**BHA Trees Ltd**
Arboricultural Consultants

3773

5th March 2019

**ARBORICULTURALIST'S REPORT**

**Terms of Reference**

1.1 This report was requested by Harry Strong of Highcroft House, St Bees, Cumbria, CA27 0BZ.

1.2 The instruction to inspect woodland at Highcroft House was received by email.

1.3 The purpose of my inspection and report is to:

1.3.1 make a visual appraisal of the overall condition of the trees
1.3.2 identify potential hazards and establish severity
1.3.3 make recommendations for remedial work
1.3.4 ensure the duty of care is observed by the trees' owners and to provide recommendations for any work deemed necessary to prevent failure.
1.3.5 advise on future management of the woodland to enhance the area and improve the value for recreation, ecology and aesthetics.

**Limitations**

2.1 The content of this report is valid for a period of three years from the date shown above.

2.2 The report is for the sole use of the client and its reproduction or use by anyone else is forbidden unless written consent is given by the author.

2.3 This is an arboricultural report and as such, no reliance should be placed on comments relating to buildings or soil data.

2.4 This is not a full arboricultural survey. This can be supplied but will be subject to a further fee. Any safety implications identified during the inspection are of course noted within this report.

2.5 My observations and comments are based upon experience with previous cases. I have no formal engineering qualifications.

2.6 The inspection was undertaken from ground level.

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**The Site**

3.1 I carried out my site visit on 1st February 2019 to inspect the woodland, during which time the weather was fine and dry with adequate visibility.

3.2 The site is a line of trees forming a shelter belt between Highfield House and the public road.

3.3 Work has been undertaken to deal with those trees implicated as potentially hazardous and improved woodland management is evident since my last report.

3.4 While the owner has started the woodland diversification with the planting of five Betula pendula, the group is a mix of predominantly broadleaf trees with limited species diversity. Species include:

Acer pseudoplatanus (Sycamore)
Tilia spp (Lime)
Taxus baccata (Yew)
Salix caprea (Goat Willow)
Fraxinus excelsior (Ash)
Castanea sativa (Sweet Chestnut)
Pinus nigra (Black Pine)

3.5 The majority of the larger more dominant trees are Sycamore of varying quality. While this does not constitute a monoculture, it does lack aesthetic and ecological diversity. In order to address this, improve the long-term quality and allow glade space for new tree establishment, I recommend removing the following paint marked trees.

3.5.1 At the southern end of the tree belt there are two Limes and one previously twin stemmed Sycamore, adjacent to the Aucuba japonica. Fell the Sycamore T2.

3.5.2 To the north is a Sweet Chestnut and a group of three Sycamores. The tree (T10) closest to the driveway should be felled to allow the other trees fully develop.

3.5.3 I have marked two further Sycamores for removal. T15 because of its structural form and T18 because I believe it has contracted Armillaria (honey fungus), evidenced by the stem exudate and bark necrosis.

3.5.4 North east of the new Beech hedge is a twin stemmed Sycamore (T31) which has been paint marked for removal.

3.5.5 Remove the marked long horizontal branch from T25.

3.6 In order to improve the diversity and habitat value of the woodland, I recommend that the established footpath through the woodland is maintained, but that chosen areas are left for bramble to colonise and stacks of branches or logs wired together and left as habitat piles for invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians.

3.7 My recommendation for new tree planting in the woodland would include

Quercus robur (English Oak)
Crataegus monogyna (Hawthorn)
Sorbus aucuparia (Rowan)
Tilia cordata (Small Leaved Lime)
Malus sylvestris (Crab Apple)

3.8 Planting shrub species should include

Leycesteria formosa (Pheasant Berry)
Viburnum opulus (Guelder Rose)
Prunus spinosa (Blackthorn)

3.9 The area already has a diverse shrub layer and ground flora is rich with bluebell, aconite, snowdrop, dog's mercury and later in the year most probably wild garlic and narcissus.

3.10 Where trees have been removed, particular Sycamores, I recommend that the regenerated shoots from the stumps are treated with glyphosate to kill off the regrowth and the root system. There is a very minor risk of root graft affecting other retained trees, however it is essential that the suckers from the stumps are treated.

3.11 Where felling a tree is recommended, this is to remove the risk of failure causing damage, injury or death. However, when a tree is in an area such as woodland, a tree belt, hedgeline or scrub land, it is possible to reduce it to a standing carcase to retain it as an important habitat.

3.12 Prior to commencing any arboricultural work to trees, it is essential to liaise with the Local Planning Authority as they may be protected by a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area.

3.13 Any arboricultural work should be carried out by a competent arborist in line with BS3998 British Standards for Tree Work. Should you require details of suitably qualified contractors, the Arboricultural Association maintains a list which is available by calling 01242 522 152 or via their website (www.trees.org.uk).

3.14 Trees are self-optimising mechanical structures that grow in and react to their environment. They are living organisms that live and die, and are capable of being wounded or infected by objects or other organisms. As self-optimising structures, trees will make as much economic use of materials as possible to ensure that any stresses are uniformly spread over the entire surface area. This means that even a mechanically perfect tree could be damaged or caused to fail by extreme events, such as weather, that overload specific areas (break points).

3.15 No tree can ever be guaranteed to be 100% safe and even trees in good condition can suffer damage under normal conditions. Any tree can be hazardous as a result of decay or structural weakness, but the risk posed by that hazard is determined by its size and location in relation to the potential target. Frequent inspections can help to identify potential problems before they become acute and allow for intervention to mitigate against a risk posed by hazard.

3.16 All wild birds, their young, eggs and active nests are protected under law and it is an offence to damage a nest intentionally while it is in use or being built. Non-urgent tree work or hedge cutting should not be undertaken during the bird nesting or breeding season (March to July, but depending on seasonal temperatures, some birds continue breeding into August and September).

3.17 All bats and their roosts are strictly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Natural Habitats and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Where bats are suspected to be present, seek advice from a licensed bat specialist before carrying out any major tree work or hedge cutting.

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Should you have any questions or require any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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