



Tree Condition Survey



Trees on land at
Cygnet Ty Alarch

Location: **Ty Alarch, Park Terrace, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8UY**

Client: **Joy Ryder**

Survey Date: **12th November 2025**

Surveyor: **Kevin Cloud**

Local Authority: **Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council**

Report reference number: **TCA-KC/TYALARCH/002**

Report date: **November 2025**



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1. Instructions

- 1.1 Technical Arboriculture Limited was instructed by Joy Ryder of Cygnet Health, Cobridge Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 5JY to undertake a ground based tree condition survey of trees within land at Cygnet Ty Alarch, Park Terrace, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8UY.
- 1.2 On arrival it was clear that one (ash) tree previously recommended for removal has now gone, therefore the report relates to one remaining (birch) tree on the site.

2. Purpose of report

- 2.1 The purpose of a tree condition survey is to determine whether any trees pose an unreasonable risk to people or property. Trees are not usually hazardous simply because of their size but failure may occur as a result of recognisable hazardous features. This report provides opinion on the condition of the trees and makes recommendations aimed at ensuring risk of failure is as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP¹) with a timescale for action and review.

3. Tree survey method

- 3.1 The industry standard tree inspection procedure is known as Visual Tree Assessment (VTA)² and involves surveying trees from ground level to detect possible weaknesses. The principles of VTA are discussed in *Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management* and have been incorporated into *Hazards from Trees - A General Guide*³. The National Tree Safety Group has issued guidance on tree management and inspections in *Common sense risk management of trees*⁴. These texts have guided the procedure adopted.
- 3.2 The tree was surveyed from ground level. Note that access to the tree was limited by recently installed fencing.

4. Limitations

- 4.1 This assessment concerns arboricultural aspects only. No inspection has been made of the soil structure. No digging or other detailed investigation was carried out. Identification of fungi is made on a visual basis only. No account has been taken of the effects of the tree or its removal directly or indirectly on any building(s) or structure(s) relating to the possibility of subsidence or heave.

¹ Further details under Risk Assessment section below.

² 1994 Mattheck and Breloer (DETR), TSO

³ <https://cdn.forestresearch.gov.uk/2000/01/fcpg13.pdf>

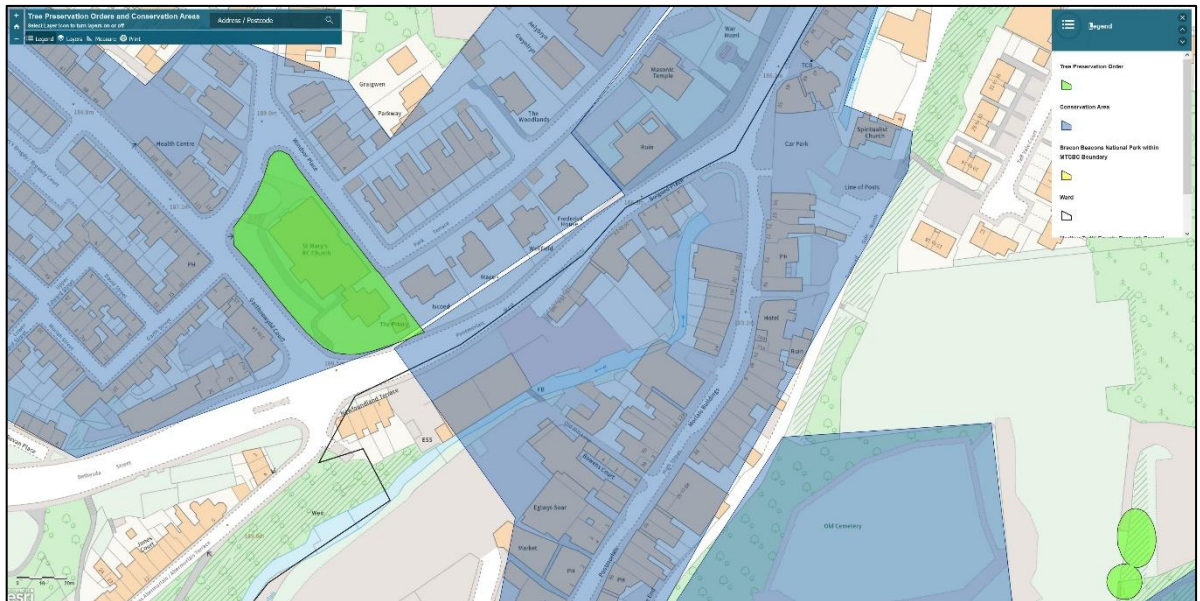
⁴ <https://cdn.forestresearch.gov.uk/2011/12/fcms024.pdf>

