

Sylva Consultancy
expert arboricultural advice

ARBORICULTURAL REPORT

28 Northcourt Avenue
Reading
Berkshire
RG2 7HA

August 2024

Ref: 24107

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This report is for the sole use of the above-named client and refers to only those trees identified within; use by any other person(s) in attempting to apply its contents for any other purpose renders the report invalid for that purpose

1. INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.1 Instructions have been received from Mr. & Mrs. Wheldon to carry out an inspection on one mature Oak tree growing at 28 Northcourt Avenue, Reading (Site/Tree Location Plan Appendix 1). This report deals with the health and safety of the tree and makes recommendations, where appropriate regarding future management needs.

2. REPORT LIMITATIONS

- 2.1 The tree has been inspected using the Visual Tree Assessment Method (VTA) from ground level only. This is a basic data collection exercise and a record of the tree's condition at the time of surveying. No soil excavations or root samplings have been taken for the purpose of this report.
- 2.2 Due to observations recorded during the May site visit a follow up internal decay investigation with the use of a Resistograph¹ (IML Resi PD400) was carried out on the 19th July 2024.
- 2.3 During the initial inspection non-invasive inspection equipment (sounding hammer and/or metal probe) was used to assess the structural integrity where the visual inspection identified this requirement.
- 2.4 Trees are living organisms whose health and condition can change rapidly. The health, condition and safety of trees should be checked on a regular basis, preferably at least once a year by a person competent in Arboriculture. In addition, it is recommended that trees are assessed at different times of the year as different symptoms can manifest themselves during the different seasons.
- 2.5 The conclusions and recommendations in this report are valid for one year from the date of this report unless otherwise specified. This period of validity may be reduced in the case of any change in conditions to or in close proximity to the tree(s). There are no guarantees of absolute safety in the event of unusual or extreme weather.

3. TREE PROTECTION

- 3.1 The oak tree is subject to Tree Preservation Order (TPO 85/004) and is identified as T1.
- 3.2 A TPO ***prohibits the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction to protected trees or woodlands unless permission has been granted by the LPA.***

¹ Resistograph's measure the drilling resistance of wood. The resistance will correlate with the mechanical properties and aids to interpretation the internal wood quality of a tree. The Resistograph results appended to this report is read from right to left and are scaled in CMS.

4. FINDINGS

T1 Oak (*Quercus robur*)

- 4.1 The oak tree is located in the rear garden of No. 28 Northcourt Avenue. It has been recorded at a distance of 24m from the rear elevation of the property and at a distance of 5m from the boundary with 28a Northcourt Avenue (Photo 1, Appendix 2).
- 4.2 The tree is a mature specimen which has been recorded at a height of 22m. The canopy dimensions are recorded as North – 8.5m; East 8.5m; South (est) 9m and West 8.5m.
- 4.3 Scattered deadwood has been observed throughout the canopy. On the western side of the canopy, at approximately 8m above ground level a site of previous storm damage is present (Photo 2, Appendix 2)
- 4.4 Scarring is present on the upper side of x 1 branch on the southern side of the tree. Further observations recorded that the tree has had branches removed from the main stem (Photo 3, Appendix 3).
- 4.5 Soften wood and cavities were recorded at the base of the tree on the western, northwestern and northeastern side of the main stem (Photos 4, 5 & 6, Appendix 3). A sounding hammer and probe was used to assess these areas. As a result of these observations a further inspection using internal decay equipment was carried out on the 19th July 2024. A total of 5 traces were conducted at ground level.

5. CONCLUSIONS

T1 Oak

- 5.1 Scattered deadwood in excess of 50mm is present throughout the canopy and it is recommended to remove this deadwood within 3 months from the date of this report.
- 5.2 Historical storm damage and scarring is present within the trees canopy. The wounding associated with the storm damage at Photo 2 is judged to have compromised the structural integrity at the branch union due to branches length and end weight loading. Consequently, it is recommended to reduce this branch by to 2m, pruning back to a suitable branch union. It is recommended to carry out this work within 3 months from the date of this report.
- 5.3 Due to the cavities and areas of soften wood observed during the May site visit five Resistograph traces were carried out.
- 5.4 Four traces were conducted at the north, east, south and west axis around the lower stem of the tree. Trace 5 was conducted at a 45° angle. (Appendix 3 Resistograph Traces). All five traces illustrate that resistance to the drill is consistent with the density of wood associated with oak trees. No decay has been recorded within the locations of the traces.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that the following work is carried out:
1. Reduce storm damage branch in Photo 2, Appendix 3 by 2m.
 2. Remove deadwood in excess of 50m.
- 6.2 An application to undertake works to a protected tree must be submitted to Reading Borough Council (RBC) in relation to the pruning of the branch at 6.1, Item 1 with appropriate consent obtained prior to the commencement of work.
- 6.3 The removal of deadwood can occur under the exception criteria within the Tree Preservation Order Legislation. As such an application to undertake works to a protected tree is not required to be submitted to Reading Borough Council. However, it is recommended that RBC are notified of the intended work 5 days in advance.
- 6.4 All pruning works should be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for Tree Works' and in compliance with good practice as promoted by the Arboricultural and Forestry Advisory Group.
- 6.5 In the event that any fungal fruiting bodies are found on or within close proximity to the tree it is recommended that these are positively identified by a competent person as soon as is practically possible.

