



Connick Tree Consultants

Specialist in Arboricultural Assessment

ARBORICULTURAL REPORT Individual Tree Assessments

OUR REFERENCE	225974/RT
CLIENT	Mr Gary Leach
SITE	23 Mandeville Close, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire. RG30 4JT
REPORT BY	Mr Richard Tilling
SURVEY BY	Mr Richard Tilling
DATE	20 th November 2025
DATE OF INSPECTION	13 th November 2025
DATE OF NEXT INSPECTION	November 2029

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INSTRUCTION

Connick Tree Consultants were instructed by Mr Gary Leach to undertake a ground level visual assessment upon two Pedunculate Oaks (*Quercus robur*) which are situated in the front and rear of 23 Mandeville Close and provide an analysis of the findings.

The principal objective of the survey was to assess the overall condition of the Oaks and advise on any remedial action to ameliorate any risks present to people and surrounding infrastructure.

1.2 SCOPE OF REPORT

The inspections were conducted using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) method (Mattheck, C and Breloer, H, 1994) examining the external features of the individual tree. All measurements, proportions and assessments of age are approximate, except where stated.

The report and recommendations relate to the condition of the trees and their surroundings at the time of inspection only.

The conclusions and recommendations in this report are only valid for one year. Any changes to the site as it stands at present will invalidate this report, e.g., building of extensions, excavation works, importing of soils, extreme weather events etc.

1.3 SUMMARY OF LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

A considerable body of case law has established that, in order to be in a position to foresee and indeed to prevent harm arising from a tree failure, it is necessary to subject the tree or trees in question to 'regular inspection,' with this inspection undertaken by someone competent both to identify any defects present and to interpret their significance for public safety.

Within the United Kingdom the landowner in which a tree stands upon has a duty in relation to the health and safety of those on or near the land. This duty is covered by both civil and criminal law and would leave the owner responsible for any liabilities arising from the falling of a tree or branch either financially or through prosecution (NTSG, 2011).

The breach of or infringement of this duty can lead to potential liabilities to pay damages within civil law under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 and 1984 or to the risk of prosecution within criminal law under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

1.4 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

I have based this report on my site observations and investigations and have come to conclusions in the light of qualifications gained and experience obtained whilst working in the field of arboriculture. I have qualifications and practical experience in arboriculture and list the details of this in Appendix II.

1.5 LIMITATIONS AND USE OF COPYRIGHT

All rights in this report are reserved. No part of it may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means without our written permission. Its contents and format are for the exclusive use of the person, firm or company to whom it is addressed (and that of any other person, firm or company whose interest was disclosed to us prior to its preparation). It may not be sold, lent out or divulged to any third party not directly involved in this situation without the written consent of Connick Tree Care.

Trees are living organisms whose health and condition can change rapidly and all trees, even healthy ones, are at risk from unpredictable climatic and man-made events. This report and recommendations relate to the condition of the trees and their surroundings at the time of inspection only.

DISCLAIMER: I have no connection with any of the parties involved in this situation that could influence the opinions expressed in this report.

2 ARBORICULTURAL SURVEY

2.1 SITE VISIT

Connick Tree Consultants were instructed by Mr Leach to undertake a ground level visual assessment upon two mature Pedunculate Oak trees located to the north and south of the property (rear garden and front driveway) and provide an analysis of the findings.

The principal objective of the survey was to assess the structural and physiological condition of the trees in relation to their surroundings and advise on any remedial action to ameliorate the risk they could represent to people and surrounding properties during adverse weather conditions.

2.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located to the south east of Tilehurst in a Close accessed from New Lane Hill.

The Oak trees are located in a 1960s development of detached houses built on the slope of a hill.

The trees that are the subject of this report are mature Oak specimens, growing in a loose row with further mature trees to the north and smaller ornamental trees within the gardens of neighbouring properties.

