

Broomhill Tree Services

Tree Surgeons and Consultancy

Fully-Insured *Established 1988*

BSc. Bio. HNC. Arb.

Contact: Vicky or Richard

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Mr & Mrs Mills
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4th August 2003

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**RE: ARBORICULTURAL REPORT FOR ONE OAK TREE ON THE
BOUNDARY OF THE GROUNDS OF 230 HIGHAM COMMON ROAD,
HIGHAM, BARNSLEY, S75 1PF.**

With regard to your instructions to proceed with the Tree Report on one individual oak tree on a rear side boundary of the site. The purpose of the report will be the following:-

1. An assessment of the biological and structural integrity of the tree.
2. The potential influence on the tree by a proposed development.

If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me:

Yours sincerely

Vikki Meller (Arboricultural Advisor)

Broomhill Tree Services

331 Glosson Road Sheffield S10 2HP

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Introduction

This report refers only to the conditions prevailing on the date the site was surveyed (trees are living organisms subject to change). During the survey period the weather conditions were sunny and clear. Visibility was good and there was access to the base of the tree despite the presence of the boundary hedge (Elder, Privet and Hawthorn).

All investigation was visual and from the ground and no aerial inspections were carried out. The Date of the Inspection was 04/08/03.

Legal constraints

The tree is currently subject to a Tree Preservation Order (1.1999. T3), which is a Planning Restriction preventing any unauthorised felling or pruning; it also means that the tree should be adequately protected from damage. The site falls under the jurisdiction of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and the Tree Officer for the Area is Mr Frank Robinson.

Re: **Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, The Head of Planning Services, Central offices, Kendray Street, Barnsley, S70 2IN. Designated Planning Officer Mr Frank Robinson - Enquiries: 01226 772557/770770**

Value

The tree is a high value to the site at a locally as well as providing wildlife habitat, it is a large old boundary Oak tree of spreading habit and is an excellent specimen both visually and in terms of its health.

Tree Species Characteristics Relevant To This Site

Native Oaks - oak trees have very durable heartwood, which reduces the risk of extensive decay, although several specific fungi are still able to attack the tree. Shading or drought stress may cause the tree to shed individual branches (as a result of wound rot) and stressed trees may also shed branches. Stressed trees are also at risk from scale insects (*Kermes quercus*) and the canker fungi *Bulgaria inquinans* *Stereum rugosum*. Failure of oaks (both by up rooting or stem failure) is relatively rare although large branch failure is less so, especially in or after severe gales. Oaks are able to root deeply if necessary and can thrive on most soils. Oak trees are not tolerant of root disturbance, due to the number of decay causing fungi which are able to infect root wounds and/or root stressed trees.

Scope of Inspection

For the purposes of the report the following details have been listed on the attached sheet(s) for trees inspected

Reference No. : Each Tree (T) or group of trees (G) is allocated a number.

Species : Where appropriate the full botanical name (genus and species) is given; where identification is ambiguous only the family name (genus) of each tree has been recorded.

Age Class : The age of the tree was estimated using the surveyors professional experience and placed in the following categories;

- > **Overmature** - Crown starting to break up and decrease in size.
- > **Mature** - More or less at full height, but still increasing in girth fairly rapidly. This category may be extended into the **Late Maturity** class, whereby the tree is of more or less full height and large girth, but increasing only slowly
- > **Semi mature** - Between 1/3 and 2/3 of the expected ultimate height
- > **Young** - Established tree up to 1/3 the expected ultimate height.

Existing Height: The current height of the tree was measured using a Clinometer

DBH: The diameter at breast height was measured at the standard height of 1.3 metres above soil level.

Crown Spread: This is measured along the North-South (N-S) and East-West (E-W) axis.

Condition: A general Arboricultural account of the tree's health and form based on the observations on site. The tree is then placed in one of the following categories;

- > **Good** - Full healthy crown, but possibly including some suppressed branches or minor physical damage.
- > **Reasonable** - Slightly reduced leaf cover, minor deadwood or isolated areas of more extensive dead wood.
- > **Poor** - Overall sparse leafing or extensive dead wood
- > **In Decline** - Large areas of the crown are dead

Note -The assessment of overall condition also considers other factors, including the appearance of the trunk and branches -splits and/or breaks; potentially weak structural features such as forks, crossing branches, occurrences of cavities, decay and physical damage to stem or branches.

