



Tree Surveys

BS5837 – Pre Planning – Mortgage – Risk Management & Prediction

VISUAL TREE ASSESSMENT AT EMMBROOK COURT READING



**Prepared for:
Emmbrook Court
South Drive
Lower Earley
Reading
Berkshire RG6 5TZ**

9 August 2024

Ref: PB/VTa-24/07.19

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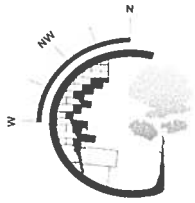
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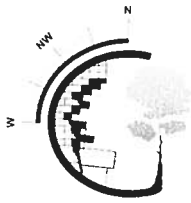
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SUMMARY

A total of 57 individual trees and 12 groups were assessed and the findings are set out in the tree schedule included at Appendix 2.

There is 1 tree that requires work within 3 months, and this is highlighted in red within the schedule. A further 4 trees require work within 12 months, these have been highlighted in yellow on the tree schedule.

The tree's locations are shown on drawing PB/TCS-24/07.19 included at Appendix 1.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instructions

1.1.1 Tree Surveys were instructed by Justine Bowler of Emmbrook Court, South Drive, Reading, RG6 5TZ to conduct a re-survey of the trees within the grounds of Emmbrook Court.

1.1.2 We are further instructed to provide a report commenting upon the structural and physiological condition, health and safety of the trees and to produce a schedule identifying works required as a result of our investigations.

1.2 Background Information

1.2.1 This is our fifth survey of the trees at Emmbrook Court. Surveys have been previously undertaken in October 2011, February 2016, November 2018 and October 2021.

1.2.2 In addition to the full surveys, advanced inspections, including decay detection, were undertaken on 7 March 2022 and 2 May 2023 and the findings and recommendations from these inspections are recorded for information only as footnotes in the complete tree schedule.

1.3 Scope

1.3.1 This report is concerned specifically with the structural characteristics and physiological condition of all the trees on the site. The primary purpose of this report is to establish the physiological and structural condition of the trees within the site curtilage and formulate management proposals in line with industry best practice.

1.3.2 The basic visual tree survey process is a simple data collection process; it followed procedures comparable to those prescribed by Lonsdale, 1999¹, Mattheck and Breloer, 1994² and National Tree Safety Group 2011³ gathering visual information on such things as:

- Tree size, age and health
- Tree species
- External Biomechanical signs
- Previous history of pruning
- External signs of decay
- Field identification of fungi.

¹ Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management, DoE booklet Research for Amenity Trees No. 7, 1999

² The Body Language of Trees, DoE booklet Research for Amenity Trees No. 4, 1994

³ Common Sense Risk Management of Trees. National Tree Safety Group, The Forestry Commission 2011



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1.3.3 Where appropriate the process may then require data from further diagnostic tests such as:

- Maps of decay or cracking
- Vitality testing
- Root investigation
- Pathogen identification.

1.4 Plans and Documents

1.4.1 We have prepared a new tree location plan under license from HMSO (all rights reserved); included at Appendix 1.

1.5 Site Visit

- 1.5.1 The trees were surveyed by Paul Billin, BSc MICFor, on the 16 and 19 July 2024; the conditions were dry and bright with good visibility, and we had full access to the site.
- 1.5.2 We re-tagged, re-surveyed and recorded 57 individual trees and 12 groups within the site. These are listed within the tree schedule attached at Appendix 2, recording new tag numbers and old tree numbers to maintain the continuity of long term monitoring.
- 1.5.3 The information contained in this report covers only those trees that we examined and reflects the condition of those specimens at the time of inspection.
- 1.5.4 The trees were inspected from the ground with the aid of binoculars, no climbing inspections were conducted.
- 1.5.5 The visual tree inspection offers no guarantee, either expressed or implied, of the internal condition of the stem furthermore, no warranty that problems or deficiencies may not arise in the future can be given.
- 1.5.6 Care has been taken to obtain all information from reliable sources, and all data has been verified where possible. However, no guarantee can be given of the accuracy of information provided by others.

2. THE SITE

2.1 Site Description

- 2.1.1 The site consists of a wooded area situated to the west of Emmbrook Court. The topography of the site is generally level with Shinfield Road located on the western boundary. Shinfield Road is a main road serving Reading town centre, has a high occupancy rate, and is in constant use. The western boundary of the site is considered high risk, the rest of the site comprises residential apartments, car parking, recreational areas and landscaped grounds. Access roads and pathways are positioned throughout the site and are considered to be of medium risk.
- 2.1.2 There is limited public access to the site although residents and staff have access to all areas of the grounds.



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- 2.1.3 The site has a wide range of tree species, the majority of which are native to the United Kingdom. The age range varies from juvenile, recently planted trees to mature specimens and monoliths.

3. SURVEY FINDINGS AND OPINION

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The trees are listed within the tree schedule attached at Appendix 2 in numerical order in accordance with the new tree tag numbers; recording also the old tree numbers to maintain the continuity of long term monitoring.
- 3.1.2 The complete list setting out our observations, recommendations and re-inspection period is included at Appendix 2.

