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TREE REPORT

Address

34 Garden Fields

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Introduction

T1 is a mature English oak (*Quercus robur*) situated within the rear garden of the property, approximately 10 metres from the rear elevation of the house (see Figure 1). The tree stands at an estimated height of 18 metres and is an established feature of the site. A detailed visual inspection was carried out from ground level, incorporating percussion testing using a nylon mallet to assess suspected areas of internal decay and dysfunction.

Observations

Significant decay is present at the base of the main stem, most notably on the north-west aspect, where a large area of degraded tissue measuring approximately 300 mm in width and 1.2 metres in vertical extent was observed. The area produces a distinctly hollow resonance under percussion testing, confirming extensive internal decay.

In addition, honey fungus (*Armillaria* spp.) was observed fruiting from the decayed tissue on this same aspect (Figure 2). The presence of *Armillaria* indicates active fungal colonisation of the basal wood and root plate, a serious condition associated with progressive structural

degradation and potential root death. The fungus is capable of attacking the cambium and sapwood, leading to extensive loss of structural integrity and eventual mechanical failure.

Further decay is evident on the south-east side of the stem base, extending approximately 1 metre in length and 200 mm in width. This area also yielded a low resonance response under percussion, indicating additional internal decay.

The combined presence of multi-aspect basal decay and confirmed honey fungus infection represents a significant compromise to the tree's structural stability and long-term viability.

The basal area appears to have been landscaped, and the root flare remains partially buried. The extent and condition of the buttress roots could not be fully ascertained due to soil coverage. However, given the confirmed Armillaria infection and basal decay, it is highly likely that root and lower stem tissues are already compromised. The fungus's capacity to extend through root systems and cause progressive decay presents a material risk of root plate failure.

The tree has been subject to extensive historic crown lifting and limb removal, believed to have taken place approximately three years ago. Large pruning wounds are visible throughout the lower crown, and substantial epicormic growth has developed in response.

While the upper canopy currently retains a reasonable leaf density (Figure 3), the tree exhibits reduced lower crown mass damping, thereby increasing wind leverage forces acting upon the decayed basal stem. In combination with basal and root decay, this markedly elevates the risk of mechanical failure under adverse weather conditions.

Minor deadwood is present in the upper crown, typical of a tree of this maturity. However, this is secondary to the more critical structural issues at the base.

A black, tar-like exudate was noted on the northern side of the main stem, approximately 2 metres above ground level (see Figure 4). This may indicate Phytophthora bleeding canker infection. While unconfirmed, this additional pathogen presence further suggests a decline in overall tree health and vitality.

Risk and Structural Assessment

Considering the extent of basal decay, confirmed Armillaria infection, and the tree's proximity to the residential property, there is now a credible risk of partial or total failure.

Although oak trees are capable of limited compartmentalisation, the progression of decay on multiple aspects of the stem base, coupled with root infection, significantly undermines the tree's mechanical integrity.

Given the potential for structural failure toward the house and garden areas, the risk level is now assessed to exceed acceptable thresholds for retention in a residential setting.

Conclusion

T1 – the mature English oak – is exhibiting extensive basal decay and confirmed honey fungus infection, resulting in severe structural compromise and diminished long-term prospects.

While previously considered a viable feature of the site, the discovery of Armillaria and the extent of basal dysfunction materially alter the tree's prognosis. Further retention would

require invasive investigation (e.g. sonic tomography, resistance drilling) and ongoing management, yet even with intervention, the presence of honey fungus renders the tree's structural recovery and retention prospects poor.

On balance, removal of the tree is now considered appropriate and proportionate in the interests of safety and risk mitigation.

Recommendation

That consent be granted for the removal of T1 (English oak) on the following grounds:

1. Confirmed honey fungus infection (*Armillaria* spp.) at the base, indicating active decay and root involvement.
2. Extensive basal and lower stem decay on multiple aspects, compromising mechanical stability.
3. Proximity to a residential dwelling within potential impact radius in the event of failure.
4. Previous canopy alterations (significant crown lift) increasing wind leverage on the decayed stem.
5. Poor long-term prognosis and elevated risk of failure under wind load.

