

Tree Condition report.

**Land to the rear of 35, 36 and 37 Woodlands Park Drive,
Cadoxton, Neath. SA10 8DE**



**Prepared on the instructions of
Mr Philip Rogers**

**Based on inspections carried out on
21st January 2023**

**By Alan Webster, MArborA
Our Ref: ARW 1141**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 **Instruction:** I am instructed by Mr P. Rogers to carry out an inspection on six trees located on land to the rear of his house and two neighbours. I am to provide a report on my observations and where necessary give recommendations to obtain acceptable levels of risk.
- 1.2 **Qualifications and experience:** I have based this report on my site observations and the provided information. I have come to conclusions in the light of my qualifications and experience in arboriculture summarised in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 **Documents and information provided:** Mr Rogers provided me with three photographs of the woodland behind the houses.
- 1.4 **Scope of this report:** This report concerns the condition of the significant trees present within falling distance of the three dwellings. This expanded the assignment to seven trees.
- 1.5 **Report limitations:** This report is valid at the time of the inspection; deliberate or accidental harm, severe weather conditions, pests and diseases can all effect change in the condition of trees.
- 1.5.1 The positions of the trees plotted on the accompanying plan are approximate.
- 1.5.2 All my observations were from ground level without detailed investigation and I estimated all dimensions unless otherwise indicated
- 1.6 **Copyright:** All rights in this report are reserved. Its content and format are for the exclusive use of Mr Rogers and his neighbours, for the purpose of obtaining acceptable levels of risk. No part of it may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means without our written consent. ©ARW Tree Consultancy 2023.

2 Site visit

- 2.1 **Site visit:** I carried out my unaccompanied site visit on the 21st of January 2023. The weather at the time of my inspection was bright and dry allowing good visibility.
- 2.2 **Site description:** Woodlands Park Drive is a residential side road in Cadoxton, Neath. It runs parallel to the A4230, Tennant Canal and A465 all to the south in that respective order.
- 2.2.1 The woodland is to the rear of the houses on the northern side of the road on steeply sloping ground. This puts the large trees in an elevated position above the rear gardens of the properties. The survey and report considers trees behind numbers 35, 36 and 37 Woodlands Park Drive.
- 2.3 **Identification and location of the trees:** The trees in question are shown on the plan included in appendix 3. This plan is for illustrative purposes only and it should not be used for directly scaling measurements. All the relevant information on it is contained within this report and the provided documents.
- 2.4 **Method:** I identified seven significant trees that were located in the woodland to the rear of the properties and carried out a detailed inspection of these using Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) methodology (Professor Claus Mattheck). I have recorded my observations in the attached tree schedule (appendix 2).
- 2.5 I attached a round aluminium tag on each tree at approximately two metres from ground level, these run concurrently from 658 to 664.



Photograph 1: Example of aluminium tag attached to trees.

3 Observations

- 3.1 **General:** The woodland is made up of large native species most notably oak and beech with an understory of thorn and rhododendron present.
- 3.2 **Potential targets:** The rear gardens of the properties extend to the edge of the woodland with access being facilitated from several of the gardens.
- 3.3 **Management:** The only recent management observed is some cutting up of fallen branches.
 - 3.3.1 There is evidence of some deposition of debris into the woodland, damage to the base of some trees indicates that this is likely to have been placed there several years ago.
- 3.4 **Appraisal:** My appraisal and conclusions are included in the schedule in appendix 2. My recommendations are repeated in the main body of the report for ease of reference.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 **Risk mitigation:** To obtain acceptable levels of risk I recommend the following work/ management.

Tree tag	Recommendations	Priority
658	1. Fell	High
659	2. Reduce to safe height of 12m (above main fork)	Medium
660	3. Fell	High
661	4. Clear understory and re inspect. 5. Sever ivy	Medium
662	6. Crown reduce by 4m. 7. Aerial inspection of fork at 8m	Medium
663	8. Crown reduce by 4m.	Medium
664	9. Reduce to 5m pole	High

- 4.2 Work priority is defined as: Urgent- as soon as reasonably practicable; High- within 3 months; Medium- within 12 months; Low- as part of routine management. All work carried out on the trees should be completed by trained personnel working to BS 3998:2010 *Recommendations for tree work*. Work must take into account the potential for Bat habitat and nesting birds and comply with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

- 4.2.1 It is understood from information provided orally by Mr Rogers that the trees are protected by a tree preservation order.

- 4.2.2 All of the work specified requires a tree work application to be made to the Local Authority.

- 4.3 **Re-inspection periods:** A reasonable re-inspection period for the trees generally is every two years considering the target area, size and species of the trees. Re-inspection should be carried out by a suitably qualified and competent arboriculturist.

