

Sant Ffraed House
Llanvihangel Gobion, Abergavenny

Arboricultural Condition Survey 2023
For
Oldwalls Collection



Surveyed by

Wyn Davies CMLI, M.Arbor.A

9th February 2023



Mackley Davies Associates Ltd

Landscape Architecture . Environmental Planning . Tree Surveying

Pensaerniaeth Tirwedd . Cynllunio Amgylcheddol . Arolygu Coed



1 Introduction:

- 1.1 The following report was commissioned by Rhys Evans on behalf of Oldwalls Collection. This report is intended to provide an assessment of the condition of the trees found growing within the property and grounds at Sant Ffraed House. All major trees on the property have been inspected but only those exhibiting hazards, defects or other noteworthy characteristics have been included with the schedule of recommended work below.
- 1.2 The report is based upon data collected on visits to the site made on 9th February 2023: weather conditions were warm & sunny with adequate visibility for the purposes of the inspection. The tree assessment comprised a visual inspection carried out from ground level only, using hand tools such probes and a sounding hammer where appropriate. The inspections were intended to identify distinct defects and other failure-prone characteristics of the trees and the sites in which they are growing, where these features might give rise to hazard. It must nevertheless be recognised that no tree is entirely safe, given the possibility that an exceptionally strong wind or other unusual circumstances could damage or uproot even a mechanically 'perfect' specimen¹.
- 1.3 While every attempt has been made to provide a realistic and accurate assessment of the trees' condition at the time of inspection, no responsibility can be accepted for damage or injury sustained as a result of the failure of any tree due to faults not apparent upon a visual, ground level inspection carried out at this season, or to faults developing subsequent to the survey. Similarly, no liability can be accepted for the condition of trees that are obscured in part or in whole (e.g. by dense Ivy or other foliage), nor for any that proved inaccessible to the inspector. Certain features which might provide evidence of ongoing decay or decline (such as seasonal fungal fruiting bodies, damage to foliage, insect emergence holes etc.) may not have been in evidence: Only those features that *are* apparent at the time of the inspection could be assessed.
- 1.4 Where significant defects have been identified some recommendations for action have been provided. It should be appreciated that any such recommendations are in outline form only and do not constitute a detailed specification of any works that may be required. It is assumed that any tree surgery would be carried out by qualified and skilled arborists who would be able to interpret the recommendations in order to carry out necessary works in accordance with current Best Practice (see references below).
- 1.5 A Tree Location Plan is provided at the end of this report. This plan indicates the approximate position of the trees and other features referred to in the report but it is for purposes of identification only.
- 1.6 This report is valid for a limited period of three years and the site will require reassessment on a regular basis and following storm events to monitor future defects that may arise.

¹ Lonsdale (2000): *see list of references and relevant texts provided at the end of this report*

2 Methodology for the assessment of Risk in Trees:

- 2.1 The inspection is intended to identify distinct defects and other failure-prone characteristics of the trees surveyed. However the identification of a 'defect'² associated with a tree does not tell us anything about the actual risk that it represents to person or property. To make a realistic risk assessment consideration of three distinct aspects of the situation are required:
- i) The likelihood that a failure, should it occur, will actually lead to any injury or damage. (i.e. are there vulnerable buildings or other structures within the potential 'target area'? If the tree is near a road, a driveway or a footpath, what is the frequency of use? How often are people, cars, bicycles etc. actually present in the area immediately around the tree?
 - ii) The size of the defective part (ie. how much damage would it cause were it to fail);
 - iii) The likelihood that failure will actually occur (i.e. what is the *realistic probability* that the dead limb, decayed tree etc. will actually break in the foreseeable future)
- 2.2 Consideration of the length of time that a pedestrian or a moving vehicle is actually within the area likely to be affected by a tree failure, frequently amounts to no more than a matter of seconds. Furthermore, tree failure can occur at any time of the day or night throughout the year and for much of that time the frequency of occupation may be negligible. Although dependant upon the frequency of traffic within the 'target area', it is often the case that the total time that a 'target' is present and potentially vulnerable to tree failure will be a very small proportion of the overall time during which a failure might occur. It may also be of significance that site usage rates, particularly by pedestrians, will be reduced at times of bad weather, when tree failures are more likely to occur. While the risk posed by trees should never be wholly disregarded, the level of safety that a situation demands must be set within the context of its environment. A tree at some distance from any building situated in a quiet side street will require considerable less stringent safety margins than would one growing in a town centre or alongside a busy road.
- 2.3 Within the methodology used in this report attempts are made to assess each of the three aspects described above. Point (i) is defined by a "Target Status" code allocated to each tree, determined by its location in relation to features that could prove susceptible to harm. Where a hazard has been identified in a tree, it's magnitude is defined by a "Hazard Code" (point ii), while the "probability of hazard failure" is also designated a code (point iii). These factors are defined in more detail, along with the other parameters assessed, in the appendix. There are subjective elements to each of these factors, but the intention is to use them to provide an informed assessment of the priority that should be given to dealing with any given hazard.

