MDJ ARBORICULTURAL CONSULTANCY LIMITED

Arboricultural ASSOCIATION
Professional Member

VALID TREE RISK-BENEFIT SUMMARY REPORT

Veteran Oak, Springfield Park, North Parade, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 2BQ

Prepared For:	Hunters Group
Local Authority:	Horsham District Council (HDC)
Document reference:	MDJAC-22.111-VTRBSR-01
Date:	November 2023
Revision:	01

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S1. This VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Summary Report (VTRBSR) has been instructed by Hunters Group; the Managing Agent of the subject property: Springfield Park, North Parade, Horsham West Sussex, RH12 2BQ.

S2. This report is intended to inform The Client of the condition of the surveyed tree stock, an assessment of the risk it poses to users of the site, and makes arboricultural risk-mitigation recommendations where necessary for all trees subjected to a 'Detailed' inspection, as described within the appended VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management Policy at **Appendix 1**.

S3. One individual English oak was assessed in accordance with the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management and Assessment methodology provided at **Appendix 2**.

S4. The subject tree is afforded statutory protection by virtue of designation 'T1' of the Horsham District Council (Springfield Park School, North Parade, Horsham, W. Sussex) Tree Preservation Order, 1990. Consequently, an application to Horsham District Council will be required before any works are undertaken.

S5. My assessment of the tree's overall vitality, its structural condition following pruning, and the newly observed root decay fungi around its base, concludes that the tree is of **Not Tolerable** risk (see **Appendix 1**), as defined at **Appendix 2**.

S6. I have prepared two management options, summarised below and discussed in detail at Section 6.1 of this report.

Tree number	Species	Risk rating	Recommendation
T1	English oak	**Not Tolerable**	**Option 1:** reduce canopy to c. 5m to form a standing monolith; or **Option 2:** section fell to ground level, grind out resulting stump and implement replacement planning programme.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INSTRUCTION

1.1.1. This VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Summary Report (VTRBSR) has been instructed by Hunters Group; the Managing Agent of the subject property: Springfield Park, North Parade, Horsham West Sussex, RH12 2BQ.

1.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

1.2.1. This report is intended to inform The Client of the condition of the surveyed tree stock, an assessment of the risk it poses to users of the site, and makes arboricultural risk-mitigation recommendations where necessary for all trees subjected to a 'Detailed' inspection, as described within the appended VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management Policy at **Appendix 1**.

1.2.2. The agreed scope of work is outlined below:

1. To visit the subject property and undertake a Detailed Active Assessment of one English oak tree located within the central gardens, and to make risk-mitigation recommendations where necessary; and
2. To produce this VTRBSR, which discusses my observations and provides additional details as necessary.

1.2.3. This report should be read in conjunction with the documents and plans listed below for context:

- The Detailed Assessment (ref. MDJAC-22.111-T1) **(Appendix 1)**; and
- The VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management and Assessment methodology **(Appendix 2)**.

1.3 AUTHOR'S CREDENTIALS

1.3.1. I am Matthew Jones BSc (Hons), MArborA, the Director and Principal Arboriculturist of MDJ Arboricultural Consultancy Limited.

1.3.2. I hold a Bachelor of Science Degree with Honours in Arboriculture and Urban Forestry, awarded by The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) in 2022. This is a top up degree following successful completion of a Foundation Degree in Arboriculture, also awarded by UCLan in 2020. I have also previously completed the National Diploma (RQF Level 3) in Arboriculture and Forestry at Merrist Wood College, Guildford in 2009.

1.3.3. During the course of my career I have attended various CPD events and courses. I hold the Professional Tree Inspection accreditation awarded by LANTRA, and am a registered user of the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management and Assessment framework (A 'Validator'), and was previously a registered user of The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) methodology, which expired in 2021.

1.3.4. I am a Professional Member of the Arboricultural Association (The AA) and an Associate Member of The Institute of Chartered Foresters (The ICF). I am therefore bound by the code of ethics and required to uphold the professional standards expected of both professional bodies.

