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Mortgage Reports
Planning & Development Tree Surveys
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Tree Works Application Support Report

Larch How

Park Lane, Old Knebworth, Knebworth SG3 6PS

24th September 2025

Ref: 240925/RP/LH

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Document

This report has been prepared to support an application to North Hertfordshire Council for consent to undertake tree works at Larch How, Park Lane, Old Knebworth, Knebworth SG3 6PS.

The document sets out:

- The current health, condition and management needs of the trees within the site boundaries
- Justification for proposed works, including tree removals, based on arboricultural assessment and good practice
- Supporting evidence for the planning authority to make an informed decision on the application

1.2 Scope of the Report & Survey

The scope of this report goes beyond a standard tree safety inspection. It provides the necessary arboricultural evidence to accompany a planning application for tree works. In doing so, it ensures that:

- The reasons for proposed works are clearly documented and justified
- The local authority is provided with a transparent audit trail and supporting information
- The proposals align with recognised arboricultural guidance and demonstrate a responsible approach to tree management

Reference has been made to best practice documents such as BS3998:2010 (Tree Work – Recommendations) and the National Tree Safety Group guidance *Common Sense Risk Management for Trees*.

1.3 Survey Details & Methodology

- **Date of survey:** 24 September 2025
- **Surveyor:** Rebecca Peace, LANTRA accredited Professional Tree Inspector, QTRA Registered User and experienced Arboriculturist
- **Method:** Ground-level visual inspection using Visual Tree Assessment (VTA¹) techniques. Where open cavities were present, probing was undertaken from ground level
- **Weather conditions:** Clear but overcast
- All trees within the site were inspected and the details recorded form the evidence base for the proposed works

¹ (1) DoE publication *The Body Language of Trees – A Handbook of Failure Analysis* by Claus Mattheck and Helge Breloer

1.4 Trees, Groups & Woodlands

The trees subject to this report are recorded in the Data and Recommendations table (Appendix 1). For clarity, they are described as:

- Individual Trees – where works or specific concerns apply
- Groups – trees assessed collectively due to shared characteristics or location. All were inspected, but only those of note or requiring work are listed separately

1.5 Mapping & Identification

Trees subject to this application are identified on an interactive Google Map that illustrates positions and references used in this report. On site, some trees are also marked with forestry chalk numbers corresponding to this report. [[Click here to access interactive Google Map](#)]

1.6 Validity

This assessment is valid for a period of insert timeframe from the date of inspection, unless significant storm damage occurs, in which case re-inspection is advised.

The contents of this document are intended solely for use in relation to the planning application for tree works at this site.

1.7 Wildlife & Protected Species

All works will be carried out in accordance with relevant wildlife legislation, including:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Checks for nesting birds, bats, badgers and other protected species will be undertaken prior to works. Generally, the autumn period (September–November) is considered least disruptive for tree works in relation to bats and birds.

2.0 Status of the Trees

Larch How is in the Local Authority area of [North Hertfordshire District Council](#).

2.1 Tree Preservation Orders:

It is not clear if there are Tree Preservation Orders in place at Larch How. More information can be found on North Hertfordshire District Council's website - [Click here more details](#).

2.2 Conservation Areas:

Larch How is in the Old Knebworth Conservation Area. More information can be found on North Hertfordshire District Council's website - [Click here more details](#).

3.0 Discussion & Recommendations

3.1 The Need for Works

The trees have been assessed with consideration for both their condition and their relationship to the surrounding property, residents and wider setting. This report therefore sets out a clear rationale for the proposed tree works as part of the application to **North Hertfordshire Council**.

Where trees are dead, dying, diseased or structurally compromised, recommendations for removal have been made on the grounds of safety and good arboricultural practice. In other cases, pruning works are recommended to improve tree health, manage future growth or to ensure compatibility with the ongoing use of the site.

3.2 Other Arboricultural Considerations

The proposed works also take account of:

- **Structural condition** - trees with significant defects that cannot be remedied through pruning have been recommended for removal
- **Suitability for location** - some trees are unsuited to their position (e.g. due to excessive shading, conflict with built structures or limited long-term viability). Removal in these cases supports a more sustainable landscape plan
- **Future management** - selective removals will provide space and light for adjacent, higher value trees to establish and develop without undue competition

3.3 Mitigation & Replacement Planting

Where tree removals are necessary, these losses will be mitigated through new planting within the proposed new garden boundary. Wherever possible, replacement trees will be of the same species and cultivar to maintain local character and continuity. Additional planting across the new garden area will provide a net gain in canopy cover and contribute positively to the long-term landscape.