7. PROTECTED SPECIES

- 7.1 The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, provides statutory protection to birds, bats and other species that inhabit trees. The timing and type of tree work, including hedge pruning must be considered before undertaking any works highlighted within this report.
- 7.2 It is an offence to 'intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat' or to 'damage, destroy or block access to the resting place of any bat' (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2001 as amended). Where works are being carried out and bats are found to be present, or if the tree is a known roost, the Statutory Nature Conservancy Organisation (Natural England 0845 600 3078) must be advised. A license is required to handle or to undertake works which will affect bats.
- 7.3 The planning of management operations must take into consideration protected species that may be present. It is advised that non-urgent work, including work to hedges are not undertaken during the bird nesting season or breeding season ((1st March – 31st August). In addition, it is further recommended that work during the main active growing period of trees is also avoided.

SITE & TREE LOCATION PLAN

SITE LOCATION PLAN

T1, OAK



PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1

View of the oak tree growing in the rear garden



Photo 2

View of the site of previous storm damage

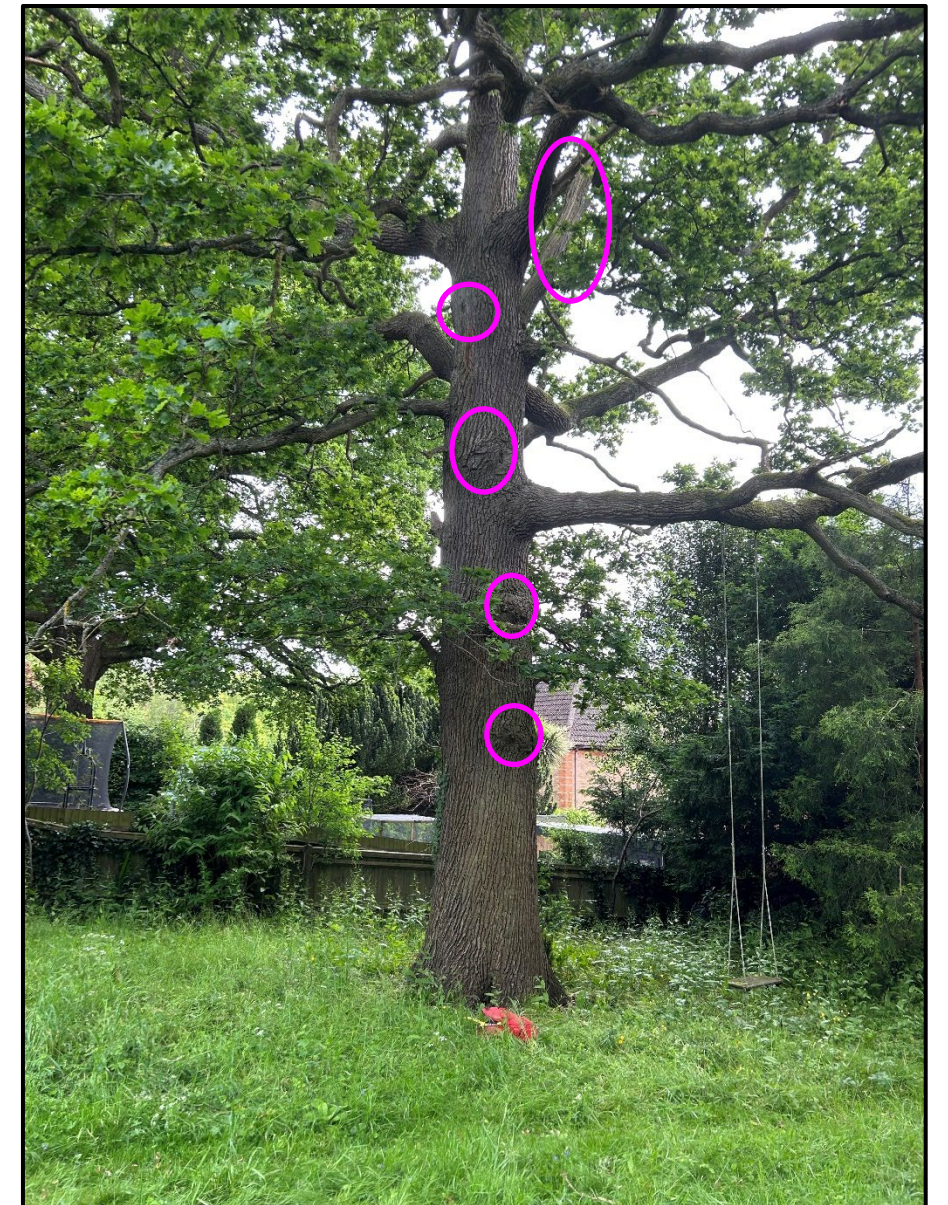


Photo 3

View of sites of previous crown lifting work.
Scarring on upper side of branch on south side at 6m agl



Photo 4

West side of the base.



Photo 5

Northwest side of the base. Cavity recorded.



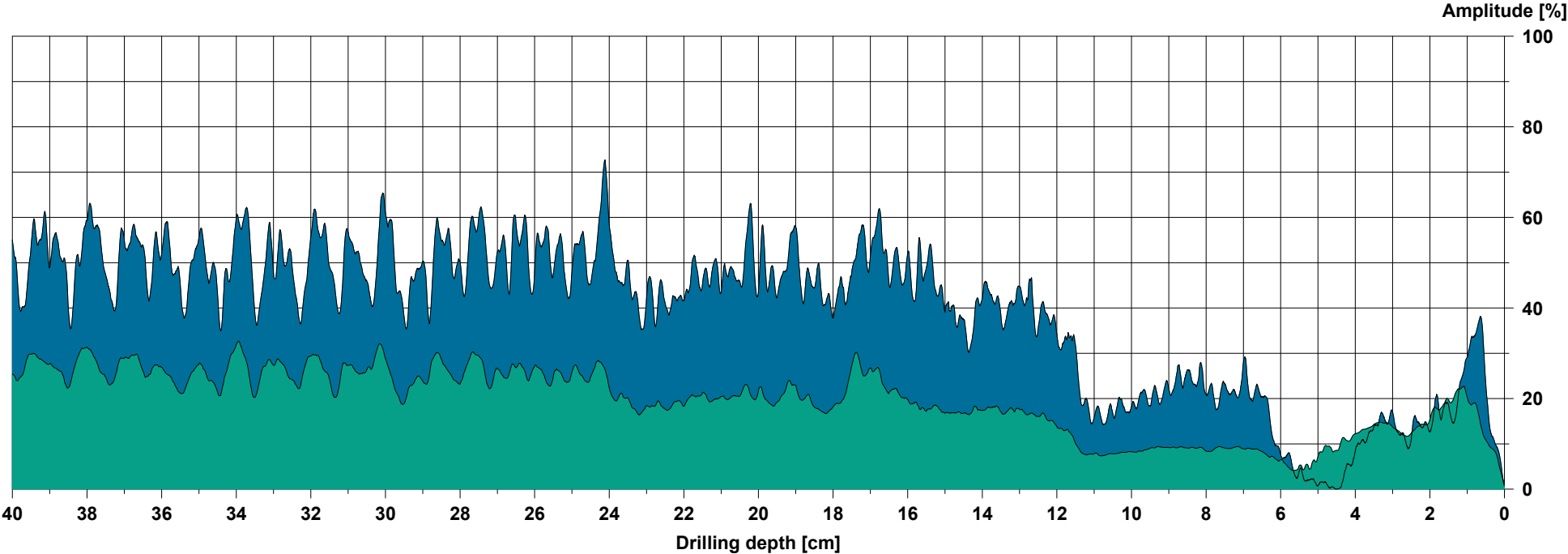
Photo 6

Northeast side of the base. Cavity recorded.

