



ARBORICULTURAL REPORT



Common Ground Estates – The Monastery, Carmelite Drive, Reading

Tree Condition Report

August 2026

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Tree Assessments UK was commissioned by Common Ground Estates to undertake an Assessment of an Ash tree (T19 as designated by TPO) at **The Monastery, Carmelite Drive, Reading** (defined as the “site”).
- 1.2 Inspection was undertaken by Lee Garner on the 16th June 2026 & 5th August 2026.
- 1.3 One Ash tree was inspected and prescribed for aerial inspection of a cavity with a fungal

ACTION PRIORITY	Immediate - Urgent	0
	High -Within 3 months	1
	Medium Within 6 months	0
	Low -Within 12 months	0
	Low - Within 2 years	0

- 1.5 Next inspection – **N/A**
- 1.6 Tree Protection (Reading Brough Council) – The Ash Tree is covered by a TPO 129/07 designated as T19.
- 1.7 A mature twin-stemmed Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) was assessed within a communal woodland area, in proximity to the public highway and internal pedestrian footpaths. Although the tree is in good physiological condition, its structural condition is considered fair, with a significant cavity identified within one of the principal stems. Previous identification of *Inonotus hispidus* prompted further investigation, with four Resistograph readings,

supplemented by probing and sounding, confirming extensive internal decay and hollowing. Residual wood thickness was recorded at approximately 100–120mm either side of the cavity, representing a substantial reduction in the sound cross-sectional area of the affected stem.

- 1.8 The affected stem supports a significant proportion of the crown, and failure would have the potential to impact the adjacent highway and internal footpaths. While crown reduction could reduce loading and provide a short-term reduction in risk, it would not address the underlying decay or prevent continued deterioration and may introduce additional physiological stress. Considering the extent of decay, the structural significance of the affected stem and the consequences of potential failure, **removal is considered the most appropriate and proportionate long-term risk management option.**
- 1.9 Recommendation - Fell Ash tree to ground level (within 3 months - October 2026)
- 1.10 A Tree Preservation Order Application will need to be made to Reading Borough Council.

2 Instruction & Purpose

- 2.1 Tree Assessments UK were instructed by Common Ground Estates to undertake internal decay detection and aerial inspection of a specific cavity and report upon the findings and mitigation recommendations, where required, of T19, a mature Ash tree located at Carmelite Drive, Reading; hereafter referred to as 'the site'.
- 2.2 This reflects the client's duty of care under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957, the Occupiers' Liability Act 1984, and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. In simple terms, this means the client is responsible for taking sensible steps to keep people safe on the site. This includes checking for potential risks, maintaining a safe environment, and putting appropriate measures in place to protect visitors, workers, and anyone else who may be affected by the condition of the trees.
- 2.3 The approach aligns with National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) guidance, promoting reasonable and practicable tree risk management, rather than elimination of all risk.
- 2.4 The purpose of this report is to assess the current level of decay and dysfunction in the stem using a decay detecting

drill and to provide a report of our findings. This may include recommendations for works where required and/or additional inspections where necessary based upon the risks of causing harm or damage to persons, property or equipment located at the site address. These decay detection methods are further explained at Appendix E of this report.

- 2.5 Tree T19 is situated within the copse area to the front of the property. It benefits from partial wind shelter provided by the surrounding vegetation and buildings.
- 2.6 Cavities were noted on the stem during a routine Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) by Treetech Arboricultural Ltd, but their position prevented detailed observation from ground level. To confirm the size and severity of the cavities and any internal decay, further investigation via aerial inspection and Resistograph analysis was advised.