² A 'defect' here is used to mean any feature of a tree that could predispose it to failure; it does *not* imply that its presence indicates that a failure *will* occur, let alone that it is necessarily likely to result in harm.

3 General observations on the site and the trees:

- 3.1 The site consists of Sant Ffraed house and surrounding grounds which includes a large pond in the south-west corner which intermittently floods inundating the surrounding ground and impacting on the rooting areas of the adjacent trees.
- 3.2 The trees will be able to tolerate the wet soils during the dormant season provided standing water does not remain around the trees for extended periods. It is worth monitoring the trees for signs of decline, particularly the very large late-mature London plane (1).
- 3.3 Land adjacent to the roads and adjacent built properties are considered to have a 'High' or 'Significant' 'Target Status'³ however in other areas the for the majority of trees is considered to be Moderate or Low with lower rates of occupancy.
- 3.4 Extensive works have been carried out on the property including regrading, mounding, new fencing & gates and areas of hard-standing impacting on a significant number of trees and hedgerows which should be carefully monitored for future decline. The group of sycamore on the eastern boundary (G1) are already beginning to show signs of dieback with necrotic patches of bark appearing on the main stems.
- 3.5 The tree stock includes some large late-mature & mature specimens providing important amenity features within the landscape, contributing to the 'sense of place'. It should be appreciated that many of the features that constitute 'hazards' (dead wood, cavities etc.) are also of considerable benefit to wildlife. Thus while safety must remain the primary concern, the *retention* of such features should be encouraged where they do not represent significant risk.
- 3.6 The oaks (4 & 5) for instance have significant defects, one of which (5) is at risk of catastrophic failure, however if fenced off from public access they could be retained and allowed to fall apart over time by natural processes.
- 3.7 As is to be expected in trees of this maturity, deadwood is widespread and debris of all sizes has built-up within the canopies of some of the trees. The risk from such debris falling constitutes one of the main visible hazards, representing *predictable* risk and should be actively managed removing any larger unstable deadwood as it arises.
- 3.8 Some trees have been recommended to be 'monitored', where some evidence of structural instability or decline in the health and vigour of the tree has been observed or suspected but where the severity of the problem is not considered to represent an unacceptable risk in the short-term. They may, however, deteriorate over time and so should be reassessed with care at the next routine inspection. However although specific trees have been identified for monitoring, it would be fair to assume all the large late-mature specimens ought to be regularly checked in order to ensure developing defects are monitored and any remedial action is taken in a timely manner.
- 3.9 It is recognised that '**residual risks**' from unseen hazards (such as root decay, undetected decay pockets, summer branch drop etc.) will remain following the implementation of the recommendations contained within this tree report and we would refer you to the document 'Common sense risk management of trees' produced by the National Tree Safety Group (2011) which provides landowners with reasonable balanced tree safety management guidelines.