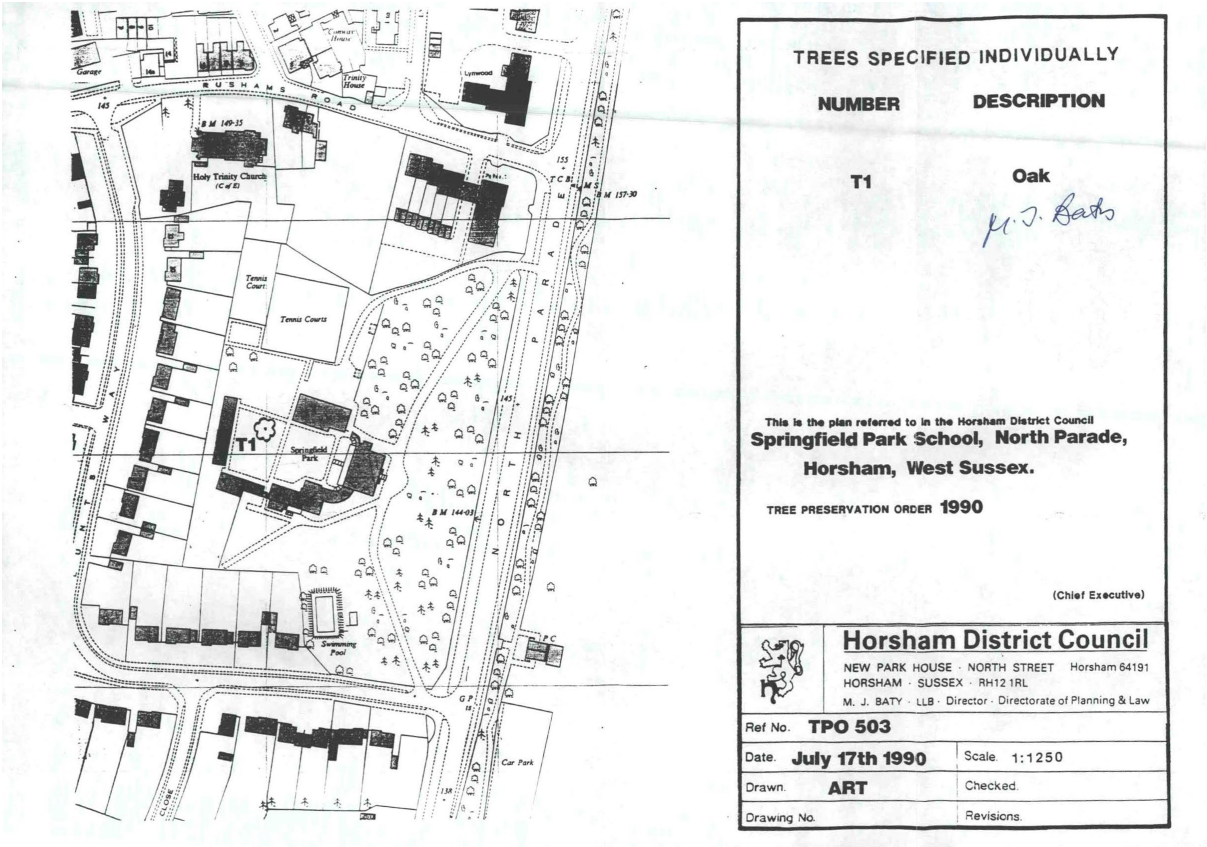
1.3.5. Since transitioning from practical arboriculture in 2014, I am regularly instructed to carry out appraisals of various sizes of tree stocks in relation to development, health and safety considerations, and the potential impact of trees on the built environment; and I am required to provide considered tree management recommendations as necessary during the course of these instructions.

2 STATUTORY CONTROLS

2.1 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS (TPOS)

2.1.1. The subject tree is afforded statutory protection by virtue of designation 'T1' of the Horsham District Council (Springfield Park School, North Parade, Horsham, W. Sussex) Tree Preservation Order, 1990, as shown by the official TPO plan provided below.

Figure 1: screen print of the official TPO map (Horsham District Council, 2023).



2.2 CONSERVATION AREAS (CAS)

2.2.1. The site is not within a designated conservation area (Horsham District Council, 2023).

3 VALID TREE RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT METHOD SUMMARY

3.1 LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT

3.1.1. **Passive Assessment:** passive assessment is carried out as ongoing informal observation exercise, usually by the owner and or staff of a particular site, during the day-to-day routine. The VALID Tree-Risk Management and Assessment method appended to this report provides a summary of potential risk features. If passive assessment is undertaken by non-arboriculturists and any such risk feature is observed, no risk assessment should be made, and an arboriculturist should be appointed to provide a professional assessment of the risks posed.

3.1.2. **Active Assessment:** active assessment is a purposeful visit made by a qualified arboriculturist, to identify and evaluate any potential risk features within the tree stock. There are three levels of assessment, ranging from 'Basic' (tree inspected, but no risk features identified), 'Detailed' (risk features identified and evaluated using the VALID App to generate a standalone report), to 'Advanced' (risk feature identified and assessed in depth, usually aided by specialist diagnostic equipment). See **Appendix 2** for additional information.

3.2 TREE RISK RATINGS

3.2.1. The valid system comprises four easy to understand risk ratings, summarised below, which are generated using the Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) and ISO 31000 – Risk Management. Full details are provided within the appended method.

