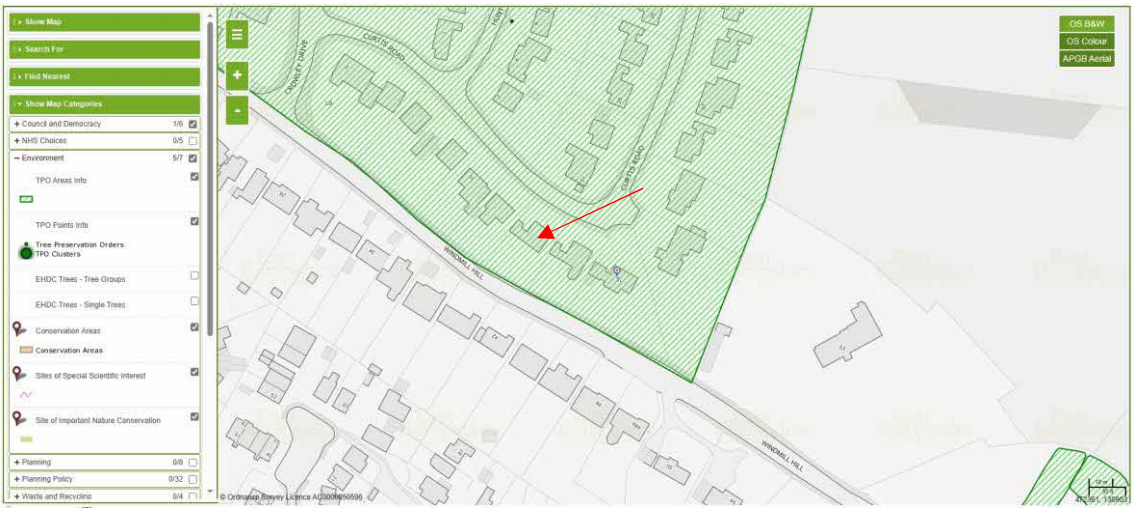
2. Site details

2.1 Curtis Road is to the southeast of Alton town centre and is part of the redevelopment of the Henry Gauvain Hospital site. The main access road to the estate is Crowley Drive and Curtis Road is on the east side of Crowley Drive. No. 14 Curtis Road has Windmill Lane to the south with the footway and carriageway. The site typically has a northern aspect.

2.2 The trees subject to the survey stand within the rear garden and on the south side of 14 Curtis Road adjacent to Windmill Lane.

3. Statutory controls

3.1 The online mapping tool provided by East Hampshire District Council, accessed on 18th t November 2023 identifies that the site is not subject to Conservation Area controls. The mapping tool does identify that Tree Preservation Order(TPO) (289)69 does relate to the site. See image SAL1.



SAL1 Image from council website[1]. Red arrow identifies 14 Curtis Road.

3.2 The TPO designates an Area which means trees present at the time of the creation of the TPO are included within the TPO if detailed in the First Schedule.

3.3 The first schedule of the TPO states *"The several trees of whatever species standing in the area numbered A.1 on the map."* Therefore, the TPO includes any tree species.

3.4 Due to the anticipated age of the trees, I believe both trees were likely to be present when the TPO was created on the 11th March 1969 and therefore I believe both trees are subject to the TPO.

3.5 As the 2 trees are subject to TPO, a Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 s16 Tree Works Application[2] will need to be issued to the planning authority and 'Consent' received prior to tree works commencing relating to these trees. Such tree works identified within any Consent will normally need to be complete before a 2 year period from the date of the Consent. Additional information on the process can be found at the government website[3]. This tree condition survey can be used to inform such a Tree Works Application.

[1] http://maps.easthants.gov.uk/easthampshire.aspx
[2] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/605/regulation/16/made
[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#making-applications-tpo

3.6 Alternatively, works may be exempt from notice as detailed in The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012 sections 14 (exceptions)[4]. Such exceptions are given as a s14 'Notice of Intent' and a 5 working day period for the planning authority to consider the matter and relate to the imminent threat of harm or damage. This tree condition survey can be used to inform such a s14 (5 day) Notice of Intent. On this occasion, no imminent threats were found.

3.7 Works in accordance with the Highways Act 1980, section 154[5], overrides the town and Country Planning Act and can be implemented without reference to the planning authority. However, it is appropriate to inform the planning authority to avoid unnecessary waste of officer time investigating whether the works are exempt.

3.8 The Forestry Act 1967 does not apply as the trees grow within the residential garden.

3.9 This document does not consider specific covenants.

[4] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/605/regulation/14/made
[5] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/154

4. Limitations

4.1 The tree survey was carried out from ground level, with the aid of binoculars where appropriate, using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) process. The VTA process is used to identify significant tree features that may have significant bearing upon the condition (physiological and structural) and management of the tree.