³ See Appendix for definition of "Target Status"

REFERENCES:

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TREE SCHEDULE:

ID no.	Species	Height	Diameter	Maturity	Target Status	Condition	General Notes &/or, Defect type <i>[If M or H]</i>	Hazard Magnitude	Probability of Failure	Recommended action	Priority
1	London plane	V	V	LM	3	G	Basal bark wound with minor decay (south side), burred stem, good flare/taper to buttress roots, tree subject to temporary inundation by flood water			Monitor due to size & location	M
2	Cherry	S	S	EM	3	G	Trees (3 cherries & 1 apple) located beneath power lines, one tree has tight stems with included bark			Crown reduce as necessary to maintain adequate clearance to power lines, monitor for splits and cracks between tight stems	1
3	Sycamore	S	S	EM	2	G	1997 memorial tree			Remove steel mesh guard from base of tree	1
4	Oak	V	V	LM	1	H	Dieback with large diameter deadwood branches throughout, tree becoming stag headed, long grass & bramble around base of tree	3	3	Clean out unstable deadwood and monitor future decline (or fence off)	3
5	Oak	V	V	LM	1	H	Extensive basal decay column with buttress root decay, dieback with large diameter deadwood branches throughout, tree becoming stag headed, long grass & bramble around base of tree	5	3	Fell tree (or fence off allowing tree to collapse naturally)	4
6	Oak	L	L	M	1	M	Basal decay cavity (west side), moderate diameter deadwood branches in upper canopy			Monitor decay progression	M
7	Ash	L	L	M	2	M	Four stemmed from 6.0m, recent excavations for the bin store have been carried out within the rooting area of the tree and surface now tarmacked over			Monitor future decline	M
8	Sycamore	L	L	M	2	M	Four stemmed, recent excavations for the bin store have been carried out within the rooting area of the tree and surface now tarmacked over			Monitor future decline	M
9	Sycamore	M	M	M	2	M	Earth bund 1.0m high has been placed over the rooting area of the tree			Monitor future decline	M

ID no.	Species	Height	Diameter	Maturity	Target Status	Condition	General Notes &/or, Defect type <i>[If M or H]</i>	Hazard Magnitude	Probability of Failure	Recommended action	Priority
10	Sycamore	M	M	M	3	H	(Tag number 1403) Moderate diameter deadwood branches throughout (adjacent group of trees have blown over following excavations for container cabins)	2	3	Remove deadwood branches	2
11	Sycamore	L	L	M	3	H	(Tag number 1404) Long moderate diameter deadwood branches in lower canopy	2	3	Remove deadwood branches	2
12	Yew	L	L	M	3	H	(Tag number 1405) Historic branch shedding, large tear wound, split and decay in remaining two stems	3	3	Remove tree or reduce to stock (4m high)	3
13	Yew	M	M	M	3	H	Moderate diameter deadwood branch over access track	2	3	Remove deadwood branches	2
14	Unknown	L	L	M	4	H	Moderate diameter deadwood branches throughout	2	3	Remove deadwood branches	2
15	London plane	V	V	LM	4	M	Very large tree in close proximity to the house			Monitor due to size & location	M
16	Austrian pine	L	V	M	3	H	Large decayed split in main stem from 6m-20m height	3	3	Remove tree or reduce to 6m height or carry out aerial inspection to assess the extent of decay	3
17	Horse chestnut	L	V	LM	3	H	Tree previously reduced, historic branch shedding, decayed tear wound on main stem from 1.5m to 8m	4	2	Reduce crown to original pruning points	3
18	Pine	L	L	M	3	H	Snapped branch hanging in upper canopy	3	2	Remove snapped branch	2
19	Oak	V	V	LM	3	M	Remains of decay bracket at base, heavy limb over farm access track			Monitor due to size & location	M
20	Red oak	L	L	M	3	H	Long moderate diameter deadwood branches throughout canopy	2	3	Remove deadwood branches	2
21	Horse chestnut	L	L	M	3	M	Historic branch shedding, tear wounds within canopy			Monitor future decline	M

ID no.	Species	Height	Diameter	Maturity	Target Status	Condition	General Notes &/or, Defect type <i>[If M or H]</i>	Hazard Magnitude	Probability of Failure	Recommended action	Priority
22	Lime	L	L	M	3	M	Historic branch shedding, tear wounds within canopy, dieback in top of canopy			Monitor future decline	M
G1	Sycamore	M	M	EM	1	M	Earth bund 1.5m high has been placed over the rooting area of the trees, patches of necrotic bark beginning to appear on main stems			Monitor future decline	M
G2	Sycamore	M	M	M	1	M	Group of four trees, recent excavations for the bin store have been carried out within the rooting area of the tree and surface now tarmacked over			Monitor future decline	M
H1	Holly, sycamore	M	M	EM	1	M	Earth bund 1.5m high has been placed over the rooting area for the length of the hedgerow			Monitor future decline	M
H2	Western red cedar	L	S	M	2	M	Earth bund 1.5m high has been placed over the rooting area at the western end of the hedgerow			Monitor future decline	M

