

Rowan Harper
38 Stoney Road
Bracknell
RG42 1YG

8th February 2024

Oak tree at 38 Stoney Road, Bracknell, RG42 1YG

Dear Rowan

You have asked me to provide advice in relation to the mature oak tree (*Quercus robur*) located at the front (east corner) of your property, next to the driveway.

I hold the Level 6 Diploma in Arboriculture, and the Arboricultural Association Technicians Certificate. I am a LANTRA Professional Tree Inspector, and professional member of the Arboricultural Association. I have 22 years experience working in arboriculture, and have been an arboricultural consultant specialising in trees in relation to planning matters for 16 years.

I visited your property on 30th January 2024 to inspect the tree, and would like to make the following observations and recommendations.

I surveyed the tree with reference to the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) system (Mattheck & Breloer 1994), and the recommendations for survey and tree inspection as outlined in 'Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management' by David Lonsdale (1999).

The tree is subject to tree preservation order (TPO) by Bracknell Forest Council reference TPO 1278, the tree is identified on the TPO as 'T7 Oak'.

The tree has a stem diameter of 1110mm, and a height of 18 metres, with a crown clearance of 5m above ground level over the road. The canopy has a spread of North: 7.5m; East: 8m; South: 9m; West 6.25m. The tree is in the over mature life stage. The base of the tree is located on a raised area of ground, such that the base of the tree is approximately 75cm higher than the surrounding ground. There is a small retaining wall separating this area from the driveway. The rooting area of the tree is surrounded by the driveway, pavement and tarmac road.

The main trunk has numerous wounds from historic branch removal which have calloused over. There is a vertical scar on the west of the trunk at the base. The main stem leans such that the tree is weighted towards the road. The trunk divides in two at 6m, with the southern and northern stems further dividing into three major limbs. See photos 1 & 2 below.



Photo 1: View of tree from within driveway



Photo 2: View of tree from road

There are a number of faults within the crown which are of concern, and I have made **recommendations for tree surgery work in bold below** to address these as follows:

1. A major limb extending out to the southeast has a large area of exposed dead heartwood where an upright limb has been historically torn out. There is then a further wound below this, from a more recently torn out branch. Due to these wounds, the branches above these areas of damage are weak, with the likelihood of the major limbs snapping in high wind. The end of the branch has been reduced in the past, no doubt to reduce the sail area of the limb and reduce the risk of the limb snapping. **I would recommend the branches above the two wounds are reduced by 2 – 3m to suitable growth points to reduce the risk of the limbs failing at the weak area.** See Photos 3, 4 & 5 below.



Photo 3 limb at south east



Photo 4 limb at south east area of weakness



Photo 5 limb at south east. Torn out branch leaving area of weakness

2. There is a 7m branch extending to the southwest over the driveway, which has a cavity near where it joins the tree from a historic tear out wound (Photo 6 below). The branch has been historically pruned back over the drive, no doubt to reduce the end weight of the branch, and then has since grown back (Photo7 below). There is the risk the branch will snap at the weak point in high wind. **I recommend that this branch is reduced by 2m to suitable growth points to reduce the risk of the branch snapping.**