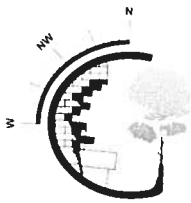
3.2 Findings and Opinion

- 3.2.1 The survey highlighted one tree (T) that requires remedial work to be carried out within 3 months due to the severity of the defects observed; T479, a horse chestnut located adjacent to Shinfield Road that leans heavily to the west.
- 3.2.2 Four trees require remedial work within the next 12 months they are T428, T449, T457 and T492
- 3.2.3 Group (G) G475 is situated along the western boundary that runs alongside the Shinfield Road and, as such, this group poses a high risk. Remedial pruning and deadwood removal has been undertaken recently and it is recommended that this should be continued as appropriate to mitigate any risk.
- 3.2.4 G435 is a mixed group of low-quality trees including ash, sycamore, aspen with laurel and occasional cypress located around an attenuation pond to the southwest of the site. The area is an important ecological resource and has a significant wildlife benefit to the local area and requires sympathetic management to ensure that this important resource continues to support a diverse range of species and habitat. Long term management should consider thinning out the trees, removing poorly formed, diseased or damaged trees, and to let light into pond and allow the establishment of native, shade tolerant woody shrubs. These works will ensure the area remains safe for residents and visitors to the site whilst enhancing the ecological value of the area.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 Trees on this site have been subject to remedial works on a rolling program and this inspection has identified further works that are required in the interest of safety and, or good arboricultural practice.



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- 4.1.2 The trees on site, as well as acting as a visual and audible screen to the busy road to the west, also have important biodiversity and ecological benefits. Managing the site by carrying out remedial work recommended and continuing with an inspection regime will balance the owner's liability to visitors to the site and the valuable resource that the trees provide.
- 4.1.3 The decline of trees can take many years before the tree becomes a hazard and require remedial measures but the decline of the physiological condition of the trees should be monitored to ensure that any decline is not accelerated by unknown factors such as fungal pathogens or environmental influences such as drought or flooding as this may cause trees in high-risk areas to become hazardous.
- 4.1.4 Horse chestnut leaf-mining moth has spread rapidly since it was first identified as present in Britain from Wimbledon in 2002. The effect on the appearance of horse chestnut trees in late summer can be profound. Horse chestnut leaf-miner is a small moth with caterpillars that feed inside horse chestnut leaves, causing brown or white blotch mines to develop between the leaf veins. Heavily affected trees can drop their leaves early, it has been found that this has almost no effect on the growth rate or health of trees, although conkers may be slightly smaller.
- 4.1.5 Two trees were identified with bacterial wetwood, also known as slime flux; this is a common disease that affects the trunks, branches, and roots of many trees. It's caused by bacteria or yeast fungi that enter the tree through wounds. The bacteria produce gases like methane and nitrogen, which create a slimy wood. The slime can be foul-smelling, especially in the summer, and can stain the bark. When dry, the stain can appear gray, pale brown, or yellow. While bacterial wetwood usually isn't fatal to a tree, it can contribute to plant decline, especially in older trees. However, affected trees will usually overcome the problem themselves.
- 4.1.6 The ash trees within the site are of mostly fair condition with no advanced signs of ash dieback however, ash dieback is present, and the condition of the ash trees should be monitored for signs of infection and decline. Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is a fungus which originated in Asia. Its introduction to Europe about 30 years ago has devastated the European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) because our native ash species did not evolve with the fungus, and this means it has no natural defence against it. The fungus overwinters in leaf litter on the ground, particularly on ash leaf stalks. It produces small white fruiting bodies between July and October which release spores into the surrounding atmosphere. These spores can blow tens of miles away. They land on leaves, stick to and then penetrate into the leaf and beyond. The fungus then grows inside the tree, eventually blocking its water transport systems, causing it to die.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Works Required

In preparing our recommendations consideration has also been given to the amenity and screening value provided by the trees.



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- 5.1.1 One tree is recommended for attention within 3 months, highlighted in red in the tree schedule in Appendix 2, and summarised below:

Tree No	Species	Recommendations
T479	Horse chestnut	Reduce end weighting of limbs adjacent to road

- 5.1.2 The survey highlighted four trees recommended for remedial work within the next twelve 12 months; their details are set out in the complete tree schedule included at Appendix 2, and summarised below:

Tree No	Species	Recommendations
T428	Sycamore	Crown lift south side to 4m AGL, and height reduction as previously
T449	Oak	Remove deadwood greater than $\varnothing > 175\text{mm}$, top stem west 11m AGL
T457	Lime	Prune to remove basal suckers
T492	Lime	Clear undergrowth around stem to facilitate future inspection

Key to abbreviations: AGL = Above ground level diam. = diameter m = metre

- 5.1.3 The trees are to be re-inspected in winter 2026. This will enable the trees to be inspected at a different time in their annual development, particularly inspection of the scaffold limbs and branch structure.
- 5.1.4 All trees on site should be inspected after any significant weather event such as periods of high winds or heavy rain to ensure the safety of site occupants.

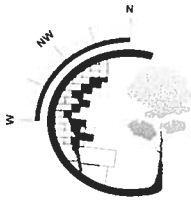
6. Statutory designations

- 6.1 Prior to undertaking any tree works it is essential that the works manager contact the tree team at the Local Planning Authority to ascertain whether there are any Tree Preservation Orders or other restrictions upon the trees.

N.B. Consent is not required for the felling of dead/dangerous trees, but a Tree Works notification is required prior to felling.

7. Arboricultural Standards

- 7.1 All tree works recommended should be done in accordance with British Standard BS 3998:2010. *Tree work-Recommendations* and should be undertaken by a properly qualified and experienced tree contracting company. It is advised that they should carry public and products liability insurance of £5 million cover.



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- 7.2 Trees are dynamic structures and therefore subject to many changes. Wind loading, if sufficiently high enough, can blow over the healthiest of trees. Where decay or root structure is compromised there is an increased risk of failure and therefore regular inspection is recommended.

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