

# **The English Tree Company Ltd**

## **Arboricultural Consultant's Report**

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### **Health & Safety Tree Inspections**

**at**

#### **North Bridge House Schools**

North Bridge House Nursery School

North Bridge House Junior School

North Bridge House Senior Schools

Ref: 1066

25 June 2014

## INTRODUCTION

At the request of Mr Keane, we have been commissioned to advise on the Health & Safety of trees within the schools. We have also been asked to supply a 5-year management plan for the trees; this is included at **Appendix 1**.

I confirm that I am a Fellow of the Arboricultural Association, and have attained the Royal Forestry Society Professional Diploma in Arboriculture.

I have over 25 years of experience in tree inspection and arboricultural reporting. I devised and managed basic and advanced tree inspection courses whilst section head of Arboriculture at Capel Manor College. I have provided expert witness services and given expert evidence in Planning Inquiries, Magistrates, County and the High Courts. I was a “significant contributor” to the publication “Lonsdale L (1999) Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management HMSO”. I am a LANTRA Registered “Professional Tree Inspector”.

I understand the some sites are within a Conservation Area and that there are Tree Preservation Orders on some trees.

This survey updates the previous survey from 2013.

**LIMITATIONS**

Inspection was carried out on the basis of ground level, visual examination of external features of each individual tree. The principal objective of the survey was to identify trees, or parts of trees, which appear to be in a hazardous condition and to advise remedial action to ameliorate the risk they could represent to users of the site and adjacent areas.

Visual assessment, in accordance with accepted arboricultural practice, was based on apparent vitality (leaf cover, extension growth), presence of deadwood and die back, fractured and detached limbs, evidence of excessive basal movement and external indications of stem and basal decay likely to affect the structural condition of the tree.

Trees and shrubs are living organisms whose health and condition can change rapidly. The health, condition and safety of trees should be checked on a regular basis, preferably at least once a year, and conclusions and recommendations are only valid for a period of 1 year. These periods of validity may be reduced in the case of any change in conditions in proximity to the trees or buildings. This assessment of the level of risk posed by trees, either individually or collectively is based on the available evidence, current published works, recognised professional opinion and my experience in these matters.

***Before undertaking any work to any of the trees, statutory controls should be checked. If Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) cover any of the trees, and / or if the site is in a Conservation Area then no works can be undertaken without the relevant statutory processes being followed.***

## The Brief

I have been asked to report on:

1. The health and safety of trees within the sites.

This report includes:

- Assessment of the health, condition and safety of the designated trees on the sites.
- Recommendations on the immediate and future management of the trees, as appropriate.

## Notes for Commercial Property Managers:

An effective system for managing trees should meet the requirements set out in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the associated ACoP (guidance is contained in HSG 65 Successful health and safety management and INDG 163 Five steps to risk assessment) and is likely to address the following:

- i. An overall assessment of risks from trees, particularly identifying groups of trees by their position and degree of public access. This will enable the risks associated with tree stocks to be prioritised, and help identify any checks or inspections needed. As a minimum, trees should be divided into two zones: one zone where there is frequent public access to trees (e.g. in and around picnic areas, schools, children's playgrounds, popular foot paths, car parks, or at the side of busy roads); and a second zone where trees are not subject to frequent public access. As a rough guide 'trees subject to frequent public access' are those that are closely approached by many people every day. Maps may be useful here as individual records for individual trees are unlikely to be necessary if zones and the trees in the zones are clearly defined.
- ii. For trees in a frequently visited zone, a system for periodic, proactive checks is appropriate. This should involve a quick visual check for obvious signs that a tree is likely to be unstable and be carried out by a person with a working knowledge of trees and their defects, but who need not be an arboricultural specialist. Informing staff who work in parks or highways as to what to look for would normally suffice. Duty holders should ensure that any system that is put in place for managing tree safety is properly applied and monitored.
- iii. A short record of when an area or zone or occasionally an individual tree has been checked or inspected with details of any defects found and action taken.

- iv. A system for obtaining specialist assistance / remedial action when a check reveals defects outwith the experience and knowledge of the person carrying out the check.
- v. A system to enable people to report damage to trees, such as vehicle collisions, and to trigger checks following potentially damaging activities such as work by the utilities in the vicinity of trees or severe gales.
- vi. Occasionally a duty holder may have responsibility for trees that have serious structural faults but which they decide to retain. Where such a condition is suspected and the tree also poses a potentially serious risk because, for example its proximity to an area of high public use, a specific assessment for that tree and specific management measures, are likely to be appropriate.
- vii. Once a tree has been identified by a check to have a structural fault that presents an elevated risk, action should be planned and taken to manage the risk. Any arboricultural work required should be carried out by a competent arboriculturist, as such work tends to present a relatively high risk to the workers involved. Duty holders should **not** be encouraged to fell or prune trees unnecessarily.
- viii. Inspection of individual trees will only be necessary where a tree is in, or adjacent to, an area of high public use, has structural faults that are likely to make it unstable and a decision has been made to retain the tree with these faults.
- ix. Monitoring to ensure that the arrangements are implemented in practice.

### **Inspection method**

The inspection was undertaken from ground level only using binoculars to assess the aerial parts.

Percussion testing was employed to help to assess the presence of latent decay in the main stems.

No excavations were undertaken about the trees at the time of inspection. No soil samples were taken.

The report and recommendations relate to the condition of the tree and of their surroundings at the time of inspection only. All measurements, proportions and assessments of age are approximate.

## FINDINGS

### Sites

The designated trees are located as indicated on the attached sketch plans.

The occupancy of the sites is high. Trees therefore have a high target risk associated with their locations.

Identification numbers have been scheduled and correspond to the attached sketch site plan and tree tags.

Vegetation type has been categorised as one of the following:  
(T) - Tree, (H) - Hedge, (S) - Shrub, (G) - Group, (ST) - Stump

Species are listed by common *names* where appropriate.

Age class is defined as follows:

- Y Young - Recently planted or establishing tree that could be transplanted without specialist equipment. i.e. up to 12 - 14cms stem girth.
- SM Semi-Mature - An established tree but one which has not reached its potential ultimate height and has significant growth potential.
- EM Early - Mature - A tree reaching its ultimate potential height, whose growth rate is slowing down but will still increase in stem diameter and crown spread and has safe left expectancy.
- M Mature - A mature specimen with limited potential for any significant increase in size but with a reasonable life expectancy.
- OM Over mature - A senescent or moribund specimen with a limited safe life expectancy.
- VT Veteran. - Trees of interest biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of their age; Trees in a state of decline due to old age.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Trees:**

Identification numbers have been scheduled and correspond to the attached site plan.

All Arboricultural recommendations to be undertaken in line with BS3998 (2010) 'Tree Work – Recommendations'.

Works are recommended in respect of reducing tree dimensions, either overall (due to structural defects) or in lateral spread (to reduce the development of weak growth and improve crown balance) and for the statutory requirements of highway clearance.

The majority of tree defects can be addressed by undertaking the recommended works listed within the schedule. Repeated basic tree inspections should occur annually to check if any tree conditions have changed and any subsequent recommended actions should be undertaken.

### **Wildlife**

All British birds nests and eggs are protected in law under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It would be an offence for any developer to damage or destroy any nest or egg of a wild bird.

At these sites, a suitable bird nesting survey be completed prior to any felling works.