3 CAVEATS & Limitations

- 3.1 The IML Resi PD-500 is a high-precision drilling instrument that measures both drilling resistance and torque as a fine, high-speed drill bit penetrates the wood. These measurements are recorded as a graph, indicating variations in wood density along the drilling axis. Areas of low resistance and torque typically suggest decay or cavities, while higher values indicate sound timber. Although the process is invasive, the high-speed drill bit creates a very narrow wound that is effectively compartmentalised as it works, minimising the risk of further deterioration.
- 3.2 Localised Assessment – The Resistograph provides data only along the single drilling axis. Decay or cavities outside this narrow path may remain undetected, meaning results represent a very limited portion of the stem or branch.
- 3.3 Invasive Nature – Although the drill is relatively small, it penetrates the wood, creating a wound that may act as an entry point for pathogens.
- 3.4 Interpretation Complexity – Readings require expert interpretation. Variations in wood density can occur

naturally (e.g. due to growth rings or reaction wood), which may lead to misinterpretation if not considered alongside species-specific characteristics.

- 3.5 Limited Depth and Reach – The PD-500 can only drill to a maximum depth of approximately 500mm. This restricts its use on very large stems or where decay is suspected deep within the trunk.
- 3.6 Environmental and Operational Constraints – Wet wood, frozen conditions, or irregular bark surfaces can affect drilling resistance and data accuracy. Additionally, access may be restricted by tree position or surrounding obstacles.
- 3.7 No Full Structural Model – The device does not provide a three-dimensional image of internal decay. For this, it should be used in conjunction with other diagnostic tools (e.g. sonic tomography) for a comprehensive assessment.

4 Tree Survey Methodology

Survey Overview

- 4.1 The tree was assessed from a climbing harness within the trees canopy, using a resistograph, probes survey and Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) methodology.

Visual Tree Assessment (VTA)

- 4.3 VTA is a widely accepted, non-invasive arboricultural assessment method, based on identifying visible indicators of structural weakness or dysfunction.
- 4.4 Trees were assessed based on visible indicators of their condition and safety. This included their structural integrity (such as branch unions, cavities, and deadwood), overall health and vitality, the presence of defects and how the tree has responded or adapted to them, and their relationship to nearby targets such as people, buildings, or infrastructure that could be affected if a failure were to occur.

Usage Zone-Based Risk Assessment

- 4.5 Tree risk has been assessed using a proportionate, usage-based framework, considering, Likelihood of failure, Likelihood of impact (based on site usage) & Consequence of failure
- 4.6 Areas within the site were categorised according to levels of use and target occupancy, adopting a proportionate

zoning approach in line with National Tree Safety Group (2024) guidance:

Target occupancy (zoning) classifications	
High Usage	Areas with frequent target occupancy (regular presence of people, vehicles or structures within falling distance), e.g., public highways, main access routes, busy footpaths, entrances and parking areas.
Medium Usage	Areas with intermittent target occupancy (occasional presence within falling distance), e.g., secondary paths/routes, lightly used areas, and places with periodic access.
Low Usage	Areas with low target occupancy (rare or restricted presence within falling distance), e.g., site perimeters, fenced off/restricted areas, or locations with minimal use and limited potential targets.

- 4.7 Usage zones have been assigned based on site observations and professional judgement at the time of inspection, unless otherwise defined by the client.
- 4.8 This approach is consistent with NTSG guidance, ensuring that tree management remains reasonable, proportionate, and risk-based.
- 4.9 A QTRA (Quantitative Tree Risk Assessment) score will also be applied.

5 Findings

5.1 Visual Tree Assessment

- The subject is a mature Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) situated within a small woodland forming part of a communal area. The tree is considered to be located within a medium to High-risk environment due to the proximity of the public highway and internal footpaths.
- The tree benefits from a degree of shelter and mutual protection from surrounding trees within the group.
- The tree has an estimated height of 18m, crown spread of approximately 14m and stem diameter of approximately 850mm.
- The physiological condition of the tree is assessed as **Good**, with the structural condition assessed as **Fair**.
- The tree is twin-stemmed, with a notable cavity identified within one of the principal stems at approximately 8m above ground level. The cavity was subject to further investigation using visual assessment, probing and Resistograph assessment.
- The cavity (see photo) extends vertically for approximately 700mm, with evidence of woodpecker activity noted at its upper extent.