PHOTOGRAPHS:



Cherry (2)



Sycamore (3)



Sycamore (G2)



Sycamore (8)



Sycamore (9)



Yew (12)



Austrian pine (16)





Horse chestnut (17)



Pine (18)



Red oak (20)



Lime (22)

Horse chestnut (21)

APPENDIX - Codes & Definitions used in the Tree Hazard Survey

Height:

P	sapling:	Trees under 3.5m (<11')
S	Small;	Between 3m & 8m (10'-26')
M	Medium;	Between 7.5m & 15m (25'-50')
L	Large;	Between 14m & 23m (45'-75')
V	Very Large;	Trees over 22m (>75')

Diameter:

P	sapling:	Diameter under 7.5cm (<3")
S	Small:	Between 7.5cm & 30 cm (3" -1')
M	Medium:	Between 30cm & 75cm (1' -2'6")
L	Large:	Between 75cm & 125cm (2'6" -4')
V	Very Large:	Over 125cm (Over 4')

(Estimated where tree inaccessible or ivy-covered etc.)

Maturity: - *Necessarily subjective and based on the appearance of the trees, not on their chronological age; (Note: "SULE" = Safe, Useful Expected Lifespan. May vary between species & with other circumstances.)*

- P Sapling or newly Planted tree; not fully established. (Transplantable or easily replaced.)
- Y Young: Establishing; usually with good vigour, but as yet of limited landscape value.
- EM Early-Mature; established; normally vigorous & increasing in height. Of increasing landscape value.
- M Mature; Well established trees around the middle half of their SULE and retaining good vigour. Achieving full height but their crowns still spreading.
- LM Late-mature: Fully established trees, generally retaining moderate vigour but growth slowing.
- O Old: Fully mature trees in last quarter of their SULE; vigour declining.
- A Ancient: Very old; low vigour; liable to decline. May include important Veteran Trees.

NOTE: *Where groups or areas of trees are considered collectively, the same codes are used to describe the general character of the majority of the trees, or the range of sizes found within the stand (e.g. S-L = Small to Large; Y-M = Young to Mature).*

Target Status (T/S):

This is an estimate, largely based on appearances at the time of inspection, of the perceived target occupancy of the area around a tree, i.e. how probable is it that a "target" will be present should some form of failure occur, considered together with an estimate of the seriousness of the possible consequences of such a failure, i.e. the vulnerability of the potential target to harm.

Thus any substantial tree near a busy road, where a failure could cause a serious accident, would have a High target status, while a tree in an open field would have a low score, even if it were in poor condition. However a relatively fragile structure, such as a prefabricated office or temporary classroom unit, may demand a High target status, even if the frequency of occupation is only moderate.

The Target Status is essentially independent of the other parameters, being a reflection of the tree's external environment. However the score of a tree may be reduced where its youth and small size indicate that failure is highly unlikely to result in damage. In such cases the score may be increased over time, as the tree grows. By contrast there are certain site types, including school premises and certain commercial leisure venues, where there may be a heightened duty of care, which may be accounted for by assuming a Target Status that is slightly above that which would reflect the actual, objective level of target occupancy.

The examples of site types given below are representative but are not exhaustive.

- 0 - **Negligible** target occupancy; very low risk of harm being caused. (e.g. low-use parts of open spaces & woodland)
- 1 - **Low** target occupancy: (e.g. Parts of amenity areas away from main footpaths; peripheral parts of parks, playing fields etc.)
- 2 - **Moderate** target occupancy (e.g. intermittently occupied areas; near moderate-use foot-paths, quiet side roads and private gardens; trees near unoccupied/low-value buildings etc.)
- 3 - **Significant** target occupancy (e.g., Near well-used footpaths, playgrounds, access routes & secondary roads. Most car parking areas. Trees over low-occupancy buildings and structures not liable to major damage in the event of tree failure)
- 4 - **High** target occupancy (e.g. high-use footpaths and play areas; main access and assembly areas; near busy roads & car-parks; near high-occupancy buildings & structures liable to significant damage in the event of tree failure.)