Before undertaking any work to any of the trees, statutory controls should be checked. If Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) cover any of the trees, and / or if the site is in a Conservation Area then no works can be undertaken without the relevant statutory processes being followed.

## Rights and Responsibilities for Boundary Trees

Regarding tree works concerning boundary or neighbouring trees, there are clear precedents in Case Law that illustrate the neighbour's and tree owners rights and responsibilities.

Briefly the relevant references are as follows;

“ If branches grow over the property line, the owner of the adjoining property may cut them back to the boundary line” (Lonsdale v Nelson, 1823)

“The adjoining owner may not enter the property on which the tree is growing without first giving notice to the tree owner” (Lemmon v Webb, 1894)

“Branches that are removed are the property of the owner of the tree and should be offered back unconverted.” (Mills v Brooker, 1919)

Also, it would normally be considered that any damage caused as a direct or indirect result of any pruning would be the responsibility of the tree pruner rather than the tree owner, in such circumstances.

It should also be noted that any damage caused to your own property by neighbouring trees would be the responsibility of the tree owner, particularly if they had already been put on notice that their trees are potentially hazardous or a nuisance.

(See: Rylands v Fletcher, 1868; Smith v Giddy, 1904 and Leakey v National Trust, 1978.)

***Before undertaking any work to any of the trees, statutory controls should be checked. If Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) cover any of the trees, and / or if the site is in a Conservation Area then no works can be undertaken without the relevant statutory processes being followed.***

**References:**

- Anon**, British Standard BS 3998 (2010), *“Recommendations for Tree Work”*, British Standards Institute. London.
- DOE**, *“Tree Preservation Orders - A guide to the law and good practice”*, Department of Environment, 1994.
- Forestry Commission** “Tree Felling – Getting Permission”, December 2003
- Gasson, P.E. and Cutler, D.F. (1990)** Tree root plate morphology. *Arboric. Journal* 14, 193-264
- Harris, R.W. (1983)** *Arboriculture; Care of trees, shrubs and vines in the landscape*. Prentice Hall, London
- Lonsdale L (1999)** *Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management* HMSO 388pp
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- Phillps D.H. and Burdekin, D.A. (1982)** *Diseases of forest and ornamental trees*. Macmillan Press. 435 pp
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## APPENDIX 1

### 5 Year Maintenance Plan

#### 1. HEALTH AND SAFETY SURVEYS

Inspection will be carried out on the basis of ground level, visual examination of external features of each individual tree. The principal objective of the survey is to identify trees, or parts of trees, which appear to be in a hazardous condition and to advise remedial action to ameliorate the risk they could represent to users of the school and adjacent areas.

Visual assessment, in accordance with accepted arboricultural practice, will be based on apparent vitality (leaf cover, extension growth), presence of deadwood and die back, fractured and detached limbs, evidence of excessive basal movement and external indications of stem and basal decay likely to affect the structural condition of the tree.

The inspection will be undertaken from ground level only using binoculars to assess the aerial parts. No specialised apparatus will be employed in the assessment of the condition of the inner timber of the trees, unless internal decay is suspected. Percussion testing will be employed to help to assess the presence of latent decay in the main stems.

No excavations will be undertaken about the trees at the time of inspection. No soil samples will be taken.

Trees and shrubs are living organisms whose health and condition can change rapidly. The health, condition and safety of trees should be checked on a regular basis, preferably at least once a year, and conclusions and recommendations are only valid for a period of 1 year. These periods of validity may be reduced in the case of any change in conditions in proximity to the trees or buildings.

***Before undertaking any work to any of the trees, statutory controls should be checked. If Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) cover any of the trees, and / or if the site is in a Conservation Area then no works can be undertaken without the relevant statutory processes being followed.***

The trees were inspected during early summer 2013, at a time of year when fungal growth would not necessarily be apparent to help diagnosis of the severity and extent of any observed indications of decay. Regular tree inspections should be undertaken, see further details later in this report.

**Trees:**

Species are listed by common names where appropriate.

Age class is defined as follows:

Young - Recently planted or establishing tree that could be transplanted without specialist equipment. i.e. up to 12 - 14cms stem girth.

Semi-Mature - An established tree but one which has not reached its potential ultimate height and has significant growth potential.

Early - Mature - A tree reaching its ultimate potential height, whose growth rate is slowing down but will still increase in stem diameter and crown spread and has safe left expectancy.

Mature - A mature specimen with limited potential for any significant increase in size but with a reasonable life expectancy.

Over mature - A senescent or moribund specimen with a limited safe life expectancy.

Veteran. - Trees of interest biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of their age; Trees in a state of decline due to old age.

All Arboricultural recommendations to be undertaken in line with BS3998 (2010) 'for Tree Work - Recommendations'. Bona fide, insured contractors must undertake all tree work.

**2. PRELIMINARY LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE TREE MANAGEMENT PLAN OPTIONS BASED ON THE SURVEY.**

A summary of tree related factors and issues identified during the survey that may affect the medium to long-term tree cover within the school. The aim of this is to provide management information to assist with forward planning, including the retention of tree features within the course, potential problems relating to tree longevity and suggestions for replanting or new planting to help ensure sustainable tree cover.

Certain trees require immediate attention to remedy defects; other trees require less urgent works. General maintenance works will be required to contain and improve tree growth in the long-term and ad hoc works will be required in response to incidents such as storm damage or disease infection.

If any developments or changes in ground conditions near trees become required, then method statement may be needed to ensure successful tree retention, where appropriate, in relation to any proposals.

### **3. TREE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The benefit of setting up such a system is that within 2 or 3 years a detailed picture of the condition of the trees is built up and it becomes possible to provide more accurate analysis of the hazards and level of risk associated with the tree population on site. This in turn will allow management to more precisely identify implications for revenue budgets over a period of 5 to 10 years of tree management on the site. It will also allow evaluation of impacts on trees and / or impacts of trees on buildings etc. that arise from proposed changes in infrastructure layout. This will be of benefit in reducing costs and reducing hazards.

Risk Management Strategy is now a 'common' policy area for all those who are involved in managing any large public or private facility. The assessment of the hazard associated with trees and the management of the risk is no different than that of ensuring that buildings are in good repair and that action is taken to prevent accidents that would be considered 'reasonably foreseeable'.

The conclusion from the above is that there is a need for a formal policy on tree hazard and risk assessment and that this should form part of the overall Risk Management Strategy for the school.

#### **The legal basis for the policy is as follows:**

##### **Landowners - HSE tree survey requirements**

Landowners have a general "duty of care" to visitors (including trespassers) under the Owner's and Occupiers Liability Act. If a tree falls and causes damage to people or property the owner will be liable if it can be proven that he/she has been negligent. Trees should be managed to reduce any risk they pose to a reasonable level. Tree owners must be able to show that regular tree inspections have taken place, especially on trees by roadsides. This would involve employing a competent tree specialist to periodically inspect the tree and provide a report on its condition, and in between these periods, the tree owner would be expected to check the tree on a regular basis for any externally visible signs of weakness. This duty of care was further clarified in the judgement in *Poll v Viscount Asquith of Morley*, 2006 where a lack of appropriate inspection of roadside trees by a competent specialist was deemed to be negligence on behalf of the tree owner.

