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Arboricultural Report:

Tree Condition Survey and Risk Assessment

Location:
1567
Hawthorn Croft
Grange Court
Wombwell
S73 0EZ

Prepared for: Greenbelt Group Ltd., 4335 Park Approach, Thorpe Park, Leeds LS15 8GB

Date of Survey:
25 November 2020

Weather Conditions: Cloudy, sunny intervals

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1. Summary and Recommendations

This report presents the results of a survey of a woodland for risk assessment, undertaken at Hawthorn Croft, Grange Court, Wombwell, S73 0EZ

The survey includes a site description and various photographs as well as a Tree Location Plan. These contain all the essential information required to address the current tree safety issues.

The woodland around the site was classed as one group to be assessed. The survey involved assessing as many of the trees as possible given the access limitation and identifying any relevant defects (decay, cavities, cracks, fungi and other pathogens). The survey assessed the risks posed by any defective trees, considering many factors including the possible consequences of any predictable failure. Recommendations for remedial work are made along with a work priority – as a timescale - according to the risk presented. It is recommended to resurvey this site within 12 months from the date of this report.

Recommendations:

- **Fell Laburnum at entrance to site to a 2m stem. Location is marked in the tree location plan. – to be completed within 6 months of the date of this report.**

- **Assess the whole site at regular intervals by a suitably qualified / experienced person within 12 months.**

2. Scope of survey

The survey considered tree condition and most importantly the risks posed by the trees to persons and property, with recommendations to manage those risks. In some cases, recommendations may be made purely for pragmatic reasons, rather than risk management. The survey did not consider in any detail the impact of tree roots on soils and structures. According to the instruction given by Tariq Saeed, this survey was only to assess semi-mature and mature trees.

3. Site Description and General Risk Assessment

The site consists of the grounds around a recently developed block of apartments. A drive enters from the east where it turns off from Park Street which is a major road with frequent occupancy of moving vehicles. The building is located central to the site with parking to the north and east of the building. To the east, between the parking and the main road is an area of mature trees grown on amenity grassland. To the west of the building is amenity grassland and semi-mature trees along the western boundary and mature woodland making up the southern section of the site. Over the southern boundary is further woodland in other ownership, and one large residential property to the southeast. The main targets of concern

are parked vehicles on site, the busy road to the east and neighbouring residential properties to the north and southeast.

Fig 1: Views from within the site and from the main road to the east, showing the general character of the site.

4. Legal status of trees on site

Before any work is to be undertaken, it should be determined beforehand whether there is any legal protection in the form of a tree preservation order (TPO) or a conservation area. If there is legal protection in place, then a planning application must be made to the appropriate planning authority. Failure to do this can result in an unlimited fine.

5. Presentation of data

A Tree Location Plan shows the approximate location of the few trees that are highlighted in this report. The discussion gives photographs and descriptions of these trees and the risks they pose.

6. Discussion

The majority of the trees on site were found to be in good condition.

- Some of the horse chestnut trees have some signs of bleeding canker. This should be monitored, but at this stage, there is no remedial work necessary on these.

- A couple trees to north of the site have been heavily reduced, but are now presenting regrowth. One of these is an ash which now has a fungal fruiting body at the base. This was identified as *Pholiota aurivella*. This is unlikely to affect the stability of the tree, especially as the tree has been crown reduced.

- There is a Laburnum to the northeast with extensive bark necrosis which is posing a risk of failure towards the drive. This should be felled within 6 months of the date of this report.

- There trees along the main road to the east are in good condition, however the ash at the south east end should be monitored for signs of Ash Dieback.

Fig 2: This laburnum near the entrance to the site is in poor condition with extensive bark necrosis and subsequent decay starting to take hold. This creates a risk of failure of the large limbs which extend toward the drive. This tree should be felled to a 2m stump.

Fig 3: These trees on the main road are currently found to be in good condition. However, the tree at the far end is an Ash. This should be monitored for signs of Ash Dieback as this tree could become a hazard in the future.