3.4 General Tree Works

All other tree pruning and removals listed in Appendix 1 are recommended for reasons of safety, good arboricultural management and to secure the long-term health of the retained tree stock. These works also form part of a balanced management approach that underpins this application for consent.

3.5 Survey Limitations

Where visibility was restricted by ivy, epicormic growth or understory vegetation, a limited inspection was undertaken and judgements made based on what could reasonably be observed. Should additional defects be identified once works commence, the supervising Arborist will provide updated advice.

3.6 Implementation of Works

All tree works must be carried out in line with BS3998:2010 (Tree Work – Recommendations). Contractors should report any further defects observed during works (e.g. from climbing inspections) so that appropriate remedial action can be agreed.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Tree & Tree Group Data & Recommendations - Larch How - 2025

[Click here to access interactive Google Map](#)

Google Maps Tree Position	Tree No.	Common Name	Height (m)	Age Class	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Recommendations	Notes	Photo 1	Photo 2
Tree Position	T1	Weeping Willow	16	Mature	Good	Good, Fair	Repollard to previous pollarding points @ approx. 8m and remove deadwood. Reshape.	Tree is next to a dried up pond which Client would like to bring back into use. Although the tree is quite a stunning architectural specimen, it has grown slightly larger than suites the area and underneath is hidden another excellent architectural feature. Both trees will have been pollarded in the past but this maintenance has not been kept up. Willow will take this kind of surgery and will recover well. They can also be reshaped at the same time.	Photo	Photo Photo
Tree Position	T2	Weeping Willow	15	Mature	Good, Fair	Good, Fair	Repollard to previous pollarding points @ approx.. 8m	This tree is next to the unused pond that is to be resurrected. It is swamping the other smaller trees and architecturally interesting trees below it - including a nice female Holly, Purple Maple, Crimson King, Monkey Puzzle and several Field Maples. The Willow has been pollarded in the past and repollarding works will have to be done sensitively. Works will give the other trees time to recover.	Photo	Photo
Tree Position	T3	Weeping Willow	12	Mature, Early Mature	Good	Good	Repollard to previous pollarding points @ approx. 8m and reshape.	This tree is not as old as the others and this will be an easier job.	Photo	Photo
Tree Position	T4	Weeping Willow	13	Mature, Early Mature	Good	Good	Selective Crown clear and remove deadwood throughout crown.	This tree has not been pollarded in the past and is smaller than the others. Therefore, it would be best to keep it as it is and just clear the crown. It can also be trimmed by more than 1m on the in order to allow access for the mower.	Photo	Photo Photo
Tree Position	T5	Maple spp.	9	Early Mature, Semi Mature	Dead	Dead	Fell and replant.	Noted on the application as the tree is dead.	Photo	Photo

Google Maps Tree Position	Tree No.	Common Name	Height (m)	Age Class	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Recommendations	Notes	Photo 1	Photo 2
Tree Position	T6	Deodar Cedar	12	Early Mature	Fair	Fair	Fell and Remove tree with mitigating replanting.	The tree is a large tree within a group of younger trees including Walnut, Catalpa and Rowan. It is not a particularly good specimen and has an odd shape. While it has been planted with the others, it is slightly out of place. There is a lot of Ivy growing throughout, which will be unfavourable to the overall aesthetic of the landscape. Removal is recommended as the remaining younger trees will form into a better landscape. Mitigation planting can be replanting the same species on the new boundary behind.	Photo	Photo
Tree Position	T7	Ash	17	Over Mature, Mature	Fair	Fair	Selective crown reduction/retrenchment to reduce end-weight over entrance, remove unstable deadwood above path, retain smaller deadwood for habitat.	This is an old Ash that is obviously part of the boundary. The size of the roots indicate that this is quite a historical tree. It is covered in Ivy and it has had works, including pollarding, in the past. It is also noted that there is semi-mature Elm growing from the base of this tree. For future management but not on this application: Targeted ivy reduction around stem for inspection. Monitor annually for Ash Dieback and structural change. Retain Elm at base if healthy but monitor for DED. Consider long-term replacement planting nearby.	Photo Photo	Photo Photo
Tree Position	T8	Larch	14	Early Mature	Fair	Fair	Fell and remove	While this Ivy covered tree is in fair condition, it is not really conducive to the surrounding area and will soon start to dominate an area which is already a little busy. Of all the trees in the area, this one has the least aesthetic value. Its removal will open the area to new planting and with the positioning of the Catalpa, Crimson Maple and Monkey Puzzle trees, its presence will not be much missed. Its loss will also not be detrimental to the wildlife corridor and the overall look of the garden. There will also be mitigation planting on the new boundary.	Photo	Photo



Appendix 3: Key to Tree Data

Google Map Location: Link to the trees exact position on Google Maps.