- 4.3.1 Inspections included in the recommendations should be carried out within the time scale quoted.

5 Bibliography

British Standards Institute (2010) British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work, (BS 3998)

Her Majesty's Stationary Office Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Her Majesty's Stationary Office Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 and 1984

Her Majesty's Stationary Office The Forestry Act 1967 (as amended)

Office of Public sector Information The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)

Arboricultural Association (2005) Tree Surveys: A guide to good practice

National Tree Safety Group (2011) Common sense risk management of trees.

F.W.M.R. Schwarze et al. (2000) Fungal Strategies of Wood Decay in Trees.

Slater. D. (2016) Assessment of Tree Forks. Assessment of Junctions for Risk Management. Arboricultural Association.

Tree Hazard: Risk Evaluation and Treatment System - THREATS

Written by:



Alan Webster, MArborA
for and on behalf of ARW Tree Consultancy

Date: 15/02/2023

Appendices

Appendix 1

Qualifications and experience of Alan Webster

1. Academic qualifications:

Level 3 **Technicians Certificate in Arboriculture**: ABC

Level 6 **Professional Diploma in Arboriculture**, units:

- Tree risk management
- Tree and hedge management
- Selection, planting and design with hardy nursery stock for amenity and landscape purposes
- Arboricultural plant health
- Planning and development in arboriculture
- Management of special trees
- Woodland management
- Independent research project

2. Practical experience:

2003 – 2005

Freelance Chainsaw Operator. Mainly working as a Groundsman for TreeWorks (West Wales) Ltd. Duties including woodland felling and ground based arboricultural operations, in the private and commercial sector.

2005 - 2009.

Groundsman progressing to Lead Climber and Arboricultural Contracts Manager in 2007. Employed by TreeWorks (West Wales) Ltd. Continue to lead arboricultural team and control all chainsaw related operations within countryside teams. Made responsible for management and implementation of company Health and Safety systems.

2009- 2014.

Consultant Arboriculturist and Technical Director. Employed by TreeWorks (West Wales) Ltd, undertaking Tree Surveys and Health & Safety Management.

2014 – Present

Independent Arboricultural Consultant. Trading as ARW Tree Consultancy. Providing advice on risk assessment, development site issues and boundary disputes.

2015 – 2016

Tree Officer for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. Responsible for risk assessing Council trees, advising Development Control on trees in relation to planning, maintenance of TPO's and applications, managing project work where trees were identified as a problem.

2016 – Present

Tree Officer (Planning) City and County of Swansea Council. Advising Development Control on trees in planning context, representing the Council in planning appeals and hearings, TPO review, creation and determination.

3. Professional qualifications and continuing professional development:

2007 **Certified Arborist**- International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).
 2008 **Arboriculture and Bats**- LANTRA.
 2008 **Managing Safely**- Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).
 2009 **Thorough Examination of Arboricultural Equipment** (LOLER '98 regs.)- NPTC.
 2010 **Level 2 Computer Aided Design**. – City and Guilds.
 2010 Recertification, **Certified Arborist**- (ISA).
 2010 **VTA Update Seminar** - Prof. Claus Mattheck/Symbiosis Consulting
 2010 **Quantified Tree Risk Assessment** – Mike Ellison
 2011 **Professional Tree Inspection** – Arboricultural Association/Lantra
 2011 **AA Getting to Grips with Subsidence** – Dr. P.G. Biddle and Dr. M. Dobson
 2012 **AA Arboricultural Consultancy** – Jim Quaife and Jeremy Barrell
 2012 **46th AA Amenity Conference** – Reading University
 2013 **AA Pests and Diseases Road Show** – Guy Watson and Ben Abbatt
 2013 **C.A.S. Experts Question Time- Tree Safety** – Jeremy Barrell and Dr. David Lonsdale.
 2013 Recertification, **Certified Arborist**- (ISA).
 2015 **PACE training** - PHF Training, Kevin Hall
 2015 **4th Big Barn Conference** – Barchams
 2015 **AA Valuing and Managing Veteran Trees** – Simon Cox
 2015 **Green Blue Urban Seminar**
 2015 **HTOF Subsidence Seminar** – Dr. P.G. Biddle
 2015 **Tree Preservation Orders, Effective Application** - CAS
 2016 **Trees in development** – AA –Barrell Tree Consultancy
 2016 **Role of the Tree Officer** – AA – Richard Nicholson
 2016 **Habitat Regulations in the Planning Process**
 2016 **Environment (Wales) Act 2016** – Natural Resources Wales
 2017 **Assessment of Tree Forks** – AA – Dr. Duncan Slater
 2018 **Aspiring Registered Consultants Day** – AA
 2018 **MTOA Tree Officer Conference** - Telford
 2018 **ICF Wales Conference** - Cardiff
 2019 **ICF Becoming Chartered Workshop** - Bristol
 2019 **Ash Die Back Toolkit launch** - Woodland Trust
 2019 **Tree Risk Seminar** – AA - Jeremy Barrell
 2019 **MTOA Tree Officer Conference** - Reading

