Rebecca Peace

Arboriculture

Website: rebeccapeacearb.com | Telephone: 07810 063 688

Mortgage Reports
Planning & Development Tree Surveys
Tree Condition Surveys
Woodland Surveys & Planning

Tree Safety & Condition Report 2025

Edward House

4 Mill Common, Huntingdon PE29 3AU

31st March 2025
Ref: 310325/RP/EH

Surveyor & Author:
Rebecca Peace, MArborA. HND. Am Horticulture
Professional Member of the Arboricultural Association
LANTRA Accredited Professional Tree Inspector (PTI)
Registered QTRA User
Professional Member of the Consulting Arborists Society (CAS)

The Consulting Arborist Society
Registered User
Arboricultural Association
Professional Member

Contents

1.0 **Introduction**
1.1 Purpose of this Document
1.2 Scope of the Report & Survey
1.3 Birds, Bats & Habitats
1.4 Survey Details & Methodology
1.5 Marking Trees & Mapping
1.6 Validity

2.0 **Status of the Trees**

3.0 **Discussion & Recommendations**
4.0 **Tree Survey Summary:**

Appendices

Appendix 1 Tree Data & Recommendations
Appendix 2 Tree Position Plan
Appendix 3 Key to Tree Data
Appendix 4 Estimated Time Scales Key
Appendix 5 Glossary of Terms & Abbreviations

1.0 Introduction

1.1 **Purpose of this Document:**

This report was commissioned to do the following:

- To assess the health and safety of **all** trees within the boundaries of **Edward House, 4 Mill Common, Huntingdon PE29 3AU**
- To recommend remedial works and to advise on any other concerns regarding the health and safety of the trees

1.2 **Scope of the Report & Survey:**

The scope of the Tree Safety and Condition Report is to offer guidance on the management of trees that have the potential to impact on residents, visitors, buildings and surrounding roads to the site and, in doing, so it provides the landowner with a defendable risk management system that shows:

- A clear audit trail
- A tree risk assessment
- A clear management system to detail what action should be taken to reduce the risk and remove the hazard

The general principles of the tree risk survey have been defined by the National Tree Safety Guidelines document 'Common Sense Risk Management for Trees' this publication is available to download from the Forestry Commission website. **Click here to Download**.

1.3 **Survey Details and Methodology:**

- The survey took place on 31st March 2025
- The survey was conducted by Rebecca Peace: LANTRA accredited Professional Tree Inspector, QTRA Registered User (Quantified Risk Assessment in Trees) and experienced Arboriculturist
- Inspection was made at ground level using Visual Tree Assessment methods. Visual Tree Assessment techniques (VTA[1]) are generally non-invasive (unless open cavities are present which can be probed from ground level)
- All trees on site were inspected for tree health and safety
- Weather Conditions: Clear with sunshine

[1] - DoE publication "The Body Language of Trees a Handbook of Failure Analysis" by Claus Mattheck and Helge Breloer

1.4 **Trees, Groups & Woodlands:**

Details of the trees subject to this survey are recorded in the Data and Recommendation table (Appendix 1) as follows:

- **Trees**: Individual trees of particular interest or those recommended for works
- **Groups**: Sometimes several trees will be assessed as a Group. These groupings are arbitrary and will be due the trees sharing a species, location, characteristic and/or for clarity/brevity. All of the trees within a Group will have been individually inspected but only those trees of particular interest, or those recommended for works, will be recorded individually

- **Woodlands**: These are larger more defined areas of Woodland. For practical reasons, not all trees within a Woodland will have been inspected but the area will have been assessed taking into account the Arboricultural and Ecological environment as a whole. Occasionally, groups of trees within a Woodland may also be grouped, as per the above. Any trees of particular interest, or those recommended for works, will be recorded individually

1.5 **Marking Trees & Mapping:**

The trees subject to this report are clearly identifiable on an interactive Google Map that shows all Tree positions and data. Some will have forestry chalk numbers on site for identification which will correlate with this report. **Click here to access interactive Google Map**.

