Andrew Belson
Arboricultural Consultant

TREE ASSESSMENT REPORT

2 Spriggs Close, Sawtry, PE28 5FF



8th November 2024

Client: [redacted]

Observations and recommendations following an inspection of trees at the property on 6th November 2024

[redacted]
RCArborA, DipArb RFS, Tech Cert (ArborA)

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1 Introduction

1.1 I am a Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association. (RC Licence No: RC202) and have worked as a consultant for over 20 years. I hold the Arboricultural Association's Technician's Certificate and the Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma, which is a level 6 qualification equivalent to an Honours degree.

1.2 I was instructed by the client to inspect trees at the property.

1.3 The Client's agent submitted an Application to pollard two Ash trees on 8th July 2024 under Tree Preservation Order number TPO 24.94 (land off Louthe Way, Sawtry); this was refused due to the absence of professional evidence to demonstrate the issues described.

1.4 My instructions were:

- To assess the health and condition of the trees
- To identify any hazards and assess the level of risk associated with any hazards found
- On the basis of the information gathered, to provide recommendations for any works required to reduce the level of risk to an acceptable level
- To generally comment on pertinent tree management matters

2 Limitations of Assessment

2.1 As trees and shrubs are living organisms whose health and condition can change rapidly, conclusions and recommendations are only valid for one year. The health, condition and safety of trees should be checked regularly.

2.2 The soil was not examined and no soil samples were taken. Should soil analysis be indicated, this will be recommended in the report.

2.3 No tree can be guaranteed to be safe. So long as trees are retained, zero risk cannot be achieved. The recommendations in this report are based on a reasonable and proportionate response to risk.

3 Survey Findings

Overview

3.1 The trees are growing on the garden boundary, beyond the fence but in agreed shared ownership/responsibility with the neighbouring properties.

3.2 No damage was seen in the main building that could be attributable to trees.

Geology

3.3 Understanding the impact of trees on soil moisture content and considering the potential effects of changes in soil volume on foundations are critical for ensuring both the stability of the built environment and the preservation of retained trees. Chapter 4.2 of the National House Building Council Standards specifically addresses the requirements and considerations related to trees and shrinkable soils. It offers guidance to developers, engineers, and builders on how to assess the risks associated with trees and shrinkable soils in a development site and implement appropriate measures to mitigate these risks effectively.

3.4 The British Geological Survey of England and Wales identifies bedrock geology of: Oxford Clay Formation - Mudstone. No superficial deposits are recorded.

3.5 Oxford Clay gives rise to a soil that is capable of high volumetric change.

Observations

3.6 My detailed observations at my inspection are in the table overleaf:

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Tag	Species	Height (m)	Age Class	TPO?	Observations	Distance from buildings	NHBC Foundation depth recommendation	Considerations	Recommendation
NT1	Ash	14	SM	Yes, part of Group 5	Previously cut at 3m and 7m with multi - stemmed regrowth. 5.5m crown spread. Multi-stemmed form	7.5m from back of garage	1.74m	This is a woodland tree with insufficient space to grow normally. Given the residential setting since the TPO was made, I consider that tree management decisions should reflect the current situation.	Fell and replace
NT2	Elder	7	M	No	Previously cut at 5m. 1.5m crown spread	4.9m from back of garage.	n/a	This is part of the lapsed boundary hedge. It could be managed however you wish.	Could be retained
NT3	Ash	11	SM	Yes, part of Group 5	Recent leaf damage due to Ash Bud Moth. 4m spread. Multi-stemmed form.	6.7m from back of house.	1.81m	This is a woodland tree with insufficient space to grow normally. Given the residential setting since the TPO was made, I consider that tree management decisions should reflect the current situation.	Fell and replace

4 Conclusions

4.1 I do not consider that Ash is a suitable species to be cultivated in such close proximity to a residential dwelling due to its future growth potential both in height and crown spread.

4.2 Doing nothing means the trees may reach a height in excess of 21m. This would result in a wholly unsatisfactory situation.

4.3 Although no damage to the property has been seen to date, we cannot be certain that the foundations are adequate for mature growth. The foundation depth of the dwelling is not known; however, it would need to exceed 1.7m to comply with NHBC Recommendations.

4.4 At the present time, the trees offer minimal visual amenity to the public at large.

4.5 My client applied to pollard or re-pollard the trees. If pollarded, this would effectively remove any public visual amenity (the main factor in considering trees' suitability for inclusion in a TPO).

4.6 Those most affected by the trees are in agreement that some sort of management is required.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Overall, I consider that most pragmatic decision is to fell and replace the trees.

5.2 In this way, the current liveability issues raised can be resolved and the replacement trees can provide the relatively modest screening cover needed.

5.3 I consider pruning would be a poor option.

5.4 Replacement tree species, size and location can be agreed through negotiation with the Local Planning Authority.

References:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 [Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/211]

Mynors, C.; Hall, S. & Nicholls, E. (2023) *The Law of Trees Forests and Hedges* London: Sweet & Maxwell.

Gov.uk (2014) *Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation Areas* (Collection: Planning Practice Guidance) [available from: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas]

British Standard 3998:2010 'Tree work – Recommendations'

Diagnosis of Ill Health in Trees (Strouts and Winter) 1994

Land off Louthe Way, Sawtry Tree Preservation Order 24.1994

Geology Viewer British Geological Survey (on-line resource)