



**Llanerch
Arboriculture**

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Tree Safety & Condition Survey

2025

**Castlewalk Park, Underdale Road,
Shrewsbury**

Prepared by:

David Woodhouse,
Llanerch Arboriculture,
4 Cleveland Street,
Shrewsbury

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1. Brief

A formal request from Mike Pugh (Contracts & Arb Officer) from Shrewsbury Town Council has been received to undertake a condition survey of the trees on a large area of open space known as Castlewalk Park off Underdale Road in Shrewsbury.

- The inspection is to undertake a condition and safety assessment of all the trees and recommend remedial work where necessary to address safety and good management issues.
- Any work recommended is to be prioritised on a risk of harm basis and is to be presented in a brief summary report.

2. Methodology

The trees were surveyed using the industry accepted 'Visual Tree Assessment' methodology and were assessed from ground level using a sounding mallet and a probe.

A risk based approach has been taken when assessing the trees whereby consideration of the usage and value of the areas within falling distance of the trees has been assessed (a process known as zoning), along with the likelihood of harm occurring from an identified hazard. Such an approach is a qualitative method that recommends remedial safety work according to the likelihood of harm within falling distance of the branch or tree/s.

A tree risk assessment report giving details of the basic dimensions but also the condition (structural & biological) of each tree is attached to this document and a remedial work report identifying trees that require remedial work is also attached to this report.

3. Survey limitations

Trees are living organisms subject to the vagaries of natural and man-made influences which may affect their health and condition over time. Thus any recommendations for tree work are valid for a period of 2 years, after which time it is advisable that the tree is resurveyed.

The assessment of the usage and value of areas is undertaken on the day by the assessor. The assessments are made by estimating the usage and as such there will be some scope for error in these assumptions.

4. Disclaimers

Trees are natural living entities that are subject to changes in their natural environment caused by human activities and weather conditions. The safety and condition of a tree cannot be guaranteed as with all trees a certain degree of risk is inherent and cannot be accounted for during any inspection. Only the factors



identified in this report will be commented on and this assessment does not preclude all risk of failure.

This report is for the sole use of the above named client and relates only to the particular trees referred to on site. Use of the information by any other person for purposes not mentioned in this report will render the information useless. The text and content of the report remains the property of Llanerch Arboriculture. Copies of the report for purposes other than those directly related to tree management on the related sites should not be made or circulated without the permission of the owner.

5. Background information

The site was surveyed on 12th September 2025 by David Woodhouse on behalf of Llanerch Arboriculture. The weather was overcast and blustery.

The site consists of a large area of open space between Underdale Road and the River Severn. There are trees located towards the edges of the site and also along the centre of the main open area towards the formalised play area.

There is a well-used footpath passing along the southern boundary between Underdale road and Castlewalk footbridge with a few trees located adjacent to this footpath.

There are residential properties adjacent to the eastern boundary and a large playing field (inaccessible) to the south. The river Severn runs along the northern boundary.

The site has two levels, the main (largest) area is in the western part of the site and is a few metres above the lower area that runs along the edge of the River Severn, with the lower area is bisected by Castlewalk footbridge.

The park is well used, and the footway is periodically frequently used by people passing through the site into the centre of Shrewsbury. The play area is well used and the park has frequent and regular use by dog walkers.

Overall, the on site usage is considered to be of moderate to high frequency and so the potential risk would be considered moderate to high.



