

Dr V Dulay
182 Church Road
Bishopstoke
EASTLEIGH SO50 6FA

16th May 2022

Your ref: **Tree House**

Our Ref: **22070-Let1-160522-JB**

Dear Dr Dulay

Re: Replacement tree house at the above address

Further to my visit to your house, I write to set out my views on the potential adverse impacts of the installation of the replacement tree house on a tree at the end of your garden. You advised that the Council had expressed concern that the work may have adversely affected protected trees, and you wanted an opinion on whether that was the case. I have seen an email trail between yourself and the Council, which provides useful background information. You can find out more about my credentials to advise on this issue on our business website and from this summary <https://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/assets/Uploads/J-Barrell-CV.pdf>.

I visited the property on 11th May 2022, where I was shown the tree house and the trees. The weather at the time of my visit was dull, still, and raining, with poor visibility, but I was able to see enough to properly assess the circumstances. I looked at the base of the tree house and the trees near it, and took photographs as a record of what I saw, some of which are included below.

The tree house is set at the end of a lawned rear garden and fits around a single alder tree with two trunks (Figure 1). The tree is part of a woodland group of similar trees up to about 50 cm trunk diameter and up to about 20–25 m in height. All the trees appeared to be in normal health with no obvious signs of decline, and the new leaves had just started emerging when I visited.

The land at the far end of the rear garden slopes away steeply beyond the relatively flat main garden area, which is retained, with a drop of about 2–3 m to the lower level beyond. The supports for the tree house structure are at this lower level, which cannot be easily accessed from the main garden area. The primary supports for the tree house are rustic wood poles that sit on two small concrete piles set into the ground that rise to the main structure, where the floor sits at around the ground level of the formal garden (Figure 2). There is no obvious disturbance around these piles and no evidence of excavation beyond their small footprint (about 20 cm square).

Additionally, there are five metal brackets screwed into the lower trunk of the tree with wood stabilising supports rising to the structure above. The two trunks of the tree go through the tree house floor with space around each allowed to accommodate trunk movements in the wind. The supporting brackets press against the bark of the trunk and have not been cut into the wood, with no obvious damage other than the screws going into the wood.



Figure 1: View of the tree house and the adjacent trees looking down the garden towards the woodland at the end.

In terms of any adverse impact on the trees, my observations indicate that there was no significant excavation to install the two concrete supporting piles, and I cannot see any significant harm arising from that work. Trees can easily cope with such minor disturbance and my opinion is that these incursions are so small that there has not been any significant adverse impact on any of the adjacent trees from that work.



Figure 2: View of the tree house from beneath looking towards the house and the retaining structure at the end of the garden, with the small concrete piles shown by the red arrows. There are further supports fixed to the tree trunk with brackets shown by the yellow arrows.

The five metal brackets screwed into the tree trunk will have caused some damage to the wood. However, these seem to be no more than often seen with fences attached to tree trunks, and healthy trees can normally cope with such small levels of damage without any adverse impacts on health. Although there has been some damage to the trunks from this work, it is so small and minor that I am confident that these trees are healthy enough to be able to recover without any obvious adverse impacts. It would be possible to remove the brackets and install additional piles to replace the lost supports, but I don't think it is necessary in this situation. Indeed, removing the brackets will not remove the damage, and leaving them in place will not cause any more damage because trees have the capacity to grow around such attachments.

In summary, although some damage has occurred to the trees, it is so minor that there is no realistic prospect of it having any significant adverse impact on their health or safe useful life expectancy. For that reason, my opinion is that no further action is necessary from a tree health and safety perspective.

If you would like further information or clarification on any of these points, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Barrell BSc FArborA DipArb CBiol FICFor FRICS