4. Relevant experience:

Since 2003 I have been pursuing my natural interest in trees, broadening my knowledge and the required skill range. These acquired skills and knowledge have been applied to projects for private customers, larger agencies and local authorities. I have inspected thousands of trees using accepted VTA methodology and have experience with the most up to date invasive decay detection devices. In the planning arena, I have experience of providing evidence for appeals and at planning hearings. I have recently authored Supplementary Planning Guidance and drafted tree policies for a local authority. I am currently working toward Chartered Status with the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

5. Professional affiliations:

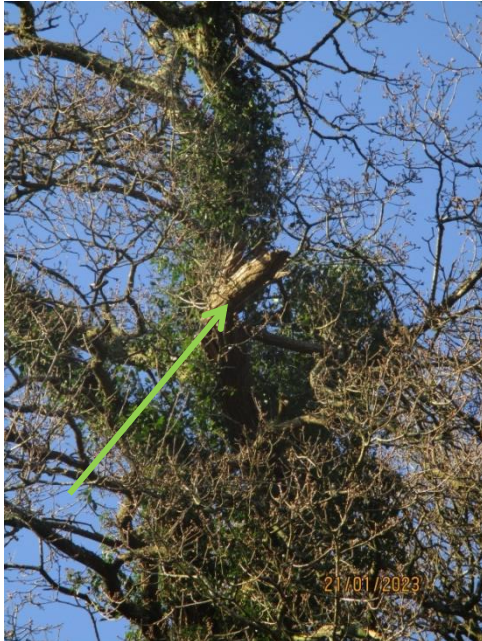
Arboricultural Association (AA)- Professional Member
 Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) – Associate Member

Tree observation schedule

Appendix 2

Tree No.	Species	Height (m)	Spread (m)	Age class	Physiological and Structural condition	Recommendations	Work priority	Re-inspect
658	Oak (<i>Quercus spp</i>)	22	8	M	Ivy covering to 18m, normal bud density. Located on edge of woodland crown biased to south east. Lean to SE. Minor surface wounds to buttress wounds on south. Large area of necrotic bark on west (yellow arrow) and black rhizomorphs (green arrow). Some rapid wood development at base. Lost limb at 15m on eastern side leaving 2m long torn stump (green arrow)	1. Fell	High	NA

Appraisal: The crown does not indicate the fungal activity at the base. Black rhizomorphs are likely to be *Armillaria* spp which is consistent with the necrotic cambium area. Fungus is pathogenetic and will lead to a loss of structural strength and root function. Reaction wood indicates a loss of strength in the localised area. Whilst symptoms are not observed in the crown, this may be hidden by the time of year; considering the trees size and proximity to houses it should be felled to mitigate the level of risk.



659	Oak (<i>Quercus spp</i>)	19	6	M	Ivy covering to 12m. Fluting on lower stem (blue arrow), no decay detected through sounding. Socket cavity at 4m from ground on SW side, obscured by ivy. Stem forks at 12m; NE stem – thickening of stem at 3 to 4m from fork (red arrow). West stem no obvious defects. Both stems somewhat elongated with growth concentrated towards tips. Rubbing branch in top of NE stem (yellow arrow).	2. Reduce to safe height of 12m (above main fork)	Medium	2 years
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Appraisal: Fluting on lower stem may indicate dysfunction of associated buttress root. This is on the tension side of the tree i.e. the root doing most of the work to hold the tree up. No visual symptoms apart from this. Thickening of stem indicates internal decay in stem and a possible site of failure. No damage seen associated with rubbing branches but this is possible due to direct branch to branch contact. A reduction in height will mitigate the risk of all the defects observed whilst retaining some of the tree.



660	Oak (<i>Quercus</i> spp)	16	7	EM	Suppressed by larger trees weighted north east. Bulge in stem and woodpecker hole (red arrow) 600mm below main fork at 10 metres. Significant basal wound on western side (yellow arrow), concrete debris piled against stem. Black rhizomorphs (blue arrow); bark affected for more than 50% of circumference. Tree forks at 10m both stems have poor taper. Bud density appears to be normal. Minor dead wood present.	3. Fell	High	NA
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Appraisal: Woodpecker hole indicates internal decay and a potential site for failure. Basal damage and fungal activity of probable *Armillaria* spp makes root anchorage uncertain. Poor specimen all round and removal would mitigate risk posed to adjacent gardens.



