



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

All Saints' Church, Walsoken
Renovation Project

Renovation Project Supporting Documentation

Title: Tree Survey 23 March 2023

Document Date: 14th October 2026

Tree report

**All Saints Church
Walsoken
Wisbech
PE13 3RA**

20 March 2023



1 Report limitations

- 1 I have prepared this report as an experienced arboriculturist, and my report represents the analysis of my observations following an external assessment of the trees from ground level only.
- 2 My opinions, and any recommendations made here that arise from those opinions, may be subject to review upon receipt of new information.
- 3 My conclusions, and any recommendations flowing from those conclusions, relate to the conditions that were found at the time of the assessment.

2 Introduction

- 4 The client for this report was the Parochial Church Council, All Saints Church, Walsoken, Wisbech, PE13 3RA.
- 5 The brief was to carry out a tree survey and prepare a professional arboricultural report concerning the apparent conflicts between a) a holly tree and the footpath leading to the church door, and b) a sycamore tree to the rear of the church and the boiler house building.
- 6 Tree report M 060 was dated 20 March 2023.

3 Planning policy context

- 7 The guidance of the Church Buildings Council in **Works to Trees in Churchyards** ^[1] has been followed.
- 8 The site, and its environs, was not identified on the **MAGiC** website ^[2] as being of any national interest.
- 9 None of the trees within the site had been identified as being of interest within the **Ancient Tree Inventory** ^[3].
- 10 The Fenland District Council website showed that the Church was not included in the **Wisbech Conservation Area**, and I was advised that no **Tree Preservation Orders** were in place.

4 The fieldwork

- 11 I visited the site on Wednesday 15 March in the company of the Rector, Rev. Allan R Landall .
- 12 For this report there was no topo survey to use as the base plan and so tree shapes have been overlaid onto imagery from **Google Earth Pro**, see figure 1:

[1] https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/Works_to_Trees.pdf

[2] <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

[3] <https://tinyurl.com/26mtjnf6>





Figure 1, the site and the trees

5 The tree survey

Introduction

- 13 Three trees were assessed,
- the holly tree T1 adjacent to the footpath,
 - the sycamore tree T2 to the rear of the church, which had been implicated by others as a causal agent of the subsidence of the boiler house, and
 - a second sycamore tree T3 which, because of its proximity to the boiler house, might also have contributed to the boiler house's subsidence.

The holly tree T1

- 14 The holly tree T1, see for example photo 1 in **Appendix A**, had twin intertwining stems, one was approximately 150mm in diameter and the other was slightly larger at approximately 180mm in diameter.
- 15 Both stems had developed adventitiously from the stump of a felled tree because it had not been treated to prevent regrowth, see photo 2 where the decaying stump is visible to the right of centre.
- 16 The tree's crown spread was no more than 3m in any direction, and it stood no more than 6m tall.
- 17 The tree's root system however was more wide spreading and had caused disruption of the tarmac path surface at least 7m from the tree's base, a line of flexing in the surface that ran parallel with the edging close to the church porch, see for example photos 3 and 4.
- 18 Other disruption had occurred across the width of the path, see for example photo 5.

The sycamore tree T2

- 19 The self-set sycamore tree labelled here as T2 was the closest of two sycamore trees to the boiler house, an addition to the fabric of the church, and which had been implicated as a probable cause of subsidence of the boiler house.



- 20 The tree's stem diameter measured close to ground level was 780mm, and (if pertinent) the tree's **Root Protection Area** ^[4] (referred to here as the RPA) as defined in **BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations** (referred to here as BS 5837) would be some 9.6m in radius.
- 21 The centre of the tree was measured to be no more than 6.65m from the corner of the boiler house, see photos 6 and 7, and so comfortably with the tree's RPA.
- 22 The tree's crown spread was no more than 5.5m in any direction, and it stood around 14m tall.
- 23 The tree was of poor overall form, see for example photo 8, – the main stem divided into three codominant stems just above ground level, see photo 9, and as the tree grew each stem would expand and push against the other possibly forcing the tree to catastrophically fail.

