



## **Arboricultural Contractors & Consultants**

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# **ARBORICULTURAL REPORT**

## **Health and Condition Survey**

**St. Thomas's Church  
Church Place  
Neath**

**Grid reference: SS75327 97674**

**Date : January 2025**

**Client: Parish of Neath**

**Consultant: Nick Thomas Dip.Arb, RFS Cert. Arb**



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

At the request of Helen Bennett the representative for the Parish of Neath a tree survey was undertaken at St Thomas's church, Neath on the 3rd January 2025. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the biological health and structural condition of the trees which are within the boundary of the church grounds. The individual tagged trees consist of the following species.

**TABLE 1**

| <b>TREE SPECIES – English / Botanical</b>                  | <b>NUMBER OF TREES</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Almond / <i>Prunus dulcis</i>                              | 1                      |
| Corsican Pine / <i>Pinus nigra</i>                         | 4                      |
| Japanese Cherry / <i>Prunus spp.</i>                       | 2                      |
| Purple Beech / <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> 'Purpurea'           | 1                      |
| Holly / <i>Ilex aquifolium</i>                             | 1                      |
| Silver Birch / <i>Betula pendula</i>                       | 1                      |
| Horse Chestnut / <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>             | 1                      |
| Red flowering Horse Chestnut /<br><i>Aesculus x carnea</i> | 1                      |
| Yew / <i>Taxus baccata</i>                                 | 2                      |
| Holm Oak / <i>Quercus ilex</i>                             | 1                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                               | <b>15</b>              |

All numbered tags have been fixed on the west facing side of the main stems between one and two metres above ground level. For the purpose of this report the trees listed above and in the tree schedule (TABLE 2) are the only trees that were inspected.

For the duration of the survey the weather was calm and overcast. Please note that this is a health and condition survey and is not intended as a substitute for a structural engineers report. Unless otherwise stated no information was received and no evaluation of the tree's roots in relation to their effect on underground services, utilities or structures has been considered in this report. This report is a basic tree survey with its conclusions and recommendations drawn from the visual evaluation as seen at the time of the inspection / survey.

All inspections were undertaken from ground level using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) system. A steel rod and nylon hammer were used to probe and sound any existing and potential areas of wood decay. Due to dense undergrowth, Ivy on the tree's main stems and branches, the terrain and the proximity of other trees some parts of the trees were not fully visible from ground level.

Due to unpredictable weather conditions and unforeseen events the information in this report is as seen during the time of the inspection and is valid for a period of one year from the date of the inspection. The condition of any tree can change suddenly and dramatically therefore any

observations and recommendations may require amendment. Any tree(s) in high risk locations should be regularly inspected especially after a storm and high winds. The frequency of inspections can be extended for trees in areas of low use and traffic or where there are low value targets. The fixed time periods are usually between six months and two years and for maximum accuracy and benefit consecutive surveys should be completed during different seasons / times of year.

## **2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

The cemetery has areas of maintained grass and unmanaged overgrowth. The location of the inspected trees are shown on the attached plans.

Due to their size and location the trees provide a prominent feature in the local landscape and are visible from a large number of properties including the new housing development which is on the opposite side of the highway.

The majority of the Ash trees are showing varying levels of Ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) infection. The positions of the infected Ash trees which require removal are shown on the attached plan with a capital A and have been marked on site with red paint. A single group of Goat Willow and Ash on the northern side of the church are also shown on the site plan. Due to their advanced decay and poor condition all of these trees should be removed as soon as possible.

There are a large number of self seeded semi mature trees growing adjacent or within individual graves / memorials. If these trees are not removed further damage will occur to the graves / memorials.

Static targets include the church, surrounding buildings and the boundary walls and railings. Mobile targets include pedestrians within and external to the site.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Due to their location and condition all recommended tree work in the tree schedule – TABLE 2 should be completed within the stated time periods.
2. To reduce the trees wind resistance and aid future tree inspections all Ivy should be severed near ground level. To avoid any damage to the bark of the trees this work should be undertaken with suitable hand tools. If required the use of a chainsaw should be limited to the larger Ivy stems with the appropriate care taken to avoid any damage to the bark of the trees. Due to its ecological benefits Ivy should only be severed on the trees listed in the schedule and which require regular inspections.
3. To evaluate any change in their health and condition and the effects of any tree pruning work all the trees should be re-inspected within two years of the date on this report or in accordance with the parish policy.

4. Prior to any tree pruning or removal the structure of the trees should be checked for roosting, nesting or hibernating species such as bats and birds. (Refer to the biodiversity section below).

#### **4.0 BIODIVERSITY**

Trees have the potential for bat roosts and nesting birds. Various legislation such as the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CroW) 2000 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 make it a criminal offence to interfere with bats, birds or their roosts and nests.