1.6 **Validity:**

Trees and plants are biological organisms and change with time. This assessment is valid for **36 Months** from the date of inspection, or until a major storm is experienced, after which time a re-inspection is recommended but not always necessary if no obvious damage is noticed.

The contents are intended for the sole use of the clients only. No liability is accepted for their use by any other parties.

1.7 **Birds, Bats & Habitats:**

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended by the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000) provides statutory protection to birds and other protected species that may inhabit trees
- It is essential to check for nesting birds, bat roosts, badgers, and hibernating animals such as hedgehogs under trees before pruning or removing trees as negligent disturbance is an offence under the EC Habitat Directive 1992 and CROW Act 2000
- In general, autumn tree work, in September, October and November, is least disruptive to bats and birds

2.0 Status of the Trees

*Edward House is in the Local Authority area of **Huntingdonshire District Council**.*

2.1 **Tree Preservation Orders:**

There are Tree Preservation Orders in place at Edward House. These are affecting the trees that border Mill Common Road. More information can be found on Huntingdonshire District Council's website - **Click here more details**.

2.2 **Conservation Areas:**

Edward House is in a Conservation Area. More information can be found on Huntingdonshire District Council's website - **Click here more details**.

3.0 Discussion & Recommendations

3.1 **The Risks:**
The trees have been surveyed with practicality and common sense in mind. This is a **Medium** risk target area. Within the survey the hazards have been identified, the associated risks have been evaluated and work recommendations provided to control the risk. For instance, a "Fell" recommendation has been put onto damaged, dead or diseased trees that will impact onto the surrounding areas. If the associated risk is very minor, then no recommendation has been given.

3.2 All other tree pruning works and fells have been recommended for reasons of safety and to ensure the long-term health of the trees and to benefit the long-term development of adjacent trees, as detailed at **Appendix 1**.

3.3 Where a full detailed inspection of trees was inhibited by restricted access or by the presence of ivy, epicormic shoots and/or understory vegetation, as detailed in **Appendix 1**, a concise inspection was carried out and a judgement made on what could be seen.

3.4 On undertaking the recommended works, the Arborist/Tree Surgeon must immediately report any defects that become apparent while climbing or working on the tree/s in question to the relevant manager or supervisor to enable the appropriate remedial action.

4.0 Tree Survey Summary

4.1 **Horse Chestnuts (T1–T8)**
Site Context: This group of Horse Chestnut trees lies within or near an area where development is being considered. The trees form a prominent landscape feature and contribute positively to local amenity and ecological value.

4.2 **General Overview (T1, T3–T8):**
The Horse Chestnuts within this group range in height from 18 to 19 metres and are primarily mature to over-mature specimens. While they are slowly approaching the later stages of their Safe Useful Life Expectancy (SULE), there are currently no immediate structural or physiological issues in most of the trees (***excluding T2***). The crowns are full and generally healthy, providing valuable ecological benefits, visual interest and screening benefits.
Horse Chestnuts (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) are naturalised in the UK, thought to have been introduced by the Romans. While they have little commercial timber value, their presence in the landscape is significant due to their size, shape and aesthetic character.
However, Horse Chestnuts are known to be slightly brittle by nature and tend occasionally to shed large limbs, particularly in summer months or during periods of high moisture stress. This needs to be taken into account when considering their proximity to people, buildings and proposed development. Just to add that they were pollarded between 30 and 35 years ago by the previous owner.

T5 to T8 – Proximity to New Build and Landscape Considerations:
Trees T5 to T8 are situated close to a newly constructed house. Although the trees currently appear to be in fair condition with no significant structural or physiological concerns, it is important to note that **the landscaping around the new build has not yet been completed**.
Given the likely extent of shallow rooting in these Horse Chestnuts, **any landscaping works within their Root Protection Areas (RPAs) must be approached with extreme caution**. Horse Chestnut roots are typically close to the surface and highly sensitive to disturbance.
It is strongly advised that any landscaping within the RPAs is kept to a minimum, avoiding excavation, cultivation or regrading of soil. Where soft landscaping is required (e.g. turfing or planting), it should be carried out using hand tools only and surface treatments should be permeable to maintain soil aeration and moisture levels.