The sycamore tree T3

- 24 The second self-set sycamore tree T3 was further from the boiler house but might also have contributed toward the subsidence of that structure.
- 25 Whilst on site I recorded the following data and made the following observations to prevent the need to return to the site if the subsidence persisted following the removal of T2.
- 26 The tree's stem diameter measured close to ground level was 735mm, and (if pertinent) the tree's RPA would be some 9.0m in radius.
- 27 The centre of the tree was measured to be no more than 12.65m from the corner of the boiler house, and so outside the tree's RPA.
- 28 The tree's crown spread was no more than 7.5m in any direction, and it also stood around 14m tall.
- 29 The tree was of also poor overall form, see for example photo 10, being multi-stemmed from around 1m above ground level, with evidence of a water pocket where the single stem divided into several codominant stems, see photo 11.

Tree quality

- 30 The quality of each of the three trees was assessed against the limited and not wholly applicable parameters of **Table 1 Cascade chart for tree quality assessment** of BS 5837: because each of the trees was implicated as the cause of damage to property they were all placed into Category U:

Category A: Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years

Category B: Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years

Category C: Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150 mm.

Category U: Those in such a condition that they cannot be realistically retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years.

^[4] Root Protection Area is defined in BS 5837:

3.7 layout design tool indicating the minimum area around a tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability, and where the protection of the roots and soil structure is treated as a priority



6 Recommendations

The holly tree T1

- 31 As the root activity of the holly tree T1 was causing the main pedestrian access to the church to buckle and distort it should be felled to ground level and the stump treated to prevent re-growth and the recurrence of such damage.
- 32 Such treatment could be the application of a suitable systemic herbicide, such as for example a glyphosate-based product either in liquid form applied by a suitably competent, qualified, and insured operator, or by the use of a product such as **Ecoplug Max** or similar.
- 33 Alternatively, the stump could be ground out to a depth of 300 mm, but given the proximity of the stump to the path edging that could result in damage to the path and the machine and so a herbicide treatment would be preferred.

The sycamore tree T2

- 34 As the root activity of the sycamore tree T2 had been identified by others as the primary cause of subsidence of the boiler house the tree should be felled to ground level and the stump treated to prevent re-growth and the recurrence of such damage.
- 35 The felling should be undertaken by suitably competent, qualified, and insured tree service providers.
- 36 The stump could be treated to prevent regrowth by the application of a suitable systemic herbicide, such as for example a glyphosate-based product either in liquid form applied by a suitably competent, qualified, and insured operator, or by the use of a product such as **Ecoplug Max** or similar.
- 37 Alternatively, the stump could be ground out to a depth of 300 mm and the resultant hole backfilled with good quality topsoil and the area re-seeded.

The sycamore tree T3

- 38 This tree has not been implicated this far as a cause of damage, but if following the removal of the sycamore tree T2 the building does not stabilise then further tree removal may be required, in which case the data and justification has been presented here.
- 39 If the removal of the sycamore tree T2 does not resolve the problem then the sycamore tree T3 should be felled to ground level and the stump treated to prevent re-growth and the recurrence of such damage.
- 40 The felling should be undertaken by suitably competent, qualified, and insured tree service providers.
- 41 The stump could be treated to prevent regrowth by the application of a suitable systemic herbicide, such as for example a glyphosate-based product either in liquid form applied by a suitably competent, qualified, and insured operator, or by the use of a product such as **Ecoplug Max** or similar.
- 42 Alternatively, the stump could be ground out to a depth of 300 mm and the resultant hole backfilled with good quality topsoil and the area re-seeded.

7 Summary

- 43 Three trees, two of which (the holly tree T1 and the sycamore tree T2) had been implicated as the source of damage to property, were assessed and justification for their removal in the short-term has been presented.
- 44 A third tree (the sycamore tree T3), not directly implicated as a cause of damage, was also assessed.



- 45 The sycamore tree T3 was considered to be sufficiently close to the subsiding boiler house to be a possible cause of damage, and rather than return for a second site visit and a new assessment after the removal of the sycamore tree T2, the opportunity was taken to record suitable data and present the justification for the tree's removal.
- 46 In my opinion the holly tree T1 and the sycamore tree T2 should be removed as soon as possible, the appointed tree service provider should be able to present suitable protocols to allow them to carry out such work during the bird nesting season without causing harm to protected species.
- 47 The removal of the sycamore tree T3 would only be required if the boiler house structure did not stabilise following the removal of the sycamore tree T2.



All trees physically tagged with a 4 digit number plate 69xx)