- Minor deadwood was observed throughout the crown. Given the relatively small size of the deadwood identified, this is currently considered to present a low level of risk to persons or property.
- A fungal fruiting body found on the ground (see photo) was observed at the base of the tree, but none attached to stem at the time of survey. *Inonotus hispidus* had previously been identified during an inspection undertaken by Treetech Arboricultural Services Limited. This finding prompted the further investigation undertaken as part of this assessment.

Resistograph Assessment

- 5.2 The locations for the Resistograph assessment were informed by the findings of the previous inspection undertaken by Treetech Arboricultural Services Limited. A further area of concern was also identified at a branch arising from the affected stem, which contained a separate cavity.
- 5.3 A total of four Resistograph drill readings were undertaken at locations selected to establish the extent and distribution of the internal cavity.
- 5.4 All four drill readings automatically retracted before traversing the full diameter of the stem, consistent with encountering a significant void or loss of resistance within the stem. Consequently, the readings could not be used to establish the full extent of the residual sound wood. The

assessment was therefore supplemented through probing and sounding with a rubber mallet.

- 5.5 The affected stem was measured at approximately 380mm diameter at the assessment locations, with residual wood thickness recorded at approximately 100–120mm on either side of the cavity. This indicates a substantial proportion of the stem cross-section is affected by internal decay and/or hollowing.

Assessment of Decay and Structural Significance

- 5.9 The presence of *Inonotus hispidus*, together with the identified cavity and reduced residual wood thickness, indicates an established area of internal degradation. Continued progression of decay is anticipated, although the rate of deterioration cannot be reliably predicted from the current assessment alone.
- 5.10 The affected stem supports a substantial proportion of the tree's crown. Consequently, failure of this stem would have the potential to result in the collapse of a significant portion of the crown or stem, with the potential impact extending towards the public highway and internal pedestrian footpaths.
- 5.11 Given the tree's location, the extent of the internal cavity, the reduced residual wood and the structural significance of the affected stem, the consequences of failure are considered significant. Crown reduction could reduce the loading on the affected stem in the short term; however, this would not address the underlying decay and would introduce additional physiological stress to the tree.

Continued deterioration could therefore result in further loss of structural integrity and the requirement for future intervention.

- 5.12 On balance, removal is considered the most appropriate long-term risk management option.

6 Recommendations & Action Prioritisation

- 6.1 It is recommended that the tree is removed to near ground level (felled). Works are recommended to be undertaken within 3 months (October 2026).

Priority Classification

Priority	Timescale	Description
Immediate	Urgent	Where imminent failure is likely to occur
High	Within 3 months	Defects with potential to cause significant harm in high usage areas
Medium	Within 6 months	Moderate risk or management requirement
Low	Within 12 months	Routine maintenance and long-term management

General Recommendations

- 6.2 All works to be undertaken in accordance with BS 3998:2010 – Tree Work Recommendations
Works to be carried out by competent and appropriately qualified arborists

Ecology Considerations

- 6.3 Tree works should be scheduled outside the main bird nesting season (March–September) where practicable. Where works are required within this period a pre-commencement ecological check must be undertaken.

7 Legal & Statutory Considerations

7.1 Prior to undertaking any tree works, the client must confirm:

- Tree Preservation Order (TPO) status
- Conservation Area designation
- Forestry Commission felling licence requirements (where applicable)

7.2 Works to trees not owned by the client require landowner consent, except where common law rights apply.

8 Limitations, Validity & Risk Statement

8.1 This report represents a snapshot in time based on conditions observed during the inspection. All conclusions and recommendations are based on a ground-level Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) only, with no climbing inspection, invasive investigation, or specialist decay detection testing undertaken unless expressly stated.

8.2 It must be recognised that:

- Trees are living and dynamic organisms
- Structural condition may change without visible warning
- Internal decay, cavities, cracks, root defects and other hidden defects may be present and are not always detectable by a ground-level visual inspection, even where no external symptoms are evident
- Tree failure cannot be entirely predicted

8.3 Accordingly:

- No guarantee of safety is implied or given
- Risk can only be managed, not eliminated

8.4 This report is valid for a maximum period of 12 months from the date of inspection unless otherwise stated within reinspection recommendations.

