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Arboricultural Report

Tree Condition Assessment

Site

**46 Timber Bank
Vigo
Kent
DA13 0SE**

Client

Ms M Giles

Prepared by

Curtis Barkel

RCArborA, DipArb (RFS), F.Arbor.A

Ref: SA/01/22

Date: 08 April 2022



Arboricultural Consultant: Curtis Barkel - RCArborA, DipArb(RFS), FArborA
Fellow and Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association

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Site	46 Timber Bank, Vigo, Kent. DA13 0SE.
Inspection Date	16 March 2022
Report Date	08 April 2022
Inspected by	Curtis Barkel

Terms of Reference

To carry out a visual inspection of five trees located in the rear garden of the property. The inspection is to provide a preliminary condition assessment of the subject trees and advise on suitability for retention within the setting, along with any required remedial works or ongoing maintenance requirements.

1.0 Instructions

- 1.1 Sylvanarb has received instructions from Ms M Giles of 46 Timber Bank, to carry out an inspection of five trees located in the rear garden of the property.
- 1.2 Ms Giles explained that she had concerns over the safety of the trees following the failure of one mature tree on the property during recent high winds; plus having additional concerns over the long-term suitability of the trees within the garden setting.
- 1.3 Ms Giles has sought an independent arboricultural assessment to determine the condition of the trees and to provide long-term management advice.

2.0 Scope of Report

- 2.1 A preliminary visual assessment of the trees was carried out noting external faults and features. The assessment was carried out from ground level only.
- 2.2 This preliminary assessment did not include a detailed examination of the tree root system or the use of internal decay detection equipment. A further supplementary Detailed Report may be advised as a result of the findings herein.
- 2.3 The assessment considers and advises on:
- Structural condition
 - Physiological condition
 - Pests and diseases
 - Priority safety work requirements
- 2.4 The inspection was carried out with aid of the following equipment:
- Sounding mallet
 - Metal probe
 - Laser measure
 - Rounded down diameter tape
 - Digital camera
- 2.5 All significant findings, along with recommendations for tree work are presented in brief on the Survey Data Sheet (Appendix A) and explained in detail within this report.
- 2.6 A tree with internal structural faults will often display associated external evidence of such faults, these would be noted in a visual tree inspection. However such signs are not always apparent at all times of the year. The following findings and recommendations have been drawn from the evidence present on the day of inspection.
- 2.7 This report remains valid for the period specified for the re-inspection of the subject trees provided in the survey schedule at Appendix A, or until extreme weather conditions affect the locality, whichever is sooner. A tree owner is advised to have all trees in their ownership regularly inspected, it is recommended that trees are re-inspected after strong winds.
- 2.8 All measurements taken are approximate.

3.0 Property Details

- 3.1 The property is located in the village of Vigo and within the Gravesham BC administrative area.
- 3.2 The site accommodates a semi-detached house, with a driveway and parking area to the front and a garden to the rear.
- 3.3 The five subject trees are located in the rear half of the rear garden, combining to form a closed canopy across the rear section of garden.
- 3.4 It is understood that the subject trees are protected by the Gravesham BC Tree Preservation Order Ref: no.1 of 1953. This is assumed to be a 'Woodland' TPO providing protection for all trees that are present on the property.
- 3.5 The British Geological Survey for the locality describes the underlying geology as Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, with superficial deposits of Clay-with-Flints.
- 3.6 Details of the building foundations are not known, if within the clay deposits a potential increase in the risk of building subsidence damage is presented; if the foundations are within the chalk no risk of subsidence is presented.

