Sylva Consultancy
expert arboricultural advice

Arboricultural Health & Safety Report

Land adjacent Charney Playing Field
Charney Bassett
Wantage
Oxfordshire
OX12 0EW

February 2020

Ref: 19169

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APPENDICES

This report is for the sole use of the above-named client and refers to only those trees identified within; use by any other person(s) in attempting to apply its contents for any other purpose renders the report invalid for that purpose.

1.0 Instructions

1.1 Instructions were received to carry out a Health & Safety inspection on trees growing on land adjacent to Charney Playing Field, Charney Bassett (Appendix 1). This report comments on the health & safety of the trees and makes recommendations, where appropriate regarding future management requirements.

2.0 Report Limitations

2.1. The trees have been inspected using the Visual Tree Assessment Method (VTA) from ground level only. This is a basic data collection exercise and a record of the tree's condition at the time of surveying. No soil excavations or root samplings have been taken for the purpose of this report and no documentation has been provided concerning the history of site changes, its hydrology or soil structure, past tree and land management, associated buildings or service installations.

2.2 Trees 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 by a person competent in Arboriculture. In addition, it is recommended that trees are assessed at different times of the year as different symptoms can manifest themselves during the different seasons.

2.3 The conclusions and recommendations in this report are only valid for one year from the date of this report, unless specified otherwise. This period of validity may be reduced in the case of any change in conditions to or in close proximity to the tree(s). There are no guarantees of absolute safety in the event of unusual weather.

2.4 A desk top study of information posted on the Vale of the White Horse District Council (VWHDC) website details that the site is not located within a Conservation Area. In addition, the website shows that no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) are present on trees located within or adjacent to the site.

2.5 Trees identified within the survey area were assessed visually from ground level by a person qualified and experienced in arboriculture. This report considers amongst other things, the trees structural condition and where significant defects are visually identified, remedial works have been recommended within the tree survey data at Appendix 2, identified on the tree location plan at Appendix 3, with a tree works schedule, including timescales listed at Appendix 4.

2.6 For the purpose of clarity, only tree species that require work have been recorded in the tree survey schedule and annotated on the tree location plan. Trees that require work have been sprayed at ground level on the northern side of the stem with pink spray. It must be noted that whilst every endeavor has been made to accurately survey the tree's location these positions are approximate only.

2.7 Trees that require work have been assigned a category code in order to determine when the recommended works should be carried out. Please refer to the Tree Survey Data Key at Appendix 2 for time scale details.

3.0 Findings

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Instructions were received to inspect a group of mature Aspen trees that are growing on land in the ownership of Charney Bassett Parish Council and managed by Charney Hall and Field Trust (CHAFT).

3.1.2 The Aspen trees are growing in the southern section of Charney Playing Field and are growing to the north and south of Bridleway No. 5. Charney Wick ditch forms the boundary of the playing field and the neighboring properties.

3.1.3 As part of the survey works at it has been requested that different options for the management of the trees is also provided.

3.2 Summary

Aspen Group

3.2.1 The majority of the Aspen trees have ivy present on the main stems and or within tree canopies. Whilst it is acknowledged the many benefits of retaining ivy, ivy can obscure defects. Ivy growth in not a threat to the health of otherwise healthy trees. On this occasion, although the ivy was moved aside in order to assess trees it was beyond the scope of this report to sever the ivy in order to allow a full inspection to be carried out of every ivy-clad tree.

3.2.2 To ensure that the trees with ivy are free from significant defects and/or decay it is been recommended for the ivy to be severed and for the trees to be re-inspected once the ivy has died back.

3.2.3 Of the trees surveyed only 6 trees have been identified as requiring remedial works. In order to ensure that Charney Bassett Parish Council and Charney Hall and Field Trusts' Duty of Care requirements are met all the recommended remedial works should be carried within the recommended timescales.

Copse Area

3.2.4 The Copse area consists of young mixed species trees with the dominant species recorded as Ash, Hazel, Field Maple and Oak. A young Hawthorn hedge is also present that runs along Bridlepath 5 to the south of the Copse. The spacing of the trees is a typical of tree planting spaces associated with newly planted areas under forestry management. Whilst it is acknowledged that some management is occurring tree spacings are still very close which has resulted in many of the tree's forms being etiolated.