- 5 - **Permanent** target occupancy (e.g. trees close to vulnerable, permanently occupied structures, or in other areas where tree failure is likely to lead to serious injury or damage, such as near fast trunk roads, in town centres etc.)

Condition:

- G Good:** No significant defects noted. ***Trees classified thus are not considered further***, (although additional comments may be provided in the “Notes” column).
- M Minor or Management issues:** Minor or *potential* problems/defects observed, but not such that is likely to represent a significant hazard within the next three years (or within the routine inspection cycle, whichever is the shortest). Also, trees where work may be advisable to abate an immediate or foreseeable nuisance, or where preventative formative pruning would be significantly beneficial.
- H Hazard** of some kind noted
- **If the Condition Code is either M or H the following parameter is included:**

Defect Description &/or General Notes: Brief notes identifying the nature and location of the hazard, defect or other characteristic observed.

- **In cases where a Hazard has been identified (i.e condition code = H) the following two additional parameters are assessed, Magnitude of Hazard & Probability of Hazard Failure, as defined below:**

Hazard Magnitude:

In considering the feature giving rise to hazard, what degree of harm is likely to arise were it to fail and find a target?

<u>Hazard Magnitude size</u>	<u>Degree of likely/possible harm</u>	<u>Approx.</u>
1. Minor:	Defective material small; unlikely to result in more than minor injury or easily repairable damage to objects or structures. (<50mm)	

- 2. **Moderate:** Some possibility of injury requiring first aid; damage to objects or structures generally repairable at moderate cost.<150mm)
- 3. **Significant:** Injury requiring hospitalisation possible; buildings etc. liable to structural damage; vehicles liable to be rendered unusable.<300mm)
- 4. **Large:** Severe disabling or even fatal injuries; significant structural damage likely to structures and vehicles.(300-750mm)
- 5. **Major:** Single or multiple fatalities likely; major structural damage; vehicles crushed.>750mm)

Probability of Hazard Failure:

Based on the condition of tree or its defective part, on the species characteristics, on its location and exposure and other factors deemed to be significant, within what period might failure reasonably be expected to occur?

N.B. Given the large number of variables that may determine when a tree might fail (e.g. weather conditions; severity of tissue degradation; further damage occurring; alterations in environment, including increased exposure etc. etc.) it is impossible to specify the probability of failure with any accuracy. The following categories are intended to provide guidance based on the conditions & circumstances at the time of the inspection, and assuming that weather conditions will not exceed what might reasonably be considered to be the ‘normal’ range to be expected in the locality. The time-scales indicated are thus indicative only; they do **not** indicate periods over which the defects may be considered ‘safe’!

- 1. **Low:** Defects effectively stable and unlikely to deteriorate in the foreseeable future (e.g. failure not probable for at least 3-5 years)
- 2. **Developing:** Failure foreseeable but not likely to occur soon (e.g. *within* 3-5 years).

APPENDIX - Codes & Definitions used in the Tree Hazard Survey

- 3. **Moderate:** Failure considered to be moderately likely to occur (e.g. within 1-3 years)
- 4. **Probable:** Failure considered to be probable (e.g. within 1 year)
- 5. **Imminent:** Failure likely to occur at any time

Notes / Action:

Brief details of any action that may be recommended or suggested for any tree. All works commissioned should conform to **BS3998:2010 – Tree works-Recommendations**.

The present survey does not give an opportunity for the detailed assessment of each tree and in certain cases further investigations, such as a climbing assessment or decay mapping may be advised. A Client Inspection may also be advised where work proposed may be controversial, or where a number of alternative options may be considered

Priority:

Based on consideration of the Target Status, the Magnitude of Hazard and the Likelihood of Failure, a **Priority code** is allocated to provide guidance as to the degree of urgency with which an identified hazard should be treated.

It is recommended that all works with a code of 1 or more be dealt with at the first opportunity, but where there are other limiting constraints (e.g. the availability of funds), operations should be prioritised as indicated.