Hard landscaping, changes in soil level or installation of services within the RPA should be avoided entirely unless a no-dig method is proposed and agreed upon through an Arboricultural Method Statement. Even minor disturbance could result in root damage and long-term decline.
Protective fencing and clear signage should remain in place during all phases of landscaping to prevent inadvertent encroachment into these sensitive areas.

4.3 **T2 – Removal Recommended:**
T2 is showing clear signs of advanced fungal decay. Two large ***Ganoderma*** brackets were observed at the base, along with **Dryad's Saddle** (*Polyporus squamosus*) approximately 1 metre up the stem. Both fungi cause **white rot**, weakening the internal structure of the tree by breaking down cellulose and lignin.
The presence of both species, particularly at basal and lower stem positions, suggests established decay with the potential for structural failure. In light of its condition, proximity to existing or proposed housing and the potential for unpredictable failure, **dismantling and removal are recommended**.

4.4 **Crown Management of Retained Trees (T1, T3–T8):**
For the remaining trees, particularly T1, T4, and T5, where canopies extend over open land, **a sensitive crown reduction** may be appropriate. This would reduce end-weight and mitigate the risk of future branch drop, especially in larger limbs. However, it is important to stress the following:

- **All pruning work should follow BS3998:2010** standards for tree work.
- Horse Chestnuts **do not tolerate major works well**, so any reduction must be light, well-targeted and spread over time if necessary to minimise stress.
- Retaining as much live canopy as possible is essential to maintain tree vitality and reduce the likelihood of opportunistic pathogens or decline.

4.5 **Considerations for Proposed Development:**
If development is to proceed within the vicinity of these trees, several critical considerations must be addressed:

1. **Foundation Design:**
   Any new construction within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of these Horse Chestnuts must use low-impact foundation methods such as:
   - **Piled foundations**
   - **Raft foundations**
   - **Screw piles**

These should be designed and installed in a way that avoids damaging the roots, especially larger structural roots. Traditional trench foundations are **not appropriate**.

2. **Tree Protection:**
   Protective fencing should be erected outside the RPA as per **BS5837:2012** guidelines. No storage of materials, machinery movement or ground compaction should occur within the protected zones.

3. **Target Area Management:**
   New structures, particularly housing or regularly occupied buildings, **should not be placed directly beneath existing tree canopies**, especially in areas where there is a risk of **branch drop**. Given the nature of Horse Chestnuts to shed heavy limbs occasionally, even healthy ones, this presents a clear hazard that must be mitigated through design.

4.6 **Conclusion and Long-Term Outlook:**

While these trees are moving toward the latter stages of their lifecycle, most are currently stable and provide significant amenity. With careful management, they can be retained for many more years. However, their presence must be considered alongside the risks they pose, especially in the context of new development.

Regular monitoring (every 18–24 months), light crown management and thoughtful site planning will help ensure these trees remain a safe and valuable feature of the landscape.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Tree Data & Recommendations - Edward House - 2025

Click here to access interactive Google Map

Google Maps Tree Position	Tree No.	Common Name	Height (m)	Age Class	Structural Condition	Physiological Condition	Recommendations	Notes	Photo 1	Photo 2
Tree Position	T1	Horse Chestnut	18	Over Mature, Mature	Fair	Fair		There are no current issues with the trees in this group (**T1 to T4 excluding T2**). While they are mature specimens and slowly approaching the latter stages of their Safe Useful Life Expectancy (SULE), this process is gradual and they could remain in good condition for many years to come. At present, these trees continue to provide significant benefits to the landscape both visually and ecologically. Although Horse Chestnuts are not native, they are considered naturalised in the UK, believed to have been introduced by the Romans. They may not hold high value in the timber market or other commercial uses but they are undeniably majestic trees, valued for their impressive form and strong contribution to the character of the area. ***For further details, please refer to section 4 of the report.***	Photo Photo	Photo Photo
Tree Position	T2	Horse Chestnut	18	Mature	Fair	Fair	Dismantle and remove.	Two large Ganoderma brackets were found at the base of the tree, along with signs of Dryad's Saddle (*Cerioporous squamosus*) about a metre up the main stem. Both of these fungi are associated with decay and can cause serious structural issues over time, particularly in older trees like this mature Horse Chestnut. Ganoderma species — most likely *G. australe* is known to cause white rot, breaking down both lignin and cellulose in the wood. This type of decay often starts in the roots or the base of the trunk and can gradually weaken the tree from the inside out. The size and presence of these brackets suggest the fungus is well-established, and there's a chance that internal decay is already underway in the lower stem or root flare.	Photo Photo	Photo Photo Photo