661	Oak (<i>Quercus spp</i>)	9	4	EM	Short tree with dense rhododendron understory around base. Stem is ivy covered and tree is suppressed by neighbouring beech trees. Tree leans north east, some fluting on western side of lower stem. Live branches viewed through understory, buds appear to be normal.	4. Clear understory and re inspect. 5. Sever ivy	Medium	2 years
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Appraisal: Full inspection of this tree was not possible due to the dense undergrowth around it; this prevented any of the photographs taken being clear. What was observed did not indicate significant ill health or structural defect. Tree is small but should be looked at again after clearance of rhododendron.



662	Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	26	10	M	Tree leans south east, has mutual canopy with 663. Little to no western canopy. Insignificant ivy covering. Forks at 8m, no signs of included bark, some adaptive growth on northern side (yellow arrow); some also shown on south side. No natural bracing observed. Indication of fluting on western lower stem, no indication of decay from sounding. Good bud density; minor dead wood (<50mm in diameter and less than 1m in length) observed at 12m.	6. Reduce by 4m 7. Aerial inspection of fork at 8m.	Medium	2 years
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Appraisal: The fluting is probably due to the difference in growth rates caused by the affected side being under tension (tree leaning) this is not considered significant. The adaptive growth may indicate a certain amount of bark inclusion at the fork although the wood development is not advanced. This coupled with no natural bracing (Slater) does make further investigation of this fork advisable. In any case this tree is a significant height and causes some anxiety for the adjacent house holders; therefore a reduction would reduce any risk and provide some comfort for the residents. Whilst this work is carried out the fork could also have an aerial inspection to check for included bark which may require a greater pruning dose.



663	Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	27	12	M	Leans north to north east and is weighted that way. No pronounced buttress development on tension side (western) of stem (yellow arrow). Sounding does not indicate internal decay. Good bud density, no significant defects observed. Larger of two beech trees and slightly more dominant.	8. Reduce by 4m	Medium	2 years
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Appraisal: No obvious explanation for under developed buttress roots on the tension side of the stem. Lack of buttressing could indicate root damage in the corresponding area or disruption to the stem, affecting growth. This tree like 662 is the source of anxiety to the near residents. Reduction work would reduce the anticipated low current risk and provide some comfort for the residents. Reduction work would also keep the two trees' crowns matched as they form a mutual canopy due to their proximity.



664	Oak (<i>Quercus spp</i>)	18	12	OM	Significant ivy covering; weighted to north east (elongated upper branches – blue arrows). Black rhizomorphs and necrotic bark / cambium at base on tension side (yellow arrow). Lost limbs, 2 at 4 metres and at 8 metres. Crown is formed by two significant limbs originating at 12 metres from ground level (red arrow). Branches in excess of 14m in length and end weighted. Good bud density in these branches at ends, rest of tree sparse.	9. Reduce to 5m	High	NA
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Appraisal: The decay at the base of the tree is likely to have affected the roots on the tension side of the tree making failure more likely. The asymmetrical crown is caused by mutual shading from other trees in the woodland. The elongated branches even if fully healthy are at risk of failure due to their length. Failure of these branches could reach the gardens below. Considering the trees poor health, risk posed by the main branches and the proximity to potential targets this tree should be significantly reduced or removed completely. Retaining a high stump would retain habitat and dead wood within the woodland, both important for biodiversity.



Explanatory notes:

- **Tree No:** Refers to the number on attached aluminium tags.
- **Species:** The species identification based on visual observations and the common English name of what the tree appeared to be is listed first, with the botanical name after in brackets. The botanical name is followed by the abbreviation spp if only the genus is known.
- **Height:** Height in metres - estimated
- **Spread:** Average estimated spread of canopy expressed as a radius in metres
- **Age class:** Age is an estimated range based on visual indicators and should only be taken as a provisional guide. Y= young- in first third of life expectancy, MA= middle aged- second third, M= mature- final third, OM= over mature- reached life expectancy, V= veteran- living beyond normal expected life range.
- **Condition:** Brief description of any identified hazards
- **Recommendations:** Description of work required or follow up inspections to abate a hazard.
- **Work priority:** **Urgent**- Work to be completed as soon as possible as failure is imminent, and the potential for harm is high due to the frequency of target or size of tree part. **High**- Work to be completed within three months, as potential failure is not imminent, but the potential for harm is high due to the frequency of target or size of tree part. **Medium**- Work to be completed within twelve months, as potential for harm is lower due to lower frequency of occupation under defect, or smaller size of tree part. Silviculture- management for good silvicultural or arboricultural practice. **Man** – Work for management reasons, can be completed when funds are available or regular work is scheduled.
- **Re-inspect:** Recommended interval until identified defect is re-inspected by a suitably qualified and experienced Arboriculturist.

Appendix 3. Tree Location Plan