- 4.2 Trees are dynamic self-optimising organisms that grow in reaction and stimulus to their immediate surroundings and influence of wider environmental conditions. Consequently, tree health and condition will inevitably change over time. Therefore any comments made in this report can only be considered valid for three years unless otherwise stated under the report “review period”.
- 4.3 This report does not take into account any effects of extreme climate and weather incidences, vandalism, changes in the natural and/or built environment around the tree after the date of this report, nor any damage whether physical, chemical or otherwise

5. Legal constraints

- 5.1 The *Town & Country Planning Act (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012* and the *Town & Country Planning Act 1990* (as amended) provides legislative protection for trees within England.
- 5.2 A Tree Preservation Order prohibits the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage and wilful destruction of trees without the Local Planning Authority’s consent. A formal application must be made before undertaking non-exempt works to protected trees. Before carrying out exempt works, such as the removal of dead trees or the removal of dead branches, the Local Planning Authority must still be given 5 days written notice for trees subject to a TPO. For trees that present an urgent and serious safety risk, you must give the LPA written notice as soon as practicable after the work becomes necessary. Trees growing in Conservation Areas are afforded a similar level of protection.
- 5.3 As of the date of this report, I have checked with the local planning authority for the presence of Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas that may be relevant and confirm that, at the time of writing, the trees identified in this report are located within a conservation area (see figure one below). The client should therefore only commence arboricultural work recommended by this report following formal notification to the local planning authority of the intention to undertake the work.
- 5.4 Trees may contain wildlife such as bats and nesting birds which are protected by law (*Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*). These place a duty upon landowners to ensure that best practice is followed, or an appropriate license issued, prior to any work commencing which may affect bats, reptiles or dormice. These could impose constraints on the use and timing of access to the site in addition to any of the tree matters considered in this report. These issues are not the subject of this report.

Figure 1. Conservation Area detail from local planning authority website.



6. Survey results

- 6.1 The tree was surveyed on 12th November 2024 using the VTA method. The survey was limited to a single mature birch tree within the boundary of the client's property. The predominant use of the land is health care facility.
- 6.2 A previous survey was undertaken in 2024. At this time two trees were located in the area of the birch. The previous report recommended removal of the adjacent ash tree and crown reduction work to the birch. These works have been undertaken and the birch is now the sole tree on the site.
- 6.3 Detailed information on the birch tree is provided at appendix one. The location of the tree is shown in figure two below.
- 6.4 The tree is located in an area bordered by the client's property to the north west; neighbouring dwellings/buildings to the east; public highway (Pontmorlais W) and pedestrian footway to the south and steps and path to the west. The trees are located in raised ground contained by the client's 1.8m stone boundary wall and access steps up from Pontmorlais W. The trees are exposed to prevailing winds.
- 6.5 At the time of the current survey a new wooden fence had been placed to prevent access to the steps down to Pontmorlais W. In addition a section of weldmesh fencing had been left in situ beyond this in the area of the steps themselves. The combination meant that access to the base of the tree was impossible. However reasonable observations were gained from a point near the first fence.
- 6.6 At the time of the last survey, the boundary between Ty Alarch and the neighbouring property to the east was demarked by a brick boundary wall placed in situ close to the tree subject of this survey. This wall has now been



replaced by a significantly engineered, block retaining structure placed to allow the raising of land levels in the neighbouring land.

Figure 2. Location of birch tree.



7. Opinion

- 7.1 During the previous survey I noted the presence of an existing boundary wall between Ty Alarch and the neighbour to the east. Whilst this wall appeared close to the base of the birch, it was apparent that the wall most likely either predated the birch or their origins were at a similar date. The result was that no concerns were raised in respect of impact of tree to the wall or vice versa.
- 7.2 At the recent survey, I observed ongoing development works in progress on the land to the east. The original wall has been replaced with a retaining structure showing significant sized blocks. Ground levels have been raised and rely on the new structure holding back the weight of infill.
- 7.3 I discussed the construction of the wall with the staff member who accompanied me on my survey. She informed me that excavations for the structure were extremely close to the base of the tree and went down some considerable distance in order to provide sufficient foundation and engineering to allow the raising of the structure and final infill.
- 7.4 In my opinion it is reasonably foreseeable that such works will have caused significant loss of structural roots of the birch tree such that roothold is likely to be compromised.

8. Risk Assessment

- 8.1 The Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) is an internationally recognised approach to making risk management decisions. 'Tolerability' does not mean

'acceptability'. It refers to a willingness to live with a risk so as to secure certain benefits and in the confidence that it is being properly controlled. ToR identifies Broadly Acceptable and Unacceptable levels of risk. Between these two levels of risk is a region where the risk is Tolerable if it is 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable' (ALARP).