4.2 Typical significant defects that are identified are referred to in Lonsdale, D., “Hazards from Trees, a general guide” (FCPG13) published in 2000 by the Forestry Commission, Lonsdale, D., “Principles of tree hazard assessment and management” published in 1999 and 2001 and reprinted in 2013 by the Forestry Commission, and Mattheck, C., “The body language of trees” published in 1994 by the Department of the Environment and 2015 by Karlsruhe Institute of Technology.

4.3 Reasonable access around the base of the tree is required to carry out a tree survey. Where this is not feasible, these parts of the tree may not be fully assessed. If a view of the entire structure of the tree(s) is limited, for instance by the properties in private ownership or obscured by vegetation, this is a limitation to the tree survey and some parts of the tree may not be able to be fully surveyed. In this instance access was available on all sides of the trees within the site and from the adjacent highway to the south, although vegetation at the base impeded some access and views of both trees.

4.4 Trees are dynamic structures and as such their condition and health may change in a short period of time, particularly in relation to changes in their immediate environment and circumstances, and as such the survey relates only to the visible condition found on the day of the survey. Tree(s) should be re-surveyed on a regular basis so that the change in condition can be identified. An appropriate time period between surveys may be up to 5 years depending upon the species, condition of the trees, their maturity / size and the context within which the tree(s) grow. Recommendations for the period between surveys are given.

4.6 No soil investigations have been carried out.

5. Tree survey findings

5.1 The survey was carried out on 31th October 2023. Mr Smith accompanied me during the site visit. The weather on the day of the site visit was clear, dry with low wind speeds.

5.2 The table of findings of the tree survey can be found in Appendix 1.

5.3 I have plotted the approximate tree position on Ordnance Survey data, Ordnance Survey data (licence 100019980), to correlate between the tree condition survey (Appendix 1), the tree survey plan (Appendix 2), and the specific trees surveyed on site. Position of the tree plotted is approximate on the tree survey plan and the specific trees will need to be identified through their approximate position shown on the tree survey plan, condition notes given in the tree survey text.

6. Discussion

6.1 The main concern for the two trees is the overlong branches and their relationship to the garden and the adjacent highway. T2 sycamore has also recently lost part of its canopy.

6.2 Overlong branches or branches standing outside the main canopy edge are more prone to excessive wind loading and therefore have an increased potential for failure. To reduce the potential for such branch failure it is appropriate to reduce these branches. Such branch reductions also reduce the potential wound size aiding the tree to cope with the pruning wound as opposed to a likely larger failure wound which will take more resources for the tree to manage and compensate for. Such works are recommended in BS3998:2010 Recommendations for tree works (refer to paragraphs 7.7, 7.9, 7.10, and Table 8.1). This applies to both trees. Remedial works to help control the risks are given in Appendix 1.

6.3 Trees that have been 'topped' or 'crown reduced' have the upper part of the tree canopy removed and regrowth typically redevelops the lost canopy. This regrowth is likely to have a weaker attachment than the original tree form. Additionally, 'top rots' (decay of the tree in the canopy) can occur degrading the structural integrity of the tree where regrowth has developed from axillary buds. In this instance, T2 sycamore has had part of the canopy fail in such a manner. It is appropriate for remedial works to be implemented prior to further branch failures. Remedial works to help control the risks are given in Appendix 1.

6.4 Recent and / or historic branch failures and pruning wounds can create opportunities for wood decay organisms to colonise the tree to produce a cavity in the stem. Where such features are identified, it is appropriate for these features to be assessed by the tree climber during their works to identify if remedial works or further advice is necessary. This particularly relates to tree T1. Remedial works to help control these risks are given in Appendix 1. Additionally, such features may be habitat for birds or bats and therefore the appropriate controls for avoiding harm or disturbance are to be followed. [6] [7] [8]

6.5 The low branches of trees over the carriageway may lead to direct damage to the vehicles. Remedial works to help control the risks are given in Appendix 1. The planning authority may consider that these works are exempt (see paragraph 3.7) where the works relate to the safe use of the highway. Where not above the highway, such works will be subject to the normal tree works application process.

6.6 Epicormic growth is often formed on the lower stem due to increased light levels triggering auxiliary buds to develop. Removal of this epicormic growth to continue to allow sunlight and daylight beneath the tree canopy is often sought by the property owners. As the ground has a northerly aspect with the trees on the southern boundary, it is likely that the property owners will seek to maintain the extent of light beneath the tree canopy, particularly during the winter months.