- **Red - Not Acceptable** – risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level;
- **Amber – Not Tolerable** – risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level, but with a lower priority than red Not Acceptable risks;
- **Amber – Tolerable** – risks will not be reduced but may require an increased frequency of assessment than green Acceptable risks; and
- **Green – Acceptable** – risks will not be reduced.

3.3 RECOMMENDATION TYPES

Risk mitigation works

3.3.1. The VALID methodology dictates when remedial works should be undertaken, based on the above risk ratings. Consequently, it is possible for a Detailed Assessment to conclude that a tree carries an Acceptable risk, and that therefore, there is no requirement to carry out any remedial works in the interests of risk mitigation.

3.3.2. Put simply, the benefits of such trees will often outweigh the risks they pose and therefore, the VALID system does not require any works to take place. The benefits in risk-reduction works to these trees by carrying of tree surgery works is negligible and will often result in unnecessary expenditure.

Tree management works

3.3.3. However, it is also possible that trees which pose an Acceptable risk may simultaneously benefit from routine or proactive management works, such as canopy reduction work or selective branch removal, to prevent further structural issues in the future.

3.3.4. Any recommendations made in this regard are subject to the Client's preference, and are not strictly necessary for the purposes of mitigating risk.

4 SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS

4.1 SITE VISIT AND TREE INSPECTION

4.1.1. I undertook a site inspection and tree survey on Thursday 9 November 2023. Weather conditions at the time were overcast with intermittent rain, and deciduous trees were in partial leaf.

4.2 SUMMARY OF TREE INSPECTIONS

4.2.1. My instruction is limited to the inspection of one veteran oak tree (T1) located within the central gardens. The assessment made was at Detailed Level, as per the attached methodology. I collected the baseline data using a handheld tablet, which was then exported to produce the Detailed Report at **Appendix 1**.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 CONTEXT

5.1.1. The subject tree is of significant size, age and prominence from within the subject site. Moreover, it shows primary features of verteranisation as defined by the Recognition of Ancient, Veteran and Notable Trees 2 (RAVEN 2) assessment method devised by Julian Forbes-Laird, arboriculturist (Forbes-Laird, 2023). These primary features include notable retrenchment of the canopy and senescence, evident by the generally low level of genetic vigour, consistent with the latter stages of its natural life cycle.

5.1.2. The tree's structure also includes fungal associations of major wood decay fungi, habitat spaces, branch splits and crevices; all of which are termed secondary veteran features within the RAVEN 2 method.

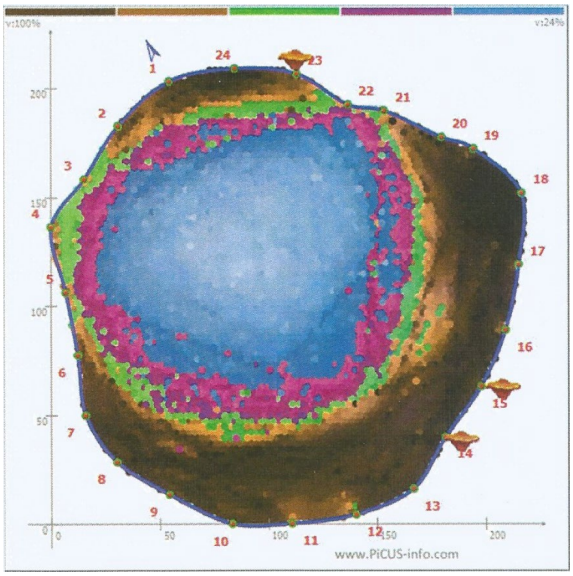
5.1.3. Consequently, the tree is of particular arboricultural and wider ecological value, despite its deteriorating condition. However, its location as a focal point of a the central gardens within the residential development poses significant complications in its management, as the risk of structural failures is likely to increases proportionately to its decline.

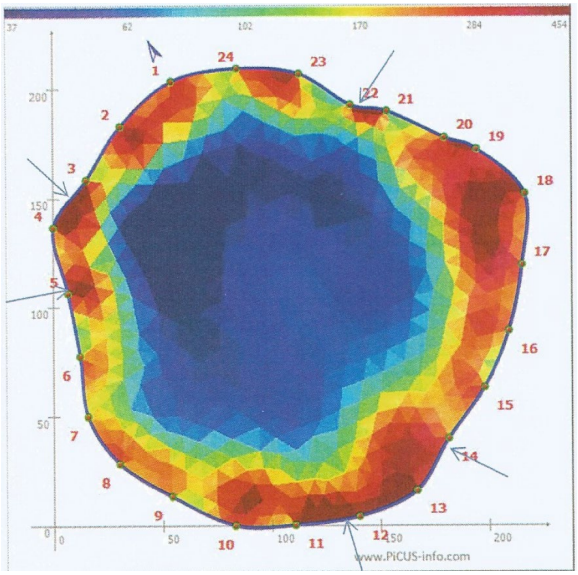
5.2 PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS

5.2.1. In May 2018 Harraway Trees were instructed to carry out a detailed internal investigation using diagnostic equipment including a resistance drill and sonic tomography. This investigation concluded that there was considerable basal decay at 75cm above ground level, as summarised below. The maroon and blue colours on the left hand image reveal a large area of low velocity dysfunctional wood. The image on the right is the results of electrical resistance testing, with the red areas being those of high resistance surrounding the central dysfunction/cavity.