##### **Commercial parties - HSE tree survey requirements**

An effective system for managing trees should meet the requirements set out in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the associated ACoP (guidance is contained in HSG 65 Successful health and safety management and INDG 163 Five steps to risk assessment) and is likely to address the following:

- i. An overall assessment of risks from trees, particularly identifying groups of trees by their position and degree of public access. This will enable the risks associated with tree stocks to be prioritised, and help identify any checks or inspections needed. As a minimum, trees should be divided into two zones: one

- zone where there is frequent public access to trees (e.g. in and around picnic areas, schools, children's playgrounds, popular foot paths, car parks, or at the side of busy roads); and a second zone where trees are not subject to frequent public access. As a rough guide 'trees subject to frequent public access' are those that are closely approached by many people every day. Maps may be useful here as individual records for individual trees are unlikely to be necessary if zones and the trees in the zones are clearly defined.
- ii. For trees in a frequently visited zone, a system for periodic, proactive checks is appropriate. This should involve a quick visual check for obvious signs that a tree is likely to be unstable and be carried out by a person with a working knowledge of trees and their defects, but who need not be an arboricultural specialist. Informing staff who work in parks or highways as to what to look for would normally suffice. Duty holders should ensure that any system that is put in place for managing tree safety is properly applied and monitored.
  - iii. A short record of when an area or zone or occasionally an individual tree has been checked or inspected with details of any defects found and action taken.
  - iv. A system for obtaining specialist assistance / remedial action when a check reveals defects outwith the experience and knowledge of the person carrying out the check.
  - v. A system to enable people to report damage to trees, such as vehicle collisions, and to trigger checks following potentially damaging activities such as work by the utilities in the vicinity of trees or severe gales.
  - vi. Occasionally a duty holder may have responsibility for trees that have serious structural faults but which they decide to retain. Where such a condition is suspected and the tree also poses a potentially serious risk because, for example its proximity to an area of high public use, a specific assessment for that tree and specific management measures, are likely to be appropriate.
  - vii. Once a tree has been identified by a check to have a structural fault that presents an elevated risk, action should be planned and taken to manage the risk. Any arboricultural work required should be carried out by a competent arboriculturist, as such work tends to present a relatively high risk to the workers involved. Duty holders should **not** be encouraged to fell or prune trees unnecessarily.
  - viii. Inspection of individual trees will only be necessary where a tree is in, or adjacent to, an area of high public use, has structural faults that are likely to make it unstable and a decision has been made to retain the tree with these faults.
  - ix. Monitoring to ensure that the arrangements are implemented in practice.

**Tree Risk Management Policy Aims**

The main aim is to reduce Liability and Risk through a defined Risk Management Policy and Strategy

Continuity of Tree Cover on site and general Landscape Management requirements of the school need to be balanced in order to provide sustainable tree cover that will be safe, appropriate, provide boundary screening, ornamental, and providing wildlife habitat and educational value.

## TREE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

### 3.1 Background

The level of risk of harm or damage rises with numbers of people using the site and the proximity of trees to buildings and property. (The free access over most of the site, means that most of the trees on the site require a high level of inspection).

The density of persons on the site when in use means that the risk is very similar to that associated with busy parks and in these situations the general arboricultural standard of frequency for assessments would be as follows:

#### **Yearly inspections during late summer / autumn**

A qualified arboriculturist would carry out the yearly inspection, while grounds staff could undertake other inspections as part of their general duties. The grounds maintenance staff would need some very basic instruction and reporting forms to enable them to carry out this function. The yearly inspection by the arboriculturist would identify any specific problem trees and also check on any defects reported by the ground staff. The arboriculturist would serve the function of a consultant, i.e. only be called in (other than for the yearly inspection) if there was a situation which the on-site staff were not able to resolve.

A walk-round survey following any major storm event should be undertaken to identify new hazards, uprooted / partially uprooted trees, major branch fractures, breaking out of parts of the crown etc.

Monthly monitoring of any suspect trees should be undertaken where decays, pests or diseases are present in order that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify problems or actions taken to remove potential hazards.

Clearly any emergency situations would require action immediately and generally no need to call in the arboriculturist at this time. However, they should be informed of such actions in case there is some likely impact on the safety of trees remaining e.g. increased exposure to prevailing winds.

The above approach allows the day to day management of the risk to be with those who are in close proximity to it and can respond quickly, while the overall strategic risk and detailed assessment of risk associated with individual trees is kept at the technical level needed for assessing such risks.

## **Tree Risk Management Policy (Continued)**

### **3.2 The Need for Policy**

The benefit of setting up such a system is that within 2 or 3 years a detailed picture of the condition of the trees is built up and it becomes possible to provide more accurate analysis of the hazards and level of risk associated with the tree population on site. This in turn will allow management to more precisely identify implications for revenue budgets over a period of 5 to 10 years of tree management on the site. It will also allow evaluation of impacts on trees and / or impacts of trees on buildings etc. that arise from proposed changes in infrastructure layout. This will be of benefit in reducing costs and reducing hazards.

Risk Management Strategy is now a 'common' policy area for all those who are involved in managing any large public or private facility. The assessment of the hazard associated with trees and the management of the risk is no different than that of ensuring that buildings are in good repair and that action is taken to prevent accidents that would be considered 'reasonably foreseeable'.

The conclusion from the above is that there is a need for a formal policy on tree hazard and risk assessment and that this should form part of the overall Risk Management Strategy for the site.

The development of hazards is not always due to natural causes such as storms or genetic traits within a tree's structure. Hazards can be created by incorrect pruning or felling techniques being used or by a failure to minimize that removing trees may have an impact on adjacent trees. Therefore, it is an essential part of any risk management strategy to ensure that tree works specifications, who carries them out and the supervision of those works, is undertaken to minimize the risk of creating new hazards.

## **Tree Risk Management Policy (Continued)**

### **3.3 Policies for Tree Hazard and Risk Assessment**

The following draft policies are suggested.

#### **Levels of Assessment**

1. The level of assessment will be at three levels:

Level 1: Carried out by those trained to recognize gross defects and changes in the appearance of a tree(s).

Level 2: Carried out by those who have a minimum of 2 years practical experience in risk assessment, a minimum of arboricultural qualification to [standard] and have received specific training in hazard tree assessment and risk assessment strategies.

Level 3: Carried out by specialists who have a minimum of 5 years practical experience, have detailed knowledge of tree failure and able to undertake hazard tree investigation to a level required for evidence in public inquiry or in court.

**A Level 3 assessment was undertaken during 2011.**

#### **Frequency of Assessment**

Assessments to monitor and identify potential hazard trees will be carried out as follows:

- a) Walk round survey on a [weekly/monthly] basis or following any major storm event (to be carried out by trained grounds maintenance staff a Level 1 assessment).
- b) A Yearly inspections (or more often as required) during late summer / autumn (to be carried out by a qualified arboriculturist, a Level 2 assessment).
- c) Weekly / Monthly monitoring of any suspect trees (to be carried out by trained grounds maintenance staff)

**Tree Risk Management Policy (Continued)****3.4 Implementing Tree Works****Emergency Works**

In the event of the identification of emergency works, e.g. such as those identified in Appendix 1 for Level 1 reporting, these will be instructed by the [site manager or is appointed deputy] if required they will liaise with relevant emergency authorities, e.g. Police, Highways Authorities and statutory undertakers (Electricity, Gas, Telecommunications and Water) and adjacent land owners as required. Site Specific Risk assessment must be undertaken for each specific tree to take account of the additional risk associated with working on trees with known defects and / or in adverse environmental conditions. These assessments must be approved by the site manager / or appointed deputy or the authority responsible for instigating the emergency works. For recording and reporting the need and implementation of emergency works see reporting below.