3.2.5 The recommended work for this area is to undertake 'thinning' works of 10%, concentrating on removing the poorer quality trees in order to allow the 'better' specimens to establish.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The following works are recommended:

1. Please refer to Appendix 4 for the tree work schedules and timescales for trees T1 – T6.
2. Sever ivy on ivy clad Aspen trees and carry out a re-inspection.
3. Undertake thinning works of 10% with the Copse Area.

4.2 All pruning works should be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for Tree Works' and in compliance with good practice as promoted by the Arboricultural and Forestry Advisory Group. It is further recommended that prior to any tree works recommended an inspection for the present of bats is undertaken.

4.3 In the event that any fungal fruiting bodies are found on or within close proximity to trees it is recommended that these are positively identified by a competent person as soon as is practically possible.

4.4 It is an offence to 'intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat' or to 'damage, destroy or block access to the resting place of any bat' (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2001 as amended). Where works are being carried out and bats are found to be present, or if the tree is a known roost, the Statutory Nature Conservancy Organisation (Natural England 0845 600 3078) must be advised. A license is required to handle or to undertake works which will affect bats.

5.0 Management Options

5.1 Option 1: Tree Retention

5.1.1 To retain the existing mature Aspen trees and to undertake regular H&S inspections. It is recommended that annual inspections are carried out. Typically, remedial works highlighted by annual surveys will consist of 're-active' works, whereby only works to meet duty of care obligations would be carried out. Given the age of the trees, close spacings and form it is considered that over the next 3 -5 years there would be more incidences of tree works being required. This approach of management would create an 'ad - hoc' type of management with unpredictable ongoing costs.

5.2 Option 2: Tree Reduction

5.2.1 The trees are etiolated in form with trees on the north side of the Bridle path 5 'reaching' for light to the north and trees growing to the south 'reaching for light' to the south. Competition for tree growth due to the close spacings (and lack of early thinning works) has resulted in biased canopy growths which is considered less than desirable. It is considered that there is an option to undertake a 50% crown reduction to retain the trees that would allow greater longevity of the trees in the landscape. However the proposed reduction works does not follow good arboricultural practice (the amount of reduction works) but should the percentage be less it is regarded that no net benefit would occur (the trees would still be exposed in the landscape with uneven canopy growth).

5.2.2 Following on from this work the trees would then need to be managed as per option 1 - on an ad - hoc basis with follow on reduction works required every 5 years to maintain the trees at the reduced dimensions. This option is viewed as the least

favorable predominantly due to the aesthetics of the pruned trees and the impact of this on long distance views across the village. In addition there would be high costs to carry out the initial reduction works with unpredictable 'ad hoc' costs and again high costs every 5 years for reducing the trees.

5.3 Option 3: Clear Fell

5.3.1 To clear fell and replant. High initial costs would be incurred to instigate this work. However, some of the removal costs (of the timber and associated brash) have the potential to be offsite with engaging with a local biomass company to remove the arrisings. On most occasions there are no costs for the removal of the arsings but clarification with a contractor would need to occur. There is the potential that costs in relation to haulage may be incurred. Costs would still be incurred from felling works.

5.3.2 Post management treatment of the stumps to minimise the anticipated root suckering that will need occur. There is a good opportunity post felling for community involvement for re-planting and potentially designing the woodland space with paths and glades. Initial follow on costs would be re-stocking failures and after about 5 years thinning out the trees to allow for the better specimens to develop.

5.4 Recommendation for the management of the Aspen Trees

Option 1

5.4.1 The view regarding this option for tree management is that this will create an 'ad - hoc' type of management with unpredictable costs. With the age of the trees it is anticipated that an increase in works will occur over time that will also increase management costs. There is the potential for no clear long-term plan to be in place that could compromise new planting when trees are removed. In addition, establishing new planting under mature trees is difficult due to shading issues so there would be long-term concerns of the erosion of tree cover. On-going costs of H&S inspections would also occur.