6. Findings

– Tree survey

- i. The trees have been inspected and a report created detailing the various Arboricultural attributes.
- ii. The report is followed by a key providing an explanation of the assessment categories and details of the risk matrix used for the survey. The details of the tree report are in **Appendix 1 page 6** and the key and risk matrix information in **Appendix 4 page 19**.
- iii. The site plan is in **Appendix 3 page 18**
- iv. The trees are in reasonable condition although the species of many are not considered durable and there are many trees where the structural condition is weakened. There are also a few trees that are dying or dead and some evidence of Chalara Ash dieback disease that in some cases is badly affecting tree health. There is a high ecological value to this site with large areas of rough inaccessible land with scrub and bramble and also much standing deadwood that provides a wide variety of bird nesting habitat. This is due to many areas being less formally managed, which is a positive action.
- v. The trees growing adjacent to the footpath through the site are an important feature however some of the young, planted trees along this line are failing to establish properly and are unlikely to reach maturity. It is recognised that this is a more difficult site as it is a former landfill site and the soil underneath may be less conducive to tree root growth than standard soil.
- vi. **Poplars on Bank towards lower area**
- vii. **White & Balsam poplars T028-T032** are located in a broad line along the bank between the upper and lower areas. There has been much historic and recent branch failure and there are also now many limbs that are over-extended and that are subsiding. Many of these limbs are becoming vulnerable to failure and one tree **T032**, is beginning to split apart at the base. Remedial work is required to all of these trees to prevent limb failure.
- viii. **Riverside Crack Willow trees**
- ix. There are numerous individual and groups of **Crack Willows** close to the river bank that in varying condition along much of the length of the park, with the majority being in the narrow Southern section to the south of Castlewalk footbridge.
- x. Many have been pollarded following significant crown failure. As per the species they are producing much regrowth and over time a cycle of repollarding will need to be undertaken. The species is typical of riverside tree populations but they can become vulnerable to failure as stems subside or become excessively elongated. There are a few instances where stem and tree failure has occurred with the debris falling into the river.



- xi. **Tree T049** has been previously pollarded, however the regrowth is now at the point where it is beginning to fail into the river. **Tree T054** is considered vulnerable to failure with subsiding limbs, some torn branches and fungal decay developing in the stems. **Group G056** is considered vulnerable at present with a stem falling into the river and a one tree being pollarded. It is important that the pollarding is continued for this group.
- xii. Also consideration will have to be given to beginning a programme of pollarding to prevent large stem failure in the short to medium term for others individual trees and groups such as **T052, G055, G059**.

7. Conclusions/opinions

- a. The tree cover on this site is of notable significance and offers significant ecological benefits to the area. The species mix is diverse but in many places there are similar groups of species present. Overall the species diversity is good with a wide range of native and non-native trees present.
- b. Adjacent to the river are numerous Crack Willow trees that are valuable as they provide a green screen to the park, stabilise the riverbank and provide much nesting opportunity for small birds.
- c. The riverside Crack Willow trees are less durable and have suffered significant failure over the years as they have subsiding limbs and naturally fail, with also occasional uprooting. Managing these by creating a pollarding regime is the best way to prevent this occurring and also retains much of the values associated. The survey has identified a notable of trees where it is considered important to undertake pollarding but also recognises that in the future other groups of Willows will require drastic intervention to prevent significant tree failure.
- d. This well used park is of significant value and is well-used and whilst there are management challenges currently and also in the future, the past maintenance and foresight with new planting has made the tree cover generally robust.

8. Recommendations

The tree survey identified a significant amount of remedial treework to a range of trees. Full details of the remedial work are contained in **Appendix 2 page 13**.

The most significant remedial work focusses on the pollarding and reduction of many Poplar and Willow trees.

There are also a few trees that require removal, some because they are leaning heavily or because they are in rapid decline or have died.

There is ivy severance required on many trees as it is smothering the trees and preventing a meaningful inspection. This severance must occur outside any bird nesting activity as traditionally this has been used by many birds as a site to build nests.



There is also some minor low branch pruning identified.

– **Timeframe for work**

The timeframe for undertaking the work varies depending on the risk apportioned during the survey and also the likelihood of further problems developing with identified trees.

It is recognised that the implementation of all of the treework recommendations is significant and therefore the timeframe has been apportioned based on the severity of risk to users of the recreation ground and adjacent roads.