Figure 2: (below left), sonic tomography testing taken from the Harraway Trees report (May 2018); and

Figure 3: (below right), showing the results of electrical resistance testing taken from the Harraway Trees report (May 2018).





5.2.2. The above information was used to formulate a set of recommendations provided by Harraway Trees, which are summarised below for the avoidance of doubt:

- Arrange for aerial inspection of wounds and cavities within the crown;
- Consider measures to improve growing conditions in the vicinity of the tree;
- Carry out reduction by a further 2-3 metres as and when appropriate in terms of the tree's growing condition; and
- Ensure that the tree is subject to repeat assessment of its structural condition in no more than three years.

5.2.3. My understanding is that John Harraway of Harraway Trees retired shortly after the report was produced and as such, I was invited to carry out an assessment of the tree in October 2022. The results of my previous assessment are contained within a separate report, but the summary points are included below:

- A marginal increase in physiological condition was noted, such that the tree was deemed to be of sufficient vigour to tolerate the reduction of low branches to alleviate the stresses on the defects on the low structural branches;

- Additional fungal fruiting bodies (not noted in the 2018 report) were noted within the cavity on the upper side of the scaffold branch at 3.5m on the east side; and
- I was able to freely insert a 250mm screwdriver between the bark platelets on the south-west aspect at c. 1m.

5.2.4. Subsequently, I made the following recommendations:

- Remove deadwood within the canopy;
- Reduce low branches on east and west sides by up to 3-4m to reduce their overall weight and consider erecting timber props (as has been done with the large Cedar of Lebanon at the site's entrance) to provide additional support;
- Subject to favourable leaf flush in spring 2023, carry out canopy reduction works of 2m throughout the remainder of the canopy; and
- Continue ongoing root feeding and intermittent soil decompaction for the next five years.

Photograph 1: showing leaf density in October 2022.



5.3 UPDATED ASSESSMENT

5.3.1. In my previous assessment I concluded that the physiological condition had improved since the previous inspection in May 2018 and that the tree would likely be able to tolerate a small amount of remedial pruning to reduce the weight of two decaying, low branches. These works have now been undertaken, but in doing so, some of the photosynthetic material required to replenish the tree's energy reserves following pruning, have been removed, and this has resulted in the tree appearing to be sparse,

notwithstanding the seasonal leaf senescence process. It is likely therefore that the trees overall physiology will be comparable to my 2022 observations throughout the 2024 growing season with no guarantee of this improving thereafter.

5.3.2. The likelihood of the low branches failing will have been lowered by the removal of excessive weight during the most recent round of pruning. However, due to the structural defects identified previously, which predominantly relate to cavities and fungal activity close to the trunk on said low branches, it is not possible to confidently confirm that a significant branch failure will not occur; particularly in light of the complex wood decay mechanics in veteran trees.

5.3.3. As eluded to in the Harraway Trees report in 2018, trees of this size and age often have significantly smaller canopies, either due to proactive management, or through natural failure of branches and stems. The retention of the canopy at its current size serves only to increase the likelihood of a significant structural failure occurring.

5.3.4. I therefore conclude that there is a foreseeable likelihood of branch or stem failures in the next five years.

Photograph 2: showing the leaf and bud density in November 2023 following previously recommended lateral branch reduction work.



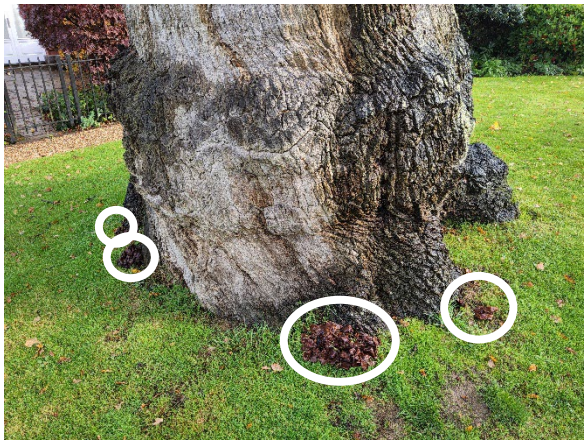
5.3.5. Previous assessment of the decay within the trunk of the subject tree was carried out by Harraway Trees in May 2018. At this point, a large area of decayed wood was identified within the trunk. Whilst oak trees of this age are able to stand for significant periods of time in spite of such decay, subject to suitable reaction wood development, the proximity to the residential properties is such that intervention is required, despite the value of the tree.