RESISTOGRAPH TRACES

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	28	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	106,00 cm
ID number	: T1	Needle state:	---	Level	: GL
Drilling depth	: 40,00 cm	Tilt	: ---	Direction:	North
Date	: 19.07.2024	Offset	: 85 / 301	Species	: Oak
Time	: 07:43:36	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location	: 28 Northcourt Ave
Feed	: 50 cm/min	Name	: PA		



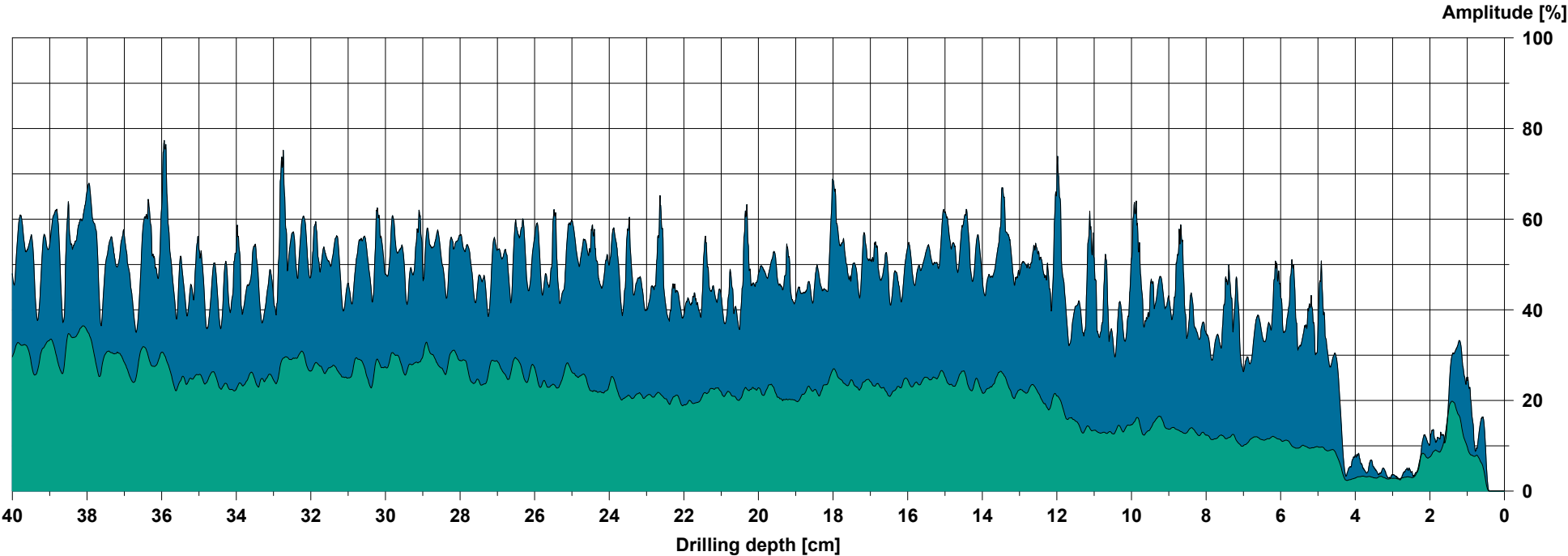
Assessment

Comment

0-6cms sap wood. Good Resistance along the remainder of the trace.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	29	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	106,00 cm
ID number	: T1	Needle state:	---	Level	: GL
Drilling depth	: 40,00 cm	Tilt	: ---	Direction:	East
Date	: 19.07.2024	Offset	: 71 / 312	Species	: Oak
Time	: 07:54:38	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location	: 28 Northcourt Ave
Feed	: 50 cm/min			Name	: PA



