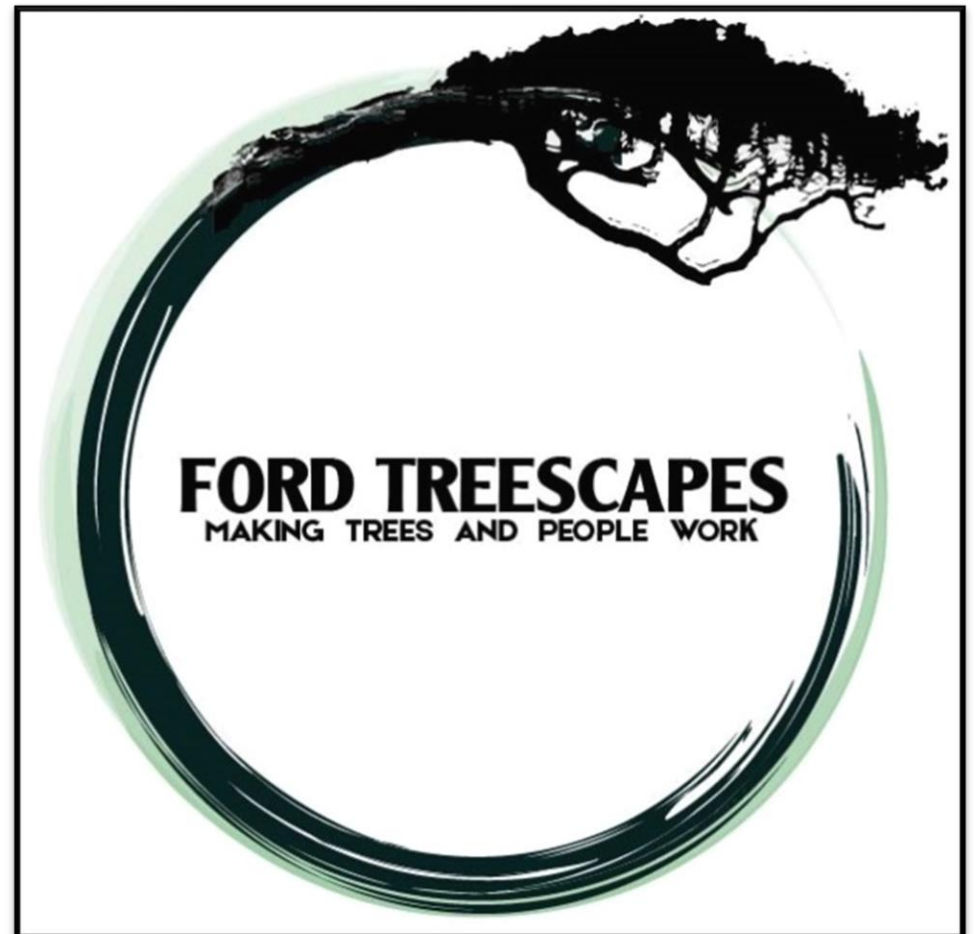


**TREE RISK SURVEY AT LAND
NEAR CWM NANT-LLWYDD
ROAD JULY 2022**



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SUMMARY

A survey of the condition of trees at land near Cwm Nant-Llwyd Rd was carried out in July 2022. Only trees that were found with an associated hazard were identified within this report.

3 trees were found to have an unacceptable level of risk associated with features they presented on the date of surveying and have been identified for remedial works. 1 tree has been identified as having minor issues and is in decline, although not currently a hazard it is recommended for removal but on a discretionary basis.

All of the trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order and remedial works will require a planning application.

INTRODUCTION

I am Laurence Ford (Ford Treescapes), an arboriculturist with 8 years contracting experience and 5 years surveying experience within the arboriculture sector. I have a BSc in Environmental Science, I have completed the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection course and I am a VALID Tree Risk-Benefit registered user. I am passionate about tree preservation and giving objective and realistic advice on their management.