[6] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/section/1
[7] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wild-birds-protection-surveys-and-licences
[8] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-protection-surveys-and-licences

6.7 The greater the amount of pruning work carried out, the greater the potential for undesirable physiological and structural impacts upon the retained trees (refer to British Standard 3998:2010 Recommendation for tree works paragraph 7.2.4 extent of pruning works). Therefore, works recommendations given seek to reasonably control the risks identified whilst minimising the potential impact upon retained trees to aid there retention in the landscape for as long as reasonably practicable. Additionally, tree works recommendations are kept to a minimum to minimise the potential aesthetic impacts that can occur through excessive tree works.

6.8 To conclude, in my consideration of the site, its location, use, frequency of occupation, the potential hazards that the trees present, the condition of the trees and potential for failure, and the potential size of the failure parts, I have provided tree works recommendations with priorities to aid the retention of the trees in the landscape where feasible and these works are detailed in section 7 and Appendix 1.

7. Recommendations

7.1 I have considered the findings of the tree survey within the context of the health and vitality of the trees and the circumstances within which they are located.

7.2 Recommended works are detailed in Appendix 1 for each tree or group with associated priorities. The priorities mean that the recommended works should be carried out within specified timescales detailed in Appendix 3 key to tree survey data.

7.3 Works are considered a ‘High’ priority and should be complete within 1 month from the date of this survey. The priority is considered based on the condition of the tree and its position and context. No trees were identified as being subject to a high priority.

7.4 Works are considered a ‘Moderate’ priority and should be complete within 3 months from the date of this survey. The priority is considered based on the condition of the tree and its position and context. No trees were identified as being subject to a moderate priority.

7.5 Works are considered a ‘Low’ priority and should be complete within 12 months from the date of this survey. The priority is considered based on the condition of the tree and its position and context. Two trees were identified as being subject to a low priority.

7.6 Tree works should be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Recommendations for Tree Works and in particular biosecurity / avoidance of transmission of disease and pathogens (4.3), extent of pruning works (7.2.4), and natural target pruning (7.2.5). A tree contractor ought to carry out works in accordance with this British Standard and be aware of these specific elements.

7.7 Tree works, except high priority and felling works, ideally to be carried out ideally in the late summer (September) or mid-winter (December to February) to aid the trees to respond to the pruning wounds in the most effective manner. The worst times to implement tree works to retained trees is particularly in spring and secondly around leaf fall and, therefore, these time periods (spring and leaf fall) ought to be avoided where possible to reduce the physiological impact upon retained trees.

7.8 Resurvey of the trees ought to be complete by the 1st July 2026. Resurvey is important as the condition of trees alters over time. Resurvey assumes the entirety of tree works recommended to be complete within the timescales given.

