



THE TREE FELLA®

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Arboricultural Report following Professional Tree Inspection

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Prepared by:	Simon Forster
Site of Inspection:	28 Parkshiel South Shields NE34 8BU
Date of Inspection:	25/02/2026
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1.0 Introduction

Those responsible for trees — referred to as tree managers — have a duty to inspect and maintain them in a manner that is reasonable and proportionate to the low level of risk trees present, the benefits they provide, and the tree manager's own health and safety obligations.

In reality, *'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'*¹.

The Common Sense Risk Management of Trees guidance² sets out a nationally recognised and balanced approach to tree risk management. Its purpose is to limit the risk of harm from tree failure while maintaining the benefits trees confer — social, environmental, and economic.

Tree risk management is achieved through proportionate inspection and maintenance. Tree risk assessment frameworks such as VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management & Assessment³ (VALID) framework and the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) provide systems that support tree owners and managers in assessing risk and fulfilling their duty of care & legal obligations, whilst retaining the benefits of trees in the landscape where it is reasonable.

In this case **Tracey Tinmouth** ('the client') had already adopted an approach consistent with recognised tree risk-benefit management principles. During what NTSG refers to as informal procedures — what I understand **VALID** to refer to as a *Passive Assessment* — the client identified concerns regarding a single sycamore tree on this site.

1.1 Instruction

I, **Simon Forster**, have been instructed by the client to undertake an **assessment of all trees within the boundary of the site** and to report on their condition, risk, and management requirements. This report presents my findings together with any **reasonable and proportionate recommendations** arising from the assessment.

1.2 Conclusion

There are medium priority **Recommendations** which can be found in the relevant section.

¹ Professional Tree Inspection Workbook – Version 4, 2023, Lantra Awards.

² Common Sense Risk Management of Trees, 2nd edition (NTSG), 2024, NTSG

³ VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management System © David Evans 2018–2025. Used with permission under licence. For details, visit www.validtreerisk.com.

2.0 Methodology

This assessment has been conducted in accordance with the principles a walk-over assessment⁴, detailed inspection⁵, and negative recording⁶ set out by the NTSG and the **Active Assessment** approach described by VALID, giving due consideration to the benefits that trees provide while evaluating and managing any risk to the safety of people or property known to occupy the space around them.

In short, **Active Assessment** is carried out periodically – for instance, where a client has a policy to inspect areas of high occupancy at least every 3 years — or when a tree is identified as potentially requiring closer attention — for instance, where there are visible signs of stress, decay, or structural concern – and this has been escalated for inspection by a suitably qualified professional. The purpose is to determine whether any risks associated with the tree remain at a reasonable and proportionate level, or whether management action is required to reduce the risk to an Acceptable or Tolerable level.

2.1 Levels of Assessment

Active Assessment is undertaken at different levels of detail depending on the situation and evidence available.

For context, VALID identifies three broad tiers of assessment — *Basic*, *Detailed*, and *Advanced* — which describe increasing depth and precision of evaluation; alongside decreasing volume.

In this report, the following terminology is used in a **similar, generic sense** to indicate the depth of inspection undertaken:

- **Basic Assessment** – ground-based visual inspection to identify obvious defects. An obvious defect is a feature of a tree that can be easily seen and recognised as likely to present a structural hazard⁷.
- **Detailed Assessment** – closer examination from ground level using simple diagnostic tools (e.g. probe and sounding hammer) to clarify any suspected defects. A defect is a condition or feature that would predispose a tree, or part of a tree, to structural failure. Not all unusual growth patterns or physical deformities are defects⁸, some are just features.

⁴ NTSG 6.5.1.5 Walk-over assessment

⁵ NTSG 6.5.2.6 Detailed inspection

⁶ NTSG 6.5.2 Negative recording

⁷ NTSG 6.3.5 Obvious defect

⁸ NTSG 6.3.4 Defect

- **Advanced Assessment** – a targeted investigation where additional certainty surrounding a defect is needed, such as decay detection, aerial inspection, or structural modelling.

