

ARBORICULTURAL REPORT

15 Vicarage Lane, Felpham,
Bognor Regis PO22 7DZ

Prepared by

Jonathan Podwell Cert Arb L4(ABC): TechArborA

November 2019





Beechdown Arboriculture Limited
Club Cottage, Top Road, Slindon
Arundel, West Sussex BN18 0RP
Tel/Fax: 01243 814740
Email: info@beechdown.com
Web: www.beechdown.com

CONTENTS

Section	Title	Page No.
1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Statutory controls	1
3.0	Documents provided	1
4.0	Survey format	1
5.0	Risk assessment and survey limitations	2
6.0	Site description	2
7.0	Tree description	3
8.0	Appraisal	3
9.0	Conclusions	3
10.0	Comment	4
11.0	Recommendations	4
12.0	Details	5

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – tree inspection details

Beechdown ref: B/0247/19

15 Vicarage Lane – tree condition report – November 2019

VAT Registration no. 887 1140 26

Registered Office as above Registered in England & Wales no. 5365869 Directors: Jonathan Rodwell NCH (arb), Catherine Bellington ACMA.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I have received instruction from Paul Sparks, of 2a Blakes Road, Felpham, Bognor Regis PO22 7EB, to undertake the inspection of one Turkey oak in the back garden of 15 Vicarage Lane, Felpham, Bognor Regis PO22 7DZ.

- 1.2 **The purpose of the instruction was to carry out a comprehensive inspection of the tree, provide a report detailing its condition and - if structural weakness, disease or dysfunction that could result in branch or tree failure leading to a risk of injury or damage to property is noted – make recommendations for remedial action.**

2.0 STATUTORY CONTROLS

- 2.1 Consultation with the Local Planning Authority confirmed that 15 Vicarage Lane is not within a designated Conservation Area but that the tree is subject to Tree Preservation Order **Bognor No. 5**. Either of the options recommended at section **11.0** will require the consent of the local planning authority.
- 2.2 Under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), with only a few exceptions, it is an offence to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while the nest is in use or being built. Bat species are protected under Section 39 of the 1994 Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (as amended), the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and the 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It is illegal to damage or destroy any bat roost, whether occupied or not, or disturb or harm a bat. Further specialist investigation may be required before undertaking any recommended works.

3.0 DOCUMENTS PROVIDED

- 3.1 No documents provided.

4.0 SURVEY FORMAT

- 4.1 The tree was inspected from the ground, along with a climbed inspection to assess attachment points of main ascending stems and branches, but no specialised decay detection was undertaken. The tree's basic parameters were measured to include

species, height, stem diameter at 1.5m, crown spread and age class.

- 4.2 A visual inspection of the tree was undertaken to assess the crown for any weak structures, deadwood, cavities, poor branch unions or other defects that might affect its stability and safety. The base of the tree was also visually inspected, together with tapping and probing to search for signs of decay, bark death and root lifting.
- 4.3 The recommendations are based on good arboricultural practice and the risk the tree poses to individuals and property in the event of its structural failure i.e. total collapse/falling branches or obstruction of highways and footpaths NOT on the basis of perceived nuisance such as autumn leaf fall or disruption of light levels to buildings and gardens.

5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT AND SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- 5.1 Although the potential risk to someone passing beneath a tree when the tree, or part of it, fails is relatively remote the risk is present. The risk increases significantly in areas of regular or consistent use, such as gardens, footpaths and roads. Where static structures are present the risks become constant and assessment is made as to whether total or partial failure of a tree could lead to damage of such structures.
- 5.2 Within the scope of any tree survey it is a fact that not all crown or stem failure can be covered, particularly in relation to extreme weather conditions when even healthy trees can suffer structural failure. There is also the potential for mature trees to occasionally shed large branches for no discernible reason, even on calm days. Although a relatively rare occurrence this should be acknowledged as a risk that cannot be entirely mitigated.

6.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 6.1 15 Vicarage Lane consists of a detached two-storey dwelling set in broadly level grounds of around 1100m². Other trees and shrubs in the back garden included a 3m high border of bamboo, privet and elder on the eastern boundary; fuchsia, spotted laurel, holly and a mature beech on the southern boundary with a broad belt of sycamore bay and *Viburnum tinus* on the western boundary.

7.0 TREE DESCRIPTION

7.1	Tree number	T1
	Species	Turkey oak (<i>Quercus cerris</i>)
	Height	16m
	Stem diameter	800mm
	Crown spread	N – 4m, S – 4m, E – 4m, W – 4m
	Age class	Mature

A single-stemmed tree in the south-east corner of the grounds and close to the western boundary of 2a Blakes Road. Historically 'topped' at 7m as a mature tree and reduced on subsequent occasions to leave a balanced crown of branches shortened, predominantly, to suitable growth points. A fairly prominent tree that is visible from Vicarage Lane, Blakes Road, Bereweek Road and Admiralty Road.