2.3 SURVEY SUMMARY

Oak Tree T1

Tree ID	Tree Tag No	Species	Type	Measurements	Ownership	Survey Notes	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Overall Condition	Inspection Limitations	Inspected	Inspection Due	Google Maps	Recommendations
T001	Not tagged	Pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	Tree	Height (m): 16 - 20 Crown Radius (m): 9 DBH (mm): 910 Life Stage: Early Mature	Owned by the estate.	Growing on steep banking to rear of property. 5.5m from property. Low retaining wooden wall to south of tree within 4m, low brick and concrete retaining wall to north of stem within 2m. Historic concrete footpath to east of stem. Remaining area laid to lawn. No fungal fruiting bodies evident around stem base, buttress growth dominant to east and south. Epicormic growth to 6m on stem, frithy whiskers and smaller sub 1cm diameter growth to 1m in length. Occluded stem wounds and occluding wounds to 7m. Crown has lost open grown canopy outline through historic crown raising operations. Crown over sails adjacent property and subject property. Sporadic deadwood throughout crown, some of the smaller diameter deadwood appears unsecure Healthy leaf and buds of good density, no apical dieback evident. Overall symmetrical canopy with lower limbs extending to 3.5m above ground level to west Potentially historically topped leaving lateral limbs intact, this would have been over 20 years ago. Adjacent trees to north are historic heavy reductions with approximately 10m regrowth evident. Summer branch drop and weight of a fully laden crown must be considered when attempting to retain a valuable asset in an exposed location with a high target	Good	Fair	Good	None	13-Nov-2025	13-Nov-2029	https://www.google.com/maps/search/?ap=1&query=51.44773949935567,-1.0275370201284144	Epicormic growth to be retained for development of secondary crown. Reduce vertical branches by upto 3m back to established secondary growth and lateral extended limbs by 4m using drop crotch pruning. Aim of pruning is to develop a more compact crown that can withstand future adverse weather events Timescale: 13-Nov-2026 (1 Year)



Photograph 1: Showing subject Oak T1 to centre of image

The Oak tree grows in the rear garden of the property on sloping ground formed into terraced levels. The stem of the tree lies approximately 6 metres from the rear of the property.

A low retaining wooden wall lies to the south within 4 metres of the stem; a low brick and concrete retaining wall lies to the north within 2 metres from the stem. A concrete footpath and steps lie to the east. The remaining garden is laid to grass.

The base of the tree is visible to the north, east, south and west and fully accessible which allowed a detailed inspection to take place around the soil/stem interface of the tree. The Oak has buttress growth dominant to the south and east with no sign of fungal fruiting bodies.

The trunk was sounded with a light weight nylon tipped mallet. Soundings were conducted from the base of the stem up to approximately 3 m in height. Delamination and sapwood decay can be picked up externally as a dull resonance from the mallet impacting on the outer stem.

There was no low resonance picked up in the stem from ground level to 3 metres in height. The stem appeared sound with no visible cavities. Although a number of occluded stem wounds are present to approximately 7 metres above ground level.

The tree is a single stemmed specimen with a stem girth of 91 cm and reaches 17 metres in height, measured from the ground level.

The lower stem has epicormic growth to a height of 6 metres, formed of multiple 'frithy' whiskers and small sub 1 cm diameter growth of up to 1 metre in length. The historic removal of lower limbs has

altered the form of the Oak from an open grown, low, wide canopy to a more drawn up, woodland tree form.

The crown of the subject Oak tree was viewed from the north, east, south and west. The crown could be assessed due to multiple viewing angles. The overall appearance is of a symmetrical canopy with the extended lower limbs dropping to around 3.5 metres above ground level on the western side (due to topography of the site). The crown over sails the adjacent property (No.25) and that of number 23.

Overall, the crown appears healthy with leaf and buds to the branch tips and of a normal colour and crown density. No apical dieback was evident in the upper crown but there is sporadic deadwood throughout the inner crown.

There is some evidence to suggest that the crown has been 'topped' in it's history. Although this cannot be confirmed.

The Oak tree is growing in an exposed location with further Oak trees to the north and south of a similar age but with smaller heights, exhibiting heavily pruned crowns.