In this instance the timeframes vary between 3 months and 2 years.

It is important to undertake the work within the timeframes recommended, and to keep records of this when completed.

It should also be noted that the site is moderately to highly - used with much pedestrian activity on and adjacent to the site. As such the trees should be re-inspected on a 2 yearly frequency to ensure that any tree hazards are identified and dealt with appropriately.



Appendix 4 - Key & explanation for assessment and work recommendation criteria

No.	The number of trees, particularly relevant when a group of tree requires work being undertaken.
Tree Name	Common tree name or scientific if not known
Location of tree	A general description of where the tree is situated.
Protected status	This is a category that details whether there are any restrictions regarding the pruning or felling of a tree. Categories are TPO (Tree Preservation Order), CA (Conservation Area) or NP (Not Protected). If the tree is protected a formal application must be submitted to Shropshire Council and approved before any work is undertaken.
Maturity – Age Class	Newly planted (N) – a tree planted but yet to establish, usually less than 5 years after planting Young (Y) - a tree less than one third of its normal life expectancy for the species and usually showing monopodial growth, Semi Mature (S) – a tree between one and two thirds of its optimum life expectancy for the species normally showing sympodial growth form, Mature (M) – a tree between two thirds and its optimum life expectancy generally that has reached peak crown size and shape for the species , Over Mature (O) – in excess of its optimum life expectancy for the species usually with signs of crown decline Veteran (V) – a tree far in excess of normal life expectancy for the species and/or being of high ecological value because of decaying wood & natural cavities, as defined by the Ancient Tree Forum.
Life Expectancy	Dead - D , short (up to 10 years) - S , medium (11-20 years) - M , long (21-40 years) - L , extra long (40+ years) – EL
Height	estimated in metres, Very Large (20m+) – 21 ; Large (15-20m) – 20 ; Medium/Large (10-15m) – 15 ; Medium (5-10m) – 10 ; Small (Under 5m) – 5 ; Unknown
Crown width	total canopy diameter 3 categories Small (up to 5m) – 5 ; Medium (6-10m) – 10 ; Large (11m+) – 15
No. Stems	Recorded number of stems emanating from above ground level, Unknown
Structural Condition	An assessment of the structural integrity of the tree. – Good (no obvious significant structural faults/defects that could lead to remedial work being instigated to prevent partial or whole tree failure), – Moderate (at least 1 significant structural fault/defect that could lead to remedial work being instigated), – Poor (at least 1 significant structural fault and any minor structural faults that is likely to require remedial work being instigated), – Very Poor (at least 2 significant structural faults and any minor structural faults that would normally require remedial work being instigated),
Biological Condition	An assessment of the biological function of the tree. – Good (leaf colour, size, density, general shoot extension and live crown considered normal for species and variety), – Moderate (tree crown showing minor reductions in any of the categories leaf colour, size, density, general shoot extension and live crown considered normal for species and variety), – Poor (tree crown showing significant reductions in the at least two categories of leaf colour, size, density, general shoot extension and live crown from that which would be considered normal. Showing crown dieback in excess of 33% of crown volume), – Very Poor (tree crown showing extensive reductions in the any multiple categories of leaf colour, size, density, general shoot extension and live crown from that which would be considered normal. Showing extensive crown dieback in excess of 50% of crown volume),



