

Survey of Trees
to the North of Cicely Grove, Melksham. SN12 6ZC

31st October 2024

Prepared by Stephen Woollard



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WESSEX RURAL CRAFTS LTD

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND & WALES · COMPANY No. 600252 · VAT 159 0141 24 · REGISTERED OFFICE: 8A HOLLYBUSH · HORNINGHAM · WILTSHIRE ·
BA12 7LE · T: 01985 220457/01985 844594



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 WRC Trees were instructed by Nikki Townshend of Selwood Housing to undertake a safety resurvey of trees growing at Berkeley House, Longleaze Lane, Melksham SN12 6QJ on the border to the north of Cicely Grove.
- 1.2 This survey has focused on the safety of those trees only.

2. Data Collection

- 2.1 The Tree Survey was carried out by Stephen Woollard, a licensed user of Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) methodology and holder of a LANTRA certificate for Professional Tree Inspection qualification, on 28th October 2024. The weather was overcast.
- 2.2 The trees were viewed from the land on which they are growing. Tree T001, a Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) was also viewed from the garden of 11 Cicely Grove.
- 2.3 The trees were assessed from ground level employing the Visual Tree Assessment method, using a nylon sounding mallet, steel probe and binoculars where necessary. Otiss Tree Survey software and a GPS enabled handheld device were used to record data and map the tree locations (see Appendix 1 - Tree Location Plan).
- 2.4 The trees were assessed for physiological health and structural condition, and an assessment of the local environment made. This was to enable identification of any defects predisposing the trees to failure, and where a significant risk to people and property may be posed. This assessment also gives an indication of the vitality of each tree and of its tolerance to competition for nutrients and light, stress, wounding and pathogens.
- 2.5 Individual tree height was estimated in metres and diameter at breast height (dbh) estimated in centimetres at 1.5 metres above ground level unless otherwise stated.

3. Risk Management

- 3.1 This survey aims to accord with the 'Common sense risk management of trees - Guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for owners, managers and advisers - 2011' as published by the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG). The Health and Safety Executive was consulted in the production of the above publication. It endorses the sensible, proportionate, reasonable and balanced advice to owners on managing the risk from trees set out in their guidance.

4. Limitations

- 4.1 Trees are dynamic living organisms, whose health and condition can be subject to rapid change, depending on a number of external and internal factors.
- 4.2 All trees will drop branches during their lifetime and no tree can be considered entirely safe. Trees can be damaged during high winds or extreme weather. Fungal fruiting bodies may appear in the future and can indicate decay or the threat of decay and possible tree failure.
- 4.3 The conclusions of this survey relate to conditions observed at the time of inspection. Any significant changes to the condition of the trees or to the use of the surrounding land will necessitate a reassessment of the trees. Aerial tree inspection, invasive procedures not highlighted, soil analysis and excavations are outside the scope of the survey, but if considered a requirement will be recommended in the report.

5. Statutory Protection

- 5.1 A check of the Wiltshire Council Planning Explorer Map indicates that Trees T001 – T005 are protected by the Tree Preservation Order 2019/00014/GRP.
- 5.2 The principal effect of a Tree Preservation Order prohibits the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of any trees subject to their protection without the formal consent of the Local Planning Authority (Wiltshire Council) following a written application.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 6.1 The condition of the trees surveyed is good or fair. Trees T002 and T005, both horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), are affected by a range of pests and diseases (see Appendix 2 – Survey Schedule); horse chestnut leaf miner (*Cameraria ohridella*), bleeding canker (*Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *aesculi*) and Guignardia leaf spot (*Guignardia aesculi*), but their structural condition is not affected by these.
- 6.2 Both T001 and T005 have been cut back to beyond the boundary, presumably by residents of Cicely Grove. Whilst common law allows the pruning of overhanging branches back to boundaries, however trivial it may seem, branches cannot be cut beyond boundaries as effectively trespass has been committed. More seriously, the common law right cannot be exercised at all where the trees are protected by statutory law, as these trees are (Tree Preservation Order) without written permission from the Local Planning Authority (see 5.2). Residents should be advised of the legal protection these trees are afforded.
- 6.3 T001, a Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) has good vitality, evidenced by its full crown of good sized and coloured foliage. The relatively recent branch failure over the garden to the south left a large gap in the canopy, altering the exposure of the remaining branches on that side. Pruning work recommended in 2023 to mitigate risk of harm from these branches has been undertaken. The lowest branch to the east has visibly decaying wood with woodpecker holes present. It is desirable to retain this branch for habitat, however pruning works are recommended to reduce weight and leverage on it (See appendix 2 – Survey Schedule).

- 6.4 To address safety and potential damage to structures it is advised that the works detailed within the survey schedule are undertaken within the recommended timeframes on receipt of this report.
- 6.5 Trees captured by this survey should be inspected every two years by a suitably qualified and experienced arboriculturalist.



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Appendix 2. Survey Schedule

Ref.	Species	Ht. (m) Est.	DBH (cm) Est.	Life Stage	Survey Notes	Condition	Recommendations	Timescale
T001	Turkey Oak (<i>Quercus cerris</i>)	25	150	Mature	Large, mature specimen growing between stock fencing and estate fencing. Dense arboreal ivy. Minor, medium and major deadwood over paddock. Recent branch failure on south side. Possible signs of incipient decay in branch immediately above failure. Lowest branch to east decaying and with woodpecker holes. 2023 works undertaken.	Good	Reduce lowest branch to east over Cicely Grove gardens by 1-2 metres to good growth points as feasible	3 Months
T002	Horse Chestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>)	17	55	Early Mature	Growing between stock fencing and estate fencing Dense arboreal ivy. Bifurcated at approximately three metres, union obscured by ivy. Horse chestnut leaf miner (<i>Cameraria ohridella</i>). Guignardia leaf spot (<i>Guignardia aesculi</i>). Bleeding canker (<i>Pseudomonas syringae</i> pathovar <i>aesculi</i>). Major deadwood over paddock.	Fair	No action required.	No Action
T003	Common Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	15	40	Early Mature	Growing between stock fencing and estate fencing Very dense arboreal ivy prevents full inspection.	Good	No action required.	No Action
T004	Common Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	15	50	Early Mature	Growing between stock fencing and estate fencing Very dense arboreal ivy prevents full inspection Minor dead wood.	Good	No action required.	No Action
T005	Horse Chestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>)	17	70	Early Mature	Growing between stock fencing and estate fencing Dense arboreal ivy. Multi-stemmed at approximately 3.5 metres, unions obscured by ivy. Horse chestnut leaf miner (<i>Cameraria ohridella</i>). Guignardia leaf spot (<i>Guignardia aesculi</i>). Historically fractured stem over garden. Lower branches truncated where cut back to boundary.	Fair	No action required.	No Action
T006	Lime (<i>Tilia sp.</i>)	25	70	Mature	Heavily buttressed tree. Lean to southeast. Medium and major deadwood throughout crown. Section of dead wood hung up low over paddock.	Good	No action required.	No Action