Google Maps Tree Position	Tree No.	Common Name	Height (m)	Age Class	Structural Condition	Physiological Condition	Recommendations	Notes	Photo 1	Photo 2
								Dryad's Saddle, while generally less aggressive, also causes white rot and can further compromise the tree's structure, particularly when it appears alongside other decay fungi. Its presence higher up the stem may indicate that decay is spreading upwards. In the context of potential development on or near the site, the presence of these fungi raises significant concerns. Given the mature age of the tree and the likelihood of internal decay, this tree would not be considered safe near to new housing or areas of high occupancy. While further investigation such as sonic tomography or resistograph testing could confirm the extent of decay, the most appropriate course of action in this situation would likely be removal, both for safety and to accommodate the proposed development.		
Tree Position	T3	Horse Chestnut	18	Mature	Fair	Fair		This tree is slightly younger than the surrounding trees with a slightly smaller crown.	Photo	Photo Photo
Tree Position	T4	Horse Chestnut	19	Over Mature, Mature	Fair	Fair		This tree is a very nice shape. It's been undermanaged which has been beneficial. Very large tree but as stated previously, it gives value to the landscape.	Photo	Photo Photo
Tree Position	T5	Horse Chestnut	18	Mature	Fair	Fair		No issues	Photo	Photo Photo
Tree Position	T6	Horse Chestnut	18	Mature	Fair	Fair		Larger tree but no issues	Photo	Photo
Tree Position	T7	Horse Chestnut	19	Mature	Fair	Fair		Larger tree but no issues	Photo	Photo Photo
Tree Position	T8	Horse Chestnut	19	Mature	Fair	Fair		With the new housing construction nearby, there have been slight changes in soil levels and some ground disturbance within the Root Protection Area (RPA). However, the tree is currently in a fair condition and no physiological or structural problems are evident currently.	Photo	Photo

Google Maps Tree Position	Tree No.	Common Name	Height (m)	Age Class	Structural Condition	Physiological Condition	Recommendations	Notes	Photo 1	Photo 2
Tree Position	T9	Lime	17	Mature, Early Mature	Fair	Fair		Third party building built within the RPA of this tree. However, judging the age of both the tree and the building, it would appear that the tree will have grown up around the building. If the foundations of the building are good, this tree will not be a problem.	Photo	Photo
Tree Position	T10	Lime	20	Mature	Good	Good		Still quite a young tree. This has been unmanaged but this is probably the best thing for it. The tree is in an area where lower growth is beneficial for screening and noise abatement from the busy road.	Photo	

Appendix 2: Tree Position Plan - Edward House - 2025

[Click here to access interactive Google Map]



Appendix 3: Key to Tree Data

Google Map Location: Link to the trees exact position on Google Maps.

Tree Number: Trees are recorded as T1, T2 etc. Groups as G1, G2 etc.

Common Name: The English name of the tree species.

Height: In metres

Age Class: The tree was ascribed to one of six age classes as follows:

- **Young** - The first third of the estimated life expectancy
- **Semi Mature** - The second third of the estimated life expectancy
- **Early Mature** - The stage between second and last third of life expectancy
- **Mature** - The last third of the estimated life expectancy
- **Over Mature** - In slow decline
- **Veteran** - - Veteran (or near veteran status) trees have no precise definition, but are trees considered to be of biological, aesthetic or wildlife interest, because of their age or trees in the ancient stage of their lives or trees that are old relative to others of the same species. Special measures, such as increasing the tree protective zone distances and selective surgery could significantly increase their useful life expectancies.
  NB: *There may be some overlapping with the above categories.*

Physiological Condition: This refers to the evident health of the tree (Physiological) and if any apparent diseases, pests or damaged areas are present within the tree. Abiotic and biotic factors are both recorded.