Appendices

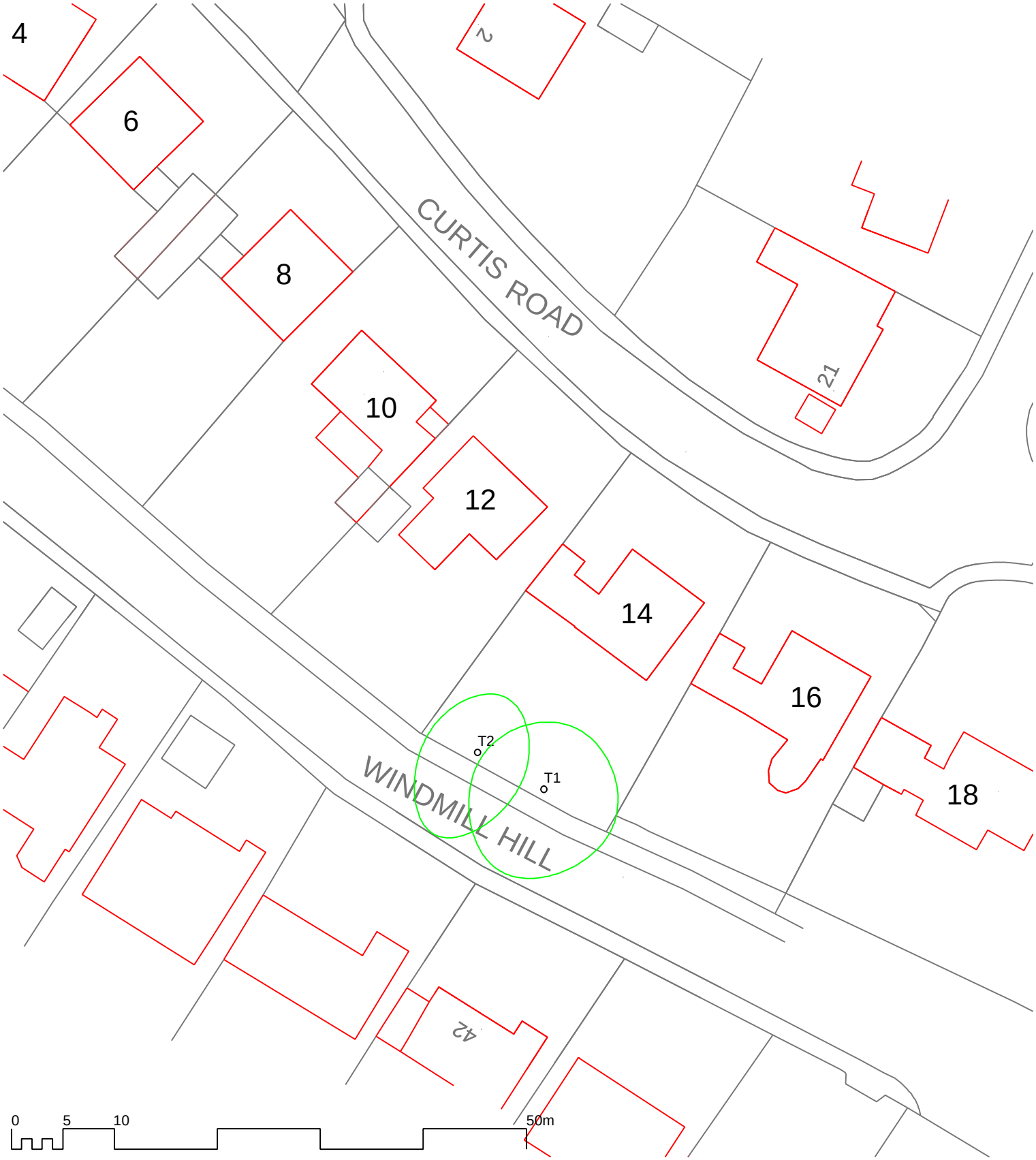
Appendix 1: tree survey data

Tree Condition Survey

Site	14 Curtis Road, Alton, Hampshire
Date of survey	31st October 2023
Job reference	J1513
Surveyor	Ben Abbatt
Resurvey	To be complete by the 1st July 2026

Designation	Reference number	Species	Height (m)	Age class	Physiological condition	Structural condition	Condition notes	Condition related tree works	Priority
T	1	Horse chestnut Aesculus hippocastanum	23	Mature	Good	Fair	Previous branch reduction on the south side with mature regrowth - potential for decay. Overlong branches over the highway to the south. Dead ivy impedes survey. Epicormic growth on the lower stem. Canopy spread to the north 6.7, east 7.6, south 9, west 6.8m.	Tip reduction of lateral horizontal branches to a horizontal radial canopy spread of 7m to create an even, natural domed form. Crown lift to 5m. Remove epicormic growth on the main stem to 5m. Remove dead ivy to allow future tree surveys.	Low
T	2	Sycamore Acer pseudoplatanus	17.5	Mature	Good	Fair	Prior crown reduction at 9.5m with mature regrowth. Recent branch failure to the northwest over the garden. Overlong branches over the highway. Series of crown lifting wounds with subsequent decay and potential for coalesced decay. Epicormic growth on the lower stem. Canopy spread to the north 6, east 5.1, south 9, west c6m.	Crown reduction from 17.5m height to 10m with a horizontal radial branch spread of 4.5m to create an even, natural domed form. Crown lift to 4m. Remove epicormic growth to 4m. Climbing inspection of the historic pruning wounds to record the stem diameter at the point of wound, inwards extent of decay, vertical extent of decay, and downwards extent of decay. Habitat regulations to be followed. Dimensions to be forwarded to the Arboricultural Consultant to enable further assessment on the condition of the tree.	Low

Appendix 2: tree survey plan



General / Key:

Indicative canopy

Indicative tree position

Site: 14 Curtis Road

This drawing is produced in colour. Please ensure that you use a colour printing to ensure that the drawing is correctly interpreted.