Oak Tree T2

Tree ID	Tree Tag No	Species	Type	Measurements	Ownership	Survey Notes	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Overall Condition	Inspection Limitations	Inspected	Inspection Due	Google Maps	Recommendations
T002	Not tagged	Pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	Tree	Height (m): 14 Crown Radius (m): 7 DBH (mm): 810 Life Stage: Early Mature	Owned by the estate.	No fungal fruiting bodies evident around stem base, no low resonance within first 3m of stem. Block driveway appears to have been extended slightly to north west. Sloped ground to footpath. Frithy whiskers of epicormic growth on lower stem to 4m above ground level, growth has been trimmed off . Occluded wound on north west stem at 3m, stem bias to east at this point, possible site of historic limb removal. Crown break from 5m, lower limbs pruned back on north, east, west and away from street light to the south west. Dense canopy with epicormic on upper limb surfaces, minor apical dieback throughout upper crown. Central upper crown exhibits evidence of historic topping or storm damage. Crown form natural domed appearance slightly forshortened by pruning. Crown oversails driveway of 2 properties. Properties extended 20 yrs and 30yrs ago approximately, crown could be managed to meet owners requirements and retain an aesthetically balanced tree	Good	Good	Good	None	13-Nov-2025	13-Nov-2029	https://www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=51.44755190963105,-1.0275172461061786	Retain top height and reduce lateral branches by between 1 and 2 metres by drop crotch pruning to retain compact crown form Timescale: 13-Nov-2026 (1 Year)



Photograph 2: Showing subject Oak T2 to centre of image

The Oak tree grows in the front garden of the property adjacent to 2 block paved driveways. The ground gently slopes from the property to the highway. The stem of the tree lies approximately 4 metres from the frontage of number 23 Mandeville Close and the neighbouring property at number 25.

The Oak tree is growing in a small grass area. The base of the tree is visible to the north, east, south and west and fully accessible which allowed a detailed inspection to take place around the soil/stem interface of the tree. The Oak has a lower stem flare but no significant buttress growth. There were no signs of fungal fruiting bodies on the lower stem.

The trunk was sounded with a light weight nylon tipped mallet. There was no low resonance picked up in the stem from ground level to 3 metres in height. The stem appeared sound with no visible cavities. An occluded stem wound is present at 3 metres above ground level to the north west.

The tree is a single stemmed specimen with a stem girth of 81 cm and reaches 14 metres in height, measured from ground level.

The lower stem has epicormic growth to a height of 4 metres, formed of multiple 'frithy' whisker clumps which have been pruned from the tree. The form of the Oak is of an open grown specimen.

The stem exhibits an eastern bias at 3 metres around the site of the stem wound, possibly a site of an historic limb loss.

The crown of the subject Oak tree was viewed from the north, east, south and west. The crown could be assessed due to multiple viewing angles. The overall appearance is of a symmetrical canopy. The crown over sails the driveways of the adjacent property and that of number 23.

The crown breaks from 5 metres above ground level, lower limbs have been recently pruned back on the north, east and west lateral branches and around the street light to the south west.

Overall, the canopy is dense with epicormic growth on the upper limb surfaces. There is minor apical die back throughout the upper crown. The central upper crown exhibits signs of historic 'topping' or storm damage.

The crown form is natural with a domed shape with a slightly foreshortened appearance due to pruning.

The Oak tree is growing in a semi-exposed location with further Oak trees to the north.

3 DECAY DETECTION

Decay in trees can be of a concern in relation to structural stability and the risk of damage to property. Significant decay can eventually weaken stems, branches or roots enough to increase the chance of mechanical failure. Decay is a natural process and commonly occurs in trees without causing structural weakness. It is therefore inappropriate to regard a tree as hazardous merely because decay has been identified.

It is important to be able to evaluate the tree to determine the extent of the decay so that informed management decisions can be made. This will ensure that hazardous trees are identified correctly, and relatively safe trees are not removed or inappropriately pruned.

The inspection of the subject trees involved sounding the stem with a nylon mallet. If low resonance wood is located, the survey process can recommend an invasive micro drilling or non-invasive Tomography assessment to determine the depth and potential impact of any decay.

During the inspection no low resonance wood was picked up within the lower stems. No invasive investigations were recommended or undertaken due to the results of the soundings, visual investigations and lack of fungal fruiting bodies on the trees.

3.1 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) T1



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) T2

Image 5



Image 6



Image 7



Image 8

The subject Oak trees historically grew in the grounds of Calcot Rise (**Map 1**), subdivision led to the trees being adjacent to Cherry Close (**Map 2**), with the area subsequently being developed in the 1960s into Mandeville Close (**Map 4**). The trees formed a linear boundary adjacent to a land drain which has subsequently disappeared. The images in **Appendix II** show the historic maps from the site along with an aerial photograph showing the Close post development.

