



TREE HEALTH & SAFETY AUDIT

**13 Wensley Gardens,
Emsworth**

on behalf of

Mr & Mrs C Cox





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1.0 Introduction & Clients Brief

- 1.1 I am instructed by **Mr & Mrs Cox** who own the property at **13 Wensley Gardens, Emsworth.**
- 1.2 There are two maturing TPO'd Ash trees in the rear garden of this property which are giving the owners considerable cause for concern.
- 1.3 They have recently employed Michael Reed Tree Services to undertake some clearance works on a tree that failed and fell across their garden and they have recommended that the trees are looked at by a qualified and experienced arboricultural consultant.
- 1.4 There is a history of tree and woody shrub failures throughout this garden caused by *Honey Fungus Armillaria mellea* [of which the most recent tree failure was one].
- 1.5 The trees overhang Woodlands Avenue and the owners are concerned that they have a 'duty of care' to the public in this respect – particularly as this is a heavily used pedestrian route by children attending the nearby school.

2.0 Visual Tree Assessment Exercise

- 2.1 I carried out a visual tree assessment exercise on this tree on **Tuesday 2nd July 2024.**
- 2.2 The trees were inspected 'by eye' from ground level and were not climbed.
- 2.3 The tools used for the purposes of this inspection were a rubber headed 'sounding hammer' and a metal 500mm long auger probe.
- 2.4 In addition to this the tree crowns were inspected in some detail using high powered binoculars.
- 2.5 The trees that were surveyed have been shown on the Tree Location Plan included with this report at [Appendix BH1](#).
- 2.6 A series of digital photographs were taken at the time to record the findings of the inspection and some have been used in this report to identify and illustrate key points - [see at Appendix BH2](#).
- 2.7 I have been advised by the owners that there is a Tree Preservation Order in place to protect these trees.

2.8 Tree Safety Audit Schedule

TREE SAFETY AUDIT NOTES

N.B. – Tree Safety Audits will comprise all of the following items :-

These Tree Safety Audit Notes have been prepared in accordance with current industry guidelines; utilising my fifty (50) years of experience in the arboricultural industry and applying common sense and a pragmatic approach, whilst at the same time recognising that safety is the paramount consideration.

- Each tree or group has been allocated a unique number **but no tags have been applied** – the numbering system is repeated on the site sketch plan which accompanies the safety audit schedule and the colour coding system applied to each grade will be repeated on the plans for ease of management. The sketch plan which normally accompanies a Tree Safety Audit Schedule will indicate the approximate location of each surveyed tree/group on site and also have the trunk circle colour coded, with a unique number positioned beside each one.
- Tree species are identified in both English Common Name and Latin Botanical Name.
- An assessment of a tree or groups age is made in terms of its site specific maturity as part of the surrounding landscape, taking into account its overall shape and form in that setting, and is recorded thus :-
 - Y** - Young tree or group
 - SM** - Semi Mature tree or group
 - EM** - Early Mature tree or group
 - M** - Mature tree or group
 - OM** - Over mature tree or group
 - V** - Veteran tree or group
- Height assessments are estimated and dimensions are provided in metres.
- The trunk diameter is recorded in millimetres.
- The average crown spread is recorded in metres.
- Condition comments are included to describe the key features of a tree and any noted defects and health and safety issues – divided into distinct areas of the tree i.e. base; trunk and crown.
- The anticipated life expectancy of each tree is recorded in bands as follows :- <10; 10-20; 20-30; 30-40 and >40.
- The category grading for each tree/group is assessed according to a simple **A, B, C, D and V** grading system.
 - A - (Green)** Trees of high amenity value of good shape and form and in a sound and healthy condition with a long life expectancy.
The only exceptions to this might be rare tree species or historical value which might also merit an A grade.
 - B – (Blue)** Trees of high amenity value but which are slightly misshapen or suppressed or have some other minor defect which prevents it being categorized as an A.
 - C – (Brown)** Trees which are in good overall order but have limited amenity value with no special or outstanding features.
 - D – (Red)** Trees which are dead, dying, diseased, dysfunctional or dangerous and will require urgent attention.
- Advice on the most appropriate course of management to render the tree(s) safe is given under the heading of Management Recommendations.