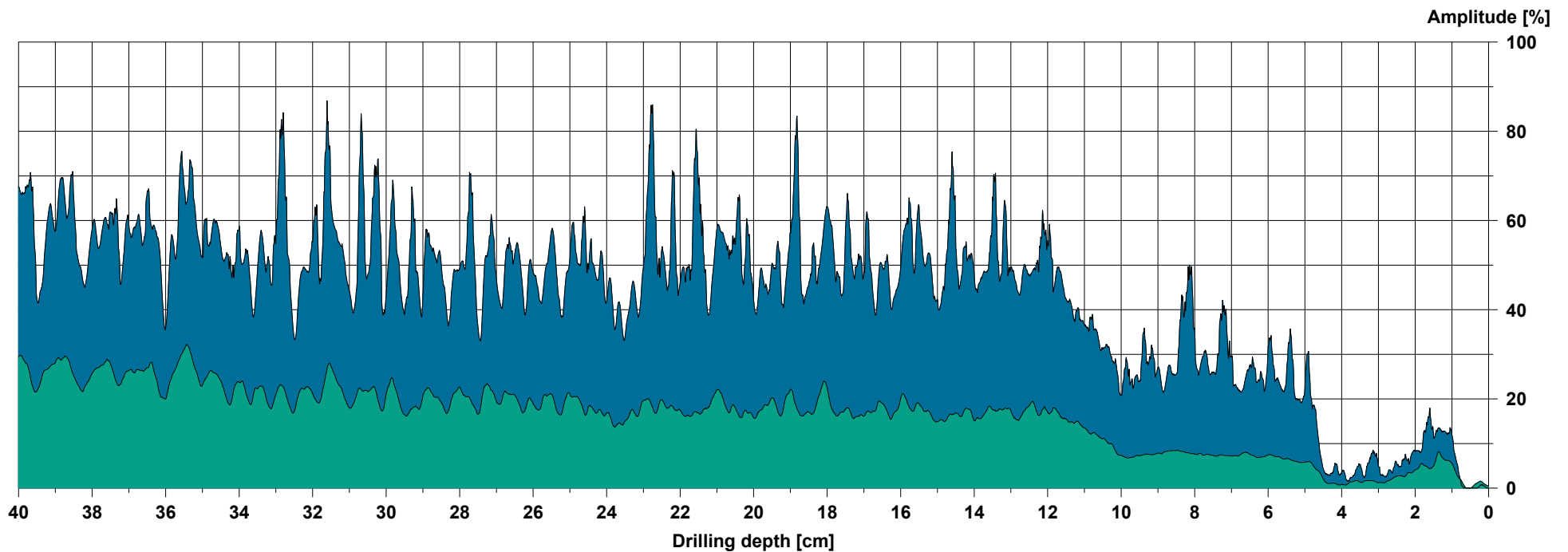
Assessment

Comment

0-4cms sap wood. Good Resistance along the remainder of the trace.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	30	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	106,00 cm
ID number	: T1	Needle state:	---	Level	: GL
Drilling depth	: 40,00 cm	Tilt	: ---	Direction:	South
Date	: 19.07.2024	Offset	: 70 / 340	Species	: Oak
Time	: 08:06:53	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location	: 28 Northcourt Ave
Feed	: 50 cm/min			Name	: PA