Each level increases in time, cost, and diagnostic precision. It is not proportionate to apply the most detailed level of assessment to every tree, and doing so would not align with the principles of reasonable and practicable tree management. Escalation to a higher level occurs only when there is a clear feature or concern that justifies it.

On this occasion, the scope of the inspection included the **Basic, Detailed, and Advanced** levels of the **VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management System**, applied as appropriate to the level of concern and evidence available at the time of assessment. Advanced Assessment techniques were used to obtain additional information about specific trees where greater certainty was required. This may have involved aerial inspection, decay detection, or structural modelling, depending on the nature of the concern and the value of the tree. Any additional investigative work was undertaken with prior agreement from the client, and findings are detailed within the accompanying report sections and appendices.

2.2 Assessment Method

Active Assessments are carried out by a variety of means, depending on the circumstances — from accessible ground, on foot, by vehicle, or by other suitable methods as agreed with the client. The method used for the assessment is recorded within the **Findings** section of this report. Where vegetation, undergrowth, structures, or terrain restrict access or visibility, this will be noted, and further inspection may be recommended.

Assessments are undertaken in accordance with the principles of **Visual Tree Assessment (VTA)** as described by *Mattheck and Breloer (1994)* and further developed by *Lonsdale (1999)*. This approach interprets the **body language of trees** — recognising external symptoms that may indicate internal weakness or mechanical stress — and evaluates the likelihood of structural failure based on those indicators.

During **Detailed Assessments**, each tree is examined systematically from base to crown, beginning at the root plate and buttresses, continuing up the main stem to scaffold branches, and finally assessing overall canopy structure. Observations also include environmental influences such as soil conditions, exposure, companion shelter, and site usage. Measurements are taken, including diameter of the stem(s), to the nearest centimetre, at 1.5m height; overall height and crown spread, both estimated to the nearest meter.

Both **biotic** (living) and **abiotic** (physical) factors are documented, and where appropriate, photographic evidence is taken to support observations and recommendations.

2.3 Risk Evaluation

Risk ratings are always understood in the context of the assessment level. A **Basic Assessment** provides an overview appropriate for most routine management situations. If no significant risk features are identified at this level, the tree is considered to present an **Acceptable** level of risk.

If subsequent **Detailed** or **Advanced Assessments** reveal concealed or complex defects, the evaluation may change accordingly. This tiered approach ensures that tree management remains proportionate to the scale of the risk and the value of the tree.

Risk will be presented to the client as **Acceptable, Tolerable, Not Tolerable**, or **Unacceptable**, in line with VALID. This provides a clear, intuitive, traffic-light-style indication of relative risk levels and supports proportionate decision-making.

- **Acceptable (GREEN):** There is no indication that risk exceeds ordinary and expected levels. The level of risk is low and does not require a management response in the near future⁹. The tree will continue to be monitored through Passive and periodic Active Assessment.
- **Tolerable (AMBER):** Risk remains low but a defect¹⁰ is present that warrants scheduled observation. The tree presents a risk of *non-imminent* harm. Where the risk is Tolerable, it is assessed to be as low as reasonably practicable. The tree will be reassessed at the next Active Assessment or sooner if Passive Assessment raises concern.
- **Not Tolerable (AMBER):** Where a defect is present and the risk is Not Tolerable, management action is advised to reduce risk to an acceptable level within a reasonable timeframe¹¹. Risk reduction measures are needed to bring risk to an acceptable level. Actions may include pruning, removal of defective parts, or implementing temporary access restrictions. Work will be prioritised in a planned and proportionate manner.
- **Unacceptable (RED):** The tree presents a risk of *imminent* harm and requires prompt management action¹². Risk is considered unacceptable based on current condition and use of the area. Work will be arranged as soon as reasonably practicable. Where required, temporary access restrictions will be put in place until works are completed.

2.4 Reporting

Where an **Active Assessment** includes **more than one tree**, the route of the walk-over assessment¹³ is recorded and illustrated on the **Site Plan**. Where the instruction relates to a **single tree**, only that tree's location is shown on the plan.

