



Neath Castle Willow

Tree Condition Survey 22nd February



22nd February 2022

Neath Castle willow

Site Location: Neath Castle	Report Reference: 02.22/NTC/V2
Client: Amanda Holmes Neath Town Council	Date of Report: 22 nd February 2022 Date of Site Visit(s): 14 th February 2022
Report Prepared By: Liz Phillips	Survey Carried Out By: Liz Phillips

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1. Introduction

1.1 Instructions

1.2.1 RTAC has been instructed to undertake a condition survey of the large crack willow (*Salix fragilis*), T1, in the grounds of Neath Castle.

1.2 Documents Provided

1.3.1 No documents or information regarding this tree have been supplied to RTAC.

2. Site Assessment

2.1 Site Location

2.1.1 Site Address: Neath Castle, Castle View, Neath, SA11 3LW.

2.1.2 Ordnance Survey grid reference: SS753977.

Location of T1



2.2 Site Description

2.2.1 Neath Castle is a historic site near the centre of Neath Town. The site is not open to the public and the area outside the remaining castle walls is flat and grassy.

2.3 Site Visit

2.3.1 The inspection was carried out on Monday 14th February 2022, the weather was dry, cold and overcast, and visibility was good.

2.3.2 Mike, the site caretaker, admitted the surveyor to the site.

2.3.3 Observations were made from ground level using Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) methodology (Mattheck 1994).

2.3.4 No soil samples were taken.

2.3.5 No invasive decay detection techniques have been used.

2.3.6 The tree survey was carried out by Liz Phillips TechArborA of RTAC. Liz has worked in the arboricultural industry for 18 years as a tree surgeon, surveyor, local authority tree officer and consultant.

3. Tree Condition

3.1 T1 is a mature crack willow growing in a well-maintained grassy area adjacent to the public highway.

3.2 T1 measures approximately 14m in height with a crown spread of approximately 7m with one large, overextended limb growing towards the road measuring approximately 9m. The stem diameter has been measured at 850mm.

3.3 The stem is covered with ivy; small areas of the ivy have been removed to check for any visible defects. Tapping the stem at these points with a sounding mallet did not reveal any signs of decay.

3.4 A large branch has split out at the stem break (2m above ground) on the south side facing Castle View. The branch failure has left a large, jagged stub and wound in the stem; no decay or fungal brackets were observed at the wound site at the time of this inspection. The remaining crown of the tree is in good condition with no signs of dieback or disease.

3.5 No fungal fruiting bodies, root disturbance, pests and diseases, deadwood or other defects were observed at the time of this inspection.

4. Conclusions

4.1 T1 is in good condition, and it is likely that the branch failure was caused by mechanical factors such as wind or, possibly, given the tree's proximity to the highway, being struck by a vehicle. The size of the failed branch is not known but if it is comparable with the adjacent branch on the south side of the tree, it is also likely that the branch failed under its own weight.

4.2 The adjacent large branch appears to be beginning to show signs of bark congestion near the union with the stem and this limb should be reduced to prevent the failure of this branch.

5. Recommendations

- Remove ivy from stem.
- Reduce large limb on south side by 4m to leave a lateral 5m in length.
- Reduce height of tree from 14m to 11m.
- Reduce laterals north side (castle) of crown by 3m to balance crown.
- Climber to inspect wound site for any signs of decay not visible from ground.
- Pruning cuts should be made to appropriate growth points and where possible retaining a lateral branch of at least 1/3 of the removed portion.
- All treeworks should be carried out in accordance with BS3998:2010 Recommendations for Treework.
- T1 is a large mature specimen and should be inspected on an annual basis for any signs of deterioration with particular care given to any signs of decay at the large stem wound caused by the branch failure.



T1 from west



T1 from south



Stem wound from below



Union of large branch on south side



T1 from south – large branch
to reduce on left of photo



T1 from east



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Neath Castle willow

I. Qualifications

Qualifications:

AA Technicians Certificate 2009
BSc. Heritage Conservation 2ii
Electrical Arboriculture Units 1 and 2a
NVQ Level 2 Environmental Conservation
NPTC CS 30, 31, 39, climb trees and perform aerial rescue

CPD:

Bats and Arboriculture: A Practitioner's guide
BS 5837:2012. Tree Surveying and Categorisation
Subsidence 1 day workshop
Assessment of Tree Forks: Assessment of Junctions for Risk Management

II. **Bibliography**

Manual of Wood Decays in Trees (2003) Weber & Mattheck; The Arboricultural Association.

Diagnosis of Ill-health in Trees (1994) Strouts and Winter; TSO.

British Standard 3998:2010 Recommendations for Tree Work UK; British Standards Institution.

The body language of trees (1994) Mattheck & Breloer; TSO.

Principles of tree hazard assessment and management (1999) Lonsdale; Forestry Commission.

Complete field guide to the Trees of Britain & Europe (2004) Johnson & More; Collins.

Assessment of Tree Forks: Assessment of Junctions for Risk Management (2016) Slater in association with Myerscough College; The Arboricultural Association.

Modern Arboriculture (2003) Shigo; Sherwin Dodge Printers, Littleton, New Hampshire.

Willows (1972) Warren-Wren; David & Charles, Newton Abbot.