

ARBORICULTURALIST'S REPORT

January 2024

SITE : Raven House, 53 Rockingham Road, Corby, NN17 1AJ

CLIENT : North Northamptonshire Council



4858

29th January 2024

ARBORICULTURALIST'S REPORT

Terms of Reference

- 1.1 This report was requested by Paul Meakins of Wilby Tree Surgeons Ltd, Towerfield Farm, Sywell Lane, Ecton, Northampton, NN6 0QT.
- 1.2 The instruction to inspect trees at Raven House, Corby was received by email.
- 1.3 The purpose of my inspection and report is to discuss the implications and interactions of the trees close to the property, and the damage under investigation.

Limitations

- 2.1 The content of this report is valid for a period of three years from the date shown above.
- 2.2 The report is for the sole use of the client and its reproduction or use by anyone else is forbidden unless written consent is given by the author.
- 2.3 This is not a full arboricultural survey. This can be supplied but will be subject to a further fee. Any safety implications identified during the inspection are of course noted.
- 2.4 This is an arboricultural report and as such, no reliance should be placed on comments relating to buildings or soil data. My observations and comments are based upon experience with previous cases. I have no formal engineering qualifications.
- 2.5 No tree can ever be guaranteed to be 100% safe and even trees in good condition can suffer damage under normal conditions. Any tree can be hazardous due to decay or structural weakness, but the risk posed by that hazard is determined by its size and location in relation to the potential target. Frequent inspections can help to identify potential problems before they become acute and allow for intervention.
- 2.6 Trees are living organisms and even a mechanically perfect tree can be damaged or caused to fail. Inspection after extreme weather events is essential and professional advice should be sought whenever there is concern for a tree's condition.

The Site

- 3.1 I carried out my site visit on 15th January 2024, during which time the weather was dry with adequate visibility.
- 3.2 The site is Raven House, located on its own plot at the junction of Occupation Road and Rockingham Road in Corby. The brick-built property was constructed in the 1950's / 1960's and a more recent extension to the south.
- 3.3 The underlying soils in the area are clay based with a potential to shrink when dried.
- 3.4 There is structural damage in the form of cracking of the brickwork below a window at the western gable end of the building and some separation between the original building and the extension to the south.
- 3.5 There are trees on three sides of the building, all of which are younger than the building. There is a line of Leyland Cypress (G1) and a Sycamore (T2) within 6m-9m of the area where damage is occurring.
- 3.6 The tree details are as follows and their locations shown on the attached plan.

Tree	Species	No Stems	Size	Age	Vigour	Condition
G1	x Cupressocyparis leylandii (Leyland Cypress)	Single	Large	Mature	Normal	Average
2	Acer pseudoplatanus (Sycamore)	Single	Medium	Mature	Normal	Average
3	Pyrus communis (Pear)	Double	Medium	Mature	Normal	Average
4	Prunus avium (Wild Cherry)	Single	Medium	Mature	Low	Dead
5	Fraxinus excelsior (Ash)	Single	Medium	Mature	Normal	Average
6	Acer campestre (Field Maple)	Single	Medium	Mature	Normal	Average

Discussion

- 4.1 The presence of trees close to the property with a clay soil means there is the potential for desiccation of the soils, causing shrinkage below the foundations and possible damage to the building structure.
- 4.2 There are foul water drains close to the area of damage and I was advised that tree roots were encountered and causing a blockage during a recent survey. While tree roots cannot enter intact drains, they will exploit any available moisture from already damaged structures.
- 4.3 The pattern of cracking/movement and the location, size and age of the trees mean they may have a minor influence in the damage under investigation.
- 4.4 However, the larger influence will have been the damaged drains which subsequently leaked, causing soil washing from under the building foundations.

Recommendations

- 5.1 I recommend that to ensure the trees do not contribute to further damage, the group of Leyland Cypress (G1) and the Sycamore (T2) should be removed by felling to allow the soils to stabilise.
- 5.2 It would not be necessary to phase their removal over several years as it has been proven that this causes healthy trees to react vigorously and put on new growth very quickly, which in turn would increase their water uptake and subsequent soil desiccation.
- 5.3 As the trees do not predate the building and there are others present, the risk of heave from soil rehydration following their removal is exceptionally low.
- 5.4 The remaining trees (T3 – T6) are all far enough from the building that their influence is not significant.
- 5.5 I recommend either grinding out or chemically treating the Sycamore stump to prevent its regrowth. Stumps of conifer trees do not need chemical treatment as they will not regenerate.
- 5.6 Once this work is complete and the drains have been repaired, the building movement should stabilise and not recur.



Prior to commencing any arboricultural work to trees, it is essential to liaise with the Local Planning Authority as they may be protected by a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area.

Any arboricultural work should be carried out by a competent arborist in line with BS3998 British Standards for Tree Work.

All wild birds, their young, eggs and active nests are protected under law, and it is an offence to damage a nest intentionally while it is in use or being built. Non-urgent tree work or hedge cutting should not be undertaken during the bird nesting or breeding season (March to July, but depending on seasonal temperatures, some birds continue breeding into August and September).

All bats and their roosts are strictly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Natural Habitats and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Where bats are suspected to be present, seek advice from a licensed bat specialist before carrying out any major tree work or hedge cutting.

Should you have any questions or require any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Hatton
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