- 8.2 The Health and safety Executive (HSE) states that at the core of ALARP *"is the concept of "reasonably practicable"; this involves weighing a risk against the trouble, time and money needed to control it"*.
- 8.3 Public safety is not the only concern when deciding how to manage trees. Other broader concerns, such as ecological, landscape and aesthetic values, should also be taken into account⁵.
- 8.4 The level of risk in respect of T001 is considered to be **UNACCEPTABLE** at the present time.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 I have assessed the condition of trees on my client's land and, having regard to the health, vitality and condition of the trees, location and the species, I consider the trees presents a **UNACCEPTABLE** level of risk in respect of whole large branch failure.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 I recommend that T001 birch is felled and replaced by a new tree close within the grounds of Ty Alarch.
- 10.2 The work should be carried out within three months.
- 10.3 Notification to the local planning authority will be required – see section 5 and figure 1.

11. Bibliography

- 11.1 This arboricultural report is based on the following primary technical references:
- British Standards Institute, 2010. *BS3998:2010 Tree work – Recommendations*. British Standards Institute, London.
 - Lonsdale, D. 1999. *Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management*. The Stationery Office, London.
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⁵ NTSG Common Sense Risk Management of Trees, 2011, page 27

- Matheny, N. P. and Clark, J.R. *A photographic guide to the evaluation of hazard trees in urban areas*. 2nd Edition. International Society of Arboriculture.
- Mattheck, C, and Breuloer, H. *The body language of trees – A handbook for failure analysis*. The Stationery Office, London.
- Schwarze, F.W.M.R., Engels, J. and Mattheck, C. *Fungal strategies of wood decay in trees*. Springer, Berlin.
- Strouts, R.G. and Winter, T.G. 1994. *Diagnosis of ill-health in trees*. The Stationery Office, London.
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- Watson, G. 2013. *Tree pests and diseases. An arborist's field guide*. The Arboricultural Association, Cheltenham.
- Watson, G. and Green, T. 2011. *Fungi on trees. An arborist's field guide*. The Arboricultural Association, Cheltenham.
- Wilson. P. 2013. *A-Z of tree terms. A companion to British arboriculture*. Ethelberga House, Kent.

Appendix One - Tree Survey Schedule

Tree Number (No) Tag No

Each tree has been allocated a unique number. Where specifically instructed small metal tags have been applied to each tree surveyed.

Common Name

The common name of tree species.

Height (Hgt)

Stated in metres above ground level at point of stem contacting ground.

Diameter

Stem diameter (in millimetres) measured at approximately 1.5 metres above ground level.

Branch spread

Overall spread of crown expressed in metres at the four cardinal points (NESW)

Age

An assessment of age expressed as fifths of maximum age. Thus broadly;

1/5 = Young,
2/5 = Early mature
3/5 = Mature
4/5 = Over mature
5/5 = Veteran.

Unless otherwise stated:

All measurements are in metres (m) or millimetres (mm).
All heights are stated above ground level (AGL) of tree stem.
All distances are from base of tree.
Cardinal points are abbreviated e.g. SW = South West

Physiological Condition

An assessment of a tree's overall physiological condition is recorded as:

Good
Fair
Poor
Dead

Structural Condition

An assessment of a tree's overall structural condition is recorded as:

Good
Fair
Poor

Crown density

An assessment of the density of live crown as a useful indicator of crown health. Stated as a bracket percentage of remaining live crown as follows:

76-100%
51-75%
26-50%
0-25%

Rem Con

Estimated remaining contribution in years.

Target

Appraisal of the key features within falling distance of the tree or parts of it.

Is Risk ALARP? Yes or No

Is the risk **As Low As Reasonably Practicable**? If the answer to this is NO then remedial work should be carried out to reduce the risk to the lowest practicable level.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that at the core of ALARP "is the concept of "reasonably practicable"; this involves weighing a risk against the trouble, time and money needed to control it".

Timescale for action

Suggested timescale for carrying out remedial action.

Review Period

Suggested timescale for carrying out repeat survey or review of tree(s).

Condition comments

Where possible the whole of the tree has been surveyed and inspected as per the client's brief. If any sections have been omitted for any reason this will be stated.

Unless otherwise stated all measurements in this section will be approximate. Unless stated otherwise, heights provided in relation to any noted aspects will be above ground level (AGL) at base of tree. Cardinal points are abbreviated to N, S E and W.

Recommendations

Suggested remedial action

Tree Survey Schedule

Tree No	Common name	Hgt m	Dia mm	Branch Spread N E S W m	Age	Phys Cond	Struct Cond	Crown density	Target	Rem Con yrs	Is Risk ALARP ?	Time Scale	Review period
T001	Birch	12	460	N4 E3.5 S4 W4	3/5	Fair	Fair	76% - 100%.	Road. Pedestrian footway.	<10	No	3 Mths	N/A

Condition Comments

Previously recommended tree works carried out.

Access to tree prevented by install of new internal fence.

Boundary fence recently replaced by neighbour with heavily engineered retaining structure.

High likelihood of compromised structural roots which presents an unacceptable risk of whole tree failure.

Management Recommendations

Fell.

Replace with new semi mature silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and new autumn flowering cherry (*Prunus subhirtella* 'autumnalis') as replacement for birch (T002) and previously removed ash.



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