Prior to any tree work all trees and the land around them must be checked for protected species by a suitably qualified and competent person. If protected species are identified all work must stop and the appropriate authority contacted e.g. Natural Resources Wales for further advice. Where bats or their roosts are present no work shall take place unless a licence has been granted in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Where work has commenced and bats or any evidence that bats are using the site as a roost are found, work must cease and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) contacted immediately. NRW can be contacted at Ty Cambria, 29 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0TP. Tel.0300 065 3000. Further advice can also be obtained from the Bat Conservation Trust, 5th Floor, Quadrant House, 250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5DR. Tel. 0345 130 0228.

**TABLE 2 : TREE SCHEDULE**

| Tree # | Species         | Age | Size | Pc | Sc | Observations / Recommended works                                                 | Cat. | Risk |
|--------|-----------------|-----|------|----|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| 981    | Corsican Pine   | M   | L    | F  | F  | N/C                                                                              | 0    | M    |
| 982    | Horse Chestnut  | EM  | M    | G  | F  | N/C                                                                              | 0    | M    |
| 983    | Almond          | M   | S    | P  | P  | Poor form                                                                        | 0    | L    |
| 984    | Corsican Pine   | M   | L    | F  | F  | N/C                                                                              | 0    | M    |
| 985    | Japanese Cherry | M   | M    | F  | F  | N/C                                                                              | 0    | M    |
| 986    | Yew             | SM  | S    | G  | F  | Multi stemmed.                                                                   | 0    | L    |
| 987    | Purple Beech    | SM  | M    | G  | F  | Included bark on the lower major branch, reduce this lower branch by two metres. | 2    | M    |
| 988    | Yew             | SM  | S    | G  | F  | Multi stemmed.                                                                   | 0    | L    |
| 989    | Silver Birch    | SM  | S    | G  | G  | N/C                                                                              | 0    | L    |

|         |                              |    |   |   |   |                                                                                                                           |   |   |
|---------|------------------------------|----|---|---|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| 991     | Holm Oak                     | SM | M | F | F | Large open cavity at base of main stem which is compartmentalising.                                                       | 0 | M |
| 992     | Corsican Pine                | M  | L | F | F | N/C                                                                                                                       | 0 | M |
| 993     | Holly                        | M  | S | D | D | Tree is dead, remove tree.                                                                                                | 2 | H |
| 994     | Corsican Pine                | M  | L | F | P | N/C                                                                                                                       | 0 | M |
| 995     | Japanese Cherry              | SM | S | F | P | Poor form, suppressed by tree 994. Small area of basal decay on western side.                                             | 0 | L |
| 996     | Red Flowering Horse Chestnut | M  | M | P | P | Major fracture of main stem, decaying cavity at 2.5 metres above ground level on the remaining large branch. Remove tree. | 2 | M |
| 997 (G) | Tree Daisy / Olearia         | OM | S | F | P | A group of four multi stemmed shrubs.                                                                                     | 0 | L |

### **KEY TO TREE SCHEDULE**

|                                         |                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tree / Group #</b>                   | Numerical order - tag numbers 981 to 997<br>N/T - not tagged.                                                       |
| <b>Species</b>                          | Table 1 – Common English name followed by botanical title.<br>Table 2 – English name only.                          |
| <b>Age</b>                              | Y – Young SM – Semi mature EM - Early mature M – Mature<br>OM - Over mature                                         |
| <b>Size</b>                             | S - Small M – Medium L – Large VL – Very large                                                                      |
| <b>PC</b>                               | The general physiological condition of the tree :-<br>G – Good F – Fair P – Poor D – Dead, dying or / and dangerous |
| <b>SC</b>                               | The general structural condition of the tree :-<br>G – Good F – Fair P – Poor D – Dead, dying or / and dangerous    |
| <b>Observations / Recommended works</b> | – As stated                      N/C - No comments                                                                  |
| <b>Cat.</b>                             | Recommended time periods for works :-                                                                               |

**Category 1 (Red)** – If combined with a high risk (H) due to the possibility of imminent failure or danger all recommended works should be completed as soon as possible / practicable.

**Category 2 (Blue)** – Trees with various structural weaknesses or problems which require remedial works. Works should be completed within one year of the date of this report or sooner if possible.

**Category 3 (Green)** – Trees with minor defects and problems which require remedial works. These works should be completed within two years of this report.

**Category 0** – No works specified or recommended.

**Risk** The level of evaluated risk taking into consideration the current surrounding static and mobile targets and the physiological and structural condition of the tree.