4.0 Observations

4.1 *T1 Douglas Fir - Observations & Considerations*

- 4.1.1 A single-stemmed early, semi-mature tree located in the centre of the rear garden at approximately 14m from the rear of the house.
- 4.1.2 Douglas Fir are the largest trees in the UK, with many commonly reaching 30-40m in height, but the tallest reaching 60-70m in height.
- 4.1.3 This particular tree has had the original top removed at 12m (either due to storm damage or pruning), with side branches now beginning to form multiple vertical leaders from the topping point.
- 4.1.4 This serves to establish a poor structural form that will present the risk of branch failures as these side branches develop to become multiple sub-stems from 12m.
- 4.1.5 The combination of these structural concerns and the potential for the tree to grow significantly in height will require that tree management be carried out to contain the vertical growth of the tree through the periodic reduction of the developing sub-stems.
- 4.1.6 Such reduction works to a broadleaf tree would potentially be acceptable, allowing a branch network to be retained that would still form a reasonably balanced canopy. However, the repeat topping of a coniferous tree such as this will be detrimental to both the structure and appearance of the tree, resulting a tree of poor form and limited long-term potential.
- 4.1.7 The works required to manage this tree, which has the potential to significantly outgrow the residential garden setting, will be detrimental to the structure and appearance of the tree, thereby having a negative impact on the wider visual amenity of the tree.
- 4.1.8 In addition, it is expected that the Woodland TPO was served to protect the broadleaf woodland that is characteristic of the locality. Forestry Commission advice recommends the removal of conifers from broadleaf Ancient Woodland, which the Vigo estate is set within.
- 4.1.9 As this individual is a non-native species that is not characteristic of the setting; does not offer any significant ecological value; and future management requirements will result in limited visual amenity value, it is considered that the tree is not worthy of retention and protection within this residential garden setting. As such, this tree is not considered to be of a suitable standard or condition to be protected by the TPO.

4.2 ***T2 & T3 Norway Spruce - Observations & Considerations***

- 4.2.1 Two single-stemmed early, semi-mature trees located close to the eastern side boundary with no.44 Timber Bank.
- 4.2.2 Although not having the ultimate growth potential of Douglas Fir, Norway Spruce are another very large forestry species that will commonly reach 30-40m in height, with the tallest reaching 50-60m.
- 4.2.3 The main stems of both T2 and T3 have historically been lost at 8m (either due to storm damage or pruning), from which point two sub-stems have since developed to a current height of approx. 19-20m.
- 4.2.4 These trees have been closely planted forming a combined canopy structure and being of a similar structural condition; as such, both trees will require the same management as if managing a single tree canopy.
- 4.2.5 As for T1, the loss of the main stems at 8m, combined with the potential for the trees to significantly increase in height, presents structural concerns that result in the need for management intervention to be carried out in order to restrict the growth of the trees.
- 4.2.6 As explained for T1, such works will be detrimental to the structure and appearance of the trees, to such an extent that the trees are not considered to be of a suitable standard or condition to be protected by the TPO.
- 4.2.7 Considering the current form of the trees and the future management works required, plus the matters relating to the species being non-native and uncharacteristic of the broadleaf woodland setting, it is considered that these trees are not worthy of retention and protection within this residential garden setting.

4.3 ***T4 Norway Spruce - Observations & Considerations***

- 4.3.1 Another single-stemmed early, semi-mature tree located close to the western side boundary with no.48 Timber Bank.
- 4.3.2 The tree is still at an early stage of development and has already attained a height of 18m. As noted for T2 and T3, this is a forestry plantation species that is fast growing and has the potential to commonly reach 30-40m in height and up to 50-60m.
- 4.3.3 The tree is of reasonable form, although it is located between the more dominant T5 and an adjacent high quality oak tree located in the rear garden of no.48.
- 4.3.4 The proximity of this tree to the adjacent oak has resulted in the development of the oak canopy being suppressed. This is likely to become more pronounced as T4 continues to develop through to maturity. The further growth of T4 will also increasingly detract from the visual prominence of the higher value oak.
- 4.3.5 The tree has a single stem and appears to be structurally sound, as such it has the potential to reach full height at maturity. Such a tree is clearly unsuited to a small

garden and will inevitably develop to outgrow the residential setting even before the full height potential has been reached.

- 4.3.6 As previously explained, management works through crown reduction would not be appropriate for the species, being detrimental to both structure and appearance. Furthermore the species is incongruous with the surrounding native woodland setting and as such, the tree is not considered to be a suitable individual for protection by the TPO.

