Shields Arboricultural Consultancy
Ref: VTA/PCO/04/25
Date: 14th April 2025

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Visual Tree Condition & Risk Assessment

2 Peel Close

Overton on Dee

Wrexham

LL13 0FB

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Instruction

1.1 Shields Arboricultural Consultancy received instructions from Mr B. Brereton to undertake a tree condition assessment and prepare a report in respect of three trees at 2 Peel Close, Overton on Dee.

1.2 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 4th April 2025 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, followed by a visual examination of the trunk and branch structure to

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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 The site is a residential two-story detached property with a private garden to the rear (west). The trees are situated adjacent to the west boundary of the garden of the property and are part of a group of five mature lime trees. There are no other trees within the garden, however there is an area of woodland to the west of the trees.

5.2 The site is slightly exposed to the south and west. There were no recent changes to the environment evident at the time of the survey.

Soils

5.3 Soils on the site appear to be free draining with no evidence of water logging.

*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.*

Tree Survey Findings and Recommendations

Summary of Tree Work

Tree #	Operation	Priority
T1	Re-pollard	High
T2 & T3	Undertake 30% reduction of tree and reduction of overhanging branches. Remove epicormic and sucker growth.	High
All	Alternatively fell and replace tree as part of the long-term management of this feature. All three trees are in a declining condition with structural issues that can be expected to worsen over time and will require on-going inspection and maintenance. The work required to remediate the current issues with the trees will impact their appearance and further reduce their vitality. The removal of the trees would allow for new planting to be undertaken that would restore the landscape feature in the future. The immediate impact of the tree loss would be mitigated owning to the quite secluded location of the trees and the presence of the adjacent woodland to the west.	High

6.1 All trees have been assessed, and 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. If the trees are retained it is recommended that in addition to inspections by the owner a professional inspection is

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undertaken every 12 months or after any storm where wind speeds exceeded gale force 9 or where damage is noted.

Tree Health & Condition General Assessment

6.4 In the main, other than where noted in the inspection report, the physiological condition of the trees was fair, and no significant pests or diseases were noted.

6.5 Remedial work is required to reduce the risk of failure of the tree trees or parts of the trees. It is also noted that the location of the trees on the west boundary is likely to cause shade over the house and garden in the afternoon and evening. The proposed work would help to reduce this impact. If it is decided that the trees will be removed on the grounds of long-term management of the feature, it may be appropriate to consider the use of a tree species with light foliage and an open crown structure are an alternative. Options could include cut-leaf alder or an ornamental birch.

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Site Plan



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