5.3.6. In addition, I also noted the presence of several clusters of fungal fruiting bodies around the base of the tree, which were not evident in 2022, and these appear semi-consistent with those of the decay fungi *Gymnopus fusipes*, commonly known as Spindle Shank, though botanical identification would be required to confirm identification. In any event, is it likely that the presence of fungal fruiting bodies is further evidence of significant basal decay and the potential for decline or mortality of the large structural roots.

5.3.7. Whilst the structural condition of the affected roots is unclear, the presence of the fungus is suggestive of reduced root function, which is twofold: a) to support the structure of the tree, and b) to transport water and nutrients from the soil into the canopy. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that the dieback within the canopy is at least partially due to the reduced ability of the roots to provide sustenance to support the tree's biological processes.

Photograph 3: (below left), showing the base of the tree with clusters of fungal fruiting bodies circled in white; and

Photograph 4: (below right), close up of a cluster of fungal fruiting bodies, assumed to be G. fusipes.





6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1. One individual English oak was assessed in accordance with the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management and Assessment methodology provided at **Appendix 2**.

6.1.2. My assessment of the tree's overall vitality, its structural condition following pruning, and the newly observed root decay fungi around its base, concludes that the tree is of **Not Tolerable** risk (see **Appendix 1**), as defined at **Appendix 2**.

6.1.3. Consequently and on balance, I now find it difficult to be able to justify retention of the tree in its current form on purely arboricultural grounds. I have therefore specified two alternative recommendations which carry various levels of risk tolerance. I am unable to clarify the Managing Agent's risk-tolerance, and so the course of action taken will have to be subject to Managing Agent and Resident discussions.

Option 1 – further reduction and retention

6.1.4. The first option would enable retention of the tree's trunk, which would be of benefit with regard to habitat for invertebrates, birds, mammals and other wildlife, but would result in much of the canopy being removed. This would alleviate the majority of the stresses on the aerial defects, and on the tree's root system, by significantly reducing the sail area upon which the wind is able to interact. A proposed pruning line is provided below for this option.

Photograph 5: proposed pruning line for Option 1.



6.1.5. There are two key considerations with this approach, outlined below:

1. **Prospects** – this level of pruning, while necessary on safety grounds, carries an inherent risk of causing further decline due to the removal of much of the canopy, which will significantly impair the tree's ability to produce new shoots. This will be dependant upon its stored energy reserves which is unknown at this point; and
2. **Future costs** – whilst this option is likely to be less than Option 2, there will be future costs associated with ongoing assessments, which would likely need to include subsequent decay detection assessments using diagnostic equipment in due course, and the cost of any subsequent pruning required to maintain the tree at the new height.

Option 2 – removal and replacement

6.1.6. The alternative to reducing the tree, would be to remove it completely, to grind out the resulting stump, and to implement replacement tree(s). This approach will remove all risk associated with the tree, at the cost of losing a valuable tree.

6.1.7. However, removal would present an opportunity to enhance the garden through replacement tree planting, which could perhaps include two trees; one at either end of the lawn. It would be prudent in light of the new residential garden environment to avoid large-growing parkland species such as oak in favour of smaller-growing, ornamental or fruiting species such as magnolias (*Magnolia spp.*), maples (*Acer spp.*), sweet gum *(Liquidambar styraciflua*), crab apples (*Malus spp.*) quince (*Cydonia oblonga*) or loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*).

6.1.8. I have discussed the potential options outlined above with the Horsham District Council Arboricultural Officer, Mr Andrew Bush, and he has kindly offered to attend a meeting on site to discuss the proposals in general terms ahead of an application being submitted, should this be of interest.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To hold a meeting on-site between the Managing Agent, the Horsham District Council Arboricultural Officer, and I, to discuss the tree's management in further detail; and
2. To decide upon and carry out one of the prescribed work options set out above.



Matthew Jones, BSc (Hons), MArborA
Director & Arboriculturist

23 November 2023

7 REFERENCES

Dunster, J. A., Smiley, E. T., Matheny, N., & Lilly, S. (2013). *Tree risk assessment manual.* Champaign, Illinois: International Society of Arboriculture.

Forbes-Laird, J. (2023). *Tree Assessment Systems.* Retrieved September 23, 2023, from https://www.flac.uk.com/downloads/tree-assessment-systems.html

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Mattheck, C., & Breloer, H. (1994). *Field guide for visual tree assessment.*

The British Standards Institution. (2010). *BS 3998:2010 - Tree work - Recommendations.* London: BSI Standards Limited.