Appendix 4 - Key & explanation for assessment and work recommendation criteria

Pathogen Significance	An assessment of any pest, disease or fungal pathogen affecting the tree. – Signif (Major fungal/pathogen Infection) – Tree infected with pest &/or disease that is considered to have major impacts on either Structural or Biological condition currently. – Minor Inf (Minor fungal/pathogen infection) – Tree infected with pest &/or disease that is considered to currently have limited impacts on either Structural or Biological condition but could become significant in the future. – None (None Present) – Tree with no notable pest &/or disease present
Consequence of whole tree failure	This is an assessment of the maximum risk presented by the tree and is related to the frequency of usage by people (pedestrian or vehicular) or the value of the property affected and the size of the tree itself. A matrix has been produced that shows how this is deduced
Next Resurvey	This is the recommended timescale for future assessment of the tree and is dependent on the consequence of whole tree failure, any degradation of structural condition and combines government and professional guidance and includes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 years or None . The last category relates to trees that pose little or no risk to any person or property by virtue of their location.
Size of part	This is the largest part of the tree likely to fail, due to an identified defect. If no defect of note is recorded / observed then this is be recorded as None . Categories are <150mm (1), 150 – 450mm (2), 450 – 900mm (3), >900mm(4), None(0)
Tree Target Rating	Relates to usage of area where the defective part of the tree is most likely to fail. The categories are essentially reflections of the Consequence of Whole tree failure category in as much as they are related to usage etc but relate only to a defective part. Catastrophic (Very High Risk) (5) , Severe (High Risk) (4) , Moderate (Possible Risk) (3) , Minor (Low Risk) (2) , Insignificant (Very Low Risk) (1) or Not Assessed (No defective part present) (0)
Tree Failure Potential	This is a judgement as to the probability of the failure of the defective part. Categories are Imminent (1-7 days) (5) , Probable (7days – 3 months) (4) , Likely (3+ months – 1 year) (3) , Possible (1 – 5 years) (2) , Negligible (5+ years) (1) or Not Assessed (No defective part present) (0)
Risk rating	Size of part x Tree failure potential x Tree target rating
Priority	This is the timescale for undertaking the recommended work. Priority is directly related to the risk rating score. Categories are: Immediate (score 60 -125), 1 month (40 – 50), 3 months (27 – 39), 1 year (12 – 25) & routine maintenance (1 – 11) (this last timescale is for non-safety based work or work affecting very low target areas). The 'Immediate' priority requires urgent attention and if work is delayed all areas within falling distances of the particular tree will need fencing off until the work is completed.
Description of defect	A description of the most significant defect, which may require remedial work.
Recommendation	These are the tree works recommended either to address a safety concern or to be considered a suitable method of tree management.



Appendix 4 - Key & explanation for assessment and work recommendation criteria

Consequence of whole tree failure matrix

	Target rating				
Height	Catastrophic (V. High Risk)	Severe (High Risk)	Moderate (Possible Risk)	Minor (Low Risk)	Insignificant (V. Low Risk)
Very large (20m+)	25	20	15	10	5
Large (up to 20m)	20	16	12	8	4
Medium Large (up to 15m)	15	12	9	6	3
Medium (up to 10m)	10	8	6	4	2
Small (under 5m)	5	4	3	2	1

Extreme	20-25
Major	15-16
Moderate	8-12
Minor	4-6
Negligible	1-3

Target Rating name	Definition
Catastrophic - (Very high risk)	This is reserved for the targets that have the highest usage and value of property to be damaged. This is almost constant pedestrian usage, high speed roads with high volumes of usage approximately 1000/hour or high property value £1 000,000+. The definition of a high speed road is 60mph or more.
Severe – (High risk)	This is for areas of high level of pedestrian usage (30 – 50 / hour), all roads with high volumes of traffic (100 + per hour), or property value of approximately £100,000 - £500,000 (covering most property values).
Moderate - (Possible risk)	This is for areas with significant level of pedestrian usage (10 / hour), roads with frequent traffic (30 / hour) or property value of approximately £20,000 (a reasonable cost for a new vehicle).
Minor - (Low risk)	This is for a low level of pedestrian usage (1 / hour), roads with low levels of traffic use (5 / hour) or property value of approximately £500 (generally the maximum value of insurance excess on basic property insurance).
Insignificant - (Very low risk)	This for areas with a very low level of pedestrian usage (5 / day), virtually no traffic use (5 / day) and very low value of property £10 (this effectively is a very low value of property damage).