The location of the subject trees is clearly visible and helps establish a timeline for the trees indicating the encroachment of development and into the recent history of the site where over the last 30 years both 23 and 25 Mandeville Close have extended the properties to encroach towards Oaks T1 and T2.

The proximity of the trees to the properties can be seen in **Images 1 & 2** for T1 and **Images 5,6,7 & 8** for T2. Further disturbance has occurred for the trees where steps and terracing have been formed by T1 in the rear (**Images 1 & 3**) and by the extension of block paving to the frontage (**Images 7 & 8**) for T2.

Both Oak trees were able to develop on a sloped site with mutual support from neighbouring trees forming a strip along the historic ditch boundary which has become fragmented over time. The remaining trees show signs of multiple pruning operations from limb removal to heavy crown pruning. The majority of this work would appear to have been undertaken during or post development of the Close in the 1960s.

Reading Borough Councils website shows a Tree Preservation Order (**TPO 24/01**) at the property covering '**T3**' which does not specify a species, or exact location. The information viewed was a Word document titled 'Tree Preservation Order Directory.' T3 is explained in the document as an individual tree (**T**) but is stated covering three trees (**3**).

Without further information this is confusing. Only 2 trees are present at the property and the details and TPO map are not viewable on the council website. It is assumed that the tree preservation order was put on to protect the oak trees during a development application for one of the property extensions. This would tie in with the 20-30 year date of the extension developments at number 23 and 25 Mandeville Close, the '**01**' normally referring to the year the order was put in place (2001). Prior to this date, it appears the trees were not covered by a Tree Preservation Order. Therefore, no applications would have been necessary for the historic heavy pruning evident on the Oaks.

Clarification of the Tree Preservation Order should be sought to ensure that it is correct and conforms to the present government guidelines.

The rooting area of the Oaks has been developed within and disturbed to some extent over the years. Despite the encroachments, the lower stems are free from major defects, fungal fruiting bodies or bark wounding.

The lower stems of both Oaks have developed, epicormic growth. The development of the epicormic growth is not always a reaction to stress but can be the early development of a lower secondary crown that develops as a redundancy measure as the functions of an older tree decline and the tree 're-trenches' into old age. (**Images 2, 3 & 5**) Unfortunately, the lower stem growth has been removed over successive pruning operations and what has developed is young or juvenile, requiring years to develop into a new secondary crown.

The permitted historic pruning of Oak tree 1 has allowed an unnatural form to develop through pruning with an exposed, over extended upper crown with a clear lower stem which has reduced the trees ability to reduce wind loading through mass dampening.

The permitted historic pruning of Oak tree 2 has allowed a poor crown form to develop with foreshortened lower branches disrupting the natural flow of the crown, the random nature of the permitted pruning means that a high value amenity tree looks aesthetically displeasing from a number of directions when viewed from the highway. (**Images 6 & 7**).

The permitted developments have allowed a perceived nuisance to be exacerbated in the form of over sail, leaf and acorn drop along with increased targets persisting within close proximity of the tree crowns.

With an increase in global temperatures, intense summer heat, more regular drought conditions and intense summer downpours there is a potential for what used to be unforeseen to increasingly be seen as foreseeable.

Where historically summer branch drop and summer branch weight were of a negligible concern, the summers of 2024 and 2025 have been concerning to me due to an increase of seemingly healthy Oak trees under my personal inspection regimes losing limbs in conditions matching the criteria for Summer branch drop and in summer storms. I would therefore look at this potential when making my recommendations.

4 CONCLUSION

The subject Pedunculate Oak trees are growing as an established, historical boundary ditch feature. The overall crown appearance of the trees is normal.

The trees appears healthy and vigorous with no fungal infections.

The historic pruning and encroachment of development has increased targets and reduced storm resilience for T1.

As a precautionary measure and to ensure the oak trees can remain safe and aesthetically pleasing for all, pruning work is advised.

