A report on tree condition

including management work recommendations

Survey Date: 30/05/2024
Report Date: 30/05/2024
Site: 7 Harton View, West Boldon, NE36 0QS
Client: Alan Robinson
Job Ref: 3367

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1 Introduction

1.1 I, Simon Forster, have been instructed by Alan Robinson, 'the client', to carry out a ground-based visual tree inspection of a single tree in the front garden of, 'the site', 7 Harton View, West Boldon, NE36 0QS and to report my findings on tree condition.

1.2 This inspection consisted of a survey of a single sycamore tree in the front garden.

1.3 The findings of this report provide management work recommendations with the order of work priority given such that hazards are addressed in an appropriate timeframe.

1.4 Management work recommendations can be found in section 4.

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2 Methodology

2.1 I, Simon Forster, holder of the ABC Level 4 Diploma in Arboriculture and the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection qualification, conducted this tree condition survey on 30/05/2024.

2.2 I carried out all tree inspections in accordance with the current best practice, Visual Tree Assessment[1], to give a systematic, consistent, and transparent evaluation method for tree inspection.

2.3 I conducted all tree inspections from ground level with the use of an acoustic-sounding hammer and probe. No invasive decay instruments were used.

2.4 The main scope of a tree condition survey is to provide a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, identifying and recording hazardous trees, to determine their level of risk, and to identify the required work management recommendations to reduce the risk of harm from these hazards to an acceptable level for the observed occupancy/land use. See Common Sense Risk Management of Trees in the bibliography for further details.

2.5 Where required trees may be grouped. Any trees of note, falling outside the group average conditions structurally or physically, will be individually identified and included in the tree survey.

2.6 Data, in line with Appendix 1 – Tree survey key, is digitally recorded during the inspection and transferred to the report document upon return to the office.

2.7 **Tree data** regarding the trees inspected for this report can be found in Appendix 2 - Tree data.

2.8 **Tree management work recommendations** are given within Appendix 2 and are colour-coded for work priority. Urgent priority works are colour-coded in purple and immediate action is recommended to make the tree safe or guard the site; high-priority works are colour-coded in red and are recommended to be carried out within 30 days; moderate-priority works are colour-coded yellow, with a recommendation to be carried out within 90 days; and low priority works are the lowest priority and may be done if budget permits.

[1] Mattheck, C (2007) Field Guide for Visual Tree Assessment & Lonsdale, D (1999) Principle of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management

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3 Conclusions

3.1 Tree T1 is in good condition, as highlighted in my observations.

3.2 My recommendations are set out below.

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4 Recommendations

4.1 I recommend that the tree is in reinspected in 24 months; paying particular attention to the exudation on the south-west buttress.

4.2 I recommend rocks are moved away from the buttress to prevent any contact damage as the buttress expands.

4.3 I recommend a mulch bed is added around the base to discourage mowing in this area. Mowing/strimming could lead to buttress damage. This mulch will also improve soil conditions for the tree.

4.4 I recommend that the homeowner considers the adoption of the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management strategy[2] and observes the "passive assessment" process including the use of the Obvious Tree Risk Features guide.

4.5 All tree works recommended should be carried out in accordance with *British Standard BS3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations*, unless explicitly state otherwise.

[2] https://www.validtreerisk.com/tree-risk-management-strategy-policy-&-plan

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5 Appendix 1 – Key to Tree data (Appendix 2)

Type & ID

- **Types** – **T**- individually identified tree, **G** – group of trees (similar trees of similar condition), * - a tree isolated from a group, **R** – row of trees, **H** – hedgerow, **S** – stump, **W** – woodland.
- **ID** – a unique number identifying the tree, group, isolated group tree, row, hedgerow, or woodland with a unique identification number. For individual tree identification metal tags may be located at 1.5m above ground on their stem.

Species – Common Name – scientific tree genus & species name with the common tree name after a hyphen. For groups there may be multiple species.

Age Class - estimated based on the current size and expected size of the species at that location.

- **Y** - Young - 1st quarter of expected life of species
- **EM** - Early Mature - not young but growing towards the tree's maximum expected size for species/location.
- **M** - Mature - near to or at the tree's maximum expected size for species/location
- **LM** - Late Mature - has been at the maximum expected height and spread for species/location for several years.
- **A** - Ancient - exceptionally old for species

Height - estimated to the nearest metre from the ground to the tip of the top of the leaf-bearing structure and recorded in metres to put observations and photos into context with observations and recommendations.

Crown Spread - is measured approximately, using a laser measure, from the tip of leaf bearing structure to the stem, horizontally, and recorded in metres. This is recorded for the north, east, south, and west crown, enabling crown shape to be indicated on our plan and contextualised within observations and recommendations.

Physiological Condition – the physiological condition of the tree(s), ranging from good (G), fair (F), poor (P), and dead (D).

