Visual Tree Condition
&
Risk Assessment

Bridgeman Coach House
Bangor on Dee
Wrexham

Ref:
VTA/BHB/01/24

Date:
9th January 2024

Commissioned by:
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Prepared by
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Contents

1.0 Instruction
2.0 Introduction
3.0 Scope & Limitations
4.0 Statutory Controls & Obligations
5.0 Site Description
6.0 Tree Survey Findings and Recommendations

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Instruction

1.1 Shields Arboricultural Consultancy received instructions from Mrs D. Vogwell to undertake an inspection of the trees at Bridgeman Coach House.

1.2 The assessment covered all trees within the garden area.

1.3 The purpose of the survey was to provide an assessment of the condition of the trees and provide advice regarding any works required to the trees to ensure that they are maintained in as safe a condition as is reasonably practicable.

Introduction

2.1 It is recommended that all tree owners should have their trees inspected for safety purposes on a periodic basis. The frequency of these inspections will depend on the location of the tree in relation to roads, footpaths, public areas and buildings or structures. This is confirmed by HSE guidance relating to managing the risk of falling trees which states that '*there is the duty to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that people are not exposed to risk to their health and safety. Doing all that is reasonably practicable does* ***not*** *mean that all trees have to be individually examined on a regular basis. A decision has to be taken on what is reasonable in the circumstances and this will include consideration of the risks to which people may be exposed*.'

Scope and Limitations of the Survey

3.1 The survey was undertaken 28th November 2023 by Stephen Shields, principal consultant with Shields Arboricultural Consultancy.

Methodology

3.2 The survey was carried out in accordance with the principals of tree inspection and assessment described in Lonsdale 1999 and using Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) techniques as described in Mattheck & Breloer 1994. This term describes an approach to tree surveying using visual observation which allows the surveyor to evaluate the stability and structural condition of a tree. The basis behind VTA is the identification of symptoms, which the tree produces in reaction to, for example, a weakness in its structure, or as a result of external stress factors e.g., drought.

3.3 The trees were inspected from the ground level using field glasses and basic equipment such as a soft faced hammer and steel probe. Where required a F-400 Resi-drill was used to examine the internal quality of the wood. The inspection followed a set procedure; firstly, the site conditions are assessed to establish if any environmental factors are present that could affect the stability of the trees. This includes an evaluation of the soil conditions to establish if there are any aspects that could inhibit root growth, such as water logging or shallow soils. The exposure and elevation of the site are considered along with any changes to the tree's environment that could affect the tree. Next the root plate and area around the tree are visually inspected for signs of instability or decay,

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followed by a visual examination of the trunk and branch structure to identify structural defects or decay. Finally, the vitality of the tree is assessed, and any significant pest and diseases identified. Where defects or health issues were identified, these are noted in the report and any required remedial measures recommended. Where no comment is made, it can be assumed that no defects were identified.

3.3 The findings of the survey are limited to the date of inspection. The seasonal nature of fungal and decay organisms and other symptoms of stress such as late or early leaf emergence or fall means that indicators of disease and decay may not have been present on the date of inspection.

3.4 The risk assessment evaluates the risk of failure in all weather conditions up to and including Beaufort Scale Gale Force 8. All trees are at risk of failure through exceptional weather conditions.

3.5 Where solutions to arboricultural problems are specified which require the usage of a third-party product e.g., no dig roadway construction, tree bracing products. No liability is assumed for the performance or suitability of the product and specialist advice as to the suitability or installation of the product should be sought from the manufacturer or other specialist. No responsibility is assumed by Shields Arboricultural Consultancy for legal matters that may arise from this report, and the consultant shall not be required to give testimony or to attend court unless additional contractual arrangements are made. Any alteration or deletion from this report shall invalidate it as a whole.

Statutory Controls & Obligations

4.1 Forestry Act; the felling of trees is controlled under Forestry Act, which requires that a felling licence is obtained prior to cutting down any trees. The Forestry Act does not apply to the felling of trees growing within an orchard, private garden, churchyard or public open space. Natural Resources Wales has the responsibility for enforcing the Forestry Act.

4.2 Tree Preservation Orders & Conservation Areas; Local Authorities have specific powers to protect trees through the use of Tree Preservation Orders. Where trees are protected under such orders it is a criminal offence to (subject to any exemptions for which provision may be made by the order) undertake, cause or permit the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees except with the consent of the local planning authority. Similar controls apply to all trees growing within a designated Conservation Area.

4.3 Bats, wild birds and other protected species; The Wildlife & Countryside Act & the Conservation (Natural Habitats & C.) Regulations make it an offence to disturb or destroy bats and bat roosts and wild birds and their nests. Other species of plant and animal are also protected. These creatures often inhabit trees and sufficient care must be taken to ensure they are not affected during forestry and arboricultural works.

4.4 Other restrictions and controls may be in force in sensitive areas such as SSSI's and Ancient Woodlands.

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Description of Site

5.1 Bridgeman Coach House is a detached two-story dwelling that has recently been renovated. It is close to the River Dee and to the north of Bridgeman House, Bangor on Dee. The coach house stands in its own private garden which extends to 4300m^2 and is level and at an elevation of 75m AOD. There are a number of trees in and around the site, particularly around the north, west and east boundaries. There are also substantial trees within the site.



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Soils

5.2 The site is reasonably free draining and geological maps indicate sand and gravel deposits over an underlying sandstone lithology.

*NB. This soil assessment is undertaken in situ using visual and manual techniques and is **only** for the purpose of establishing the influence of site soils on tree growth. The assessment **must not** be relied upon to inform any engineering decisions.*

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Tree Survey Findings and Recommendations

Summary of Tree Work

Tree Tag#	Operation	Priority
T5, T7, T11, T18*,	Fell and replace	High
G15	Silvicultural thinning	Moderate
T3, T9, T14	Remove unstable deadwood / Damaged or broken branches	Moderate
TT3, T10, T20	Monitor	Moderate

6.1 All trees are assessed and those requiring work or monitoring or with minor defects are recorded. Full details of the tree inspections are provided in the Arboricultural Inspection Record, along with work recommendations.

6.2 Ensuring that the trees within the site remain in a reasonably safe condition, can normally be achieved through periodic inspections and monitoring of trees that may have progressive defects. In addition to inspections by the owner it is recommended that a professional inspection is undertaken every 24 months or after any storm where wind speeds exceeded gale force 8 or where damage is noted.

6.3 The management of aerial deadwood should be given careful consideration. This provides an important habitat and is an integral part of a woodland or arboreal habitat. Deadwood should only be removed where there is a high value target, such as over buildings, roads and well-used footpaths, seating areas or high use areas and it is large and unstable, in excess of 50mm diameter and / or 1m in length unless it is reasonable robust.

Tree Health & Condition General Assessment

6.4 The trees vary in age and species, other than the trees individually recorded the overall structural condition of the trees is good, and only work is required to identified trees.

6.5 In the main, the physiological condition of the trees is also good and, with the exception of Chalara die-back of ash (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*), no significant pest or diseases were noted.

Management of Ash Dieback and Recovery Planning

6.6 There are two ash trees within the area with indications of Chalara die-back of ash (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). This disease, which is now well-established across the UK, is a fungal pathogen that initially causes dieback of shoots of the affected tree but eventually leads to tree death. Once a tree is infected there is no cure available, and it will progress through stages of dieback until the tree dies. Usually this takes around 4 – 5 years from the initial infection, but this depends to some extent on the size, age and vitality of the tree concerned.