Option 2

5.4.2 The biggest concern is the aesthetics of the trees post management. The work required does not follow best practice which would not be seen as favourable from a 'PR' point of view. Whilst this option can be better budgeted for there would be high costs for tree works in the first instance with following on work also requiring high costs. On-going costs of H&S inspections would also occur. There would be the same 'issues' regarding securing post felling tree planting and the success of new planting.

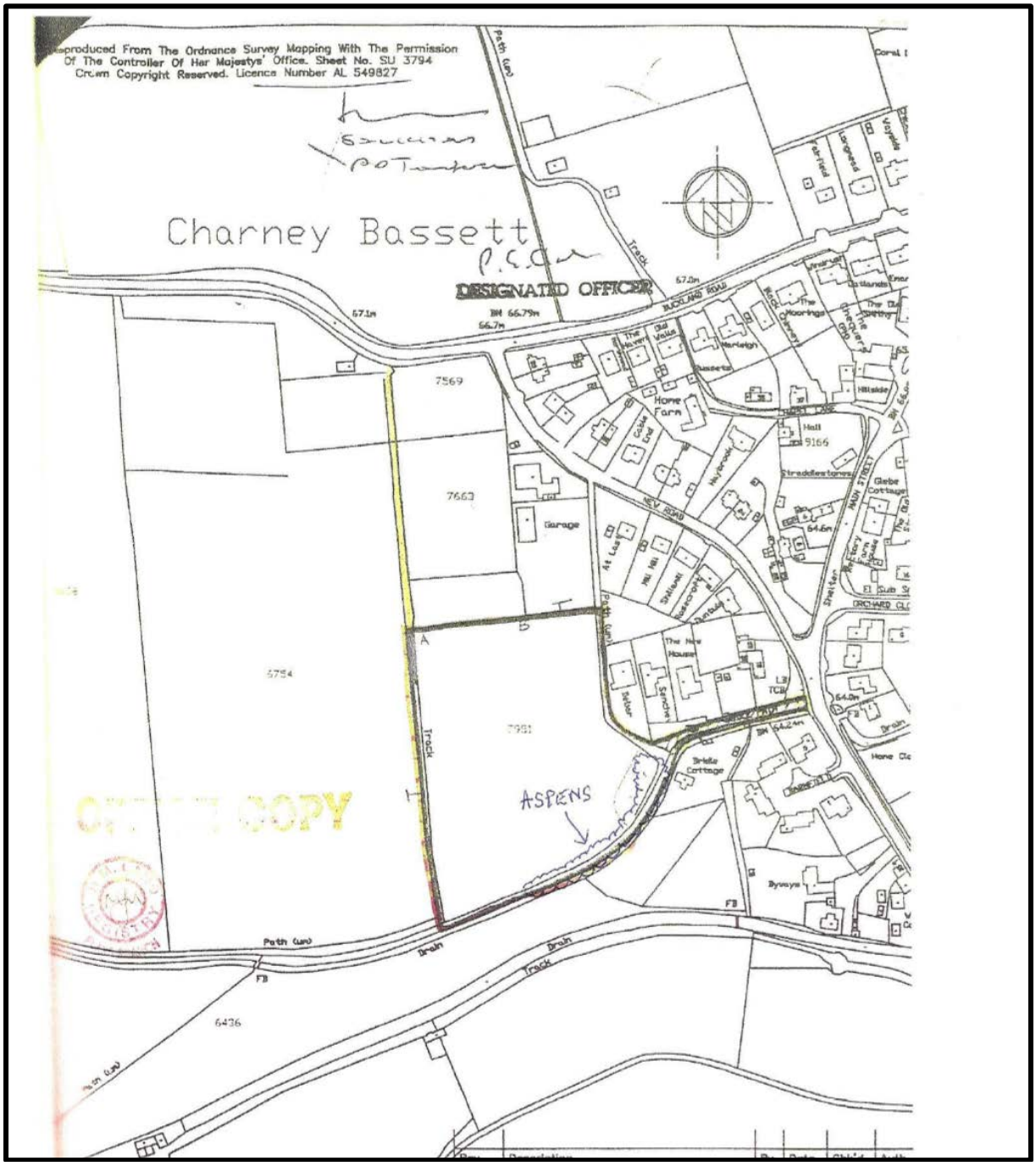
Option 3: Preferred Recommendation

5.4.3 This option could be viewed as quite 'extreme' and that initially you would be losing a valuable local landscape component of the area. However, whilst costs would be initially high it is expected some of these can be offset. Costs for H&S Inspections would be negated up to between 10-15 years as the trees become establish. So once replacement planting has been carried out the only initial costs would be replacing losses with thinning works occurring as the trees start maturing. With restocking there is a good opportunity to move away from the current monoculture. Follow up work can be community based and this will aid in providing a sense of 'ownership' with the trees so there is a greater likelihood of the trees reaching maturity and making a positive contribution to the local area.