7. Tree Location Plan

Hawthorne Croft

21-11-11 - 1567

Tree Survey Nov 2020

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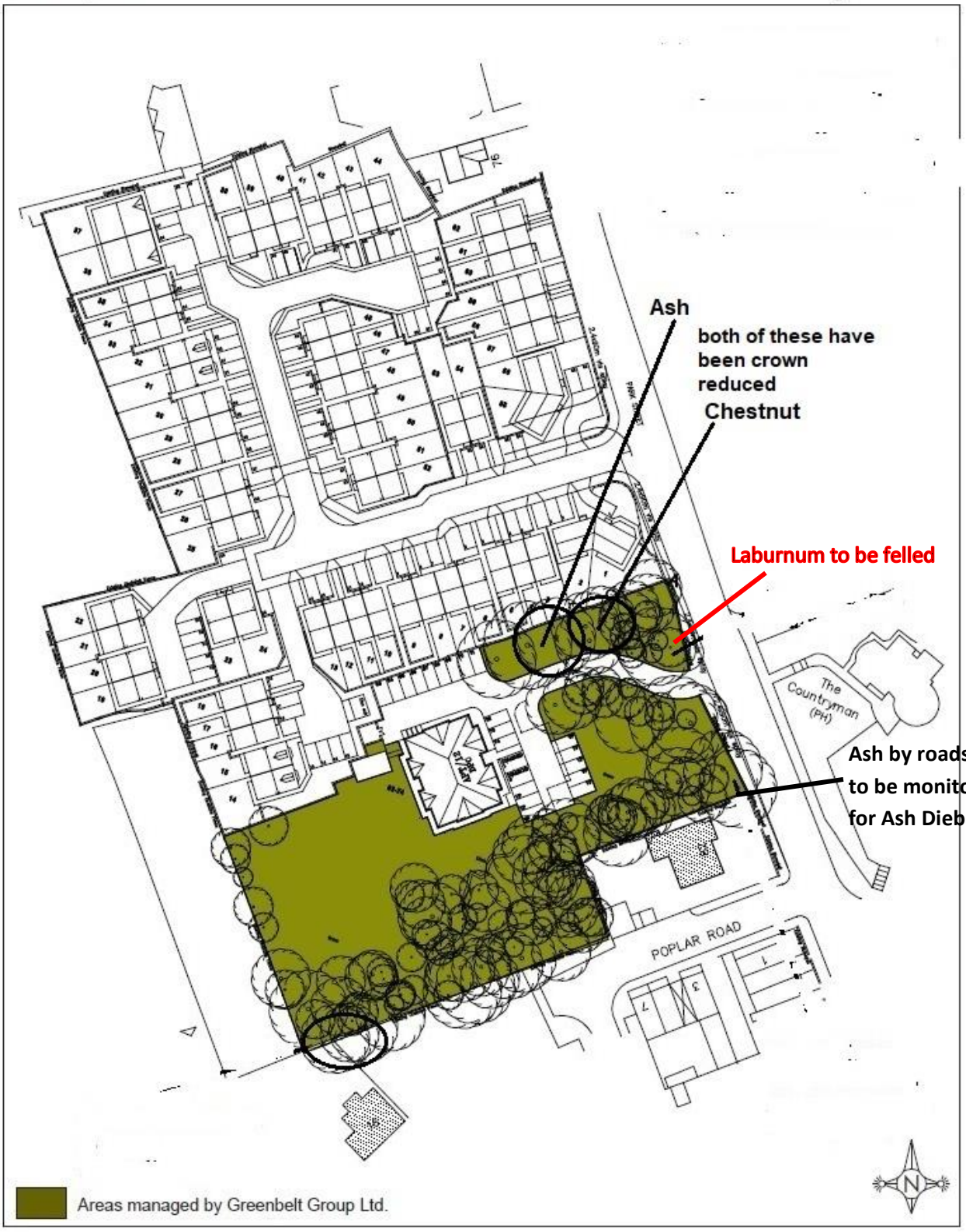

8. Additional Information

8.1 Qualifications and experience

Tashi Fletcher holds a Level 4 Diploma in Arboriculture completed at Tree Life AC and awarded by ABC. He holds a Professional Tree Inspector Certificate of Competence awarded by Lantra. He has seven years of continuous experience working in the arboricultural industry.

8.2 Survey method

Each tree was assessed individually, from ground level only, without use of any invasive decay detection techniques. Acoustic testing for weaknesses was performed in some instances, using a nylon hammer. Where decay or cavities were found or suspected, the extent of these was investigated using a thin metal probe.

Dimensions included the height and the diameter of each tree at 1.3 m above ground level. These were estimated. A careful assessment was made of the potential ‘targets’ that each tree might hit, if either falling or shedding limbs and where relevant this was noted in the comments section.

The overall form and structure of each tree was considered, and this included consideration of the degree of shelter within which it grew, and the implications of any change in that sheltered situation. Surrounding ground was examined for any evidence of root-plate movement, and for the presence of decay fungi - which in some cases may be found a significant distance from the stem (but still above the rooting area).

The stem and canopy were then examined systematically from the stem base to the branch tips. This examination considered: the structural form of the various visible parts of the tree; specific structural concerns such as cavities, cracks, deadwood and decay strips; and signs of any potentially harmful pathogens (fungal, bacterial or other). Where present, foliage was assessed as an indicator of tree vigour and vitality**.**

Trees along the site boundaries were also inspected from beyond the boundary wherever possible.