**Planned Maintenance**

Tree work programmes and their specifications will be undertaken in accordance with known arboricultural best practice taking into consideration the level of risk, legal and site specific constraints. Contractors implementing, or internal resourced maintenance, tree works will be required to submit in advance to the supervising officer / site manager / consultant arboriculturist their Site Specific Risk Assessments for the works being undertaken. For supervision reporting on tree works see Reporting below.

### **3.5 Reporting**

#### **Hazard Reporting**

Ad hoc reporting by grounds staff will be undertaken when obvious defects and storm damage has been noted. Reporting should be to the site manager who will advise management so that appropriate action can be taken, consultancy advice sought and/or contractors appointed.

Newly identified defects are likely to include, for example, tree deaths, defoliation, branch failures, storm damage, fungal growth and partial uprooting. Where defects present a safety risk that cannot be addressed by ground staff, a works order should be issued to a bona fide contractor as soon as practicable. Defects should also be reported to the consultant in order that any health and safety issues can be considered. For example, fungal growth could mean the presence of decay of stems or roots, branch failure may be associated with crown decays and defoliation could relate to pathogenic insects or diseases that may spread.

#### **Monthly Reporting**

The [duty H&S] appointed person for the month will provide the site manager with a summary report on the last day of each month detailing any defects or reporting that no defects were observed.

The monitoring inspections will be recorded in a format that will allow ready identification of any new hazards and progress of any action identified by the site staff /arboriculturist report.

**Tree Risk Management Policy (Continued)****Yearly Reporting**

The yearly report from the consultant arboriculturist will provide detailed assessments of any defective trees, any necessary works and consultations and / or applications required. The report will also identify trees for monitoring or more detailed investigations requiring specialist equipment and / or knowledge. These will be set out in a tabulated form showing when assessments and works will occur and who is responsible for each of the actions.

**Auditing Tree Works**

The auditing of tree works by the management will be in five parts:

Ensuring that the specified works will remove or control the risk and / or achieve the required arboricultural objective

Ensuring that the Contractors / internal maintenance staffs Specific Risk Assessment is accurate and identifies all the risks associated with the works being undertaken.

Supervision of works to ensure that the contractor follows the work specification and risk assessment.

Reporting any accidents and any incidents relating to the tree works which do not meet the specification or risk assessment.

Completion of the Tree Works Audit Report which will provide summary information on the works undertaken, with dates and locations and any additional works / monitoring that have been identified during the implementing of the works.

**Training**

Grounds maintenance staff should be given basic training to allow them to monitor the tree population of the course and complete a report sheets after each inspection where defects have been identified. Information on this is included in Section 4 of this report.

**Tree Risk Management Policy (Continued)****3.6 Monitoring of Inspections**

Inspection records will be passed to the management for checking and identification of action, if required. Action will not be taken, except in emergency situations without consultation with the Local Authority Officer if there are any statutory controls, e.g. Tree Preservation Orders.

Records of inspections and action taken to be forwarded for the consultant arboriculturist on a quarterly basis, unless agreed otherwise as part of the management plan, such as reporting of newly identified defects.

External audits should be arranged on a regular basis [e.g. every 3 years] or following any significant tree failure that was not identified as part of the assessment system.

## **Tree Risk Management Policy (Continued)**

### **3.7 Review of Policy and Procedures**

Following the yearly report and / or some major change in hazard or risk level, the management will (where necessary in co-operation with the local authority) consider any issues that have arisen from the inspections and reports, and / or proposed changes in the course, that may have implications for the tree hazard and risk management on the site.

Legal and other Constraints:

The site is constrained by or may be constrained by:

Tree Preservation Orders

Conservation Area

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Statutory Undertakers Rights

These constraints will need to be taken into account when considering any works (including plantings) and may require that applications / consultations are undertaken with the relevant authorities before any works can be undertaken.

In the case of emergency it will be necessary to ensure that documented evidence is provided, photographs, statements and records of events (chronologies) so that the relevant authorities can be shown documented evidence to support the work action undertaken.

## **Tree Risk Management Policy (Continued)**

### **3.8 Survey Methodologies**

A detailed description of the outcomes and reporting format for each of the above is provided below. This methodology should not be used for the undertaking of initial surveys for categorising risk management zones, these should always be based on Level 2 Assessments.

#### **Level 1: Descriptions of outcomes from assessment are:**

To identify major changes to the trees structure and or its appearance

These are:

Leaf colour, Die back / loss of twig density, Soil disturbance and root plate lifting

Fungal Fruiting Bodies, Splits and spiral cracks

To record these changes on the survey form provided

To audit the data to ensure that tree location / number is accurate

To report any of the following hazards immediately to the [site manager]

Hanging / broken branches, Soil / root displacement, Leaning trees

Splits / spiral cracks on stems and main branches

#### **Level 2: Descriptions of outcomes from assessment are**

To identify defects as Level 1

To be undertaken by persons with sufficient training / experience / expertise / qualifications to identify tree hazards and latent defects

Assessment of the level of risk posed and the likelihood of tree failure

The provision of appropriate management recommendations

#### **Level 3: Description of outcomes from assessment are**

To identify defects as Level 1 and Level 2

To be undertaken by persons of the highest level of skill and knowledge

Provision of expert opinion on defects and risks and be able to produce expert reports as required

If assessments, particularly Levels 2 and 3, are going to put out to tender or it is intended to use outside consultants these scopes of works descriptions must form part of the specification / instruction. If this description is not incorporated in the instruction the quality of the data and the ability to use it for management and / or as evidence in case of accidents may be reduced or have a negative contribution.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated and revised as appropriate.

Signed:

Mr A Keane

Date.

#### 4. General Guidance for Grounds Staff – Tree Inspection and Maintenance

##### Defects described

Hazardous defects are visible signs that the tree is failing. We recognize seven main types of tree defects: dead wood, cracks, weak branch unions, decay, cankers, root problems, and poor tree architecture. A tree with defects is not hazardous, however, unless some portion of it is within striking distance of a target.

##### Dead wood

Dead wood is "not negotiable"-- dead trees and large dead branches must be removed immediately! Dead trees and branches are unpredictable and can break and fall at any time. Dead wood is often dry and brittle and cannot bend in the wind like a living tree or branch. Dead branches and treetops that are already broken off ("hangers" or "widow makers") are especially dangerous!

Take immediate action if...

- \* A broken branch or top is lodged in a tree.
- \* A tree is dead.
- \* A branch is dead and of sufficient size to cause injury (this will vary with height and size of branch).

##### Cracks

A crack is a deep split through the bark, extending into the wood of the tree. Cracks are extremely dangerous because they indicate that the tree is already failing

Take action if...

- \* A crack extends deeply into, or completely through the stem.
- \* Two or more cracks occur in the same general area of the stem.
- \* A crack is in contact with another defect.
- \* A branch of sufficient size to cause injury is cracked.