⁹ NTSG 6.6.1.4 Risks not requiring a response in the near future

¹⁰ NTSG (2024), Section 6.3.4 Defect

¹¹ NTSG 6.6.1.3 Risk of non-imminent harm posed by trees

¹² NTSG 6.6.1.2 Risk of imminent harm

¹³ NTSG 6.5.1.5 Walk-over assessment

The locations of trees subject to **Detailed** and **Advanced Assessments** are shown on the **Site Plan** in line with NTSG's detailed inspection and negative recording guidance. Each assessment has been recorded using VALID's mobile application, which produces concise, individual report-card style outputs for each tree. These can be found in the **Appendix**, alongside any supplementary data or photographs collected during Advanced Assessment. The report also includes guidance on **remedial works, monitoring intervals**, and other management actions intended to maintain tree health and public safety.

Advanced Assessments were carried out where greater certainty was required — for example, to clarify the extent of decay, evaluate structural integrity, or assess the strength of load-bearing parts of the tree. These investigations included appropriate techniques such as aerial inspection, decay detection, or structural testing. The results of these Advanced Assessments have been incorporated into the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

Findings and **Recommendations** can be found later in this report..

3.0 Limitations

The locations of trees illustrated in this report are approximate, derived from a combination of geo-referenced data, Ordnance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Tree positions shown on any accompanying plan are sufficiently accurate to enable identification, risk evaluation, and the scheduling of recommended works.

The findings of this report are valid for a period of **12 months** from the date of inspection, unless significant site changes or extreme weather events occur that could materially affect tree stability or condition. The assessment represents a snapshot of the trees as observed from accessible positions on the day of inspection. Conditions or defects not visible, obscured, or inaccessible at the time cannot be evaluated and may not be reflected in this report.

While every reasonable effort has been made to identify observable features, trees are dynamic, living organisms subject to natural processes and external forces beyond human control. Accordingly, **no tree can ever be guaranteed as safe**, and no responsibility can be accepted for damage or injury arising from tree failure after the time of inspection.

The absence of any specific recommendation does not imply that a tree is safe or free from risk, nor does the inclusion of a recommendation guarantee that its implementation will eliminate risk entirely. All trees carry an inherent level of risk, which may be deemed Acceptable, Tolerable, Not Tolerable or Unacceptable depending on site use and occupancy.

Active Assessment relates solely to the **risk of harm to persons and property from tree failure (whole or part)**. It does not consider potential indirect effects such as **subsidence, heave, or root interference with underground structures or utilities**, unless otherwise stated.

Legal and environmental constraints may influence or restrict the scope and execution of recommended works. These may include, but are not limited to, **Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Area designation, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and Forestry Commission felling licence regulations**.

4.0 Findings

I, **Simon Forster**, holder of the ABC Level 4 Diploma in Arboriculture and the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection qualification, conducted this **Active Assessment** on **25/02/2026**.

The inspection was carried out from ground level and on foot. The inspection routes are shown on the Site Plan in **Appendix 1**.

Weather conditions during the assessment were **Warm** and **Dry**, with **a light wind showing some movement in the crowns**.