9 Liability & Reliance

9.1 This report has been prepared for the sole and exclusive use of the Client and for the specific purpose instructed. It must not be relied upon by any other person and must not be reproduced, distributed, or disclosed (in whole or in part) to any third party without the Consultant's prior written consent. No third party shall acquire any rights under this report, and no duty of care is accepted or owed to any third party in connection with it.

9.2 Tree Assessments UK accepts no responsibility or liability to any third party who may obtain access to this report without the Consultant's written consent, nor for any use of the report outside the purpose for which it was prepared.

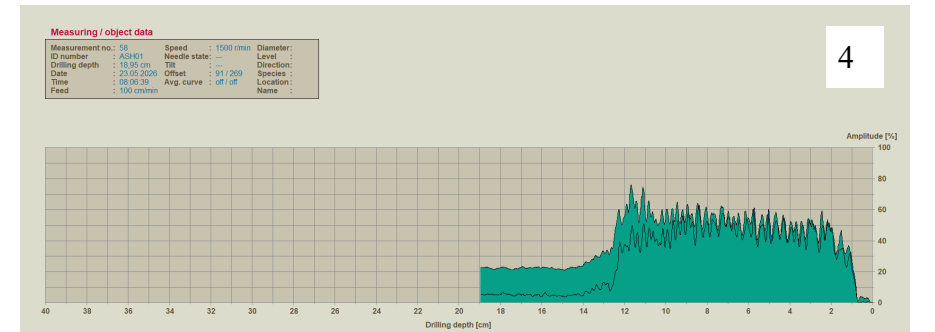
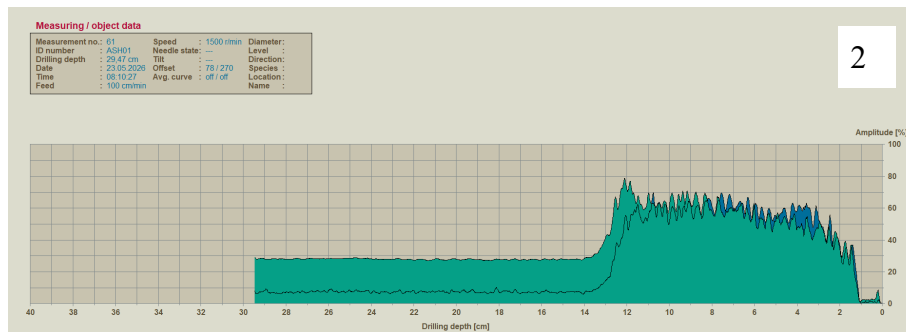
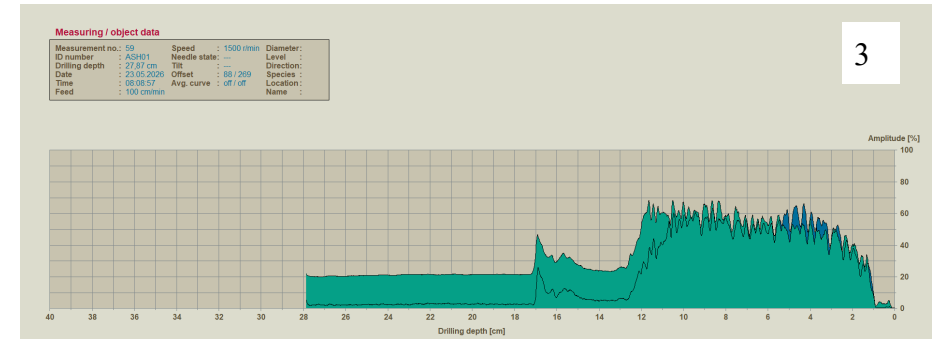
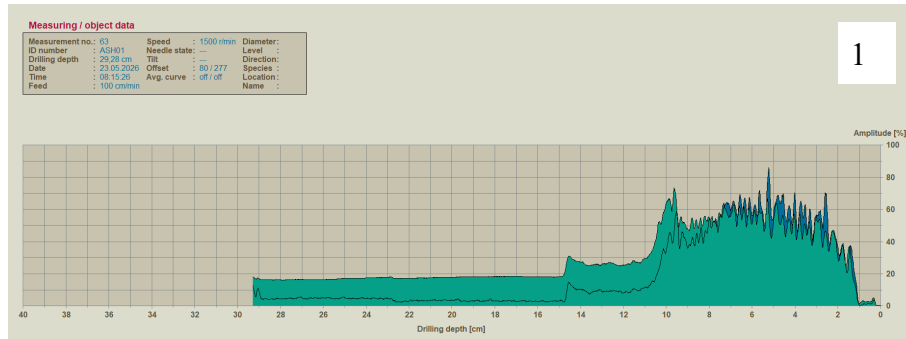
9.3 All recommendations represent professional opinion based on evidence available at the time of inspection.