Structural Condition: This refers to any defects within the main stem and structure of the tree:

- **Excellent** - Tree is without any visible symptoms
- **Good** - No apparent problems
- **Fair** - Minor problems
- **Poor** - Major problems
- **Dead** - Dead

Recommendations: Prescriptions for remedial actions to alleviate problems or defects within the tree. Recommendations to fell are normally to ground, level unless specified.

Photo: Link to photograph of Tree.

Appendix 4: Estimated Time Scales

It is strongly emphasised that these categories and figures are only guidelines which are applicable under normal circumstances only. The occurrence of extreme weather and other events beyond one's control do occur and so would have to take priority over recommended work.

Urgent

Target completion – within 24hrs

- Making safe of storm damaged trees in adverse weather conditions
- Large limbs snapped and hung up over high vehicular and pedestrian flow
- Trees that pose imminent danger to people or property

High Priority

Target completion – within 2 months

- Dead, dying, diseased and dangerous in high pedestrian and traffic flow areas
- Tree branches below 2.5m over high pedestrian flow footpaths
- Tree branches below 5.2m over high traffic flow roads
- Tree branches causing damage to property
- Trees with root plate movement

Medium Priority

Target completion – within 2 years

- As High Priority but without causing damage to person or property and in low-risk areas
- Snapped limbs/branches on public open space with low pedestrian access

Low Priority

Target completion –2 years+

- All other general tree maintenance work that is causing no risk of harm to persons or property

Appendix 5: Glossary of Terms & Abbreviations

Compression fork/Co-dominant stem: Can be a failure point at a fork between two branches or limbs, which, as they grow, press against each other, causing a build-up of stresses similar to the effect you would get if a wedge were hammered into the fork. Increased end-loading as the limbs grow can lead to the fork failing.

Cracked bark: Another indicator of structural weakness in the wood. It can be on the surface of reaction growth that has grown rapidly, or it can show a shearing failure point, where the load on a branch/limb becomes too great and causes the grain of the wood to separate and fail.

Deadwood: Twigs or branches in the crown of the tree which have died off. This can indicate the tree's inability to transport fluid and/or nutrients to its extremities signifying that the tree is under stress or has failing systems. It can also take place naturally when a branch affects a process known as "self-pruning". This occurs when the energy needed to sustain the live branch outweighs the energy it produces.

Decay: This can be minor, such as on the surface of a shallow wound, or severe, with large sections of the trees structure being decayed. It is a problem that can progress to the point where the tree collapses.

Epicormic growth: This can sometimes indicate a problem within the tree's systems. Epicormic growth is produced by the tree to gain a greater ability to photosynthesise when it needs extra resources. Some trees, such as Lime, produce epicormic growth, particularly from the base, as part of their natural growth habit.

Lean: A lean does not necessarily mean inherent instability but when a tree's stem loses structural integrity, it can become a hazard, especially if the weakness is on the side to which the tree is leaning.

Loosened B**ark:** This indicates a problem under the surface in either the wood or the inner layers of bark (cambium). Bark can fall away from decaying wood behind it or can start to die off due to a range of reasons (bacterial infections etc). The bark can then no longer transport fluid or nutrients around the tree.

Mechanical Damage: Damage caused by non-biological means i.e. vehicle impact or damage caused by animals trying to eat bark. Damage of this kind can penetrate the structure and is more often found on the surface of the tree.

Reaction wood/growth: Where weakness or decay within a tree occurs, the tree will grow material to compensate for it. It is often seen as 'cable' like structures with patches of uneven bark which indicate irregular growth patterns. Another form of reaction growth can be seen as 'bulges' on a trees structure. Large amounts of reaction growth indicate advanced decay or weakness within the tree structure.

Weak unions: The unions between the stem (trunk) and structural limbs or branches sometimes develop weakly, and as the tree ages can become unstable. This can be exacerbated when the tree is affected by other problems. Also, certain tree species are prone to developing weak unions.

Rebecca Peace

Arboriculture