##### Weak Branch Unions

Weak branch unions are places where branches are not strongly attached to the tree. A weak union occurs when two or more similarly sized, usually upright branches grow so closely together that bark grows between the branches, inside the union. This ingrown bark does not have the structural strength of wood, and the union is much weaker than one that does not have included bark. The included bark may also act as a wedge and force the branch union to split apart. Trees with a tendency to form upright branches, such as elm and maple, often produce weak branch unions. Weak branch unions also form after a tree or branch is tipped or topped, i.e., when the main stem or a large branch is cut at a right angle to the direction of growth leaving a large branch stub. The stub inevitably decays, providing very poor support for new branches ("epicormic" branches) that usually develop along the cut branch.

Take action if...

- \* A weak branch union occurs on the main stem.
- \* A weak branch union is cracked.
- \* A weak branch union is associated with a crack, cavity, or other defect.

### **Decay**

Decaying trees can be prone to failure, but the presence of decay by itself does not indicate that the tree is hazardous. Advanced decay, i.e., wood that is soft, wet, or crumbly, or a cavity where the wood is missing can create a serious hazard. Evidence of fungal activity including mushrooms, conks, and brackets growing on root flares, stems, or branches are indicators of advanced decay.

A tree usually decays from the inside out, eventually forming a cavity, but sound wood is also added to the outside of the tree as it grows.

Trees with sound outer wood shells may be relatively safe, but this depends upon the ratio of sound to decayed wood, and other defects that might be present. Evaluating the safety of a decaying tree is usually best left to trained arborists.

Take action if...

- \* Advanced decay is associated with cracks, weak branch unions, or other defects.
- \* A branch of sufficient size to cause injury is decayed.
- \* The thickness of sound wood is less than 1" for every 6" of diameter at any point on the stem.

### **Cankers**

A canker is a localized area on the stem or branch of a tree, where the bark is sunken or missing. Wounding or disease causes cankers.

The presence of a canker increases the chance of the stem breaking near the canker (Fig. 5). A tree with a canker that encompasses more than half of the tree's circumference may be hazardous even if exposed wood appears sound.

Take action if...

- \* A canker or multiple cankers affect more than half of the tree's circumference.
- \* A canker is physically connected to a crack, weak branch union, a cavity, or other defect.

### **Root Problems**

Trees with root problems may blow over in wind storms. They may even fall without warning in summer when burdened with the weight of the tree's leaves. There are many kinds of root problems to consider, e.g., severing or paving-over, raising or lowering the soil grade near the tree; parking or driving vehicles over the roots; or extensive root decay.

Soil mounding (Fig. 7), twig dieback, dead wood in the crown, and off-colour or smaller than normal leaves are symptoms often associated with root problems.

Because most defective roots are underground and out of sight, above ground symptoms may serve as the best warning.

Take action if...

- \* A tree is leaning with recent root exposure, soil movement, or soil mounding near the base of the tree.

- \* More than half of the roots under the tree's crown have been cut or crushed. These trees are dangerous because they do not have adequate structural support from the root system.

- \* Advanced decay is present in the root flares or "buttress" roots.

### **Poor Tree Architecture**

Poor architecture is a growth pattern that indicates weakness or structural imbalance. Trees with strange shapes are interesting to look at, but may be structurally defective. Poor architecture often arises after many years of damage from storms, unusual growing conditions, improper pruning, topping, and other damage. A leaning tree may be a hazard. Because not all leaning trees are dangerous, a professional arborist should examine any leaning tree of concern.

Take action if...

- \* A tree leans excessively.

- \* A large branch is out of proportion with the rest of the crown.

### **Multiple Defects**

The recognition of multiple defects in a tree is critical when evaluating the tree's potential to fail. Multiple defects that are touching or are close to one another should be carefully examined. If more than one defect occurs on the tree's main stem, you should assume that the tree is extremely hazardous.

### **Corrective Actions**

Corrective actions begin with a thorough evaluation. If a hazardous situation exists, there are three recommended options for correcting the problem: move the target, prune the tree, or remove the tree.

#### **Move the Target**

Removing the target is often an inexpensive and effective treatment for correcting a hazard tree. Easily moved items like play sets and swings, RV's, and picnic tables can be placed out of the reach of the hazardous tree with little effort and expense.

If the target cannot be moved and a serious hazard exists, consider blocking access to the target area until the hazard can be properly eliminated.

**Prune the Tree**

A defective branch or branches may cause a hazardous situation, even though the rest of the tree is sound. In this case, pruning the branch solves the problem.

Prune when...

- \* A branch is dead.
- \* A branch of sufficient size to cause injury is cracked or decayed.
- \* A weak branch union exists and one of the branches can be removed.
- \* Branches form a sharp angle, twist, or bend.
- \* A branch is lopsided or unbalanced with respect to the rest of the tree.
- \* A broken branch is lodged in the crown. Remove the branch and prune the stub.

Pruning a tree properly early in its life is a good way to effectively avoid many potential problems when the tree is older and larger. When done correctly, routine pruning of trees does not promote future defects. If done improperly, immediate problems may be removed, but cracks, decay, cankers, or poor architecture will be the ultimate result, creating future hazards.

We recommend that the "natural target" pruning method be used.

**Remove the Tree**

Before cutting a tree down, carefully consider the alternatives. The effects of removing a tree are often pronounced in landscape situations and may result in reduced property values. Tree removal should be considered as the final option and used only when the other two corrective actions will not work. Tree removal is inherently dangerous and is even more serious when homes and other targets are involved.

Removal of hazardous trees is usually a job for a professional arborist.

**Cabling and Bracing**

Cabling and bracing does not repair a hazard tree, but when done correctly by a trained arborist, it can extend the time a tree or its parts are safe. Done incorrectly, it creates a more serious hazard. We do not recommend cabling or bracing as treatment for a hazard tree unless the tree has significant historic or landscape value.

**Topping and Tipping--Poor Pruning Practices**

Topping is the practice of pruning large upright branches at right angles to the direction of growth, sometimes used to reduce the height of the crown. Tipping is the cutting of lateral branches at right angles to the direction of growth to reduce crown width. Both of these practices are harmful and should never be used. The inevitable result of such pruning wounds is decay in the remaining stub, which then serves as a very poor support to any branches that subsequently form. Trees that are pruned in this manner are also misshapen and aesthetically unappealing.

## 5. WILDLIFE

As part of due diligence in respect of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, an ecological 'walkover' survey should be undertaken to identify the presence of nesting birds, invertebrates, flora, mammals, bats or amphibians that would require consideration prior to works commencing on site.

### BATS

All the British bat species are fully protected through Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation Regulations 1994 through inclusion on Schedule 2. This legislation makes it illegal to disturb, obstruct, damage or destroy any bat roost.

The potential for bat roosts at this site in the absence of any derelict or suitable man-made structures or caves etc, would be limited to the existing tree cover.

Most of the trees are vigorous healthy specimens with little dead wood or broken limbs/branches. They have very few holes, crevices or cracks in their bole or crown. Their bat roost potential therefore is limited.

If a bat roost is present within any of the trees a licence must be obtained from DEFRA that allows the disturbance/destruction of the identified roost, before any development works begin.

### BIRDS

All British birds nests and eggs are protected in law under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It would be an offence for any developer to damage or destroy any nest or egg of a wild bird.

It is therefore essential that a suitable bird nesting survey be completed prior to any tree removal, pruning or clearance works as part of due diligence.