APPENDIX 1

OVERVIEW OF SITE SURVEYED

Site Location Plan



APPENDIX 2

HEALTH & SAFETY TREE SURVEY DATA

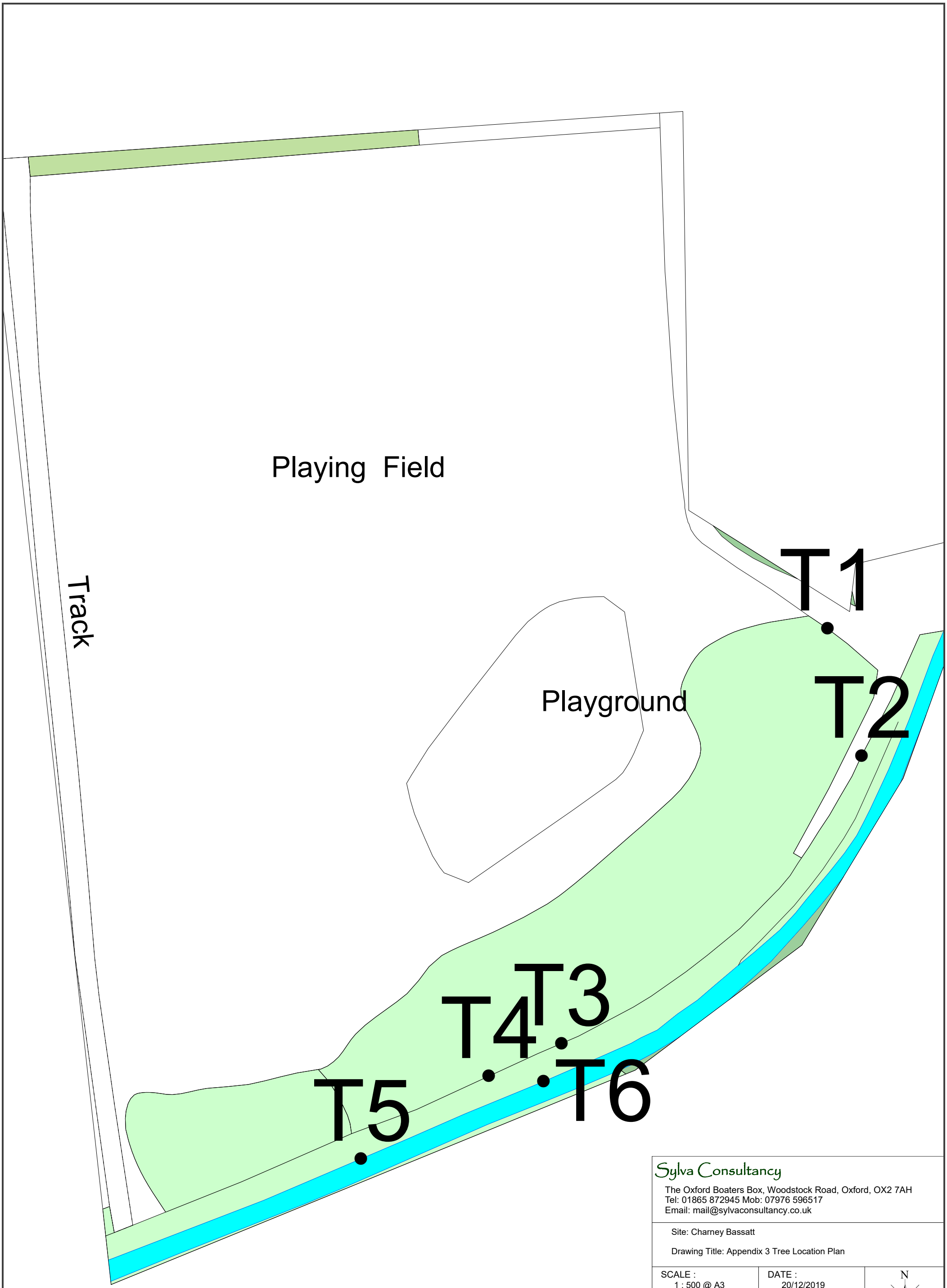
KEY TO TREE SCHEDULE

Tree No:	Identification of a tree or group of trees
Species	Common name
Height:	Estimated height expressed in meters
Abbreviations:	
E	Estimated
ave	Average
agl	Above ground level
SULE	Safe Useful Life Expectancy
Age Class:	
Y	Young
SM	Semi mature
M	Mature
OM	Over Mature
NP	Newly Planted
Physiological Condition:	
G	Good
F	Fair
P	Poor
D	Dead
Priority Codes:	
1 Month	Works required to be carried out within the next 1 month from the date of the report, unless otherwise stated.
3 Months	Remedial pruning works to be carried out within 3 months from date of this report.
6 Months	Remedial pruning works to be carried out within 6 months from date of this report.
Ds	Highly desirable works. Should be carried out as part of regular maintenance of trees.
1 Year	Works to be carried out in 1 year
Monitor	Monitor tree as per recommendations in report.
NW	No works currently recommended

Tree No.	Species	HT (M)	Age Class	Phys. Cond.	Branches	Leaf/Buds	Stem	Roots	Comment	Proposed Work	Priority	Next Survey (months)
T1	Aspen	17	M	F	Major dead wood	Normal	Ivy covered	No visual defects	Failed hung up branch on east side of tree. Within falling distance of footpath.	Prune	1 Month	12
T2	English Elm	10	SM	D	Dead	Dead	Dead	Dead	Dead Elm adjacent to path. Option 1 Fell; Option 2 reduce to 3m. Second dead Elm 4 m to the south.	Fell	3 Months	
T3	Poplar	21	M	F	Damage/wounding; Minor dead wood	Normal	Ivy covered	No visual defects	X1 limb rubbing on the adjacent stem of tree. Reduce upper canopy by 3m to remove direct contact and to reduce risk of failure.	Prune	3 Months	12