Tree Number: Trees are recorded as T1, T2 etc.

Common Name: The English name of the tree species.

Height: In metres

Age Class: The tree was ascribed to one of six age classes as follows:

- **Young** - The first third of the estimated life expectancy
- **Semi Mature** - The second third of the estimated life expectancy
- **Early Mature** - The stage between second and last third of life expectancy
- **Mature** - The last third of the estimated life expectancy
- **Over Mature** - In slow decline
- **Veteran** - Veteran (or near veteran status) trees have no precise definition, but are trees considered to be of biological, aesthetic or wildlife interest, because of their age or trees in the ancient stage of their lives or trees that are old relative to others of the same species. Special measures, such as increasing the tree protective zone distances and selective surgery could significantly increase their useful life expectancies.

NB: There may be some overlapping with the above categories.

Physiological Condition: This refers to the evident health of the tree (Physiological) and if any apparent diseases, pests or damaged areas are present within the tree. Abiotic and biotic factors are both recorded.

Structural Condition: This refers to any defects within the main stem and structure of the tree:

- **Excellent** - Tree is without any visible symptoms
- **Good** - No apparent problems
- **Fair** - Minor problems
- **Poor** - Major problems
- **Dead** - Dead

Recommendations: Prescriptions for remedial actions to alleviate problems or defects within the tree. Recommendations to fell are normally to ground, level unless specified.

Photo: Link to photograph of Tree.

Appendix 4: Glossary of Terms & Abbreviations

Compression fork/Co-dominant stem: Can be a failure point at a fork between two branches or limbs, which, as they grow, press against each other, causing a build-up of stresses similar to the effect you would get if a wedge were hammered into the fork. Increased end-loading as the limbs grow can lead to the fork failing.

Cracked bark: Another indicator of structural weakness in the wood. It can be on the surface of reaction growth that has grown rapidly or it can show a shearing failure point, where the load on a branch/limb becomes too great and causes the grain of the wood to separate and fail.

Deadwood: Twigs or branches in the crown of the tree which have died off. This can indicate the tree's inability to transport fluid and/or nutrients to its extremities signifying that the tree is under stress or has failing systems. It can also take place naturally when a branch affects a process known as "self-pruning". This occurs when the energy needed to sustain the live branch outweighs the energy it produces.

Decay: This can be minor, such as on the surface of a shallow wound or severe with large sections of the trees structure being decayed. It is a problem that can progress to the point where the tree collapses.

Epicormic growth: This can sometimes indicate a problem within the tree's systems. Epicormic growth is produced by the tree to gain a greater ability to photosynthesise when it needs extra resources. Some trees, such as Lime, produce epicormic growth, particularly from the base, as part of their natural growth habit.

Lean: A lean does not necessarily mean inherent instability but when a tree's stem loses structural integrity, it can become a hazard, especially if the weakness is on the side to which the tree is leaning.

Loosened Bark: This indicates a problem under the surface in either the wood or the inner layers of bark (cambium). Bark can fall away from decaying wood behind it or can start to die off due to a range of reasons (bacterial infections etc). The bark can then no longer transport fluid or nutrients around the tree.

Mechanical Damage: Damage caused by non-biological means i.e. vehicle impact or damage caused by animals trying to eat bark. Damage of this kind can penetrate the structure and is more often found on the surface of the tree.

Reaction wood/growth: Where weakness or decay within a tree occurs, the tree will grow material to compensate for it. It is often seen as 'cable' like structures with patches of uneven bark which indicate irregular growth patterns. Another form of reaction growth can be seen as 'bulges' on a trees structure. Large amounts of reaction growth indicate advanced decay or weakness within the tree structure.

Weak unions: The unions between the stem (trunk) and structural limbs or branches sometimes develop weakly and as the tree ages can become unstable. This can be exacerbated when the tree is affected by other problems. Also, certain tree species are prone to developing weak unions.



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