Drawing title:

Tree survey plan

Drawing reference: J1513

Revision: -

Date: 18th November 2023

Scale: 1 to 500 on A4

Sheet: 1 of 1

N

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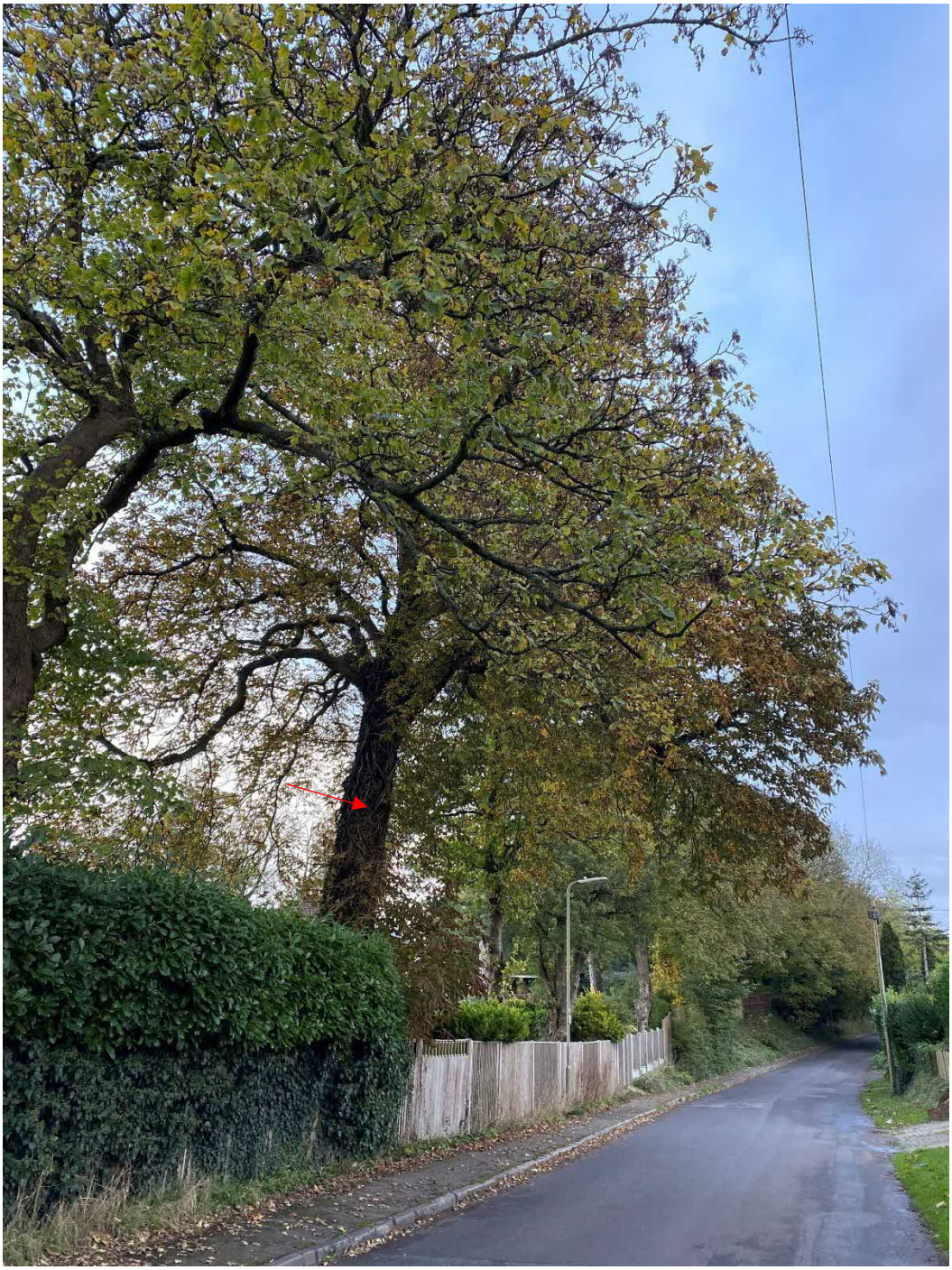
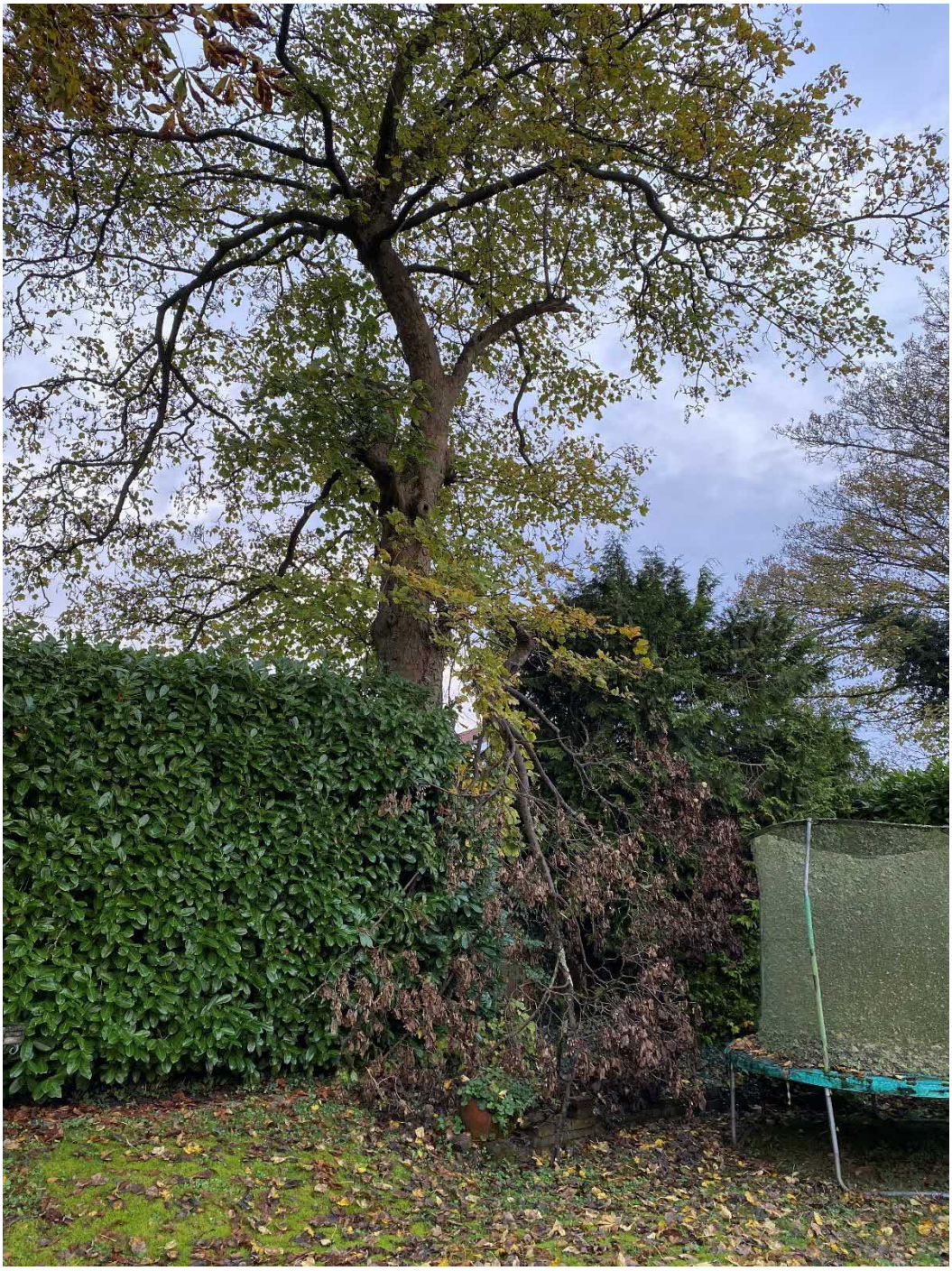
Appendix 3: photographs