Ford Treescapes were asked to survey trees at land off Cwm Nant-Llwydd road Gellinudd, Pontardawe and identify any that pose an unacceptable level of risk to people or property. The extent of the work was to inspect trees from ground level for failure associated characteristics, and when these were found make a calculated judgement on the risk that they pose. This is explained further in the methodology section. Where unacceptable levels of risk were identified, remedial works are recommended as well as general advice on how to manage a healthy resilient treescape. Ford Treescapes have had no prior experience working on this site and so were not familiar with any of the individual trees.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON TREES AND RISK

It is important to note that trees pose an incredibly small amount of risk in our daily lives compared to other things that we may deem “safer”.

Although fatalities and injury to person and property are infrequent, they do occur annually, and it is the responsibility of the landowner to ensure that those on or near to their land have an acceptable level of safety.

Zero risk from trees cannot be achieved whilst trees are retained within a landscape, statute law does not require the tree owner to maintain completely safe trees. The duty of care requires the tree owner only to take reasonable care. Where there has been failure to do this and injury to person or property has occurred there is possibility of a claim either in negligence or under the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984. The landowner needs to ensure that reasonably foreseeable events that could cause harm from falling trees or parts of trees are reduced or removed.

“The duty of care is to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that cause a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury to persons or property” from the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) – Common Sense Risk Management of Trees.

The NTSG outline three types of inspection. These are **Informal Observations** - carried out by landowners or staff in their day-to-day activities. **Formal Inspections** - someone invited to visit the trees with the specific purpose of performing an inspection. **Detailed Inspections** carried out by a competent specialist following an informal observation or a formal inspection.

The survey carried out at land near Cwm Nant-Llytwdd Road constitutes a formal inspection.

METHODOLOGY

The tree survey seeks to find any failure associated traits on trees at the site. Information regarding the space around the tree, the size of the defective part that could fail and the timescale in which the part could fail is gathered on site. This information which we have termed **occupancy area (OA)**, **severity of damage (SOD)** and **probability of failure (POF)** is used to make an informed judgement on the level of risk that the tree may pose.

Occupancy area (OA) refers to the surrounding area that the tree/or part of the tree would effect if it were to fail. This is with regards to frequency of persons underneath or value of object permanently underneath.

Severity of Damage (SOD) is the size of defective part that is in question that may fail or other information that could affect the severity of damage it could potentially do. For example, a medium diameter piece of deadwood may do little damage falling from 2 meters, but the severity could increase hugely if the same piece was to fall from 20 meters.

Probability of failure (POF) is how likely the tree or part of tree in question will fail and in what timescale. Although impossible to assess with accuracy this helps to determine whether further action is needed.

A rough categorisation of zones was identified for occupancy area using obvious signs found on site e.g. roads or benches where people congregate along with a quick chat with the home owner who knows the area well.

The occupancy area zone categorisations are listed in decreasing level of use and are as follows:

- Cwm Nant-Lwydd Rd running to the north (high occupancy).
- The track running to the west (medium occupancy).
- Interior of the woodland (low occupancy).

The severity of damage and the probability of failure then pulls in arboricultural knowledge of the surveyor.

This is looked at in more details in the tree survey data key.

LIMITATIONS

Trees are dynamic living organisms existing within an unpredictable changing environment and their condition can change very quickly due to biotic and abiotic factors. The purpose of this survey was to identify any failure associated characteristics and the risks related to these. Although all effort was made to make balanced and reasonable judgement no responsibility can be accepted for any damages caused by a tree failing due to an unseen issue on the day of inspection. It must certainly be expected that no tree can be deemed completely safe and even fault-free healthy trees can fail even in calm weather conditions and the risk they pose must be balanced with the benefits that they provide, which are numerous.

No decay detection equipment was used in this survey and no subterranean investigations were carried out.

This report does not constitute a mortgage report, or cover issues of subsidence nor seek to identify the presence of statutory controls i.e. tree preservation orders/conservation areas. It is strongly advised that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is contacted prior to commencing any tree work operations to ascertain whether Statutory Controls exist on the site. Failure to do so may result in severe penalties should any protected trees be pruned or removed without permission.