Remarks: Where applicable specific problems/defects associated with a particular genus of trees may be recorded. This may include consideration of the root plate area and trunk/soil interface - cracking, mounding, presence of fungi as well as an examination of previous management practices such as pollarding, crown reduction/thinning, etc. The intensity/severity of the problem/defects will be recorded individually.

Geological report

I have no information about the soil type at the site, this being so the report is based on a soil plasticity index of 27% +.

Reference No. T1

Species: Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*)

Age Class: Mature

Existing Height: 9.3 m

DBH: centimetres 190 cm

Crown spread: The crown is low and spreading, since it has ample room to develop without restriction (spread 11.7 m and 12.6 m)

Condition - Good

The tree is growing to the far end of the rear garden of the property and is located on the lower side boundary between a semi wild grassed and herbaceous flower area and an open field (nettles and grasses). There is no hard standing around the root plate and the only path ways are cut grass and these not frequently used. The tree is in a boundary of Hawthorn (*Crataegus mongyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) which gives way to Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), further up the garden none of these plants seem to be interfering with the tree in any way. The fence line passes along side the tree, which is old wooden post and rail with top wire and barb wire, 'filled in' on the lower portion with sheets of corrugated iron held in place by large stones. The fence is very low impact and appears to have had no affect on the tree. The only other 'structure' immediately near the base of the tree is a row of bricks to mark the edge of the grass path, but these have been placed on the surface of the ground and are having no affect on the site.

The root plate area, base of the tree and stem all appear to be in good condition, there is no evidence of root disturbance (girdled or damaged roots at the base) and no sign of any stem damage. There is a lean from the vertical towards the field, but the tree has coped well with this and laid down additional wood at the area around the bend (there is nothing to suggest the presence of decay at this area), and there is no sign of stress (buckling or cracking). There is a slight difference in soil level between the garden and the field, but once again the tree has coped with this and there are no signs of any problems. There is a minor amount of epicormic growth on the lower stem but not enough to indicate root stress. The client has stated that the area can be damp but there is no evidence of any root problems around the base or in the crown.

The only evidence of root disturbance is a recently dug trench (2 m depth) although this trench is 2 m beyond the drip line, there are exposed roots evident, with a strong possibility that they belong to the Oak, due to the close proximity. The sensitive, live roots are located around the edge of the root plate and are therefore at risk. These roots should not be allowed to dry out and die. The spoil heap has been placed within the drip line, which is not advisable, since there is a high possibility it will lead to increased soil compaction.

4.

The crown of the tree is in excellent condition, with full leaf cover and only minor amounts of deadwood (to be expected). Minor fire damage has caused some damage on the underside of several lower branches on the garden side, according to the client the damage occurred several years ago and it appears to be well healed. There is a minor amount of fungal decay on one of the small dead branches, while the fungus was not positively identified, by its colour and growth habit, it is not one of the major decay causing type but a saprophytic organism restricted to dead wood only. Saprophytic fungal organisms are common on deadwood in any healthy crown.

The site appears to be undisturbed generally and the Oak tree has benefited from this and grown into a healthy attractive specimen that is an important asset, both to the site and to the wider area.

Recommendations

This oak tree is in good condition at the time of writing this report, there is only minor crown damage for which the cause is known (garden fire) and a small amount of dead wood, which is consistent with the age of the crown. The tree has had no pruning regime imposed upon it and the site is relatively undisturbed, so there can have been little root stress and little root compaction (possible animal, related to possible past use of field). The area is said to be moderately damp at certain times of the year, but there is no evidence that the site has been wet enough to have had an adverse affect on the tree and indeed the presence of the tree may have prevented the site from becoming water logged.

The potential problems for the tree are related to the planned development of the site, with the intention to build houses on the field area.

The tree has been identified has a very important specimen that should be retained for the benefit of the area (and the future development) and therefore has been issued with Tree Preservation Order. I agree that the tree is a handsome, mature specimen and that it is in excellent condition and should be retained.

Since it has been decided that the tree should be retained, it is vital that it is protected throughout the development process. The tree will be at risk through out building work and then from the owners of the new property closest to the tree (there is often pressure from new owners to severely cut back crowns that they perceive are interfering with their property).

The most important consideration is the root plate area. A 2 m deep trench has already been dug and although this is out side the drip line the spoil from the trench has been piled within the drip line.