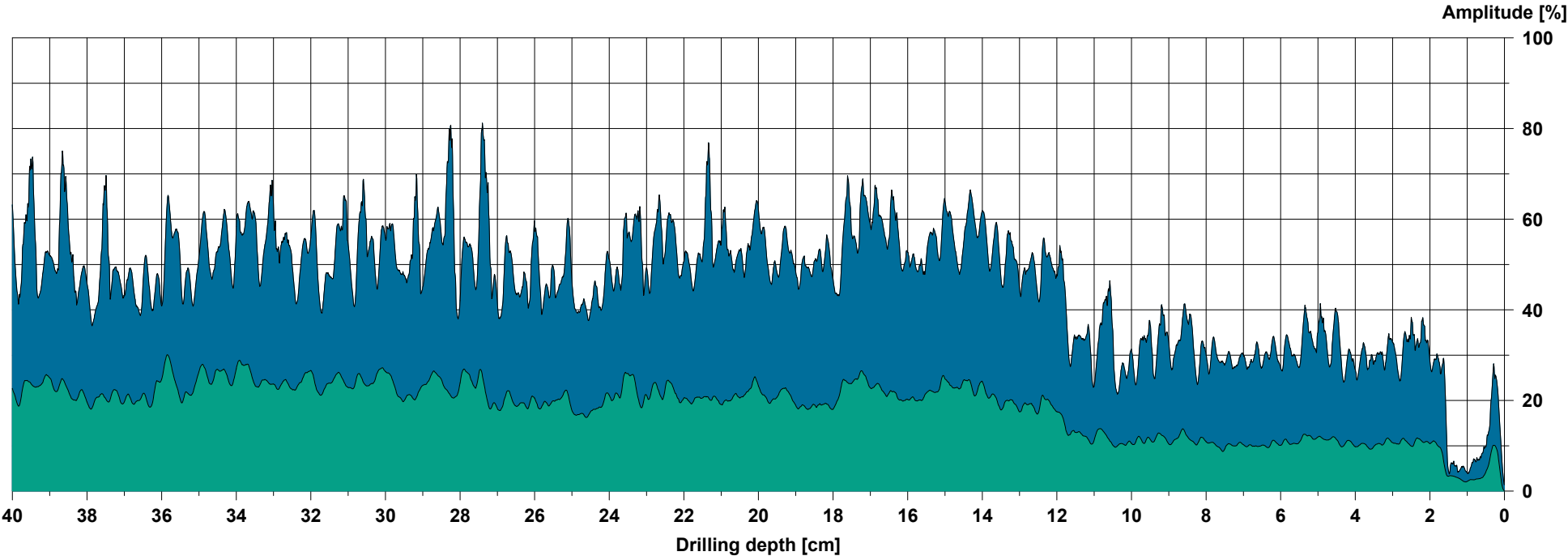
Assessment

Comment

0-4cms sap wood. Good Resistance along the remainder of the trace.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	31	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	106,00 cm
ID number	: T1	Needle state:	---	Level	: GL
Drilling depth	: 40,00 cm	Tilt	: ---	Direction:	West
Date	: 19.07.2024	Offset	: 61 / 282	Species	: Oak
Time	: 08:09:56	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location	: 28 Northcourt Ave
Feed	: 50 cm/min	Name	: PA		



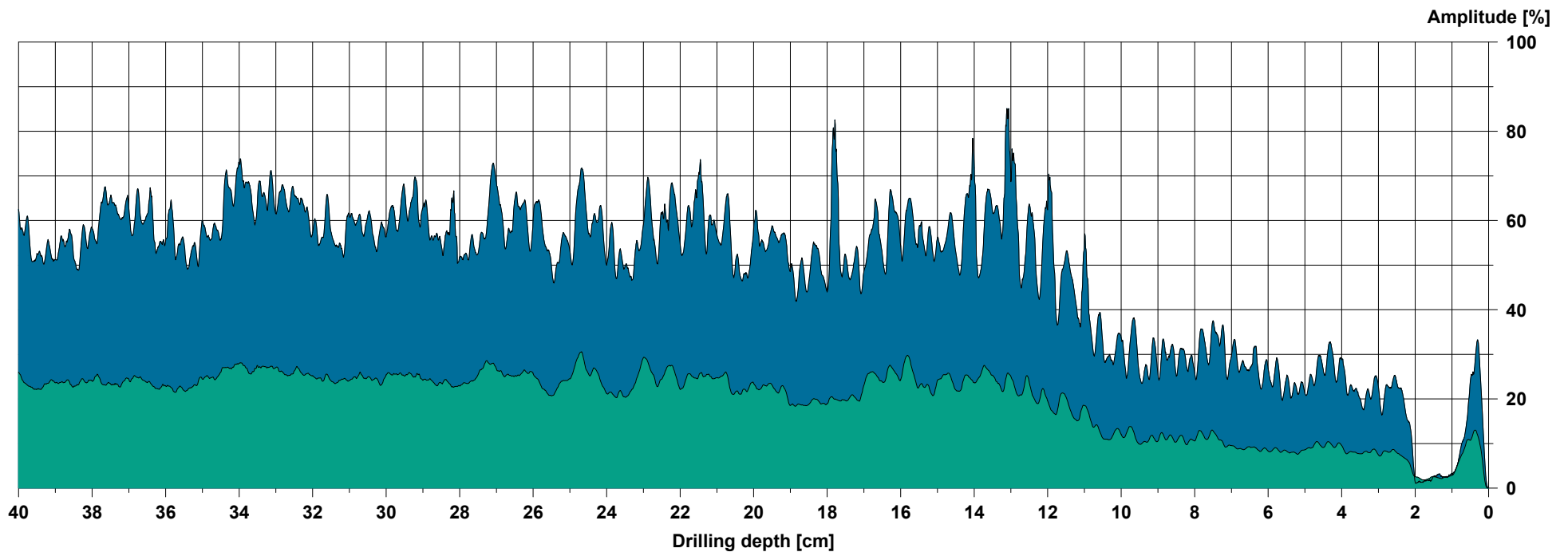
Assessment

Comment

0-2cms sap wood. Good Resistance along the remainder of the trace.

Measuring / object data

Measurement no.:	32	Speed	: 2500 r/min	Diameter:	106,00 cm
ID number	: T1	Needle state:	---	Level	: GL
Drilling depth	: 40,00 cm	Tilt	: ---	Direction:	West
Date	: 19.07.2024	Offset	: 57 / 284	Species	: Oak
Time	: 08:11:26	Avg. curve	: off / off	Location	: 28 Northcourt Ave
Feed	: 50 cm/min	Name	: PA		

