Wessex Tree Consultancy
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13th July 2023

Ref: 7467

Michael Bailey
16 Erleigh Drive
Chippenham SN15 2NQ

Dear Mike

Ash Tree at 16 Erleigh Drive, Chippenham, S15 2NQ

As requested, I have inspected your ash tree.

Inspection Notes:
The inspection of the ash tree took place 12th July 2023 and comprised a ground-level visual assessment of external features. View was from along Erleigh Drive and from the grassy area directly about the tree; no access was made to the enfenced garden of No. 16 or to neighbouring gardens.
I used binoculars, hand-held metal probe and light-weight, nylon-headed mallet as inspection aids.
I am unable to comment upon risk to property from tree root activity. Various other limitations also apply - please see below.
I understand from referring today to Wilts Council's on-line planning map[1] that the ash tree does not stand within a Conservation Area and is not subject of a Tree Preservation Order. However, I have found that the Council's online system may be prone to glitches and I advise that you should check formally with Wilts Council before undertaking any work to the tree.
The advised tree work should be performed to BS 3998: 2010 *Tree work – Recommendations*.
If you undertake work to the tree, along with proper observance of any planning requirements e.g. with regard to any Tree Preservation Orders &/or Conservation Area constraints that may apply, appropriate consideration also should be taken of the legal requirements regarding avoidance of harm to protected species of wild life e.g. most birds and all bats, including disturbance of nests and roots.

The tree:
The ash tree stands on level ground in an area of open, of mown grass alongside (to N of) your house, garage and garden. There are a number of potential 'targets' within height range. Your house is ca. 14m to S; your garage is ca. 12m to SE; your neighbour's garden at *Tall Trees* is ca. 4m and beyond to W and the *Tall Trees* house is ca. 14m also to W. The pavement and roadway of Erleigh Drive run, at closest, ca. 15m to E.
The grass area about the tree is not fenced-off from the Erleigh Drive pavement.
The ash tree stands ca. 20m in height; trunk diameter at breast ht. is 60cm.
Approximate crown spread is N:8m, S :8m, W: 6m and E: 10m
Judging from tree size and form I consider it is mid-fully mature; possibly around 70 years old
The upper surface of short lengths of a number of roots (est. 7.5-20cm diam) can be seen within the lawn. Some of these surface-roots are scarred from repeat lawn-mower damage. It is not clear to what extent this has harmed the tree. It is possible that decay may extend in some places below ground. However, at this level of inspection, I did not observe any obvious overall seriously harmful effects from the mower damage. The root damage is not heavily concentrated close to the trunk but is scattered within its crown spread. The basal buttresses do not appear to be seriously affected and are normally healthy--looking. The main trunk is upright and well proportioned. Visual inspection and use of a hand-held simple probe and a lightweight mallet (to lightly, repeatedly tap parts of the trunk in order to listen to resonance) identified no obvious signs of serious basal decay or hollowing. I found no fungal fruiting bodies attached to the tree. I noted some small 'toadstool' type fungi growing on the grass in a few places but, provisionally, as far as I could tell from outward features, I did not identify these as being of a severely pathogenic variety. I saw no exudations from bark about the tree, nor any obvious cavities or major old wounds. I noted no signs of recent ground disturbance nearby, nor any indications of root-plate movement.

[1] https://wiltscouncil.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=74a353612a934bd48fee1f2bc564cdd8

Density and quality of foliage and young growth about the crown appear normal. There is occasional dead wood about the crown, with a few pieces up to 75mm diam; but overall incidence of dead wood looks to be normal for a generally healthy ash tree of this size and maturity.
I saw no obvious signs of serious *Chalara* ash-die back infection about the crown. Light symptoms may be present but, if so, they do not appear to be clearly advanced.
The lowest major side-branch, attached to the main trunk at approx. 4.5m ht. reaches to SE, a short way over the garden fence and roof of the garage at No 16. The end-part of this lowest side-branch ramifies repeatedly with multiple fairly small diameter subsidiaries that together create a heavy end-load, reaching down low within potential falling range of the garage.
The second-lowest major side-branch, attached to the main trunk at approx. 5m ht. reaches to SW, over some compost bins in the far corner of the grassy area about the tree. The end region of this side-branch supports two upswept subsidiary stems and their dependent crowns that are long-extended and heavily end-weighted and that respectively reach over the nearby parts of the rear gardens of No 16 and of *Tall Trees.* Viewed from uphill along Erleigh Drive to N, the end regions of this side-branch extend well beyond the general crown contour of the tree.

Management Advice:

1. Undertake 25% end-weight reduction of lowest side-branch (attached to the main trunk at approx. 4.5m and reaching to SE, shortly over the garage at No 16) – treatment to include: thinning end parts by approx. 15% ; shortening overall reach of branch by approx. 2m ; shaping to a natural-looking outline.
2. Undertake 25% end-weight reduction of second-lowest side-branch (attached to the main trunk at approx. 5m and reaching to SW, over the near parts of the rear gardens of No 16 and of neighbouring '*Tall Trees'*) – treatment to include: thinning by approx. 15% ; shortening upswept end parts of branch by approx. 2m ; shaping to a natural-looking outline
3. Remove major dead wood and any obviously weak live growth throughout crown of the tree
4. Adjust mower height to avoid wounding surface roots of the tree.
5. The tree should be re-inspected by a competent arboriculturist within about 12 months of the date of this report. In addition to formal re-inspection, frequent informal visual checks are also advised, to be undertaken by yourself, looking out for obvious signs of damage to the tree or other changes in tree condition. Informal tree-condition checks should be particularly undertaken closely after periods of severe weather and following changes about the site, including building work and changes to levels of usage near trees. In instances where informal checks raise uncertainty or other concerns, competent arboricultural advice should be called upon.

Limitations:

a) Only the single ash tree has been considered. Tree inspection has been restricted to ground-level visual assessment of accessible external, macroscopic features. Inspection methodology & tool-aids to inspection have been limited to those described in this letter-report. No inspection material has been assessed by laboratory. The time of year when inspection took place may have limited observations & inferences. The assessment has not been informed by detailed background information concerning the management history of the trees & site, or by knowledge of its soil, geology, or hydrology.

b) Compass orientation, proportions & assessments of age have been estimated. Heights & distances have been assessed by eye.

c) Assessment of the extent, nature & use of the area within the potential dropping zone of the tree has been based upon circumstances observed & interpreted at the time of inspection.

d) Tree management advice in my letter-report does not aim to achieve zero risk of harm. The advice aims to provide for management of risk of serious harm from tree collapse or heavy branch shedding, at a level that is as low as is reasonably practicable, for the reasonably foreseeable future.

e) It is intended that the term 'the reasonably foreseeable future' should normally cover a twelve-month period from date of inspection. However, this period is not guaranteed, nor is any other. There is no guarantee that advice will reliably account for, or protect against the effects of severe weather, disease or of features that were not recorded at the time of inspection.

f) Where tree-related risk is being considered, this only relates to risk of serious harm to people or property from direct physical impacts from falling tree limbs or trunks. No attempt has been made to assess or to advise treatments for other forms of tree-related risk, including risk from trip hazards or risk of damage to property from tree-root influence (e.g. associated with subsidence, heave, direct pressure or infiltration) upon buildings, services (including drains), or other structures.

g) My assessments & advice, whether provided in writing or orally, are my considered & honest observations & opinion. They are presented in good faith, but there is no guarantee that they are free from omission or error.

h) My input is subject to these Limitations (Items a-g above) & to any additionally set out in my letter-report.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please give me a call

Best wishes

Yours sincerely



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