



**12 Fringewood Close
Northwood
HA6 2TB**

Tree Health and Condition Survey

(Ref. 101 639)

Date: 03/08/2021

Prepared by:
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HEADINGS & ABBREVIATIONS

TREE NO.	Reference number. Refer to plan or numbered tags where applicable.
SPECIES:	Common name.
AGE RANGE:	Y = Young, SM = Semi Mature, EM = Early Mature, M = Mature, OM = Over Mature
HEIGHT:	Estimated height expressed in metres.
CROWN SPREAD:	Radial crown spread approximately measured to the four cardinal points (for individual trees only). Tree groups: approx. total crown spread diameters.
CROWN CLEARANCE:	Height in metres of crown clearance above ground level (to inform clearance for structures/ movement of vehicles and shading).
STEM DIA:	Stem diameter – measured at approximately 1.5 metres above ground level. For multi-stemmed trees the basal diameter is measured immediately above the root flare
NATS	None at Time of Survey (tree work)
VITALITY	Measure of physiological condition. D = Dead, MD = Moribund, P = Poor, M = Moderate, N = Normal

RE-INSPECTION CYCLE	High: Approx. 6 months to re-assess recognized defect
	Moderate: Approx. 12 to 18 months
	Low: Approx. 3 to 5 years

WORK PRIORITY	1: URGENT=Imminent health & safety threat-Immediate action required;
	2: High Priority=Required to address POTENTIAL health & safety threat-Within 6 months
	3: Moderate=Required for Good Arboricultural Practice-Within 1 year;
	4: Low= Good Arboricultural Practice-No health & safety or tree structure threat- At owners discretion

SITE:	12 Fringewood Close, Northwood, HA6 2TB	SURVEYOR:	R. BALL
CLIENT:	MR. C. SHAH	ASSESSMENT DATE:	02/08/2021
BRIEF:	CARRY OUT AN ARBORICULTURAL HEALTH & CONDITION SURVEY	VIEWING CONDITIONS:	CLOUDY
		JOB REFERENCE:	101 639

Tree No.	Species: common name	Age Range	Height (m)	Crown Spread. (m)	Crown Clearance (m)	Stem/ Multi Stm* Dia. mm	Vitality	Tree Health & Structural Condition
T1	Japanese Red Cedar	EM	28 +	4.5	9.0	740	Normal	As viewed from the street T1 is a stand-out tree that provides significant public visual amenity. The tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). We have been instructed to carry out this survey due to three branch dropping episodes dating back to 2017. A Visual Tree Assessment (VTA see note 1) was undertaken from the ground also using binoculars. Health: Normal vitality and crown density Root-plate: No radial cracking or soil disturbance (= evidence of excavations/trenching) was observed when walking around T1: including looking over into the neighbouring property (as best could be done by looking over the tall fence). Root-Crown (RC): No cavities or fungal fruiting bodies were observed. The amount of root buttressing around the RC was limited to none though at this time this appears not to be significant given the branch failures described below that are the clear and present hazards issues. Trunk: No cavities, splits, cracking or fungal fruiting bodies were observed. Crown form: We are advised by the client that in 2019, Hillingdon Council permission was given to crown reduce (CR) T1 by 25%, due to its close building proximity and associated shading issues. As result the tree has a slender upright crown form. No dead or diseased branches were observed in the crown. Scaffold Branches: Over all given the above CR works and the size and age of T1, the primary scaffold branches are not long and neither are they of a significant diameter. Low Northern Crown Scaffold Branches: At approx. 12m there is a horizontally lodged approx. 2m long secondary branch. It appears that this branch was shed 2-3 years ago. Mid Southern Crown Scaffold Branches: At approx. 18m there is torn primary scaffold limb stub (approx. 3.5m long) that appears to have shed a distal limb section with last 2-3 years. Upper North Crown Section: At approx. 25m there are two approx. 3-4m long scaffold hangers (see photo no. 1). These could fail and drop into the garden at any time and until these are removed we do not recommend that the garden is used. Additionally there is torn upright primary scaffold limb (approx. 2m high) with recently exposed heartwood. It is likely that this limb shed the failed limbs as described below. Recent Failed Scaffold Branches: Four secondary branches recently failed and dropped into the garden (see photo no. 2). Their approx. length is 3.5m; 3.0m; 2.5m and 1.5m. These could have caused a significant injury to anyone that happened to be using the garden during the limb failure event. Past Failed Scaffold Branches: These occurred in 2017 (1 x branch) – see photo no. 3 and in 2019 (3 x branches) – see photo no. 4. The property owner advises that there was email correspondence with Hillingdon Council regarding these failures including the recent failures as set out above.