Structural Condition – the structural condition of the tree(s), ranging from good (G), fair (F), poor (P), and very poor (VP).

Comments – observations or comments noted by the surveyor.

Management Work Recommendations - recommended tree surgery operations including further investigation of suspected defects that require more detailed assessment.

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Occupancy – an assessment of the target zone (where harm may be done by the tree) from high to low as assessed on the date of the tree inspection. This is informed using the area likely to be affected by a failure of whole or part tree, and the perceived likelihood of this area being occupied at the time of failure.

- High occupancy areas should be reinspected in 12 months or as stated.
- Medium occupancy areas should be reinspected in 24 months or as stated.
- Low occupancy areas should be reinspected in 5 years or as stated.

Work Types

- Hazard – hazard management work to reduce risk to a person or property from a tree with a defect or in poor condition.
- Arb – informed Arboricultural management.
- Landscape – landscape design/management for amenity.
- Conservation – wildlife/habitat/historic management.
- Woodland – woodland management.

Work Priority – A priority for management work recommendations determined from an assessment on the day, considering the occupancy and the likelihood of failure. The surveyor considers his understanding of the tree(s) physiology/anatomy, the condition of the tree(s), the reasonable foreseeability that the tree or part of the tree will fail, and the size of the failed tree or part.

The ISA risk rating matrix is applied, giving a Risk Rating for the tree.

	Consequences of Failure			
Likelihood of Failure & Impact	**Negligible**	**Minor**	**Significant**	**Severe**
Very Likely	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Likely	Low	Moderate	High	High
Somewhat likely	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Low

Taken from ISA Basic Tree Risk Assessment Form, 2017.

Based on this risk rating a recommended timescale for the work to be carried out is provided below.

- Urgent (where extreme) - immediate action is recommended to make tree(s) safe or guard the site.
- High - to be undertaken within 30 days of the tree survey.
- Moderate - to be undertaken within 90 days of the tree survey.
- Low - that may be carried out if the budget permits.

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6 Appendix 2 - Tree data

Type & ID	Species Common Name	Age Class	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m)	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Comments	Management Work Recommendations	Occupancy	Work Type	Work Priority
T1	Acer pseudoplatanus Sycamore	M	12	6	G	G	A windy day. Exposed to wind load due to height and location. Good crown movement in wind. No evidence of basal movement. Historic crown lifts have occluded well, and the tree has excellent vitality. Stem taper is reasonable for location. Crown with appears to be increasing faster than height, especially at the level sheltered by wind. Black crust on stem identified as 'Arbrex Seal & Heal' pruning sealant from the 80s/90s (figure 1 & 2). Small area of exudation/damp on the southwest buttress (figure 3). No visible deadwood.	Reinspect in 24 months to paying close attention to southwest buttress exudation area.	HIGH	N/A	N/A



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

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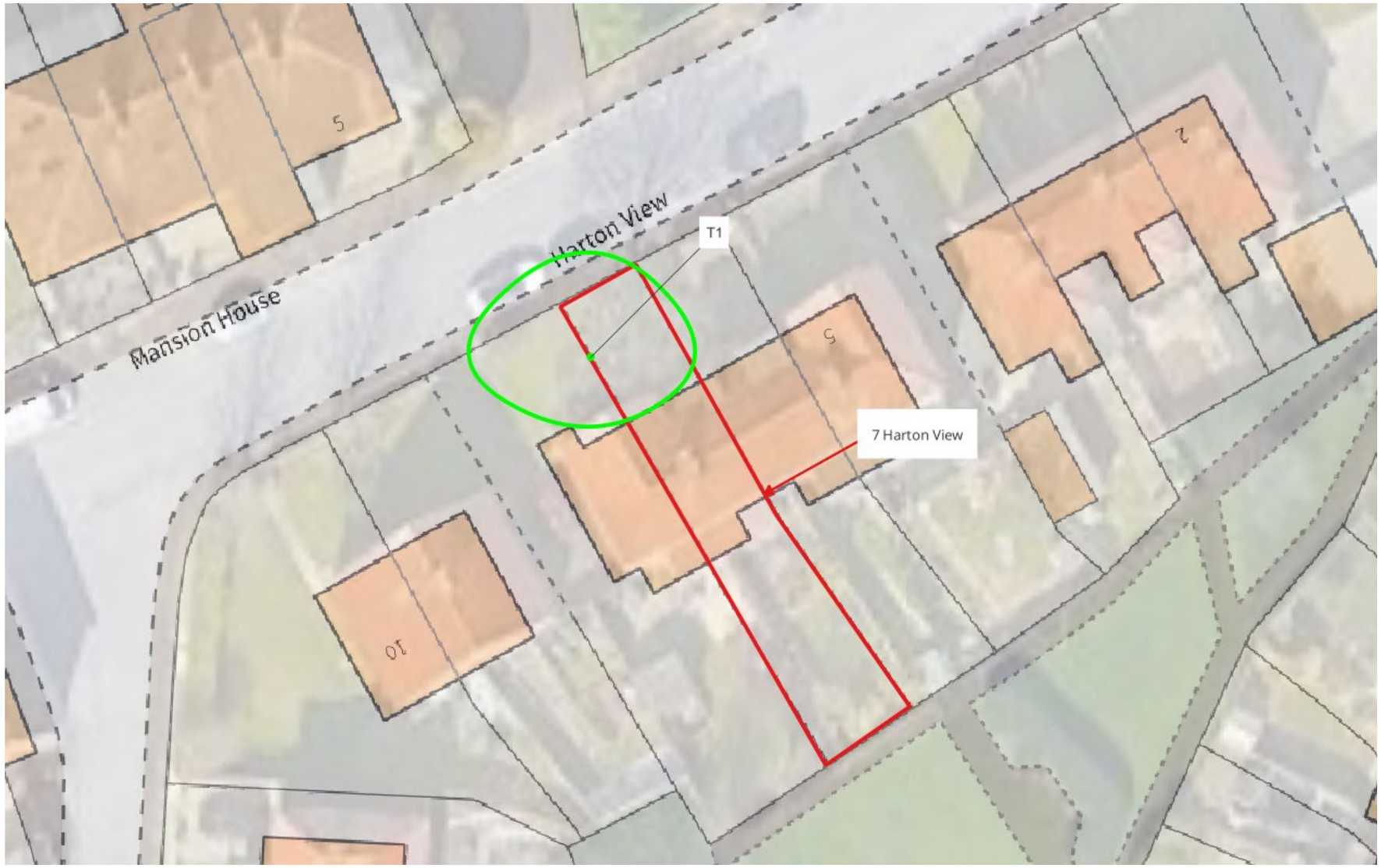
7 Appendix 3 – Tree location plan