English Nature recommends that no tree and scrub clearance work takes place between March and June inclusive. Despite the planned scrub and tree works not starting in the survey area until July, a bird nesting survey was completed at the end of June for any late nesters.

**APPENDIX 2**

**TREE SCHEDULES**

**MANAGEMENT PLANS**

**SKETCH PLANS**

**NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE JUNIOR SCHOOL - SCHEDULE OF TREES**

<b>Tree</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>Spread</b>	<b>Diam.</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
T1	Robinia (False Acacia)	7	2	370	To right of front entrance, mature specimen Large dead branch; tree has been historically pruned to contain its dimensions.	Clean out large dead branch.
T2	Sycamore	17	4	290	Located to rear of dining hall, self-set tree close to boundary and building, high growth potential, inappropriate for this location, as future conflicts with building and boundary are inevitable. Very close to building, potential direct and indirect damage risks.	Previous application for removal refused, unlikely to be successful with a new application.
T3	Poplar	9	1.5	1160	Mature specimen recently received heavy crown reduction pruning. Potential for decay within main stem, species is prone to decay and branch failure. High target risk adjacent playground.	Repeat inspection 2015
T4	Poplar	3.8	1.5	1120	Mature specimen recently received heavy crown reduction pruning. Potential for decay within main stem, species is prone to decay and branch failure. High target risk adjacent playground. Some loose bark, no decay.	Repeat inspection 2015
T5	Sycamore	18	6	760	Located to rear of fence in storage area. Multi-stemmed habit.	None
T6	Plane	18	8	N/A	Located within neighbouring land to the rear, crown extends over playground and has been reduced in the past. Unable to inspect in detail as tree is far side of boundary. See later comments on neighbour's rights regarding boundary trees.	None

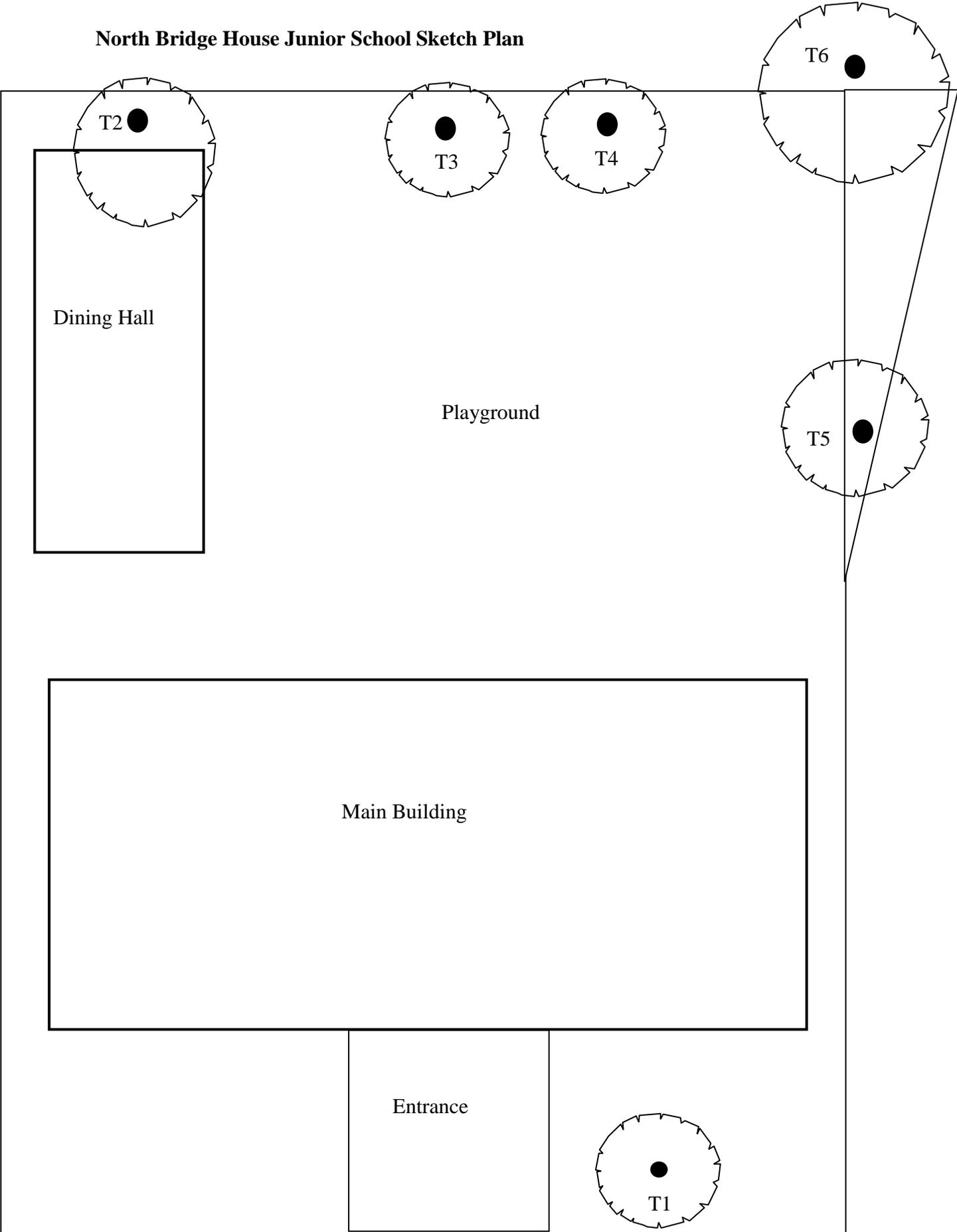
**NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE JUNIOR SCHOOL  
5-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN – TREE WORKS AND INSPECTION**

This is a preliminary plan as the first two years of inspection and recommended actions will allow definition of the long term tree management strategy.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tree Works</b>	<b>Inspections</b>
2014	<p>Undertake tree works as recommended within the June 2014 report.</p> <p>Autumn 2013 – Plant a new False Acacia tree to replace the lost TPO specimen to the left hand side of the entrance.</p>	<p>Level 3 Inspection undertaken June 2014</p>
2015	<p>T1 – remove any new dead wood or storm damage T3/T4 – inspect T5 - remove any new dead wood or storm damage T6 - remove any new dead wood or storm damage</p> <p>New False Acacia – undertake basic young tree maintenance, watering, checking and adjusting stake and tie, replenish mulch/undertake vegetation control within 1m radius of base.</p>	<p>Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to update tree conditions to appraise the conditions of the main stems of the Poplar trees T3 &amp; T4 to ensure there is no internal decay that could lead to stem failure.</p>
2016	<p>T1 – remove any new dead wood or storm damage T3/T4 – see opposite, undertake any recommended action T5 - remove any new dead wood or storm damage T6 - remove any new dead wood or storm damage</p> <p>New False Acacia – undertake basic young tree maintenance, watering, checking and adjusting stake and tie, replenish mulch/undertake vegetation control within 1m radius of base.</p>	<p>Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.</p>

