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11th October 2026

Arboricultural Tree survey in support of proposed Tree works

Proposed felling of a smoke bush adjacent to a damaged boundary wall

Local Planning Authority: Arun District Council

Site designation: Conservation area

Date of site visit: 2/10/26

1. Introduction and purpose of inspection

A site visit was undertaken to inspect an established smoke bush (*Cotinus coggygria*) growing immediately adjacent to a brick boundary wall. The purpose of the inspection was to assess the relationship between the tree and the existing masonry defects and to consider whether removal of the tree is justified.

The inspection included a visual assessment of the tree's position, its basal structure, the surrounding ground conditions and the visible condition of the boundary wall. Photographs taken during the inspection are provided in support of this application and illustrate the tree's location, its proximity to the wall and the existing deterioration of the masonry.

The property is situated within a designated conservation area, and the contribution of the tree to the area's character has therefore been considered when assessing the proposed works.

2. Tree description and location

The subject tree is an established, multi-stemmed ornamental smoke bush with a broad, mature crown and reddish-purple foliage. It is growing within a narrow planting strip immediately behind the brick boundary wall.

The tree has a substantial basal structure and occupies a confined growing space between the wall and the garden. Its main stems and root collar are situated in very close proximity to the masonry, leaving limited space between the tree and the existing boundary structure.

The accompanying photographs show the tree in its wider setting and provide close-up views of the trunk base and the restricted space between the tree and the wall.

3. Observations of the boundary wall

During the site inspection, the boundary wall was observed to exhibit areas of deterioration and irregularity within the brickwork and mortar joints. The photographic evidence records the following visible defects:

- Deteriorated and locally open mortar joints.
- Uneven brickwork and areas of irregular alignment.
- Localised cracking and gaps within the masonry.
- Weathering and biological growth across the brick surfaces and mortar.
- Areas of apparent localised movement requiring consideration in the context of the tree's position.

The defects are visible across several sections of the wall, with the tree growing immediately behind the affected structure.

The close proximity of the tree's established basal structure to the wall is a relevant factor in assessing the potential for ongoing interaction between the tree and the masonry. Root growth and expansion in confined ground conditions may contribute to localised displacement where roots encounter shallow foundations or adjacent structures.

The precise contribution of the tree to each individual defect cannot be quantified without further structural investigation. Nevertheless, the site observations demonstrate a clear physical conflict between the tree's location and the existing boundary structure.

4. Arboricultural assessment

The smoke bush is established in a restricted position immediately adjacent to a traditional brick wall. Its substantial basal structure and proximity to the masonry create an ongoing potential for conflict as the tree and its root system continue to develop.

The wall already exhibits visible deterioration, including defective mortar joints and irregular masonry alignment. The tree's position is therefore considered undesirable in relation to the long-term preservation and maintenance of the wall.

Retention of the tree would leave the existing arrangement unchanged and would not remove the potential for further interaction between its root system and the boundary structure.

Crown reduction or routine pruning would not address the potential conflict at the base of the tree. Root pruning would require careful consideration because severing significant roots could affect the tree's stability and may not provide a reliable long-term resolution.

Having considered the tree's location, its established basal structure, the limited growing space and the observed condition of the wall, removal is considered a reasonable and proportionate management option.

The recommendation to fell the tree is based on its physical relationship with the boundary wall and the objective of preventing further potential damage, rather than on a conclusion that the tree is necessarily dead, diseased or imminently dangerous.

5. Justification for the proposed felling

The proposed removal is supported by the following site-specific considerations.

5.1 Existing damage and maintenance of the wall

The wall exhibits visible defects and deterioration. The close proximity of the tree presents a potential contributing factor to localised movement and a continuing constraint on the inspection, maintenance and repair of the masonry.

5.2 Prevention of further potential damage

Removing the tree would eliminate future growth of its root system and remove this particular source of potential physical interaction with the wall. This would assist in providing suitable conditions for subsequent masonry repairs and ongoing maintenance.

5.3 Unsuitable growing position

The tree occupies a confined planting strip immediately behind the wall. The available space is limited in relation to the established basal structure, making long-term coexistence with the masonry undesirable.

5.4 Limitations of alternative management

Pruning the crown would not resolve the potential conflict at ground level. Root pruning could introduce additional stability concerns and would not necessarily address the underlying problem. Felling is therefore considered the more definitive option for removing the tree-related constraint.

6. Conservation area considerations

The site lies within a designated conservation area, and the contribution of the tree to the local landscape character has been taken into account.

The tree is an ornamental garden specimen growing in close proximity to a boundary wall that forms part of the property's established setting. The proposal is not intended to remove vegetation without justification but to address a specific conflict between an established tree and a deteriorating masonry structure.

The photographs demonstrate the tree's position in relation to the wall and the wider residential setting. Although the tree contributes to the garden's appearance, its retention must be balanced against the practical requirement to maintain the boundary structure and avoid further potential deterioration. Subject to the local planning authority's assessment, removal is considered justifiable in the circumstances described.

7. Photographic evidence

The accompanying photographs form part of this report and support the findings of the site inspection. They illustrate:

- The tree's overall form, crown and position within the garden.
 - The close proximity of the main stems and basal structure to the boundary wall.
 - The restricted ground conditions surrounding the base of the tree.
 - The visible deterioration, irregular alignment and defective mortar joints within the brickwork.
 - The wider relationship between the tree, boundary wall and residential setting.
- The photographs should be read in conjunction with the observations and assessment set out in this report.

8. Proposed works and precautions

The proposed works comprise the felling of the identified smoke bush at ground level by a suitably competent and insured tree contractor.

The works should be undertaken with care to avoid unnecessary damage to the existing wall and surrounding property. Substantial roots adjacent to the wall should not be indiscriminately excavated or removed without considering the potential effects on the masonry and its foundations.

Following removal, the exposed area should be inspected and appropriate repairs to the wall undertaken as necessary. Any replacement planting should be positioned to avoid a recurrence of the same conflict.

The works should proceed only after the applicable conservation area notification requirements and any relevant tree protection restrictions have been addressed.

9. Conclusion and recommendation

The site inspection identified an established smoke bush growing immediately adjacent to a traditional brick boundary wall. The tree occupies a confined growing position, with its substantial basal structure in very close proximity to the masonry.

The wall exhibits visible deterioration, including defective mortar joints, irregular brickwork and areas of apparent localised movement. The accompanying photographs provide supporting evidence of these defects and demonstrate the close spatial relationship between the tree and the affected structure.

While the precise contribution of the tree to individual masonry defects cannot be quantified from a visual inspection alone, the existing arrangement presents a credible potential for continued conflict between the tree's root system and the wall.

Alternative measures, such as crown pruning, would not resolve the potential conflict at ground level. Removal is therefore considered a reasonable and proportionate measure to eliminate future growth of this tree's root system in the immediate vicinity of the wall and to facilitate its inspection, -

repair and maintenance.

Having considered the site observations, the condition of the wall, the tree's location and the conservation area context, the recommendation is to approve the proposed felling of the smoke bush, subject to the local planning authority's determination of the application.

The proposed works are intended to protect the existing boundary structure, facilitate appropriate repairs and allow the garden to be maintained in a manner sympathetic to its surroundings.

Yours sincerely

Chris Matthews

All works are carried out in accordance with BS3998:2010 recommendations for tree work. We maintain public liability insurance up to £5 million. Please note that Conservation Area Planning rules or Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) may be applicable to some trees, requiring local authority consent. We always verify the absence of restrictions prior to commencing any work. If planning permission is necessary, please allow up to eight weeks for a decision.