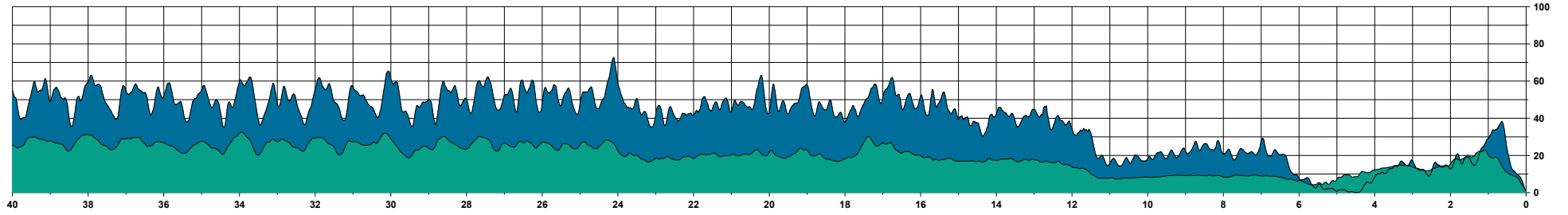


Assessment

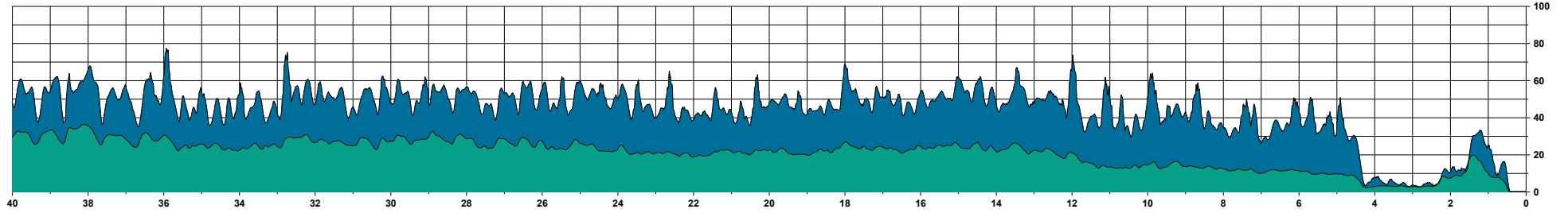
Comment

45 degrees - west side of tree
0-2cms sap wood. Good Resistance along the remainder of the trace.

