

# Tree assessment report

For: Cheltenham College

Tree ref: 10

Tree location: On lawn near junction of Bath Road and Thirlestaine Road ([map link](#))

17th January 2024

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## INTRODUCTION

The mature blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica 'glauca'*) (T10) is located on the open lawn area near the junction of Bath Road and Thirlestaine Road.



FIGURE 1: AERIAL IMAGE (GOOGLE MAPS) SHOWING TREE LOCATION IN CONTEXT

The tree has previously suffered a large limb loss on the east side which has altered the shape of the crown but this is barely discernible when viewed from the adjacent roads to the west and south. Following the branch failure (during strong winds) the tree was lightly crown reduced in 2020.

## FINDINGS

I visited the school site on 11th December 2023 to meet Christine Croton (head gardener) & inspect the tree.

I have previously climbed this tree to inspect an old steel cable brace in the upper crown, as well as to look at branch junctions to check for any signs of weaknesses that could not be observed from ground level.

The tree appears to be in good health, and has produced new growth near the branch tips since the reduction pruning carried out in 2020. There are no signs of dieback or discoloration of the foliage.

Structurally, there are no signs of crown separation from sagging branches or visible cracks (viewed from ground level).

The tree overhangs a footpath on the east side. This is not one of the most commonly used paths within the school as it does not link classrooms, but is likely to have several people per hour use it.



*PHOTO 1: THE CEDAR AS VIEWED FROM THE SOUTHWEST*

## DISCUSSION

There are no significant 'defects' observable at present, such as fungal induced decay, reduced vitality or visible cracks. However, mature cedars often suffer damage via branch failures when snow falls or strong winds are accompanied by heavy rain as the foliage becomes very heavy when wet and this adds significant load to the branches.

This tree has previously suffered a large branch failure on the east side over the footpath, prior to being pruned. Since the reduction pruning was carried out, there have been no failures. However, since the pruning was carried out over three years ago, there has been inevitable new growth near the tips of the branches which is gradually increasing the end-weight of the branches. In my opinion, this increased loading of the branches could lead to further branch failures in strong wind or under loading from snow.

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Therefore, on balance I conclude that it is desirable to prune the tree again to proactively try and reduce the likelihood of future failures.

I recommend that the crown is pruned to reduce the radial length of lateral branches by up to a maximum of 2 metres, using a 'reduction via thinning' approach to leave as natural as possible. The maximum pruning cut size shall be 10cm and the reduction via thinning to remove around 20% of the density of the branch ends.

The work shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of BS3998:2010.

Other cedar trees at the school have been pruned by the school's appointed tree contractor and this has achieved a good result aesthetically.



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