This report does not constitute an ecological survey or report. No details are recorded regarding protected species or habitat, and it is recommended that an ecological expert is consulted for this purpose.

Any findings/recommendations will need updating should any of the trees be impacted by development or severe weather events.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The site was surveyed on 8th of July 2022 by Ford Treescapes on a dry day with good visibility. Details of the tree survey can be found in the tree survey findings table below.

Overall, the condition of the trees on the site was good. A total of **4 trees** have been identified as hazard trees and recommended for remedial works to be carried out to bring the level of risk associated with them down to an acceptable level. These trees are recommended to be removed to ground level or to a short monolith stem. These trees are highlighted in **red** on the tree survey data table and on the tree location map. The priority of this work ranged from low to medium.

Details of works recommended and the priority in which this should be done can be found along with other information on the trees in the tree survey data table below.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The trees at land near Cwm Nant-Llywdd road have been formally inspected by a qualified and experienced arboriculturist. Site usage was assessed from information on site and with conversations with the client.

The trees were generally found to be in good condition with only 4 needing remedial work. 4 of which are recommended for removal.

Although it is not possible to say with certainty that any ash tree that exhibits dieback of the crown has ash dieback disease (ADB) caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* without taking samples to a laboratory, the fact that the UK will likely lose up to 80% of ash trees means that there is a high probability that crown dieback is caused by ADB disease.

It is of course incredibly important not to remove any ash trees that do not currently show signs of ADB disease as genetically resistant trees will be essential in replenishing the species within the landscape.

It is also important to retain standing dead wood where possible as it is a valuable niche habitat.

The area surveyed appears to fall under a woodland TPO within Neath Port Talbot Borough Council and so any work carried out will require a planning application to be made through them.

It is recommended that all works, even minor tree pruning, and ivy severing be carried out by an experienced and qualified arboricultural contractor.

Leaving monoliths at a height stated in the recommendations is desirable as these have good habitat value and large log sections should be left in situ where possible.

TREE SURVEY DATA

Tree ref Tree Tag	Species	Location	H	Stem Diam	Age	Observations	OA	SOD	POF	Management recommendations	Priority
T1	Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	In the NE corner of the site by Cwm Nant-Llwydd road.	15	350*	EM	Heavily Ivy clad tree, wire fence wrapped around and possibly affecting vascular system, poor vigour and poor condtion overall.	H	S	L	Remove tree to ground level or 2.5m monolith.	Low
T2	Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Large ash tree in middle of woodland.	17	350*	EE	20% crown dieback, lean to west	M	M	M	Remove tree to ground level or 2.5m monolith.	Medium
T3	Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	SW corner of woodland next to track.	15	280*	EM	25% crown dieback lean to west, medium diameter deadwood present.	H	S	M	Remove to ground level.	Medium
T4	Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	SW corner of woodland next to track.	15	280*	EM	25% crown dieback lean to west, medium diameter deadwood present.	M	S	M	Remove to ground level.	Medium

TREE SURVEY DATA KEY

Colour code

- **Red** – hazard identified, and substantial remedial works recommended like pruning or removal.
- **Yellow** – minor issue identified and monitoring recommended, or visibility for inspection limited which needs to be amended.
- **Green** – no action required at present.

Tree ref – the tree reference number.

Tree tag – the tag number on the tree (if it was tagged).

Species – common name followed by Latin name.

Location – a description of where to find the tree.

H – estimated height of tree in meters.

Stem Diam – diameter of stem or stems in mm. generally taken at 1.5m if form of tree permits if not from another height that gives a good representation of the stem diameter. If no * follows stem diameter then this was taken accurately with a diameter tape, if there is a * sign following the diameter this means the diameter was estimated.

Age – The age class of the tree. This is split into 5 categories:

S – Sapling or newly planted tree.

Y – A young tree in the early stages of its life but more established than

S. EM – Early mature, an established tree that if in good health should be growing vigorously and increasing in height.

M – Mature, more or less reached full height and bark characteristics matured.