9.4 Tree Assessments UK shall not be liable for:

Changes in tree condition following the survey, Loss, damage, or injury arising after the date of inspection or Failure of trees or parts of trees outside the scope of reasonable inspection.

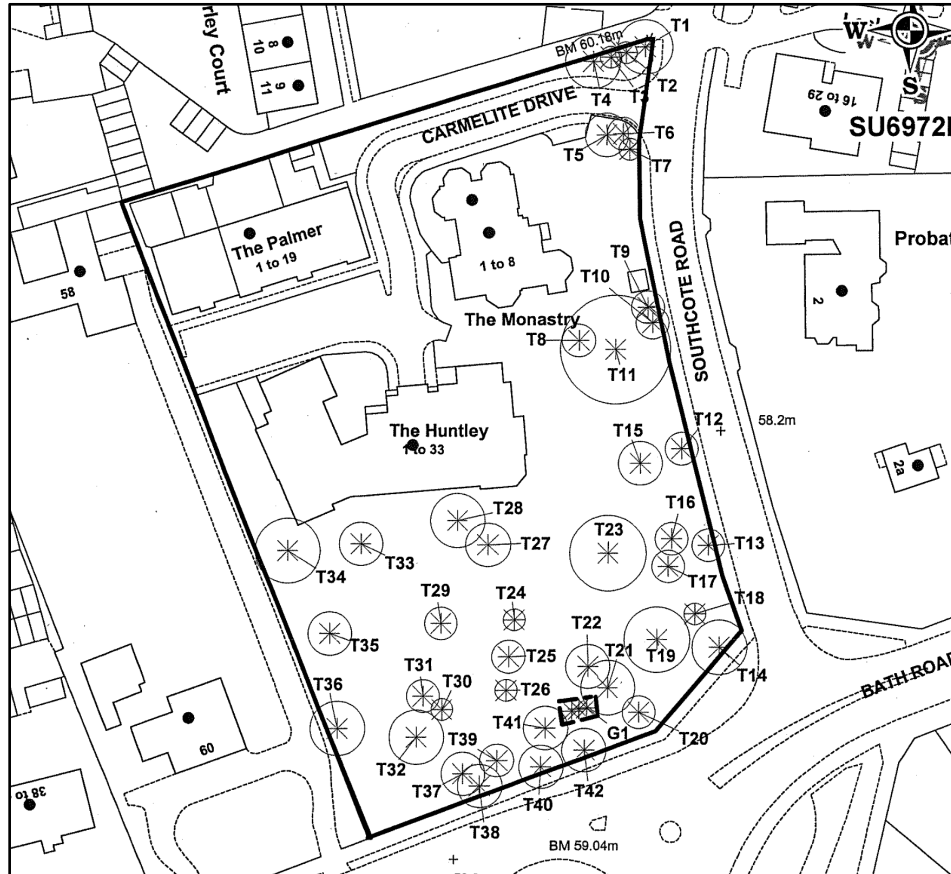
Appendix 1 – Resistograph Readings





Appendix 2 – Site Plan





Reading Borough Council Tree Preservation Order Plan – See T19

Appendix 3 - Photographs





Photo 1



Photo 3



Photo 2



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6