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9th August 2026

Tree Survey:

Arboricultural Report in Support of Proposed Tree Works

Species: Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
Inspection: Visual ground-level assessment
Tree condition: Poor / Severe decline

Observations

The Sycamore tree was inspected from ground level, with the assessment supported by photographic evidence.

The tree is exhibiting significant physiological decline, with extensive areas of dead and declining growth throughout the crown. A substantial proportion of the upper crown is devoid of foliage, with numerous dead and dying branches evident. The remaining live crown appears sparse and unevenly distributed, indicating a significant reduction in the tree's overall vitality.

There are also extensive areas of abnormal and deteriorating bark, particularly around the lower stem and main structural limbs. These areas display extensive cracking, necrosis, darkened and degraded bark tissue, and areas where the bark appears to be breaking down and exposing underlying wood. The upper stem and primary branch structure also contain numerous dead limbs and sections of declining wood. Several larger limbs appear to have died back considerably, increasing the potential for branch failure, particularly during periods of adverse weather.

The extent and distribution of the symptoms are considered significant and indicate that the tree is undergoing advanced decline rather than normal seasonal dieback.

Possible Pathogen / Disease

The combination of extensive crown dieback, declining foliage and areas of dark, deteriorating bark is consistent with a serious fungal or pathogen-related decline. The bark symptoms may be consistent with sooty bark disease (*Cryptostroma corticale*), which is known to affect Sycamore and can cause extensive bark necrosis, crown dieback and progressive decline. However, a definitive diagnosis cannot be made from visual inspection and photographs alone. Confirmation would require appropriate further investigation and, if necessary, laboratory analysis.

Irrespective of the precise causal pathogen, the current condition of the tree indicates that its physiological health and ability to maintain normal growth have been substantially compromised.

Structural Condition

The extensive crown dieback and presence of numerous dead branches represent a significant deterioration in the tree's structural condition.

The dead and declining upper limbs have an increased potential for failure, particularly during periods of high winds. The progressive deterioration of the stem and bark also warrants concern regarding the long-term structural integrity of the tree.

Given the tree's location in proximity to neighbouring property and areas where people may reasonably be present, the potential consequences of branch or whole-tree failure should be taken into consideration.

Risk Assessment

The tree is considered to be in poor condition with significant and progressive decline. Due to the extent of the crown dieback, the presence of substantial deadwood and the observed deterioration of the stem, the tree has limited prospects for long-term retention in its current condition.

While remedial pruning could remove some of the immediately hazardous deadwood, this would not address the underlying decline or restore the tree's physiological condition. Further significant deterioration can reasonably be expected.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Sycamore tree be removed to ground level and the arising timber and brash removed from site.

Removal is considered the most appropriate long-term management option given:

- The extensive crown dieback and loss of vitality.
- Significant quantities of dead and declining branchwood.
- Extensive stem and bark deterioration.
- Suspected serious fungal/pathogen involvement.
- The progressive nature of the decline.
- The tree's proximity to surrounding property and potential targets.
- The limited likelihood of the tree recovering sufficiently to provide a sustainable long-term structure.

As the tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order, the appropriate consent/notification should be obtained from the Local Planning Authority before any works are undertaken.

Conclusion

The Sycamore is exhibiting advanced physiological decline and significant structural deterioration. The extent of deadwood, crown dieback and stem/bark abnormalities indicate a tree with poor long-term prospects.

The observed symptoms are potentially consistent with sooty bark disease, although this should be regarded as a suspected diagnosis unless confirmed through further specialist investigation.

In my professional opinion, removal of the tree is justified on arboricultural and safety grounds and is recommended as the most appropriate course of action.

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.