On completion of the visual tree assessment, it is believed that overall, the trees is in a Good physiological condition and a Good structural stem condition with Fair/Good structural crowns.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Pedunculate Oak T1

It is recommended that the entire vertical crown structure is reduced by up to 3 metres, removing branches back to established secondary growth. Lateral extended limbs are to be reduced by the 'drop crotch' pruning technique by up to 4 metres with a view to reduce the overall crown weight, develop a manageable compact crown whilst reducing the sail over the adjacent properties without loss of shape.

All lower stem epicormic growth and 'frithy' epicormic whiskers are to be retained and allowed to develop into a secondary crown over time.

T1 should be pruned within 12 months from the date of this report.

Tree T1 should be re-inspected in 4 years from the date of this report if the prescribed work is undertaken or 2 years from the date of this report if the work is not undertaken.

Pedunculate Oak T2

It is recommended that the top height of the Oak crown is retained and individual branches outside of the crown silhouette are pruned into the silhouette, removing only tertiary branches.

The lateral branches forming the crown are to be reduced by 'drop crotch' pruning removing between 1 and 2 metres to re-establish the natural flowing crown form whilst clearing the properties and street lighting.

T2 should be pruned within 24 months from the date of this report.

Tree T2 should be re-inspected in 4 years from the date of this report.

It is also recommended that clarification of the TPO is sought to correctly identify which trees are protected.

6 TREES SUBJECT TO STATUTORY CONTROLS

Before undertaking any work to any of the trees, statutory controls will need to be checked. A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) covers the trees, no works can be undertaken without the relevant statutory processes being followed.

7 REFERENCES and BIBLIOGRAPHY

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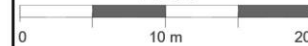
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APPENDIX I TREE LOCATION PLAN

Mr G Leach
23 Mandeville Close, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4JT

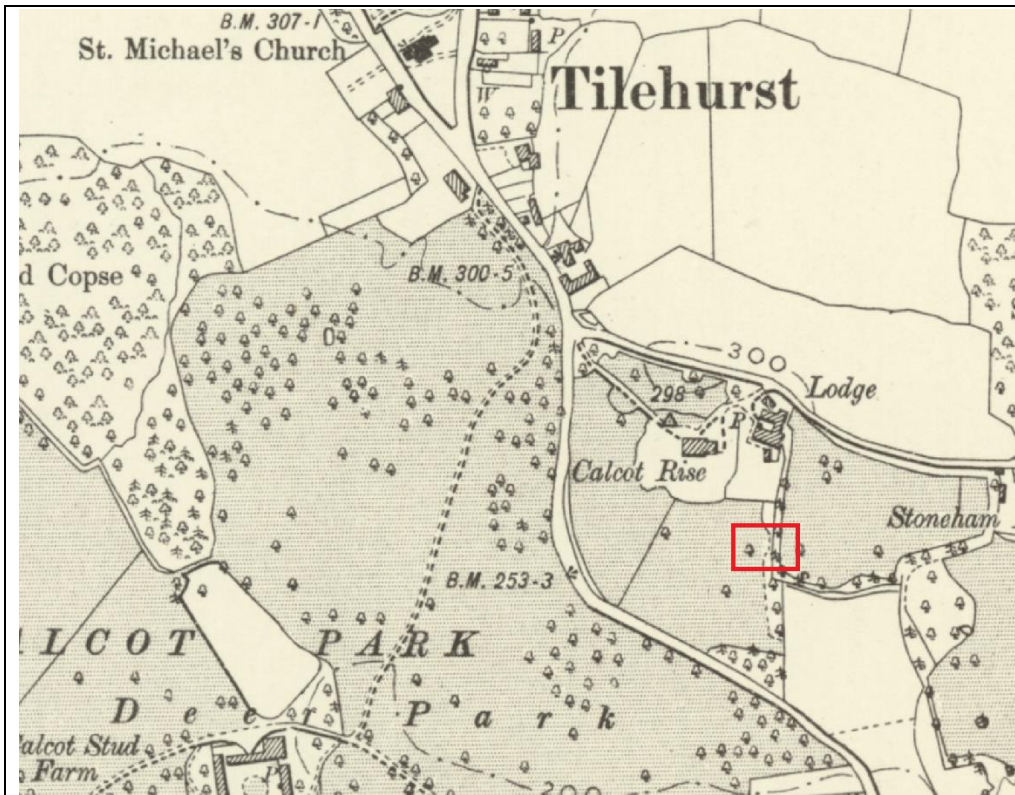
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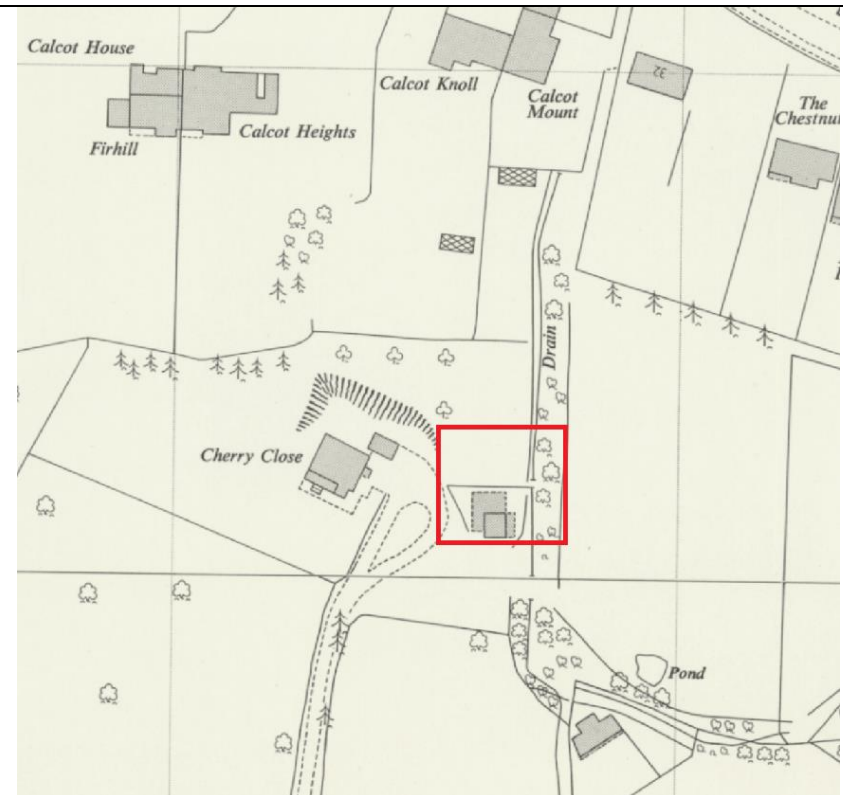