Following removal, it is recommended that the stump and surrounding soil be excavated and disposed of appropriately to reduce the spread of *Armillaria* to adjacent vegetation.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 3

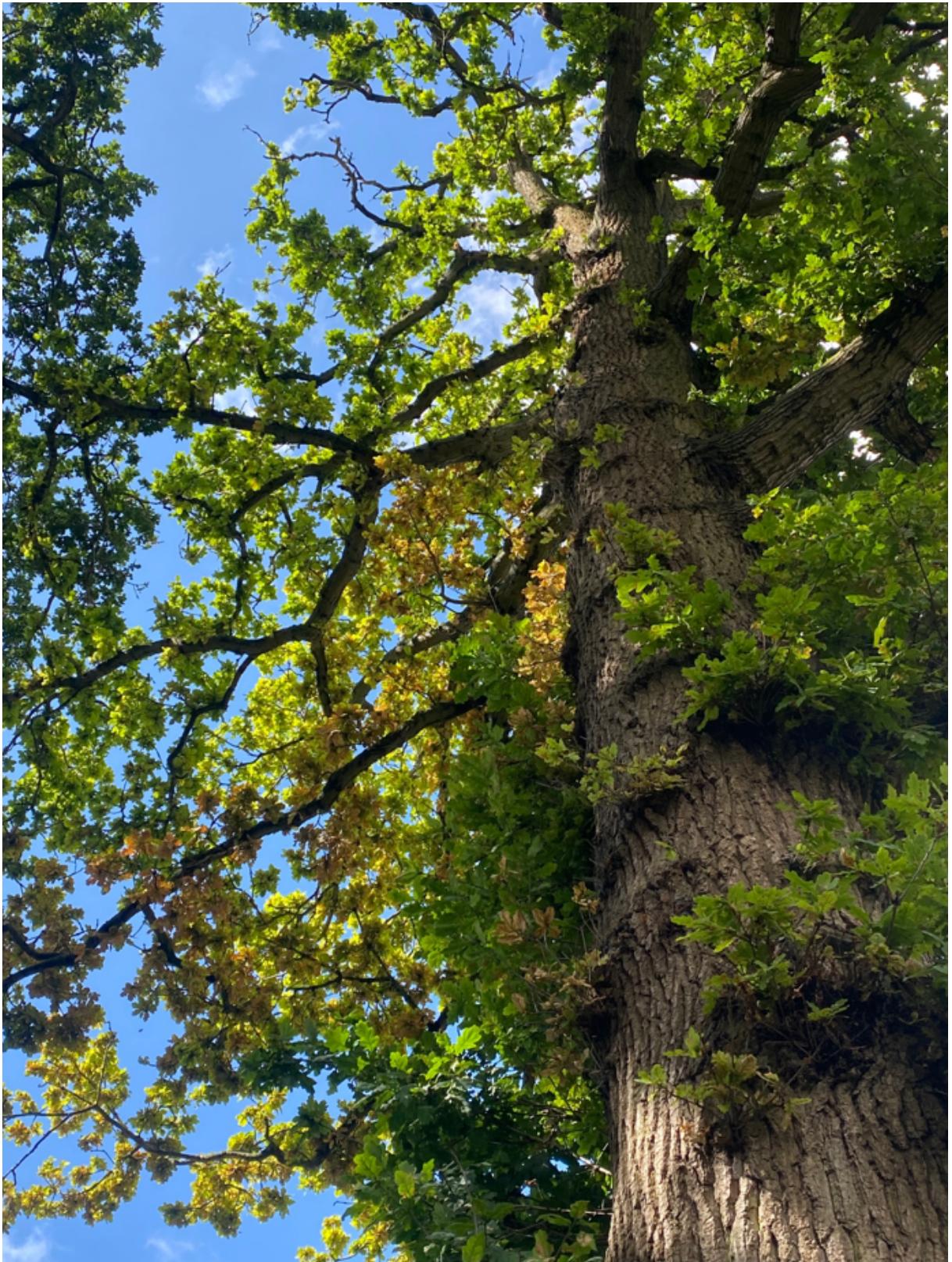


Figure 4