O – Old trees with moderate vigour and in the last quarter of their lifespan.

A – Ancient trees of exceptional age with low vigour but high amenity and wildlife value.

Observations – Here are detailed observations of the tree, useful in assessing any risks or indeed for any good management practises. Also, helpful to refer back to as a reference point for future inspections.

OA – Occupancy area. This is the area that would be affected if the tree or part of tree in question was to fail and the likelihood that the area is occupied by person or property and the value of the object in occupancy area. The occupancy area is given one of 6 categories:

N - Negligible

VL - Very low

L - Low

M - Moderate

H - High

VH - Very high.

See the following table for more information.

Occupancy area rating	Description of what would generate this rating
N	Negligible. Extremely little chance that anybody would be in the area if a failure was to occur and nothing of value under or near to the tree. An example of this would be a tree in a large woodland with no paths nearby or in a dense thicket that would be hard to get to.
L	Low probability that the area would be occupied by person or property if a failure was to occur. Again, nothing of value underneath the tree. An example of this again could be in a woodland but of slightly smaller size and with a slightly greater chance of someone venturing from the paths to find themselves in this area.
M	Moderate probability that the area would be occupied by person or property if failure was to occur. Or, low value buildings or other property could be in occupancy area. An example of this is private gardens, quiet footpaths, or above low value buildings that are unoccupied.
H	High probability that the area would be occupied by person or property if failure was to occur. Or that property under the tree is of high value. An example of this is next to a busy footpath or next to a busy road.
VH	Very high probability that the area would be occupied by person or property if failure was to occur. Or,

	extremely busy footfall, or permanently a high value structure or property is occupying the area. An example of this would be a tree in a city centre, above an occupied house or at the entrance of a school.
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SOD – The severity of damage. The predicted amount of damage if the tree or part of tree was to fail would do to person or property if in the occupancy area at the time of failure. This is given as 1 out of 4 categories which are as follows:

SOD rating	Description of what would generate this rating
Min	Minor - minimum harm or damage caused out of the categories, but not negligible. Generally, from small diameter parts of tree that could fail or larger parts that would not gather much momentum if they did fail, for example a small dead upright stem that could fail pivoting from the ground.
S	Significant -generally, from medium diameter parts that could fail and gather enough momentum to cause significant harm where first aid or possibly hospitalisation could result to someone in already good health. Or significant costs on repairs could be needed (in the £500 – 1000s range).
M	Major - large diameter parts that could fail and cause serious harm or damage. Potential to disable or even kill. Damages costing upwards of £10, 000.
Max	Maximum rating for the severity of damage. Fatalities likely. Major damage caused with huge costs involved.

POF – Probability of failure. On what timescale could this possible failure be predicted to occur. Although not possible to give with accuracy this component of risk assessment is needed to give a balanced judgment on the risks associated.

POF rating	Description of what would generate this rating
L	Low - defective part stable and not likely to fail for several years < 3 years.
M	Medium - the defective part likely to fail in under 3 years
H	High - the defective part likely to fail within a year
I	Imminent - the defective part very unstable and likely to fail in a number of days.

Severity of damage and probability of failure rating will only be given if a failure associated characteristic has been identified.

Management recommendations – This gives information if needed on best actions to take following findings relating to risk or general management.

Priority – The urgency to which any management recommendations should be carried out. This will consider occupancy area, severity of damage and the likelihood of failure. Re-inspections given in management recommendations will not be given a priority but will be required within the timeframe specified. See table on next page.

Priority rating	
D	Discretionary - possibly management recommendations not relating to risk management but may improve the environment around the tree for people or other factors. No timescale needed
L	Low priority - works to be carried out within the next 2 years
M	Medium priority - works to be carried out within a year
H	High priority - works to be carried out within 90 days
VH	Very high priority - works to be carried out within 30 days
U	Urgent - action should be taken to get works carried out right away.

TREE LOCATION MAP





T1



Wire fence around stem of T1



T 2



T 3 & T4

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