2017	<p>T1 – remove any new dead wood or storm damage  T3/T4 – see opposite, undertake any recommended action  T5 - remove any new dead wood or storm damage  T6 - remove any new dead wood or storm damage</p> <p>New False Acacia – undertake basic young tree maintenance, watering, checking and adjusting stake and tie, replenish mulch/undertake vegetation control within 1m radius of base.</p>	<p>Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.</p>
2018	<p>T1 – remove any new dead wood or storm damage  T3/T4 – see opposite, undertake any recommended action  T5 - remove any new dead wood or storm damage  T6 - remove any new dead wood or storm damage</p> <p>New False Acacia – undertake basic young tree maintenance, watering, checking and adjusting stake and tie, replenish mulch/undertake vegetation control within 1m radius of base.</p>	<p>Level 3 inspection to update tree conditions and to appraise the conditions of the main stems of the Poplar trees T3 &amp; T4 to ensure there is no internal decay that could lead to stem failure.</p>

North Bridge House Junior School Sketch Plan



**NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL****Schedule of Trees**

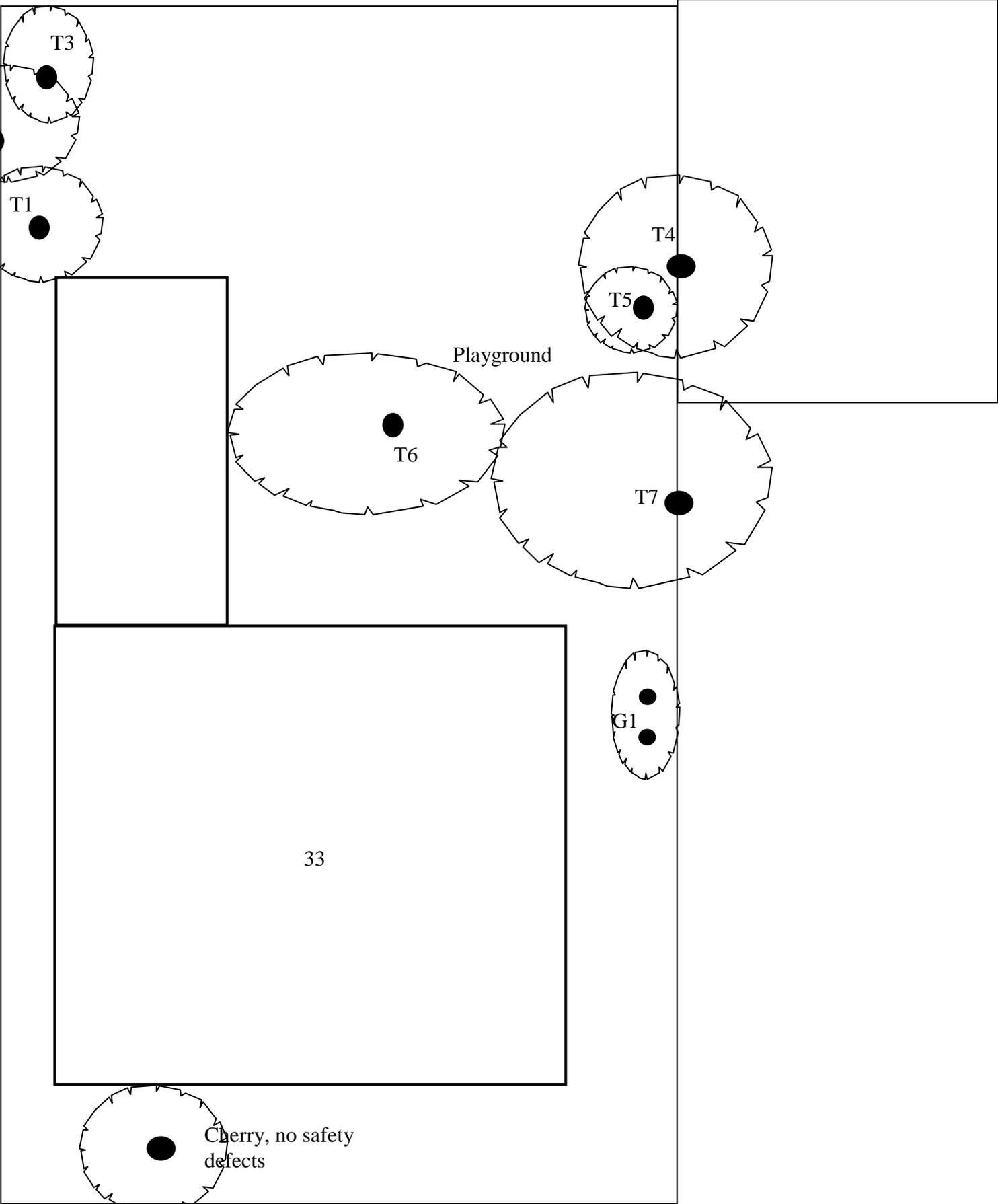
<b>Tree</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>Spread</b>	<b>Diam.</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
T1	Sycamore	11	3.5	240	Previously pruned. No significant defects. Low foliage close to CCTV camera	Prune growth near roof and CCTV camera
T2	Lime	15	5	x3 <350	Previously Reduced. No significant defects.	
T3	Sycamore	12	4	320	Previously pruned. No significant defects but suppressed by neighbouring tree	
T4	Plane	17	7	1300	Multi stemmed from 2m, Previously pruned. No significant defects. Sparse upper crown, small dead wood	Annual inspection for Massaria branch drop syndrome and reporting of any fallen branches, any fallen branches to be retained for inspection by Level 3 Consultant
T5	Yew	5	3	140	Poisonous foliage	
T6	Pear	5.5	6	320	Unbalanced, suppressed, foliage on school roof, twin stemmed from 2m	Reduce crown to improve balance and clear foliage from roof.
T7	Plane	17	6	1100	Within wall, stem partly visible, damage and lean to wall, crown reduced on neighbour's side, multi stemmed from 2.5m. Small dead wood within slightly sparse crown.	Annual inspection for Massaria branch drop syndrome and reporting of any fallen branches, any fallen branches to be retained for inspection by Level 3 Consultant
G1	Cypress x2	1.7	0.5	50	Within raised bed, likely to cause damage to retaining wall in long term,	

**NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL  
5-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN – TREE WORKS AND INSPECTION**

This is a preliminary plan as the first two years of inspection and recommended actions will allow definition of the long term tree management strategy.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tree Works</b>	<b>Inspections</b>
2014	T1 – Remove low foliage over roof and CCTV camera	Level 3 inspection undertaken June 2014
2015	Annual inspection for Massaria branch drop syndrome and reporting of any fallen branches, any fallen branches to be retained for inspection by Level 3 Consultant  T1-T7 remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.
2016	Annual inspection for Massaria branch drop syndrome and reporting of any fallen branches, any fallen branches to be retained for inspection by Level 3 Consultant  T1-T7 remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.
2017	Annual inspection for Massaria branch drop syndrome and reporting of any fallen branches, any fallen branches to be retained for inspection by Level 3 Consultant  T1-T7 remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.
2018	Annual inspection for Massaria branch drop syndrome and reporting of any fallen branches, any fallen branches to be retained for inspection by Level 3 Consultant T1-T7 remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 3 inspection to update tree conditions and to appraise the conditions of the main structure of the trees to ensure there are no latent defects