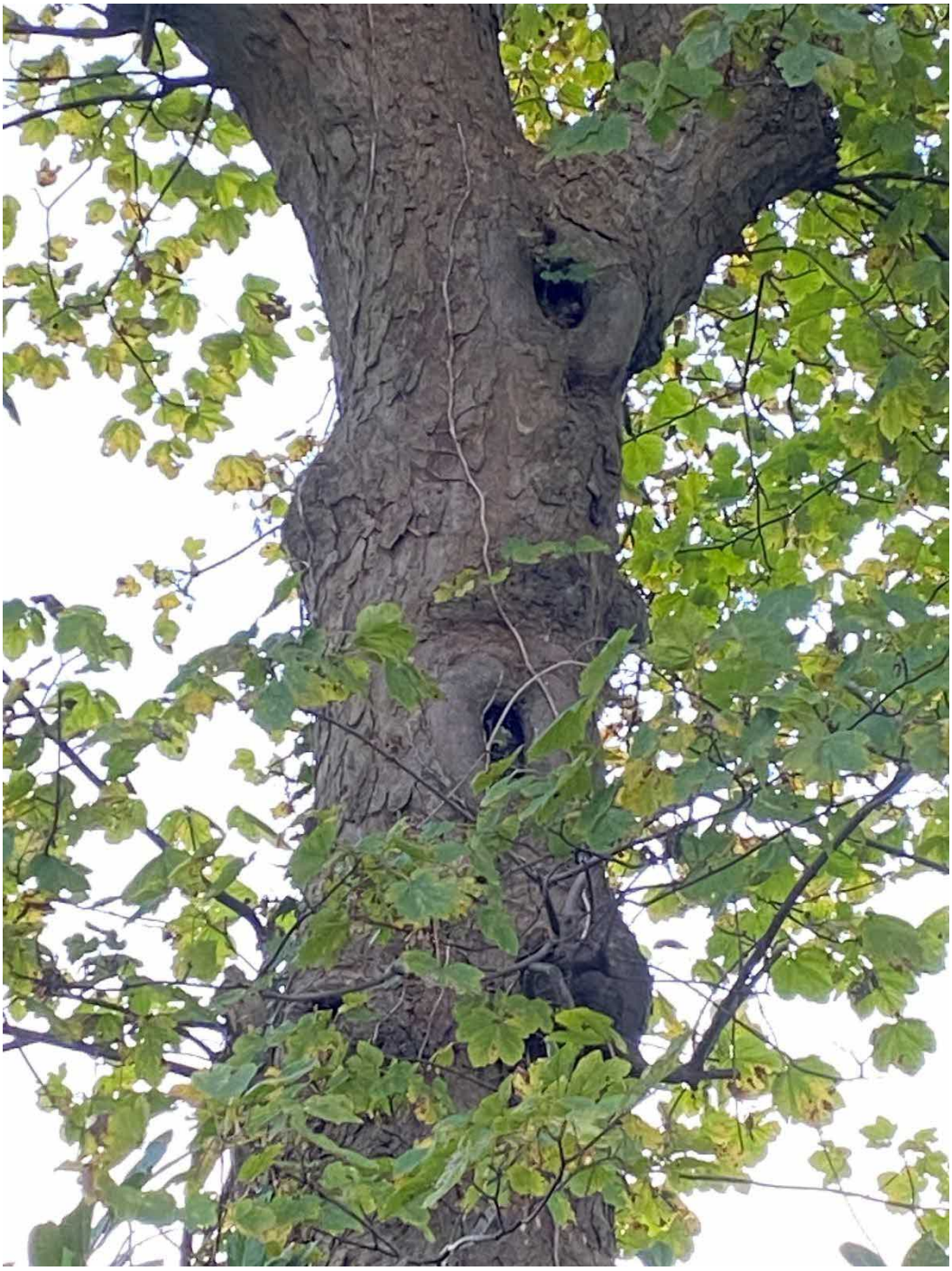


SAL2 T1 horse chestnut (identified by red arrow) with over long branches over the highway. T2 sycamore to the far left of the image.

SAL3 T2 sycamore in centre of image.



SAL4 T2 sycamore with recent branch failure within the rear garden shown by the brown leaves.



SAL5 T2 sycamore with series of cavities on the main stem.

Appendix 4: general notes

The tree survey can only be an assessment of the tree at the time of the survey and the tree(s) should be re-surveyed on a regular basis. An appropriate time period between surveys may be up to 5 years depending upon the condition of the trees, their maturity and the target(s). Recommendations for the period between surveys will be given.

As trees are dynamic structures their condition and health may change in a short period of time, particularly in relation to changes in their immediate environment and circumstances. Therefore, the survey is an assessment of the trees at the time of the survey only. If there is a significant change in the immediate environment and circumstances, then this should be brought to the attention of the arboricultural consultant so that they may advise accordingly.

I have not specifically checked with the planning authority whether the site is within a Conservation Area or whether the trees are under Tree Preservation Order (TPO), but I have relied upon their published map information. Prior to any tree works confirmation of whether these legal restrictions apply to the site or trees ought to be sought from the planning authority. If the trees stand within a Conservation Area designated under the Town and Country Planning Act the LPA will normally require 6 weeks notice of intention to carry out any tree works as detailed in the survey. If the trees are under TPO then the planning authority will normally require an application for any tree works. Some tree works are exempt, for instance if the trees are dead or dangerous, and certain works can be carried out without application. It is necessary to give the planning authority at least five days notice prior to carrying out any of these tree works under these exemptions. This survey, with recommendations, can be used to support any such application or notice.

Wildlife issues are of significant concern to the general public. A balance has to be found between the protection of wildlife and the need for safety when managing trees. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1980) and Countryside Rights of Way Act (2000) give statutory protection to wild birds, bats, mammals, some invertebrates and plants. It is important to ensure that this legislation is properly considered when carrying out any works to trees.