8.3 Caveats and limitations

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No reliance should be given to any non-arboricultural observations, which are made from the standpoint of a layperson.

The survey and all observations were made from ground level only. No soil samples were taken.

It was not necessary to accurately measure all stem diameters and heights. Estimates were made and recorded as such.

Observations were valid at the time they were made. However, trees are dynamic and growing structures that experience changes affected by time, weather and other factors; even those in good condition can fail under average conditions. Regular informal inspections can help to identify potential problems before they become acute.

8.4 Proportionate and defendable risk management

(a) Risk – general

The purpose of this report is to identify any foreseeable and unacceptable risks currently presented by trees on this site, and to outline a plan for their future management.

Risk is found in many aspects of life. Trees are in fact shown to present an extremely low overall level of risk to the public. The chance of being killed by a tree or branch falling has been shown to be around one in 10 million – a much lower risk than that presented by many of our common everyday activities.

While it is important to manage risks from trees, the tendency towards being over cautious should be resisted. Reasonable tree risk management should be proportionate, based upon balancing the risk that trees present with the considerable benefits they bring to landscape, environment and human wellbeing. This is the core concept behind the National Tree Safety Group's 2011 publication "Common sense risk management of trees": a condensed version of this guidance, suitable for mid-sized landowners, can be downloaded at http://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/FCMS025.pdf/$FILE/FCMS025.pdf

(b) Risk – zones and 'target areas'

The risk presented by a tree is determined not only by the condition of the tree, but also by the potential for any defect to cause harm to persons or property. A heavily decayed tree in woodland, far from any footpaths, presents an extremely low risk despite its condition. Similarly, in residential gardens, trees close to roads and thoroughfares present a greater risk than those in underused areas of the back garden.

On some sites, it is a straightforward matter to define the high and low risk zones within the site. On other sites it is more useful to consider the 'target area' of each tree individually. In either case, the zones or target areas can then be used when planning the necessity/priority of remedial works, and the frequency of inspection intervals.

(c) Risk - Site-specific

On this site, with varied usage levels and many trees either weighted towards or away from higher use areas, it was most practical to consider each tree's 'target area' individually. Where a tree was likely to impact upon a particular target this was noted in the comments section. This has helped inform recommendations on remedial works and inspection intervals.

(d) Risk – A note about deadwood

It is natural for healthy trees to have some dead branches in their canopy. While there is a greater risk of failure of a dead branch, this deadwood is ecologically valuable. For this reason, the presence of deadwood has been noted in the survey, but its removal has only been recommended where it is likely to impact upon targets.

8.5 Law, inspection intervals and expertise

Tree owners are responsible for harm caused to people or property by their trees. They have a duty to take 'reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that cause a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury to persons or property'. While this may appear somewhat vague, the courts have attempted to define 'reasonable care' as that of 'a reasonable and prudent landowner'.

How often should a 'reasonable and prudent landowner' inspect their trees, and to what level of expertise?

There is no definitive guidance on this, but the courts appear to indicate that this may in part be proportional to the size and situation of landowner, and the expertise and resources available to them. It should also be guided by the potential for the trees to present a risk (**see previous sections).** Thus, a site with trees adjacent to a playground, or to thoroughfares that are busy with traffic, should have those trees frequently and thoroughly inspected by an appropriately qualified individual. By contrast, the homeowner with an isolated rural property might be considered 'reasonable and prudent' if they themselves simply looked at their trees once a year for defects obvious to the untrained eye.

8.6 Wildlife considerations and law

Tree management works must be planned to ensure they do not contravene the following wildlife legislation:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

One combined effect of the above legislation is that tree work operations must be planned to avoid disturbance to nesting, breeding or roosting birds, or to bats and their roosts. The bird nesting season is officially from 1st March to 31st July. All wild birds are protected, and all 18 bat species found in the UK are afforded European Protected Species status.

8.7 Standards of tree work

Unless otherwise specified, all tree work recommended in this report should be carried out in accordance with the British Standard *BS 3998: 2010 Tree work – Recommendations*.

9. Reference List

1. The National Tree Safety Group (2011) *Common sense risk management of trees*. Edinburgh, Forestry Commission.

2. *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*. London, HMSO.

3. *The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012*. London, HMSO.

4. *Forestry Act 1967*. London, HMSO.

5. *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*. London, HMSO.

6. *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010*. London, HMSO.

7. *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2011*. London, HMSO.

8. *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*. London, HMSO.

9. British Standards Institution (2010) *BS 3998: 2010 Tree work – Recommendations*. London, BSI Standards Ltd.