MDJ ARBORICULTURAL CONSULTANCY LIMITED

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APPENDIX 1: DETAILED ASSESSMENTS

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Company Registration No.
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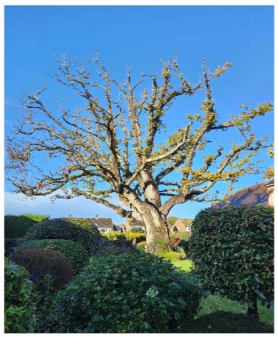
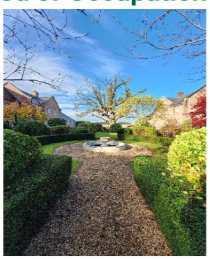
English Oak (T1)



Tree Details and Location



Likelihood of Occupation



Consequences



Likelihood of Failure

VITALITY	V	crown density woundwood response growth	R
ANATOMY	A	wood properties architecture H/D ratio	A
LOAD	L	exposure changes to the tree changes around tree	A
IDENTITY	I	species profile age of wounds CODIT	A
DEFECT	D	soundwood decay - extend feature or fault	R

Notes

Summary

Risk



Highest Risk	**Not Tolerable**
Risk reduction	See main report.
Tree Management	See main report.
Review Year	**2025**
Date Assessed	2023-11-09 10:00 am
Assessed By	Matthew Jones
Phone Number	07780336000
Email	Info@mdjac.co.uk

Species	Height (m)	Stem Ø (cm)	Crown Ø (m)
English Oak Quercus robur	17	170	16

Springfield Park
North Parade
Horsham, RH12 2BQ

Risk Inputs



O
4
Low



C
1
Very High

Significantly reduced vitality.
Limited epicormic growth....

Lapsed pollard.
Prominent basal flare with reaction wood.

Recent pruning to low branches.
No other notable changes surrounding tree.

Durable wood characteristics.
Extensive hollowing....

Fungal fruiting bodies surround base (multiple species).
Aerial cavities (trunk and branches)....

F
3
Moderate

The highest risk is structural failures of branches/stem due to defects and decay.

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APPENDIX 2:
VALID TREE RISK-BENEFIT MANAGEMENT & ASSESSMENT METHOD

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Company Registration No.
(England & Wales): 13900533

Tree Risk-Benefit Validator







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1 Establishing the context

Trees give us many benefits that we need

1 The more obvious benefits that trees give us are visual beauty in the landscape, wood, and the various crops they produce. Further values include wildlife habitat, pollution filtering, and reducing the harmful effects of both weather and climate change. Trees also have important social value as part of our culture, history, or because they commemorate an important event. As if all those benefits weren't enough, there's an ever-increasing body of scientific evidence shows trees are essential for our physical health, mental wellbeing, and quality of life.

The overall risk to us from trees and branches falling is extremely low

2 Compared to other everyday risks we readily accept, the overall risk to us from branches or trees falling is extremely low. Our annual risk of being killed or seriously injured is less than one in a million. That's so low, we're at greater risk driving about a 400km/250mi round trip to visit friends for a weekend than from branches or trees falling over an entire year. Given the number of trees we live with, and how many of us pass them daily, being killed or injured by a tree is a rare event; one that usually happens during severe weather.

We can't be an insurer of nature or eliminate the risk from trees

3 Of course, we can't be an insurer of nature, and trees are living structures that sometimes shed branches or fall over. But this usually happens because of severe weather. Or because they have an obvious risk feature. Since we need the many benefits from trees, we have to accept we can't remove all of the risk. Trees also drop leaves, bark, cones, nuts, and fruits, but the risk from this natural debris falling is so low it's Acceptable.

1.1 Duty of care

Reasonable
Proportionate
Reasonably practicable

4 We have a duty of care to manage the risk from our trees. The duty also says we should be reasonable, proportionate, and reasonably practicable when managing the risk. That means there's a balance we need to strike between the many benefits trees provide, the risk, and the costs of managing the risk. By taking a balanced approach, we don't waste resources by reducing risk - and losing benefits - when the risk is already Acceptable or Tolerable.

We all have a responsibility to make reasonable decisions

5 We're all expected to act reasonably and responsibly. When severe weather is forecast, we can manage our exposure to the higher risk from tree failure by not going out. If we go out, we're choosing to accept some of the risk.

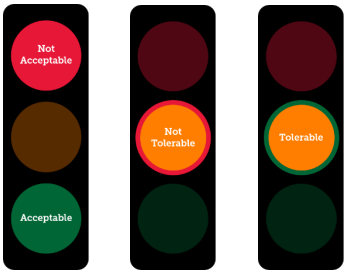
1.2 Risk tolerance

What's an Acceptable or Tolerable level of risk from our trees?