Photo 6 cavity in branch extending over driveway

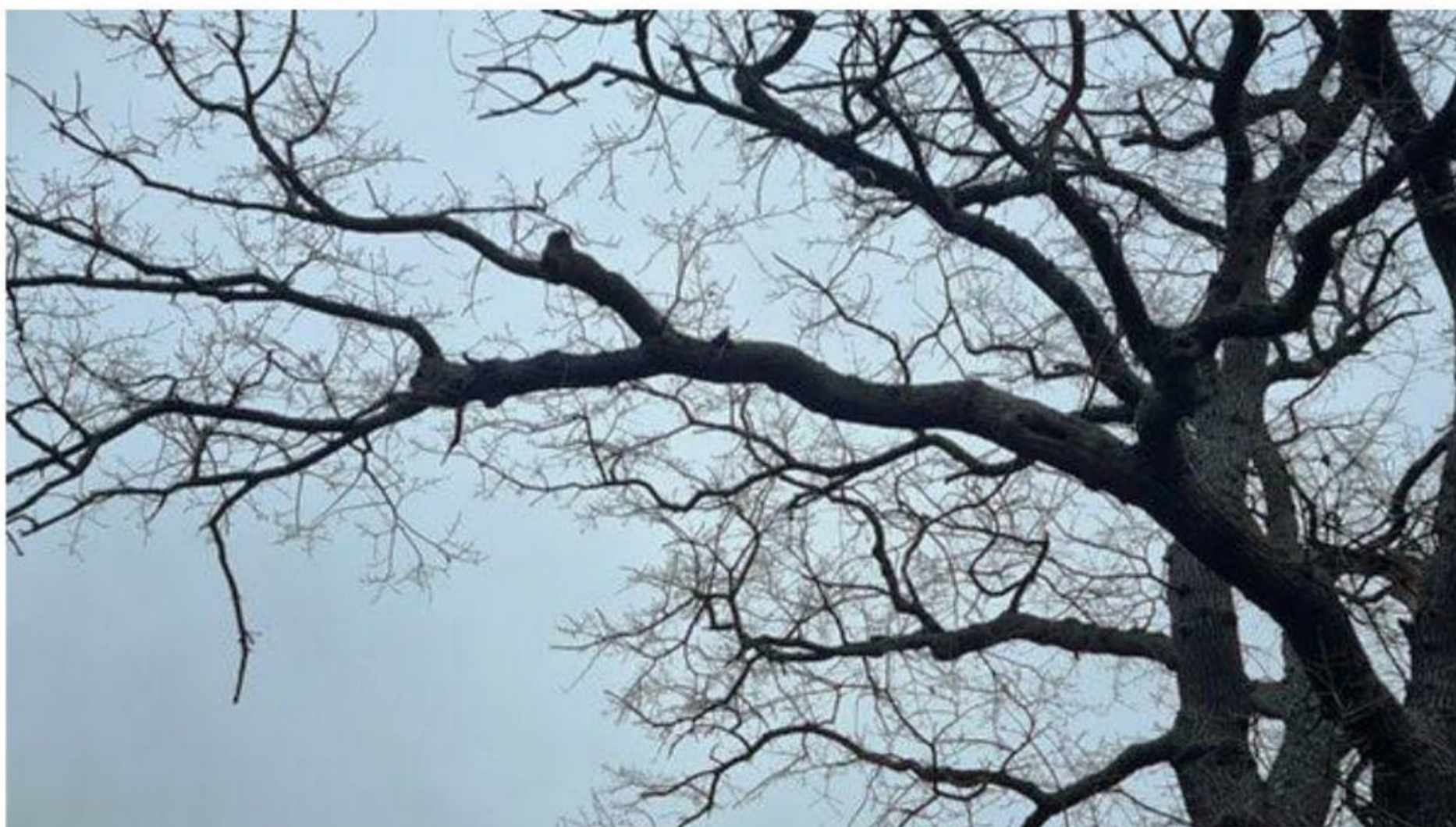


Photo 7 branch extending over driveway previously reduced

3. On the northern main limb at 10m there is a cavity in the main upright limb, approximately 50cm high and 5cm wide. The extent of the callousing would indicate that the cavity has been present for some years, however this also means that any decay present will have had time to develop, creating an area of weakness. From experience this species can be prone to snapping where such cavities are present. See photo 8 below. **I would recommend that the crown above this cavity is reduced by 2 – 3m to suitable growth points to reduce the risk of the limb snapping in high wind.**



Photo 7 showing cavity at 10m

4. There are dead branches throughout the crown which are at risk of falling on the footpath or driveway, and it is recommended that all deadwood greater than 25mm is removed from the crown. (Removal of deadwood can be undertaken as work exempt from requiring permission from the council under the TPO).

The tree is covered by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and therefore permission to carry out the works recommended in 1 – 3 above must be obtained from the local planning authority prior to being carried out, and I offer this letter in support of such an application.

Yours sincerely



Tom Grayshaw BA (Hons) Tech Cert (ArborA) Dip Arb L6 (ABC) MArborA
Director