Sketch Plan - North Bridge House Nursery School



**NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE SENIOR SCHOOL – 1 GLOUCESTER AVENUE****Schedule of Trees**

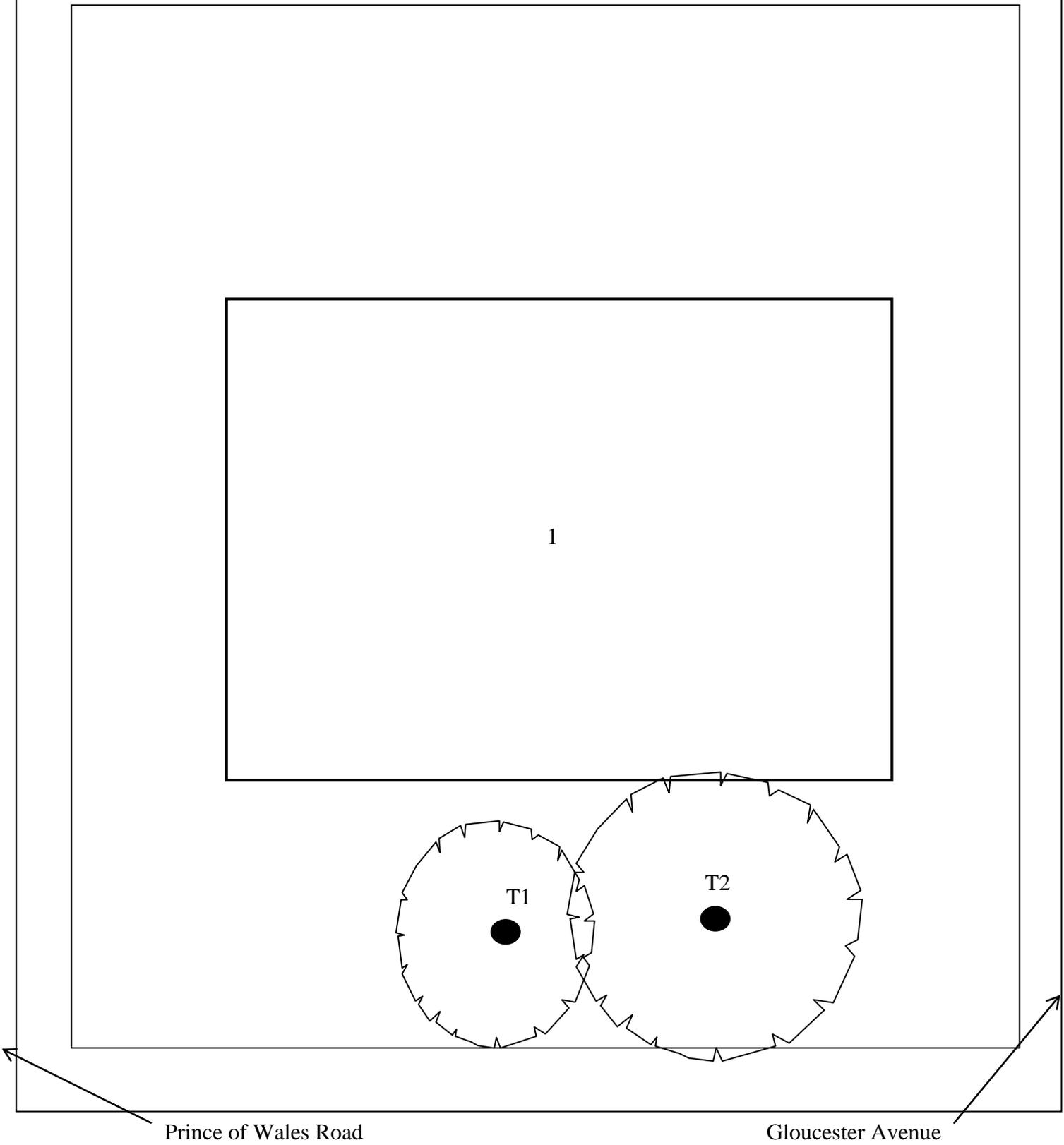
<b>Tree</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>Spread</b>	<b>Diam.</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
T1	Lime	8	2	330	Twin stemmed from 2m, crown reduced in recent past,	None
T2	Sycamore	13	2.5	720	Crown reduced in the recent past, Stem wound with soft surface decay only, occluding with strong wound wood developing, likely cause was impact damage when access gate was in use.	None

**NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE SENIOR SCHOOL – 1 GLOUCESTER AVENUE  
5-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN – TREE WORKS AND INSPECTION**

This is a preliminary plan as the first two years of inspection and recommended actions will allow definition of the long term tree management strategy.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tree Works</b>	<b>Inspections</b>
2014	None	Level 3 inspection undertaken
2015	Remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.
2016	Remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.
2017	Remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.
2018	Remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 3 inspection to update tree conditions and to appraise the conditions of the main structure of the trees to ensure there are no latent defects

**Sketch Plan - North Bridge House Senior School - 1 Gloucester Avenue**



**NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE SENIOR SCHOOL – ROSSLYN HILL****Schedule of Trees**

<b>Tree</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>Spread</b>	<b>Diam.</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
T1	Cherry	8	5	350	No significant defects.	
T2	Spruce/Cypress	9	2	150	No significant defects.	
T3	Plane	14	7	750	Previously reduced in size. No significant defects.	
T4	Beech group	8	4	<250	10 main stems, No significant defects.	
T5	Cherry	8.5	4	500	Twin stemmed near base, sparse foliage.	
T6	Sycamore	14	5	420	No significant defects.	
T7	Beech group	8	4	<250	7 main stems, No significant defects.	
T8	Whitebeam	8	3	340	No significant defects.	
T9	Elm	5	2	200	Dead	Removed
T10	Sycamore group	10	5	<300	Foliage near building	Removed
T11	Sycamore	15	5	720	Twin stemmed from 2m, foliage on neighbour's roof	Lift/reduce crown to clear roof by 4m
T12	Sycamore	15	5	400	Two stems arise from base, foliage on neighbour's roof	Lift/reduce crown to clear roof by 4m
T13	Elder	6	3	200	Twin stemmed. No significant defects.	
T14	Cherry	4	2	120	Dead	Removed
T15	Elder	4.5	2	120	No significant defects.	
T16	Cedar	6	1.5	160	No significant defects.	
T17	Cherry	5	2	150	Ivy clad stem.	
T18	Cherry	12.5	3	240	Previously pruned, crown cankers and sparse foliage.	
T19	Cherry	10	2	200	Previously pruned, crown cankers and sparse foliage.	
T20	Birch	6	1	50	Poor, dying young specimen	Consider replacement
T21	Birch group	8	2	<140	Close to retaining wall. No significant defects.	

**NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE SENIOR SCHOOL – ROSSLYN HILL  
5-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN – TREE WORKS AND INSPECTION**

This is a preliminary plan as the first two years of inspection and recommended actions will allow definition of the long term tree management strategy.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tree Works</b>	<b>Inspections</b>
2014	T11 - Lift/reduce crown to clear roof by 4m T12 - Lift/reduce crown to clear roof by 4m	Level 3 inspection undertaken June 2014
2015	Remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.
2016	Remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.
2017	Remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 2 inspection by arboricultural contracts manager to identify and new fungal growth or structural defects and to recommend any additional maintenance pruning.
2018	Remove any new dead wood or storm damage plus any newly recommended works.	Level 3 inspection to update tree conditions and to appraise the conditions of the main structure of the trees to ensure there are no latent defects

Sketch Plan - North Bridge House Senior School - Rosslyn Hill