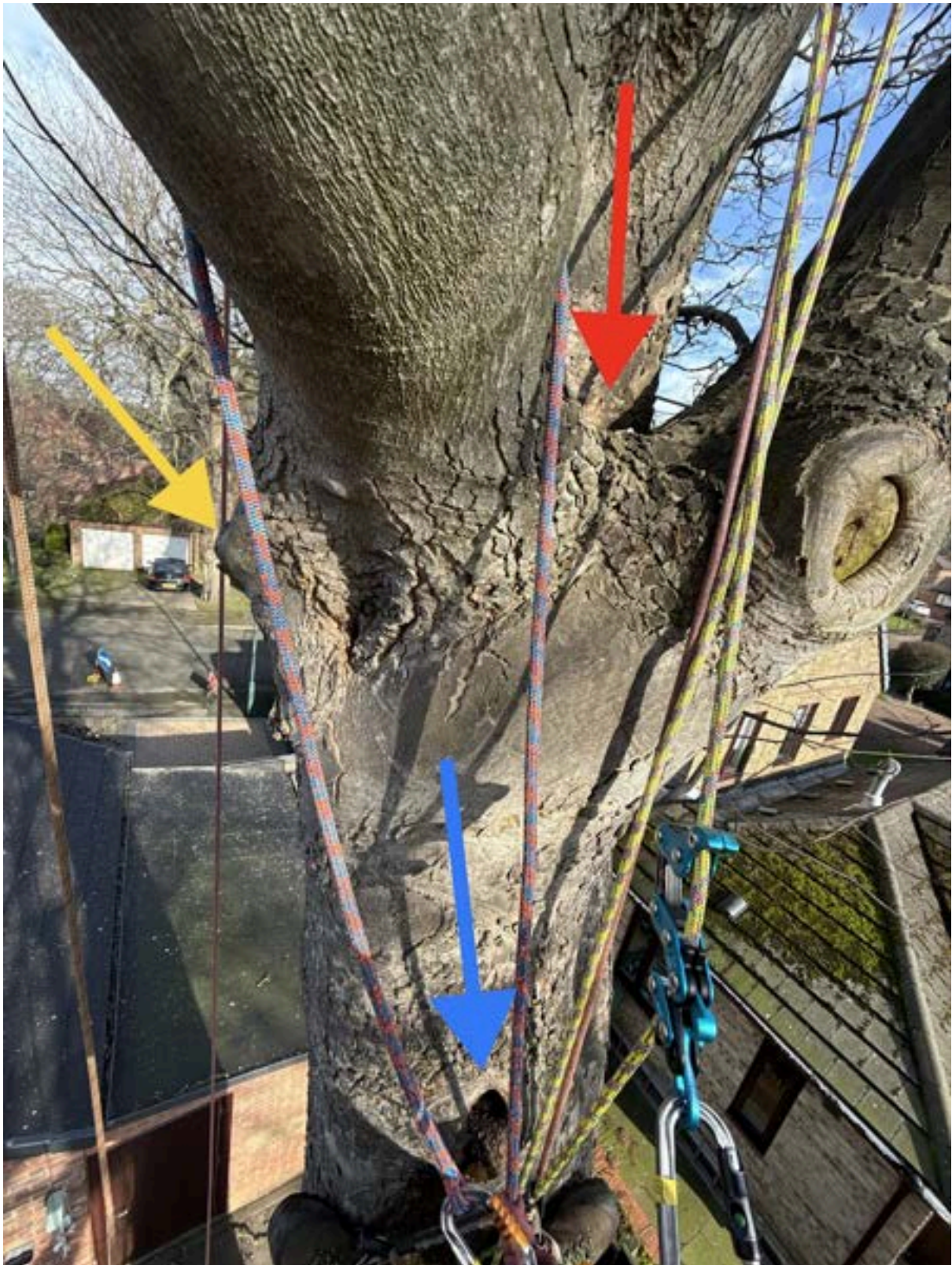
The site comprises a **residential home** with several surrounding dwellings. Residents access the area via a driveway and a footpath to the back garden that passes beneath mature trees, a neighbours rear entrance is directly under the tree. Buildings are under one or more of the trees. A public road and footpath run along the northern boundary, away from trees.

During this Active Assessment, **1** of the Basic Assessments led to **Detailed Assessment**, and **1** of those progressed to **Advanced Assessment**. The corresponding tree locations are shown on the **Site Plan (Appendix 1)**, and individual report cards are provided in **Appendix 2**. Advanced Assessment data will be explored within **Findings**.

4.1 Findings of Aerial Inspection of T1

I carried out an aerial inspection of this tree T1. The tree had a large amount of deadwood in the crown and a previous inspection, carried out 6 years earlier, had indicated cavities within the main stem.

