



## **L.Smith Tree Surgery**

### **Visual Tree Assessment**

**Prepared by** Leo Smith

ABC L4 Diploma in Arboriculture, LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection.

**Site Address:** Wildwood, Reading Road North, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 4AQ

**Tree Name:** *Fagus sylvatica* (Common Beech)

**Tree Location W3W:** ///bonnet.lines.resembles – Rear garden

**Date:** 11/04/24



*Ref: 1* Photograph of T1, with tree owners house in the foreground.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Mr Tom Marks, approached me about concerns over the trees health and safety 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2024, given the decay on West side in the lower stem, and basal cavity on south side.
2. The tree known as T1 is Common Beech tree, located in the rear garden of Wildwood, Reaching Road North, Fleet, GU51 4AQ. The tree stands at 25-28m with a crown spread of 18-20m and stem diameter 870mm (measured at 1.5m above ground level). T1 is approx. 10m from the dwelling, with neighbouring dwelling on the North side, approx. 6m from the base of the tree.
3. The three habited dwellings, Wildwood, Ebenezer Cottage, and The Gate Cottage, located on the southwest and south side of the tree are residential dwellings, with 24hr occupancy. The neighbouring residential dwelling on the Northeast side, is also occupied 24hrs a day.

## FINDINGS

4. T1 is single stem at ground level, leading to twin stem at approx. 10m. As visible at from Ref 1.
5. We observed the fruiting bodies of '*Kretchmaria deusta*', in three locations, at ground level on the northwest side between two buttress roots, in the basal cavity and in the vertical wound of the main stem.



Ref: 4 Photograph of fruiting body one.



Ref: 3 Fruiting body two.



Ref: 2 Photograph of fruiting body three.

6. T1 has decay at the base of the tree on the West side, between the buttress roots. The decay extends into the centre of the stem, leading to a cavity which extends up into the lower stem, which an acoustic test indicates reaching 1.7m above ground level.



Ref: 5 Photograph of the basal cavity.

7. We observed dieback of the cambium, with reactive growth callusing the wound on the Northwest side, the dieback of the cambium has led to the decay of the central stem. An acoustic test indicates the decay is prevalent around the wound and across stem.
8. Bulging visible on the East of the stem, at same height of the wounding.
9. Full health crown was visible from ground level; however, the tree was inspected during February 2024, during dormancy.



Ref: 6 Photograph of the west side of stem, detailing cambium dieback.

## Opinion

10. In our opinion, we believe that the likely cause of the wound on the lower stem, is the result of historical bonfire damage, leading to the dieback of the cambium and subsequent decay of the lower portion of the stem, which has likely lead to ingress of *K.deusta*. which can now be seen fruiting in two separate locations.
11. *K.deusta* is a fungal disease, of the lower stem, commonly found in Common Beech, in the lower stem. The fungi leads to a soft rot leading to brittle fracture of the main stem.
12. The decay was measured as high as we could manage up the stem, to a height of 2-2.5m with an acoustic test.
13. Given the extent of the decay, indicated by the basal cavity, the extent of wounding on the mainstem, coupled with the associated hall marks of *K.deusta*, and full canopy, this will lead to our recommendation to fell the tree.

## Recommendation

14. Given the extent of the decay, the presence of *K.deusta*, exposed location in high risk residential area, and tree owners obligation under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 & 1987, our only recommendation is to fell the tree to ground level. However, the tree could be retained as a standing monolith, of 4m, and be retained for habitat at the discretion of the client/council.

Time Scale to complete the works – **3 Months.**