Bird nests were not identified whilst on site. However, any Arborist carrying out the tree works should ensure that there is no disturbance to nesting birds prior to the works being carried out. Further guidance upon the appropriate timing of the works can be sought from DEFRA, if necessary. Where nesting birds are found, further information should be sought from DEFRA 08459 33 55 77 or helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk. Prior to any works being implemented the tree contractor must identify whether there are any bats or birds using the tree as roost or nest. If such habitation is identified, then the tree contractor must obtain the necessary licence from Natural England (0845 601 4523 www.naturalengland.org.uk) to carry out the works.

A bat survey prior to tree works is not recommended, except where there is a high potential for habitat. During the tree works, the contractor should carry out the tree works with bats as an active consideration and follow the current industry best practice, e.g. Arboricultural Association Guidance Note 1 Bats in the context of tree work operations 2011, BS8596 Micro guide to surveying for bats in trees and woodland https://shop.bsigroup.com/upload/273444/BSI-Bat-Microguide-UK-EN.pdf which a competent tree contractor should be familiar with.

Biosecurity measures: To minimise to potential for contamination of the tree from other tree works it is appropriate to sterilise tools to be used before and after the works are implemented. Appropriate disinfectant includes Propellar or Cleankill Sanitizing spray. Loose debris is to be brushed off prior to treating with disinfectant to ensure appropriate application. See http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS028-guidance.pdf/$file/FCMS028-guidance.pdf for further information on Biosecurity and http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-9fjd2d for disinfectant information.

Appendix 5: key to tree survey data

Desig	Designation (T is Tree, G is Group, H is Hedge, W is woodland, S is Stump)	
No	Tree number.	
Species	Species of tree.	
Height	Height measured in metres.	
Canopy spread	Canopy spread in metres is taken at the four cardinal points to derive an accurate representation of the crown.	
Height of crown	Height in metres of crown clearance above adjacent ground level.	
Age Class	**Young**	A tree considered to be less than approximately 20 years old.
	Middle aged	A tree in approximately the first 1/5th of its normal life span with apical dominance (rapidly growing with a clear main leader) and not yet fully at its environmental potential full height.
	Mature	A tree in its 2/5ths to 5/5ths of its normal life span with apical dominance lost and at its environmental potential full height.
Condition (Physiological and Structural)	**Good**	A tree of typical physiological and structural condition that requires only general tree works to facilitate its retention in the landscape.
	Fair	A tree of impaired physiological and / or structural condition that may require remedial and general tree works to facilitate its retention in the landscape.
	Poor	A tree of significantly impaired physiological and / or structural condition that will require remedial and general tree works to facilitate its retention in the landscape if feasible.
Recommendations	As per BS3998: 2010 Recommendations for Tree Works.	
Priority	**Immediate**	Works should be carried out immediately as the probability of harm or damage occurring is likely.
	High	These works are important to carry out as soon as reasonably possible and any budget available for tree management should be spent upon these trees before the moderate and low categories. Works in this category usually will relate to abatement of risk for harm and or damage to occur. Ideally works in this category are anticipated to be carried out within 1 month.
	Moderate	These works are important to carry out as soon as reasonably possible and any budget available for tree management should be spent upon these trees before the low categories. Works in this category usually will relate to abatement of risk for harm and or damage to occur and for the good arboricultural management of the trees. Ideally works in this category are anticipated to be carried out within 3 months.
	Low	Works in this category usually will relate to the good arboricultural management of the trees. Ideally works in this category are anticipated to be carried out within 12 months.
Re-survey	This is the time period in which it is recommended that the tree is surveyed again. This is based upon the condition of the tree, its location, previous, current and future management. It is normally expressed at a time period from the date of the report / survey, whichever is the sooner. If no time period is noted then the default period is one year.	

Appendix 6: surveyor qualifications and experience

Ben Abbatt has been involved in the arboricultural industry since the mid 1990s and has worked in a variety of roles within the industry, starting as a forestry contractor, progressing to the surveying and management of forestry and arboricultural contracts for a national forestry company and running the arboricultural section of a horticultural business overseas. Additionally, Ben has worked in local Government at Borough and County levels, providing planning related advice and managing Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas, as well as managing highways trees and contracts.

Since 2006, Ben has been the Director and Principal Consultant of Sapling Arboriculture Ltd.

Ben is a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF), Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), Society for the Environment (SocEnv) and the Arboricultural Association (AA), having been an Arboricultural Association Registered Consultant since 2006. He is also a member of the International Society of Arboriculture and the Royal Forestry Society.

He holds many arboricultural and forestry qualifications including the Professional Diploma in Arboriculture awarded by the Royal Forestry Society, the Technicians' Certificate awarded by the Arboricultural Association and an HNC in Forestry.

Ben is also a freelance trainer for LANTRA, delivering courses in Basic Tree Survey and Inspection and Professional Tree Inspection.

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