T4	Aspen	22	M	F	Damage/wounding	Normal	Ivy covered	No visual defects	Damage on main stem caused by T3. Reduce canopy below damage area - approx. 3m.	Prune	3 Months	12
T5	Norway Maple	15	SM	P	Damage/wounding	Normal	Bark wounds; Leaning	No visual defects	Growing adjacent to ditch. Significant wounding on main stem. Leans towards path. Reduce to 3m	Fell	3 Months	
T6	Aspen	14	M	P	Damage/wounding	Normal	Failed leader	No visual defects	Part failed leader at 12m agl - growing towards neighbouring property and over stream. Priority to remove.	Fell	1 Month	

APPENDIX 3

TREE LOCATION PLAN



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Site: Charney Bassatt

Drawing Title: Appendix 3 Tree Location Plan

SCALE :	DATE :	N
1 : 500 @ A3	20/12/2019	

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APPENDIX 4

TREE WORKS SCHEDULE

Tree No.	Species	Work Category 1	Work Item 1	Priority 1	Work Category 2	Work Item 2	Priority 2	Work Category 3	Work Item 3	Priority 3	Comment	Date of Works
T1	Aspen	Prune	Faulted branch/limbs	1 Month							Remove ailed hung up branch on east side of tree.	
T2	Elm	Option 1	Fell to ground level	3 Months	Option 2	Fell to safe height	3 Months				Dead Elm adjacent to path. Option 1 Fell; Option 2 reduce to 3m. Second dead Elm 4 m to the south - same options.	
T3	Poplar	Prune	Reduce faulted limbs/stems	3 Months							Reduce upper canopy by 3m to remove direct contact with rubbing branch on adjacent tree and to reduce risk of failure.	
T4	Aspen	Prune	Reduce faulted limbs/stems	3 Months							Reduce canopy below damage area - approx. 3m	
T5	Norway Maple	Fell	Fell to safe height	3 Months							Tree leans towards path. Reduce to 3m.	
T6	Aspen	Fell	Fell to ground level	1 Month								