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8 Appendix 4 – Limitations of Survey & Report

8.1 "**It is perfectly normal for trees to occasionally break without anyone or anything being to blame. The breakage is the natural price the tree must pay for achieving an energy-saving, lightweight structure**"[3]. Whilst every effort is made to ensure an accurate assessment of tree condition is made during an inspection no responsibility can be taken for resultant damage or injury occurred by a falling tree. The survey only gives a snapshot of what is visible, not obscured, or inaccessible on the day of the survey.

8.2 The **level of detail** of the tree inspection will vary depending on the target occupation and the size of the tree or group of trees. For example, zones of perceived high confluence (large trees in high target occupation areas) will be inspected in much greater detail than zones of perceived low confluence (small trees in low target occupation areas).

8.3 **Findings of this report** are only valid for 24 months from the date of the tree inspection.

8.4 **Location of trees** illustrated in Appendix 3 - Tree location plan is approximate, derived from geo-reference data, ordnance survey mapping and aerial photography. The tree locations shown on the plan are sufficiently accurate to assess the risk of harm and readily identify trees requiring works.

8.5 **Legal constraints** may limit the work that can be undertaken on-site, and the methods used. These may include, but not be limited to, those that follow.

8.5.1 Trees may be subject to **TPO (tree preservation orders)** or within a **conservation area** and therefore may be subject to legislation whereby you have an obligation to gain local planning authority consent, or at least inform the authority before any work is carried out on site. You should confirm this position prior to instructing any works. It is my understanding that the tree inspected is covered by South Tyneside Council TPO 277.

8.5.2 Prior to instruction of any works consideration should be given for **protected wildlife**, which may involve inspection and written records or reports, to prevent damage to wildlife and ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and to protect species such as Bats that are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. It is my understanding your site is within the West Boldon conservation area.

8.5.3 Requirements for a **felling license** under the Forestry Act (1967) may apply to this site depending on the designation of the land where the trees are located. The

[3] Professional Tree Inspection Workbook – Version 4, 2023, Lantra Awards.

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Forestry Commission guidance document, '*Tree felling: getting permission*', tells you if you'll need to get permission to fell trees. It is my understanding that trees standing or growing in a garden, as yours are, are exempt from this requirement.

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9 Appendix 6 – Information on Author

9.1 I, Simon Forster, have over seven years of experience working within the Arboricultural industry having worked as a climbing arborist for many of these years and have a detailed knowledge of the practical profession of climbing arborist. I am a professional member of the Arboriculture Association (PR9022) and have a keen interest in all areas of arboriculture and keep up to date with research and developments tracking CPD as part of my Arboriculture Association membership.

9.2 My qualifications include.

- Upper Second-class BSc Honours Degree
- ABC Level 4 Diploma in Arboriculture
- PTI - Professional Tree Inspection (LANTRA awards)
- Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) – Mike Ellison
- VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management – David Evans
- Practical Arboriculture Qualifications (NPTC)

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10 Appendix 7 - Bibliography

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