6 The Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) is an internationally recognised approach to making risk management decisions. It's used by duty holders where they manage a risk that's imposed on the public. ToR defines Broadly Acceptable and Unacceptable levels of risk. Between them is a region where the risk is Tolerable if it's 'as low as reasonably practicable' (ALARP). Put simply, ALARP means the risk is Tolerable if the costs of the risk reduction are much greater than the value of the risk reduction.

1.3 Risk-benefit management plan & risk ratings

Risk ratings are as easy to understand as traffic lights



7 VALID has applied ToR and ISO 31000 - Risk Management to tree risk-benefit management and assessment, which we've adopted. We're going to manage the risk from our trees with **Passive Assessment** in all zones of use, and **Active Assessment** in zones of high confluence (high-use + large trees). We have four easy-to-understand traffic light coloured risk ratings.

Red	**Not Acceptable** risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level
Amber	**Not Tolerable** risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level, but with a lower priority than red Not Acceptable risks
Amber	**Tolerable** risks will not be reduced, but may require an increased frequency of assessment than green Acceptable risks
Green	**Acceptable** risks will not be reduced

2 When might a tree be dangerous?

Trees with the highest risk are the easiest to spot

Be watchful after storms

8 When a tree has a risk that's not be Acceptable or Tolerable it'll usually have an Obvious Tree Risk Feature you can't help but notice. Passive Assessment is simply picking up on these features as you go about your day-to-day routine. If you see anything like these features, get in touch with us.

2.1 Root failure

Storms can break tree roots without blowing them over

Signs to look out for are

Change in angle of the trunk
Large cracks in the soil
Hump in the ground on one side

9



2.2 Hanging branches

Don't forget to look up

Branches can break during storms and still hang on

Sometimes they can get stuck up there for quite a while

10



2.3 A crack or split into the wood, beyond the bark

When trees bend and twist in storms the wood can split and crack

Vertical cracks in the bark are just the tree growing well there's no need to worry

11



2.4 Decline & death

To stay healthy and strong trees need 'solar panel' leaves to make food

When trees suffer they often have much less leaf cover and many dead branches

Standing dead trees have great habitat benefits but need checking

12



2.5 Decay fungi fruiting bodies

To decay fungi these 'fruits' are like apples to an apple tree

Decay fungi and trees mostly live happily together creating essential habitat for wildlife

Fungi can sometimes 'eat' too much wood and weaken the tree

13



2.6 Construction Damage

Tree roots are surprisingly shallow



Trees can't repair wounds
Digging or building near trees makes them very vulnerable to damage

14



Photographs
Jake Miesbauer, Michael Richardson, Roy Finch, Mark Hartley, Rick Milson, Andrew Benson, David Abrahams
Felicity Cloake & Wilf, David Humphries, Jack Prynn, Moreton Arboretum, Josh Behounek, Jan Allen

3 What is Active Assessment?

Trained assessors looking at trees with three levels of assessment

15 Active Assessment is where we're looking for tree features where the risk might not be Acceptable or Tolerable. It has three levels to it that increase in depth of evaluation from Basic, to Detailed, up to Advanced.

Risk ratings are limited by the level of assessment

16 Risk ratings have limitations that depend on the level of assessment at which they're made. For instance, when we carry out a Basic Assessment, if there are no Obvious Tree Risk Features, then the risk is Acceptable at this level of assessment. A Detailed or Advanced Assessment is an increase in depth of evaluation, which might reveal features that weren't apparent at a Basic level, and could mean a higher risk. However, carrying out higher levels of assessment, with the additional costs, when there are no obvious features to trigger it isn't reasonable, proportionate, or reasonably practicable.

3.1 Basic Assessment

Finding the few trees where the risk might not be Acceptable or Tolerable

17 At a Basic level of assessment, we're looking for trees with obvious features where the risk might not be Acceptable or Tolerable. We're also keeping an eye out for features that might significantly increase the likelihood of failure. We'll evaluate the importance of these features with VALID's Tree Risk App, and carry out a Detailed Assessment when it's necessary. If you raise any alerts from **Passive Assessment**, we'll decide whether the trees need a closer look at this Basic level of assessment. Rarely, we may come across emergency work, and we'll let you know about this as soon as we can.

We'll assess the trees from easily accessible ground

18 We'll assess trees from easily accessible ground, by foot, bike, or in a vehicle with a drive-by, and agree which one with you beforehand.

If we can't get a close enough look at a tree that we need to we'll let you know

19 If there are any trees we need to get a closer look at, but can't because of climbing plants, undergrowth, hedgerows, boundaries, or basal growth, or because the ground is too difficult, we'll let you know.

The trees or what they could fall on and the type of assessment will be recorded

20 We'll record trees or what they could fall on and how we covered the ground. For example, in a park, we'll plot and record individual or groups of trees as having been assessed on foot. Whereas, if there are many trees beside a road, we'll record the road as having been assessed and how we covered it.