Initial Conclusion: The recently failed branches were not diseased, nor did they have horizontal splits or decay issues. Also they could not be described as heavy over-extended limbs with long-lever arms. As such we cannot be conclusive regarding the mechanism of failure though high winds could have been a contributing factor. As a possibility: Summer Branch Drop (SBD) occurs with long large diameter primary scaffold branches and the usual suspects are, amongst other tree species, beech, oak and eucalyptus. Typically, SBD is associated with limb water content rather than being a structural defect. In our experience however SBD is not an issue with swamp cypress and importantly in regard to T1, it does not have long heavy primary scaffold branches. The role of SBD as a causal agent to the T1 branch failures is therefore questionable.

Risk Rating: As the cause of the recent branch failures is unknown it is not possible to prescribe a risk rating for T1. Although importantly given the past and recent branch failures – on a balance of probability - it is likely that such failures will occur in the future. It is also important to consider the small garden (= target) in which T1 is situated that is essentially the *drop-zone* for any such branch failures. Below we have set out tree management works (TMW) options. Following the crown reduction works and as T1 re-grows, branches failures could reoccur and at this point a case could be made that the *risk tolerance level* of this tree has been exceeded, and that it should be removed and replaced: perhaps with a silver birch (or similar sized species) given its close building proximity.

As an alternative to the TMW, based on the:

- (a) Tree owner's acceptance of the future risk that T1 poses,
- (b) Episodes of branch failure (21017, 2019 & 2021),
- (c) High value target under T1 (property occupiers & their children).

there could be a case for T1's removal. Another key point to consider is the liability if harm is caused by yet another branch failure. It could be argued that such an event was foreseeable and as such this liability would be very significant.

However, given the public visual amenity provided by T1, the key question is: would Hillingdon Council grant permission for its removal in light of the latter visual amenity?

Recommended Tree Management Works:

- (1) Remove the upper crown hangers (x 2) and the low crown lodged branch (x 1). Even though T1 is subject to a TPO these tree works can be carried out without Hillingdon Council permission. During these works the contractor should carry out a climbing inspection to note and report back on any branch defects (e.g. cracks, splits or weak unions). *Timeframe:* As we have recommended that the garden not be used until these branch removals are carried out, these tree works should be carried out as soon as possible.
- (2) Apply to Hillingdon Council to prune back the crown to the previous pruning points i.e. the crown reduction of 2016. This will reduce the branch end weight and mitigate any branch failures in the short-medium term. This may also include the removal of any defective branches noted during the aforementioned climbing inspection. *Timeframe:* within the three months.

Final Conclusion: After speaking to the property owner who is understandably concerned about future branch drop events and the foreseeable risk that this poses to his family, we have decided to recommend the removal of T1. The property owner is going to email Hillingdon Council and supply this report that was requested by the TPO Officer. In the meantime the garden should remain *off limits* until the hangers and lodged branch are removed.

Notes

1. A **VTA** is the standard assessment performed by most Tree Risk Assessors. It requires that (where possible) the assessor walks completely around the tree observing the root-plate, woody/buttruss roots, main trunk and scaffold branches. It also entails looking at the tree from some distance away to consider its site surroundings.

Photo no. 1 to show within the yellow oval, the torn upright scaffold limb (with pale heartwood exposed) on right-hand side and the 2 x branch hangers on the left-hand side



Photo no. 2 to show the 4 x recently failed braches
NB Door included for scale and note small branch diameters



Photo no. 3
Supplied photo of branch that failed in 2017



Photo no. 4
Supplied photo of 3 x branches that failed in 2017



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