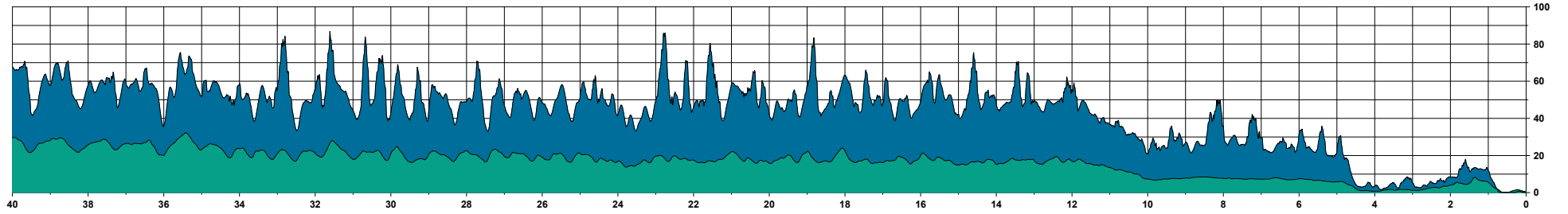
Measurement028.rgp



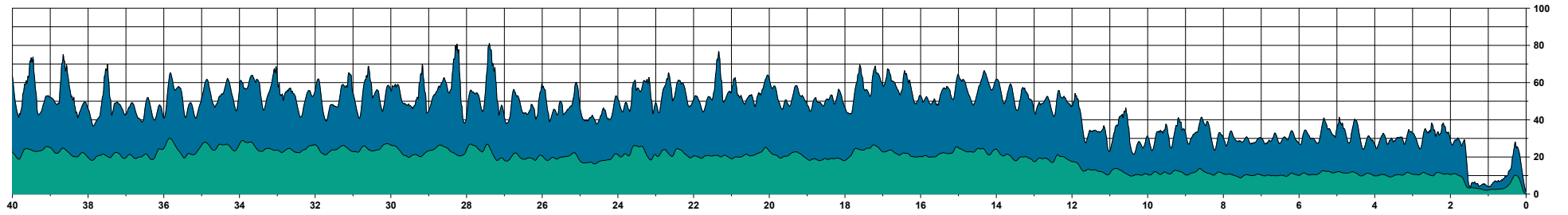
Measurement029.rgp



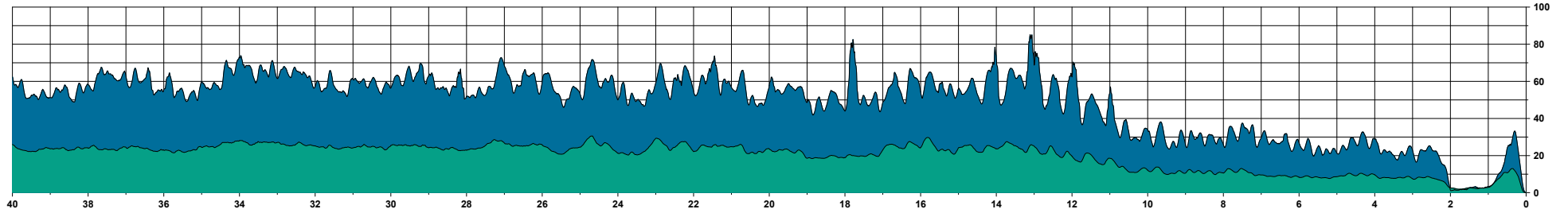
Measurement030.rgp



Measurement031.rgp



Measurement032.rgp



BIBLIOGRAPHY/ GLOSSARY

TREE GLOSSARY

Adventitious:	Describing shoots, roots or other plant organs which develop other than in their normal position of origin (i.e. terminal/axillary buds).
Arboriculture	The cultivation of trees in order to produce individual specimens of the greatest ornament, for shelter, or any other primary purpose other than the production of timber.
Canopy	The uppermost layer of twigs or foliage in a woodland, tree or group of trees.
Chlorotic:	Chlorosis is an atypical colouring, usually yellowish, of foliage; often symptom of mineral nutrient imbalance or inadequate root function.
Crown	The spreading branches and the foliage of the tree supported by trunk(s).
Crown Cleaning:	The removal of dead, dying, crossing, diseased branches.
Crown Lifting:	The removal of lower limbs, generally back to the main stem or pruning lower secondary branches to give more clear space below the crown.
Crown Reduction:	The tree crown is reduced by shortening branches, usually carried out all round the crown or canopy to maintain a balanced shape. Partial reductions may be useful for preventing branches contacting buildings, roofs and guttering
Crown Thinning:	This reduces the density of the tree's crown without changing the shape and form of the tree. Thinning reduces the amount of foliage and allows more light through the canopy or crown. The amount is usually specified as a percentage (%) of the crown.
Dead wood	In some situations dead wood can pose a hazard as it can fall from the tree. However it also provides a range of habitats both when aerial and when on the ground.
Dieback	The death of a part of a tree, usually starting from the branch tips and progressing in stages.
Epicormics:	Pertaining to shoots or roots which are initiated on mature woody stems; shoots may form in this way from dormant buds or they may be adventitious.
Included Bark:	Bark of adjacent parts of the tree (usually in forks, acutely angled forks or basal flutes) which is a face-to-face contact, so that there is a weakness due to the lack of a woody union.
Occlusion:	The overgrowth of a wound with (callus) tissue which is produced subsequently.
Pollard	A tree cut once or repeatedly at a height above which grazing animals can reach the regenerating growth. Usually cut on a semi-regular basis with the whole or part of the crown removed.
Reaction Wood:	Usually laid down in wider annual increments than ordinary wood. Formed to help maintain the angle of a bent or leaning part of a tree by resisting the further bending downwards.

TREE GLOSSARY

Soil compaction	Soil compaction restricts the growth of trees, damages roots and reduce infiltration of water into the soil which over prolonged periods of time will be detrimental to tree health.
Stress	In plant physiology, a condition under which one or more physiological functions are not operating within their optimum range.
Vitality	In tree assessment, an overall appraisal of physiological and biochemical processes, in which high vitality equates with healthy function.
Wound wood:	Wood formed in the vicinity of a wound. Can also be used to describe the occluding tissues around a wound.

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QUALIFICATIONS

QUALIFICATIONS

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I have over 24 years' experience of arboriculture and I am the principal consultant at Sylva Consultancy. I hold the Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma in Arboriculture and the Arboricultural Associations Technicians Certificate. I am a Fellow member of the Arboricultural Association and a professional member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, of which I am also a registered Consultant.

I have the benefit of both a local authority and private practice background and I am frequently instructed to provide advice and assistance relating to trees and the planning process. I am also experienced at compiling expert reports, providing evidence and also appearing as an expert witness at Public Inquires.

I am committed to my continued professional development which is reflected in my regular attendance of seminars and workshops.