8.0 APPRAISAL

8.1 Tree inspection details and condition assessments are shown at **Appendix 1**.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Conclusions for relevant sections detailed in the appraisal at **Appendix 1** are detailed below.

- ✦ There was no evidence of significant historic branch or stem failure within the crown that would indicate a greater inherent structural weakness than typical of the species.
- ✦ There were no signs of root plate movement, changes in soil level or disturbances to the rooting area that may indicate a loss of stability and increased risk of windthrow.
- ✦ There was no evidence of recent loss of shelter, i.e. large tree felling, that has resulted in increased exposure.
- ✦ Although largely occluded, poor resistance to decay means that it is quite possible that there are pockets of decay associated with the multiple pruning wounds on the main stem.
- ✦ Extensive decay at the base of the stems at the historic reduction point at 7m means there is an increased risk of stem failure, particularly of the eastern stem, with the likelihood of collapse into the garden of 2a Blakes Road a real possibility.

- ❖ The probe hit non-woody material at the union of the main stem and ascending stems at 7m – it is possible that a cavity at this point has been filled with concrete or cement.
- ❖ Failure of the minor to moderate deadwood in the crown represents a very minor risk.
- ❖ Wood exposed, by squirrel damage, on the upper surfaces of many of the branches will be at greater risk of colonisation by wood decay fungi.

10.0 COMMENT

- 10.1 The tree is locally prominent but not a particularly good specimen or of a quality that represents a significant amenity value.
- 10.2 There is a foreseeable risk of failure of the ascending stems from the decaying 'topping' point at 7m, with the potential for injury or damage to property.
- 10.3 Recent pruning operations made it difficult to assess the vitality of the tree but the loss of photosynthetic area combined with extensive squirrel damage may result in a deterioration in condition.
- 10.4 To retain the tree safely, the ascending stems at 7m will have to be reduced significantly - further affecting the tree's ability to produce energy and exposing more woody tissue to possible colonisation by wood decay fungi.
- 10.5 With regular pruning to restrict its size it may be possible to retain the tree safely but as a pollard rather than in its current form. The tree will have less impact visually but there may be increased wildlife benefits, although typically Turkey oak does not support the variety of flora and fauna that native oaks do.
- 10.6 The other option is to remove the tree and plant a suitable replacement that can reach maturity without requiring regular pruning.

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 **High priority** – work to be completed within **three** months – *subject to Local Planning Authority consent.*
- ❖ **Either** - dismantle and fell to ground level and plant suitable replacement.

History of failure

- ✦ There was no evidence of significant recent branch or stem failure within the crown.
- ✦ The original heavy reduction at 7m, as a mature tree, would have been fairly unsympathetic pruning and may have been as a result of storm-damage.

Ground conditions

- ✦ The site geology is Chalk Formation sedimentary bedrock and the superficial geology is described by the National Soils Resources Institute as a loamy soil with naturally high groundwater.
- ✦ There was no evidence of soil cracking or movement, recent excavation, changes in level or construction activity.

Exposure

- ✦ The tree is fairly exposed to the prevailing winds but recent pruning has reduced its sail area.
- ✦ There was no evidence of any recent large tree removal in the immediate area.

Species characteristics

- ✦ Grows rapidly, even on poor soils.
- ✦ The timber is not as strong or durable as that of the native oaks.

Stem base & surrounding area

- ✦ Growing in unsurfaced ground.
- ✦ No fungal fruiting bodies were present.

Buttresses

- ✦ No visible defects, loose or lifting bark.
- ✦ Tapping with a nylon sounding mallet did not identify obvious areas of decay or dysfunction.
- ✦ No fungal fruiting bodies or exudates were present.

Trunk

- ✦ No visible defects, loose or lifting bark.
- ✦ Tapping with a nylon sounding mallet on the lower stem did not identify obvious areas of decay or dysfunction.

Appendix 1 – Ash (T1) – Inspection details

- ❖ There were several occluded and partially occluded pruning wounds on main stem.
- ❖ No fungal fruiting bodies or exudates were present.

Main union/ Primary ascending stems

- ❖ A union of three main ascending stems from the 7m reduction point.
- ❖ Extensive decay and hollowing at the base of the eastern stem and some hollowing of the southern stem.
- ❖ A probe extended for 250mm through the stem base into the top of the main stem before hitting hard, non-woody material.

Main branches

- ❖ Main branch unions throughout the tree appeared sound with no evidence of obvious enclosed bark or weak attachment visible.
- ❖ All branches shortened – some to suitable growth points and some to dormant buds or left as stubs.
- ❖ Minor to moderate deadwood throughout the crown.
- ❖ Bark wounds to the upper surface of almost all the branches was consistent with squirrel damage.

Minor branches, buds & foliage

- ❖ Tree inspected out of leaf so no foliage was present.
- ❖ Where present buds were typical but difficult to assess extension growth and vitality due to recent pruning operations.