4.4 ***T5 Norway Spruce - Observations & Considerations***

- 4.4.1 Another single-stemmed early, semi-mature Norway Spruce located close to the rear property boundary.
- 4.4.2 As already highlighted, this is fast growing species of tree used in forestry plantations, commonly reaching 30-40m in height.
- 4.4.3 T5 is the most dominant tree of the five trees in the garden, being of good form and vigorous physiological condition. This suggests that there would be no reason to expect the tree to not attain full height potential at maturity.
- 4.4.4 The matter of the species being non-native and poorly suited to the mixed broadleaf woodland within the setting, plus the aim of the Forestry Commission to remove conifers from Ancient Woodland sites, has already been highlighted. But to add to this the suitability of a tree that has the potential to attain such a size needs to be given full consideration.
- 4.4.5 If left to develop to full maturity this tree will dominate the adjacent properties and become an unsuitable feature within the broadleaf woodland setting.
- 4.4.6 Considering this and the reasons previously set out for the other trees of this species, this tree is not considered to be a suitable for retention within the setting and as such is not therefore an appropriate tree for protection by the TPO.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The five subject trees are non-native species within a protected lowland broadleaf woodland setting. The original woodland that covered the estate and that was protected by the TPO was an Ancient Woodland and the surrounding woodlands that characterise the locality are all mixed broadleaf Ancient Woodland.
- 5.2 The TPO will have been intended to protect and preserve as much of the native woodland characteristics, no doubt at the time that development proposals were being considered for the estate.
- 5.3 The subject trees are unsuitable components of a native Ancient Woodland, with the removal of trees from such settings being something that is promoted by the Forestry Commission through grant aided assistance.
- 5.4 Furthermore the species of tree that has been planted here are two of the largest species of tree in the UK. The planting of these trees within the garden setting really is poorly advised, with the potential for those of good form to attain the maximum heights achieved by mature members of the species; whilst those of poorer structural form will require periodic ongoing management that will result in the trees being left with poor structural form and limited amenity value.
- 5.5 It is therefore recommended that the trees be removed, this will improve the growth potential of the adjacent high quality oak tree in the garden of no.48 Timber Bank, whilst also presenting the opportunity to secure replacement trees of a more suitable species for a residential garden setting, it is expected that these could be small native species that will provide both ecological and aesthetic improvements to the setting.
- 5.6 The removal of the trees will require the prior approval of the Local Authority, it is therefore recommended that this report be submitted as supporting evidence in application for the removal of the five subject trees.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Tree Works

The following works are recommended in the interests of good arboricultural management:

Table 1: Recommended Management Works

Tree No.	Species	Recommended Works	Reasons for Works
T1	Douglas Fir	- Fell and grind stump.	- The tree is of poor form and will require ongoing management that will be detrimental to the structure and visual amenity of the tree. - Will come to outgrow location.
T2-T3	Norway Spruce x 2	- Fell and grind stumps.	- These trees are of poor form and will require ongoing management that will be detrimental to their structure and visual amenity. - Will come to outgrow location.
T4-T5	Norway Spruce x 2	- Fell and grind stumps.	Will come to significantly outgrow the setting and dominate the small garden setting.

6.2 **General Recommendations**

- 6.2.1 A tree owner has a legal duty of care to the visitors to their property and to their neighbours, this duty requires that their trees are regularly inspected and recommended management carried out. 'Regularly' is not defined in law, however an advised inspection frequency has been provided for each tree based on the condition of the individual and the potential target.
- 6.2.2 In order to satisfactorily address safety concerns and honour ones duty of care the recommended tree work is to be carried out within the time scale specified at Appendix A.
- 6.2.3 The permission of the Local Authority is required prior to any tree works being carried out. To carry out unauthorised work to a protected tree carries heavy penalties.
- 6.2.4 All tree work is to be carried out by a competent arborist in accordance with the British Standard for tree work BS3998:2010 'Recommendations for Tree Work' unless otherwise specifically prescribed herein to address health and safety issues.
- 6.2.5 Trees may provide host sites for legally protected wildlife such as birds and bats. It is essential that prior to works being carried out the tree work contractor is instructed to assess each tree for the presence of protected species such as bat roosts and birds nests. It is an offence to disturb or destroy such sites. Advice on bats can be obtained from the Bat Conservation Trust (tel:0845 1300 2280), advice on nesting birds can be obtained from Natural England (tel:0845 600 3078).