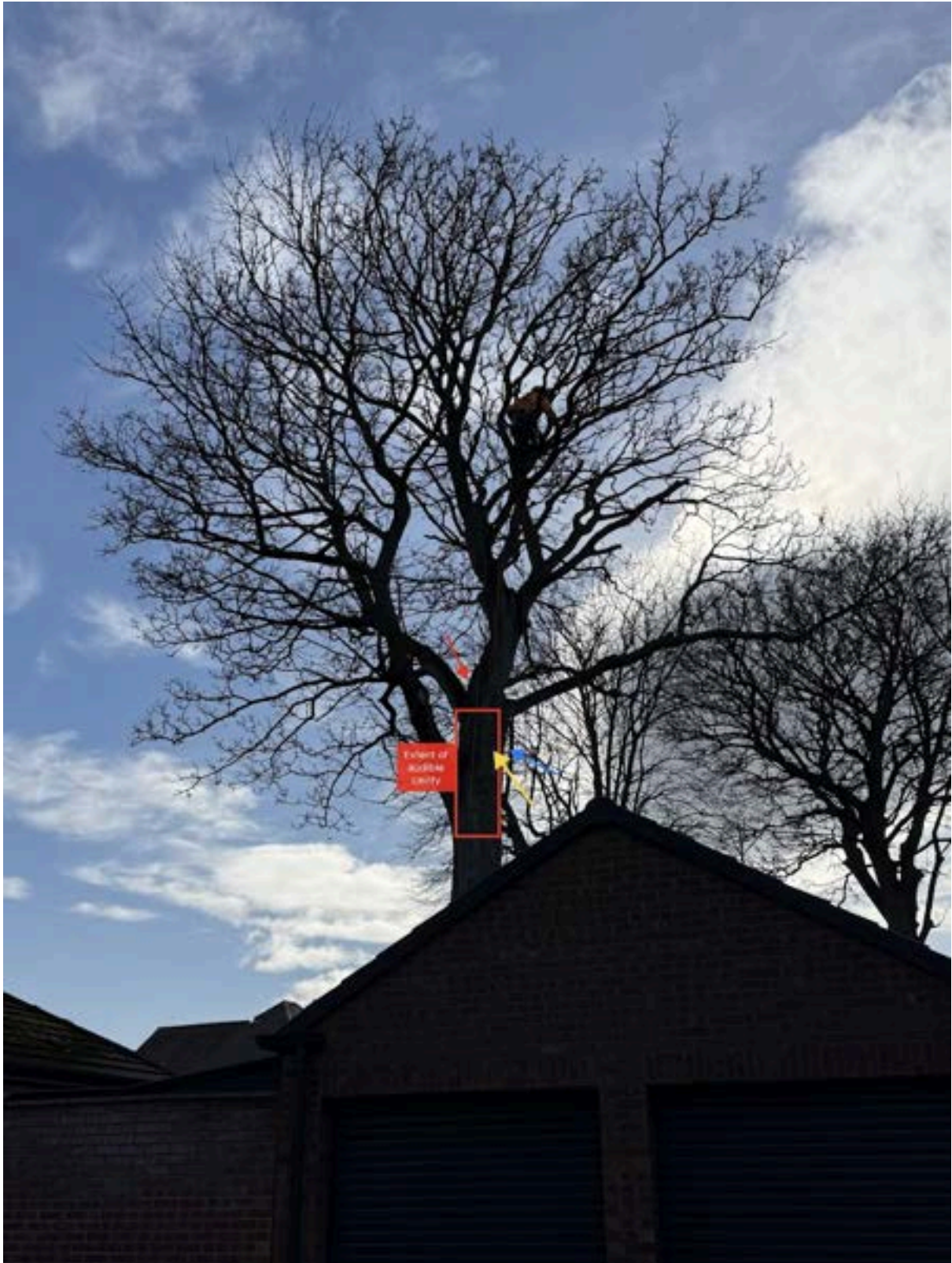
During my aerial inspection I was able to locate several cavities; red, yellow and blue.



