



## SJ Stephens Associates

ARBORICULTURAL, LANDSCAPE & MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Mr F R Wellburn  
38 West Hill Court  
Millfield Lane  
London N6 6JJ

3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016

Dear Bob,

### **Re: Beech tree by tennis court**

Further to my visit on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016, when I met yourself and the other residents to look at the beech tree, I am pleased to provide my findings.

The vigour of the tree has significantly deteriorated since my previous inspections in September 2014 and October 2015. Some photos are attached to aid comparison. The change is most evident in the photos taken from the lawn in 2015 and 2016, only a few days apart. The 2015 photo was taken after the crown reduction had been completed earlier in 2015. The decrease in crown density is marked and the average leaf size is much smaller than, for example, the mature beech growing in the adjacent site the other side of West Hill Court. This is almost certainly caused by a factor affecting the ability of the roots to take up nutrients and moisture. Disfunctional roots, as well as affecting nutrient uptake, are also likely to affect the stability of the tree.

The most likely cause is a fungus such as the Honey fungus, *Armillaria mellea*. I looked carefully around the base of the tree but did not find any signs of fungi. Although I could not positively identify the fungus, this does not necessarily mean it is not present.

Some bark cracking was observed around approximately 15% of the basal circumference to the south-east, tapering up to approximately 3.5m. This is shown in the photos attached.

It is most unlikely that the vigour of the tree will improve whatever action is taken. It will almost certainly continue to decline and windthrow, caused by root decay, is a possibility. If this happened, the prevailing wind from the southwest and the existing lean to the north-east means it would be most likely to fall across the path onto the lawn, during a storm. Although the gardens are not open to the public they are used by residents and visitors who will be at risk. The other risk is the shedding of limbs as the vigour deteriorates. However, the existing fencing which is keeping people out from under the canopy, reduces this risk.

Although this tree has been a prominent landscape feature in the locality, its amenity value is reducing as its vigour deteriorates. I suggest that the time has come to remove the tree and plant a replacement. To do otherwise is to put off the inevitable and subject residents to an unnecessary risk.

[www.sjstephens.co.uk](http://www.sjstephens.co.uk) email: [info@sjstephens.co.uk](mailto:info@sjstephens.co.uk)

Savernake Barn, Stokke Common, Great Bedwyn, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 3LL Tel: 01672 871 862

SJ Stephens Associates Ltd. Registered Office: The Pines, Boars Head, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3HD. Company No 5240258 VAT No 850 9220 36



## SJ Stephens Associates

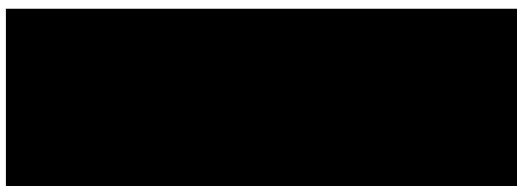
ARBORICULTURAL, LANDSCAPE & MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Up until the tree is felled, you should ensure seating benches are not positioned within falling distance of the tree and maintain the fencing keeping people away from the canopy.

If you decide to remove the tree, since it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, you will need to get permission from the Local Planning Authority. If you supply a copy of this letter with your application, I would be surprised if permission was denied.

If you require any further information, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



**Simon Stephens**  
**Arboricultural Association Registered Consultant**  
**MA Oxon, Dip Arb (RFS), MArborA, CEnv, MICFor**

[www.sjstephens.co.uk](http://www.sjstephens.co.uk) email: [info@sjstephens.co.uk](mailto:info@sjstephens.co.uk)

Savernake Barn, Stokke Common, Great Bedwyn, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 3LL Tel: 01672 871 862

SJ Stephens Associates Ltd. Registered Office: The Pines, Boars Head, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3HD. Company No 5240258 VAT No 850 9220 36

10-09-2014



01-11-2016





26-10-2015



01-11-2016





01-11-2016