2.9 Tree Assessment

Tree No & Species	Statistics	Tree Condition Comments
1 Common Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Age – Mature Diameter – 500mm & 400 x4 Height – 14m Grade – B Est. Life Expectancy - 30-40 years	<u>Basal Area:</u> - The basal area was ‘sounded’ and produced no irregular sound resonance that might indicate internal hollowing or decay. - Several roots were exposed in the lawn and over time repeated mower damage has resulted in decay ‘canoe hollowing pattern on upper surface’. - Using an auger to probe all points around the basal area there were no openings or fissures noted. - No fungal brackets or clumps were present arising from the root system or ground around base of tree. <u>Trunk:</u> - Multi stemmed at around 1m from ground level with included bark within the stems and a water pocket between them which over time has filled with detritus and now has Escallonia growing out of it. <u>Crown:</u> - Previously heavily reduced and reshaped with most old wounds having partially callused over. - Low branching habit which is in conflict with the external hedge of Leylandii and some branch rubbing has occurred. - The crown shows good vigour and vitality and there is no evidence of Ash Dieback Disease [<i>Chalara</i>] although the leaves have been heavily browsed by Pigeons. - The lowest limb on the southeast side is heavily cankered.

Tree No & Species	Statistics	Tree Condition Comments
2 Common Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Raywood Form)	Age – Semi-mature Diameter – 550mm Height – 15m Grade – B Est. Life Expectancy - 30-40 years	<u>Basal Area:</u> - The basal area was ‘sounded’ and produced no irregular sound resonance that might indicate internal hollowing or decay. - Using an auger to probe all points around the basal area there were no openings or fissures noted. - No fungal brackets or clumps were present arising from the root system or ground around base of tree. <u>Trunk:</u> - Multi stemmed at around 3m from ground level with strong forks. <u>Crown:</u> - Previously heavily reduced and reshaped with most old wounds having partially callused over. - Low branching habit which is in conflict with the external hedge of Leylandii. - The crown shows good vigour and vitality and there is no evidence of Ash Dieback Disease [<i>Chalara</i>] although the leaves have been heavily browsed by Pigeons.

3.0 Risk Assessment

3.1 Immediate Risks:

- The low crown overhang of the adjacent road is a concern – although in both cases the previous crown reduction works will have reduced the risk of branch failures quite considerably.
- Similarly the cankered lateral branch on T1 would be of greater concern had the limb not been previously reduced in the past.
- The crossing and rubbing limbs are creating open wounds that could eventually result in branch failure with the added risk of fungal infection from airborne spores.
- The deadwood has been removed from both trees when the trees were last reduced so this is not a concern.

3.2 Longer Term Risks:

- Both trees are healthy and vigorous at present and continue to put on regrowth at a strong rate thus placing increasing pressure on the old pruning points where there is weaker attachment strength than if the tree had remained unpruned.

4.0 Tree Management Strategy Recommendations:-

T1 Common Ash –

- I recommend repeating the crown reduction and reshaping exercise reducing down to the previous pruning points – or just beyond them if decay has undermined the knuckle.
- Deal with the crossing and rubbing branches by removing the smaller diameter limb in each instance.
- It would be prudent to also remove the cankered limb - for both health and safety reasons.

T2 Common Ash –

- I recommend repeating the crown reduction and reshaping exercise reducing down to the previous pruning points – or just beyond them if decay has undermined the knuckle.



BH 1

Tree Location Plan



BH 2

Photographic Record



BH 3

Qualifications & Experience



QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- My name is **Bernie Harverson** and I am a self employed independent arboricultural consultant in private practice. I take instructions primarily in the South of England but also on occasions work nationwide and abroad and have offices at : – **10 Southleigh Grove, Hayling Island, Hampshire PO11 0SH**
- I hold the following arboricultural qualification – **National Diploma in Arboriculture** (Royal Forestry Society – 1976)
- I have **fifty-three (53)** years of practical and managerial experience in the arboricultural industry including periods in both the public and private sectors.
- My Local Government sector experience comprises one year as a tree surgeon with Brighton Parks and nine years spent in Arboricultural Officer posts with both Westminster City Council and Portsmouth City Council
- My past practical experience in the private sector includes two years at Tilhill Forest Nursery and over ten years for various companies as a Climbing Arborist/Tree Surgeon.
- Managerial work in the private sector includes two years as manager of Beechings Tree Surgery Company and twelve years with CBA Trees as Managing Director and Senior Arboricultural Consultant.
- As an independent self employed Arboricultural Consultant since 2006 I now provide a comprehensive range of services including :- tree surveys, appraisals, assessments and inspections with particular reference to planning and development and tree safety audits with a service offered as a climber to undertake full climbing inspections to better understand the condition of a given tree before prescribing a management strategy.
- I also on occasion undertake litigation work appearing as an Expert Witness in Court Actions and at Planning Appeals, Hearings and Public Inquiries.

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