Cavities Red, Yellow and Blue join up to form a large cavity just under where the main crown breaks. Cavity Blue and Red are on the southern face. Using a sounding hammer I was able to identify a large area of hollowing within the Northern face that ran from Red to Blue via Yellow.



This all occurs in and around the main stem union. When compared to the report 6 years earlier this appears to be as expected; with the original surveyor giving the tree around a 10 year life span.



On the back side of Red is an included area of the main union.



This is another potential point of failure.



I was able to probe cavity Red beyond 30cm deep.



There is a fourth cavity, Green. This cavity forms on a main limb extending over a neighbouring property and decay can be probed up to 40cm back into the union.



Cavity Green is within 1m of the decay area formed between Red and Blue.
There is a large area of decay, with multiple pockets on all sides of the tree.
Sonic tomography would likely confirm this.
Sonic tomography could be used to measure the approximate extent.

Coupled with a large amount of crown dieback; which was removed during our visit; this tree is not likely to recover and the condition will likely worsen over the coming years.

My VALID likelihood of failure is informed by the above information and my assessment of risk can be found in Appendix 2.

Recommendations arising from this assessment follow.

5.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the Active Assessment and reflect what is reasonable and proportionate for the trees inspected. Actions are prioritised according to the level of risk presented and the urgency with which work should be undertaken.

5.1 High Priority (RED)

There are no High Priority recommendations.

5.2 Medium Priority (AMBER)

As these trees present a risk of non-imminent harm, you should, as soon as practicably possible after completing the high-priority works, arrange for a suitably qualified and competent person to carry out the following work.

Tree(s)	Works
T1	Remove tree

5.3 Low Priority (GREEN)

There are no Low Priority recommendations

5.4 Reinspections

The reinspection intervals below are based on the assessed level of risk and site use. They provide a proportionate schedule for future checks to help maintain tree safety and condition.

Tree(s)	Reinspection no later than
All	Summer 2028

5.5 Other Recommendations

I recommend that the client reviews the **NTSG Summary Guidance** and implements a proportionate tree safety management plan. We can support this by preparing a bespoke plan that aligns with NTSG principles and integrates straightforward procedures for staff to follow.

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

Habitat features suitable for protected species (such as cavities, loose bark, or dense ivy cover) were observed during the inspection. While no direct evidence of use was identified, caution is advised, and a pre-works inspection should be carried out immediately prior to any tree work to ensure compliance with the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** and **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019**.

Appendix 1: Site Plan



Appendix 2: Detailed Assessments

Site 28 Parkshiel
Ref: 4411

Sycamore Maple (T1)

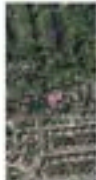


Highest Risk	Not Tolerable
Risk Reduction	Remove tree.
Tree Management	N/A
Review Year	2027
Date Assessed	2026-02-25 10:01 am
Assessed By	Simon Forster
Phone Number	01914326367
Email	hello@thetreefella.co.uk

Risk



Tree Details and Location



Species	Height (m)	Stem Ø (cm)	Crown Ø (m)
Sycamore Maple <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	15	86.5	16

28 Parkshiel
South Shields

Likelihood of Occupation



Risk Inputs


People


Not Weather


Group

O

2
High

Consequences




Tree


Stem


Branch


Deadwood

C

1
Very High

Likelihood of Failure

VALID

There are lots of new buds emerging throughout crown; but also evidence of new buds drying up and dying quickly in some areas.

Crown breaks into several stems at approx. 8m height. Tight union present between southern breaks and main stem.

No recent changes around the tree, but large amount of deadwood will change wind flow through crown.

Sycamore in notable decline; typical unlikely to suddenly recover.

Large cavity forming where three pockets of decay are coalescing at 6-10m. Notable hollowing when sounded on south (cavities visible) and north face.

Notes

The highest risk is crown failure at decay area.

F

3
Notable

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VALID

Sycamore Maple (T1) | Detailed Tree Risk-Benefit Assessment

Intentionally Blank