No Obvious Tree Risk Features The risk is Acceptable

21 Unless a tree has a feature to trigger carrying out a Detailed Assessment, the risk is Acceptable at this Basic level of assessment.

3.2 Detailed Assessment

We do a Detailed Assessment when a tree needs a closer look

22 We'll carry out a Detailed Assessment out on trees that we've picked up during a Basic Assessment as needing a closer look. Or on trees where we've been asked to carry out a Detailed Assessment.

The risk is assessed with the App

23 The assessment will be done from ground level with VALID's Tree Risk App.

We'll produce a report

24 The App prints an easy to understand one side of paper report, which includes the risk rating, risk review year, any risk reduction work options, and management advice.

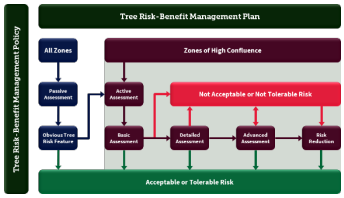
3.3 Advanced Assessment

Large and important trees might be worthy of more effort and cost

25 If we need more information about the likelihood of failure, an Advanced Assessment can be carried out. This might be because we have extensive decay with significant strength loss and want to find out whether the tree is strong enough. Or, an aerial inspection to take a closer look at the upper stem and branches. When a tree needs an Advanced Assessment, we'll let you know and go through the options with you. If the costs are substantial, we can help you decide whether the tree has enough value and future benefits to justify the costs. We'll produce a report that'll include the risk rating, risk review year, any risk reduction work options, and management advice.

4 Simpler • Clearer • Smarter

The Strategy at a glance



26 Whether you manage or assess tree risk, we're here to help make your life less complicated and more effective.

From **Strategy** to **App**, we've got all your bases covered with the first complete tree risk-benefit management system. By taking out the *bafflegab* (vague and ambiguous words) and *numberwang* (questionable maths that you can easily get wrong) from tree risk, we've made it:

"*Uncomplicated...intuitive...simpler...clearer...smarter*"

This is what Duty Holders, Arborists, and other staff who we've trained as Basic Validators **are all saying**. These are some words you'll likely use to describe how you feel after you've validated your approach to tree risk.

4.1 Tree risk-benefit management

Reasonable
Proportionate
Reasonably practicable



27 Whether you're a Government Agency, Landowner, or Homeowner you have a duty of care to manage the risk from your trees falling or dropping branches. That duty of care says you should be reasonable, proportionate, and reasonably practicable when managing the risk to an Acceptable or Tolerable level.

VALID's got your back here with our full range of easy to understand and common sense **Tree Risk-Benefit Management Strategies**. As part of our not-for-profit goals, they're released under a creative commons license. That means they're *free* and open to *everyone*. **Validators** can help you customise these strategies. They also have a potted version to help you if you've not yet formally adopted a strategy.

4.2 Tree risk-benefit assessment

VALID has been stress-tested to breaking point



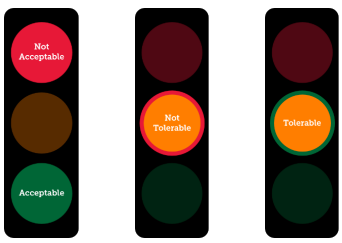
28 Our Tree Risk-Benefit Management Strategies do more than 99% of your assessments for you. When you need to carry out a *Detailed Assessment,* you'll use our super smart and intuitive **Tree Risk App**.

The engine of the App has been built with a Professor of Natural Hazards & Risk Science. The Professor's an internationally distinguished expert in this field. He's test-driven the model to breaking point:

> *"We have stress-tested VALID and didn't find any gross, critical sensitivities. In short, the mathematical basis of your approach is sufficiently robust and dependable for any practical purpose."*
>
> Willy Aspinall
> Cabot Professor in Natural Hazards & Risk Science
> University of Bristol

4.3 Tree risk ratings

Risk ratings are as easy to understand as traffic lights



Yes, it really is that clear and easy to understand. There's no confusion about what vague and ambiguous words or complicated numbers mean. We have four easy-to-understand traffic light coloured risk ratings.

Red	**Not Acceptable** risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level
Amber	**Not Tolerable** risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level, but with a lower priority than red Not Acceptable risks
Amber	**Tolerable** risks will not be reduced but may require an increased frequency of assessment than green Acceptable risks
Green	**Acceptable** risks will not be reduced

4.4 Tree risk-benefit management advice & training

Visit our Training page
Or get in touch for help

29 We work with duty holders to help them manage the risk and benefits from their trees. We also **train** Arborists to become **Validators**, or staff who aren't Arborists to be **Basic Validators**.