All advice given in this report is based on the information available on the day of inspection. Should additional information not available or apparent on the day of inspection come to light, the right is reserved to modify the conclusions found within this report. This report is valid for the period of re-inspection specified for each tree at Appendix A, notwithstanding change of site conditions, extremes of weather or other such overriding environmental changes.



08 April 2022

Signed:

Date:

Appendix A

Tree Survey Data

Gravesham Borough Council

Survey Key

Tree No.	Tree Number - cross-referenced with tree numbers shown on Site Plans.	
Age Class	Young	Staked or recently established tree at the fast growing early stage of establishment.
	Semi mature	An established tree at a stage of rapid growth with increasing future growth potential
	Mature	A tree that is at a stage of constant growth nearing/at ultimate canopy size.
	Veteran	A mature tree, often of great ecological or heritage importance, that has reached a stage of natural decline.
	Over-mature	A tree in an advanced state of decline, moribund with minimal live growth.
Hgt (m)	Height range estimated in metres. 0-5m; 5-10m; 10-15m; 15-20m; 20-25m; 25-30m	
Recommended Mgt	Management recommendations to bring the trees to an acceptable and safe standard in the current site context.	
Work Priority	U Urgent	Works required immediately to make tree safe.
	H High	Works required within 90 days.
	M Medium	Works to be carried out within 12 months.
	L Low	Suggested good arboricultural management, which may be carried out as and when the budget allows.
Inspection Frequency	1 Every year	High risk tree considering size/condition/location/use of target area.
	2 Every 2 years	Moderate risk tree considering size/condition/location/ use of target area.
	3 Every 3 years	Low risk tree considering size/condition/location of tree/ use of target area.

Tree Survey Data

TPO ID No	SPECIES	HEIGHT (m)	STEM DIA.	AGE CLASS	NOTES / CONDITION	RECOMMENDED MGT.	WORK PRIORITY	INSPECTION FREQUENCY
T1	Douglas Fir	15	390	Semi-mature	- Top relatively recently lost at 12m, with whorl of branches beginning to take apical dominance. - Potential for significant growth development. - Bark damage to buttresses to S. - Will outgrow location.	• Fell	L	2
T2	Norway Spruce	19	370	Semi-mature	- Top historically lost at 8m, 2 x sub-stems developing to 19m. - Companion tree with T3. - Poor form. - Will outgrow location.	• Fell	L	2
T3	Norway Spruce	20	350	Semi-mature	- Top historically lost at 8m, 2 x sub-stems developing, one being of more dominance and reaching 20m. - Companion tree with T2. - Poor form. - Will outgrow location.	• Fell	L	2
T4	Norway Spruce	18	370	Semi-mature	- Impacting on development of adjacent high value oak tree. - Significant growth potential. - Will outgrow location.	• Fell	L	2
T5	Norway Spruce	18	530	Semi-mature	- Dominant and vigorous individual with significant growth potential. - Will outgrow location.	• Fell	L	2

Appendix B

Tree Location Plan

Gravesham Borough Council

Tree Location Plan
6 Timber Bank, Vigo. DA13 0SE.



 Sylvanarb Arboricultural Consultants 139 Buth Road Cuckoo Rochester Kent ME2 1EZ Tel: 01634 724023 E-mail: info@sylvanarb.co.uk Web: www.sylvanarb.co.uk	TREE LOCATION PLAN	Site Address: 46 Timberbank Vigo Kent DA13 0SE Client: Ms M Giles	By: C. Barkel Date: 05 April 2022 Ref: TB/TLP/01-22-01 Scale: 1:400@A4
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Appendix C

Photographs

Gravesham Borough Council

Photo 1: Tree T1 - Lost top at 12m.



Photo 2: T2 & T3 - Bifurcated at 8m.



Photo 3: T4 - Impacting on development of adjacent oak, will come to dominate.



Photo 4: T5 - Large dominant tree with significant growth potential.