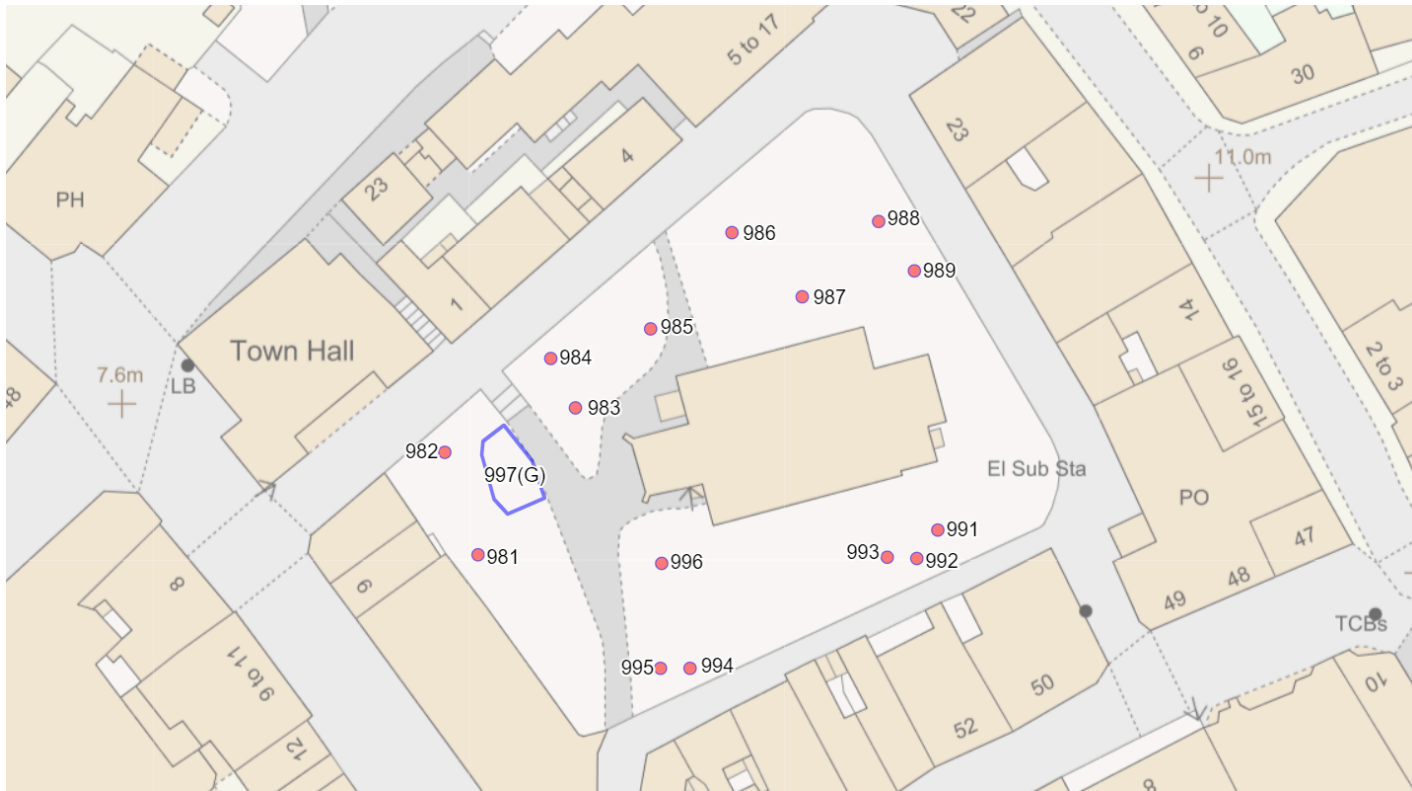
L – Low      M – Medium      H - High

| <b>TABLE 3 : Recommended work (Tree numbers)</b> |                                    |              |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Category / Risk</b>                           | <b>Tree identification numbers</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>1H</b>                                        | 0                                  | 0            |
| <b>1M</b>                                        | 0                                  | 0            |
| <b>1L</b>                                        | 0                                  | 0            |
| <b>2H</b>                                        | 993                                | 1            |
| <b>2M</b>                                        | 987,996                            | 2            |
| <b>2L</b>                                        | 0                                  | 0            |
| <b>3H</b>                                        | 0                                  | 0            |
| <b>3M</b>                                        | 0                                  | 0            |
| <b>3L</b>                                        | 0                                  | 0            |
| <b><u>TOTAL</u></b>                              |                                    | <b>3</b>     |

## **5.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- D. Lonsdale Principles of Tree Hazard & Management (1999)
- N. Fay, D. Dowson & R. Helliwell Tree Surveys – A guide to good practice (2005)
- C. Mattheck Field Guide to Visual Tree Assessment (2007)
- British Standards Institution BS3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations
- National Tree Safety Group Common Sense Risk Management of Trees (2011)
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- D. Slater Assessment of Tree Forks. Assessment of junctions for risk management (2016)

**SITE AND TREE LOCATION PLANS** (Not to scale)



## **TERMS & CONDITIONS**

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