Operations meriting Priority Codes 4 or 5 will normally be communicated to the client immediately (i.e. prior to the submission of a written report).

(Where the tree in question is considered to be of particularly high amenity value, and a defect threatens its well-being or survival, it may be given an

upgraded priority rating even if there is no major risk of harm to person or property.)

- 0 (or not set) - No action deemed necessary on the basis of this inspection.
- M **Monitor** Hazard, health or other factor identified that is deemed not to require positive action at this time but to which future assessments should pay particular attention.
- D **Discretionary:** Risk to person/property below action level but work nonetheless recommended; includes problems of nuisance & those currently minor or incipient. (Note: this may include matters where timely action may be cost-effective by preventing more serious problems developing.)
- 1 **Low priority:** ┐
- 2 **Medium priority:** ┆ **Work recommended**
- 3 **High priority:** └
- 4 **Urgent*:** Serious risk of significant harm: ***attention required without delay***
- 5 **Emergency*:** ***Immediate attention required: Emergency call-out of contractors; road closure &/or site evacuation may be required.***

(* Note: Such cases would normally be notified to the relevant authority immediately and should therefore have been dealt with by the time the written report is received.)

SUMMARY OF TERMS & CODES USED IN THE TREE HAZARD ASSESSMENT

Height Codes:			Diameter:			Maturity: -		
P	saPling:	Trees under 3.5m (<11')	P	saPling:	Diameter under 7.5cm	Min	Minor tree (Sapling / newly Planted tree)	
S	Small;	Between 3m & 8m (10'-26')	S	Small:	Between 7.5cm & 30 cm	Y	Young:.	
M	Medium;	Between 7.5m & 15m (25'-50')	M	Medium:	Between 30cm & 75cm	EM	Early-Mature	
L	Large;	Between 14m & 23m (45'-75')	L	Large:	Between 75cm & 125cm	M	Mature	
V	Very Large;	Trees over 22m (>75')	V	Very Large:	Over 125cm	LM	Late-mature:	
						O	Old	
						A	Ancient (veteran)	

Note: 'Minor Trees' are small, young & non-hazardous individuals; they will be recorded by species only with no additional detail given.

Target Status: - 0 - <u>Negligible</u> target occupancy	2 - <u>Moderate</u> target occupancy	4 - <u>High</u> target occupancy
1 - <u>Low</u> target occupancy:	3 - <u>Significant</u> target occupancy	5 - <u>Permanent</u> target occupancy

Condition: - **G** Good: Trees classified thus are not considered further. **M** Minor or Management issues **H** Hazard of some kind noted

- If Condition is **M** or **H**, a **Defect Description** is included; if Condition is **H**, the following 2 parameters are included:

Magnitude of Hazard: In considering the feature giving rise to hazard, what degree of harm is likely to arise were it to fail and find a target?

1 Minor: **2** Moderate **3** Significant **4** Large **5** Major

Probability of Hazard Failure: Based on the condition of tree or its defective part, on the species characteristics, on its location and exposure and other factors deemed to be significant, within what period might failure reasonably be expected to occur?

1 **Minimal:** Defects effectively stable and unlikely to deteriorate in the foreseeable future (e.g. failure not probable for at least 3-5 years) **3** **Likely:** Failure considered likely to occur (e.g. within 1-3 years)

2 **Developing:** Failure foreseeable but not likely to occur soon (e.g. within 3-5 years). **4** **Probable:** Failure considered to be probable (e.g. within 1 year)

5 **Imminent:** Failure likely to occur at any time

Priority: The degree of urgency with which an identified hazard should be treated. However all remedial and preventative works are recommended to be put in hand as soon as practicable.