APPENDIX 5
BIBLIOGRAPHY/ GLOSSARY

TREE GLOSSARY:

Adventitious:	Describing shoots, roots or other plant organs which develop other than in their normal position of origin (i.e. terminal/axillary buds).
Arboriculture	The cultivation of trees in order to produce individual specimens of the greatest ornament, for shelter, or any other primary purpose other than the production of timber.
Canopy	The uppermost layer of twigs or foliage in a woodland, tree or group of trees.
Chlorotic:	Chlorosis is an atypical colouring, usually yellowish, of foliage; often symptom of mineral nutrient imbalance or inadequate root function.
Crown	The spreading branches and the foliage of the tree supported by trunk(s).
Crown Cleaning:	The removal of dead, dying, crossing, diseased branches.
Crown Lifting:	The removal of lower limbs, generally back to the main stem or pruning lower secondary branches to give more clear space below the crown.
Crown Reduction:	The tree crown is reduced by shortening branches, usually carried out all round the crown or canopy to maintain a balanced shape. Partial reductions may be useful for preventing branches contacting buildings, roofs and guttering
Crown Thinning:	This reduces the density of the tree's crown without changing the shape and form of the tree. Thinning reduces the amount of foliage and allows more light through the canopy or crown. The amount is usually specified as a percentage (%) of the crown.
Dead wood	In some situations dead wood can pose a hazard as it can fall from the tree. However it also provides a range of habitats both when aerial and when on the ground.
Dieback	The death of a part of a tree, usually starting from the branch tips and progressing in stages.
Epicormics:	Pertaining to shoots or roots which are initiated on mature woody stems; shoots may form in this way from dormant buds or they may be adventitious.
Included Bark:	Bark of adjacent parts of the tree (usually in forks, acutely angled forks or basal flutes) which is a face-to-face contact, so that there is a weakness due to the lack of a woody union.
Occlusion:	The overgrowth of a wound with (callus) tissue which is produced subsequently.
Pollard	A tree cut once or repeatedly at a height above which grazing animals can reach the regenerating growth. Usually cut on a semi-regular basis with the whole or part of the crown removed.
Reaction Wood:	Usually laid down in wider annual increments than ordinary wood. Formed to help maintain the angle of a bent or leaning part of a tree by resisting the further bending downwards.
Soil compaction	Soil compaction restricts the growth of trees, damages roots and reduce infiltration of water into the soil which over prolonged periods of time will be detrimental to tree health.

Stress	In plant physiology, a condition under which one or more physiological functions are not operating within their optimum range.
Vitality	In tree assessment, an overall appraisal of physiological and biochemical processes, in which high vitality equates with healthy function.
Wound wood:	Wood formed in the vicinity of a wound. Can also be used to describe the occluding tissues around a wound.

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APPENDIX 6
PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph of Aspen Group

Photograph of Copse

APPENDIX 7
QUALIFICATIONS

Fiona Bradshaw

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I have over 20 years' experience of arboriculture and I am the principal consultant at Sylva Consultancy. I hold the Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma in Arboriculture and the Arboricultural Associations Technicians Certificate. I am also a Chartered Arboriculturalist and I am a Fellow of the Arboricultural Association and Professional Member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, of which I am also a registered Consultant.

I have the benefit of both a local authority and private practice background and I am frequently instructed to provide advice and assistance relating to trees and the planning process. I am also experienced at compiling expert reports, providing evidence and also appearing as an expert witness at Public Inquires.

I am committed to my continued professional development which is reflected in my regular attendance of seminars and workshops.