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APPENDIX II HISTORIC SITE DATA



Map 1 OS 6 inch 1888-1915



Map 2 OS 1/2500 1944-1974



Map 3 OS 1/2500 1944-1974 with Google Earth overlay



Map 4 RAF Aerial photograph 1967

APPENDIX III

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Richard Tilling

1. QUALIFICATIONS

Subject	Date
Fakkop Tomography training	April 2025
Vet Cert training	October 2023
Microdrill Training	November 2019
Getting to grips with subsidence	March 2019
Undertaking Aerial Inspections	February 2019
Lantra Accredited Professional Tree Inspection	May 2010 - Refreshed May 2018 and May 2025
CMI Level 3 certificate in First Line Management	July 2017
NPTC Level 3 Certificate of Competence in the Thorough Examination of Arboricultural Equipment	April 2006 – Refreshed May 2016
IOSH Training - Managing Safely	April 2013
Higher National Diploma in Arboriculture	September 1992 – June 1995

2. CAREER SUMMARY

Completed a Higher National Diploma course in 1995, with work placements in Guildford Borough Council's Arboricultural Department, National Trust Winkworth Arboretum and 12 months with an independent Tree Surgery company.

Working in Tree Surgery from 1995 until 2017, from groundsman through to Contract Management. Managing contracts including Sutton, Bromley, Bexley, Richmond upon Thames, Hounslow and Islington.

Undertaking tree surveys of Camden Councils tree stock, 'dead, dying and dangerous' surveying for The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Council, Health and Safety surveying for Transport for London (Southern) and climbing bat roost inspection surveying for Chiswick House and Gardens.

I joined Connick Tree Care in January 2018 as an Arboricultural Consultant undertaking individual tree assessments, Veteran tree management, Sonic Tomography and Micro drill assessment, health and safety surveying, Climbing inspections, Insurance or Mortgage surveys and woodland inspection.