0 (or not set) - No action deemed necessary on the basis of this inspection. **Remedial or preventative work should be prioritised as below**

M **Monitor** A feature identified which is not deemed to require positive action at this time, but to which future assessments should pay particular attention **1** **Low priority:**

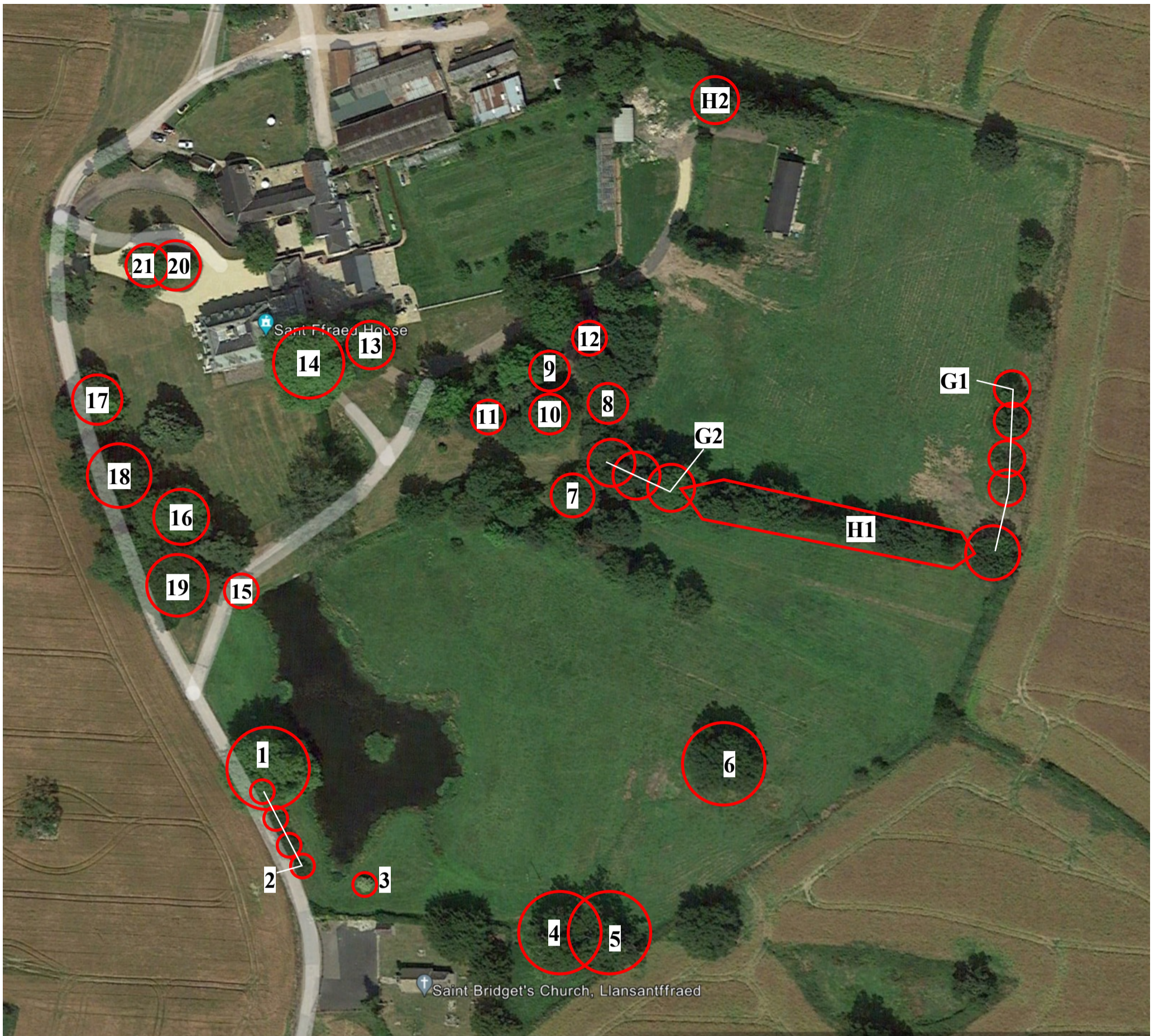
D **Discretionary:** Work recommended to deal with minor problems representing no immediate hazard; may be considered optional or postponable (but work now may avoid problems developing subsequently). **2** **Medium priority:**

3 **High priority:**

4* **Urgent:** Attention required without delay


5* **Emergency** IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED

(* Note: Urgent & Emergency works would normally be notified to the relevant authority immediately and should therefore have been dealt with by the time the written report is received.)



Tree Condition Survey 2023

KEY:

-  Tree location & ID no



Sant Ffraed House
Llanvihangel Gobion, Abergavenny

