

Arboricultural Assessment of 9 Merdon Close, Chandler's Ford, EASTLEIGH, SO53 1EF

Carried out by Matthew Rowden on behalf of Romsey Tree
Surgeons Ltd for the prospective buyer.

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3. Instruction

This report is to survey three trees on the site for the potential to cause damage and/or harm for insurance and liability. I refer to the current guidance set out within NTSG Common sense risk management of trees 2011 to enable the homeowner to have discharged their duty of care. The risks that I have assessed are: Likelihood of damage to property (indirect or contact), tree failure through structures, and personal harm or injury. I have been instructed by Ross Woodley from Romsey Tree Surgeons Ltd.

4. Limitations

This survey is valid for 3 years (adhering to the guidance set out in NTSG 2011). I must be kept in direct supervision of the site at all times in regards to all arboricultural matters in order for the findings in this report to remain valid.

The site was inspected using the VTA method as outlined in Mattheck and Breloer 1994. No detailed decay detection has been carried out.

No soil analysis has been carried out: assumptions have been made based on data from the BGS, and the species that grow in that area.

5. Site details

The site comprises a detached two-storey residential property known as 9 Merdon Close, Chandler's Ford, Hampshire, SO53 1EF. The dwelling forms part of a residential estate predominantly constructed during the late 1960s to early 1970s, with the surrounding area characterised by mature gardens and established tree cover. The property occupies a relatively level plot within a well-established suburban setting. This then pre-dates the NHBC guidelines 4.2 overhaul that occurred in 1985 for trees close to structures on shrinkable clay soil.

The soil conditions are listed by the BGS as: "London Clay Formation-Clay, silt and sand. These sedimentary rocks are marine in origin. They are detrital and comprise coarse- to fine-grained slurries of debris from the continental shelf flowing into a deep-sea environment, forming distinctively graded beds."

6. Legal restrictions

All three trees are covered by a TPO, which based on the register provided by Eastleigh Borough council is likely to have the reference of 1E.

7. Proposals

This report aims to establish whether the trees require work within the next 5 years, 1 year, critically (as soon as reasonably practicable), or no work whatsoever. It aims to discharge the duty of care that the landowner has to ensure that their trees are as safe as reasonably practicable, and to instil a cyclic formal re-inspection schedule every 3-5 years in line with NTSG common sense risk management of trees 2011. Based on the target area of the site, the records of this report must be kept with the homeowner, and the next date for a formal inspection is July 2029.

8. Drawings and documents

The client has not provided drawings and documents for the purposes of this assessment. I have obtained one from the Ordnance survey and have annotated the trees on the map.

9. Summary

Overall, the tree stock is of reasonable quality and makes a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding street scene. Tree 2 is a particularly prominent specimen with high amenity value and remains in good physiological and structural condition. However, Tree 1 has the potential to contribute towards subsidence due to its proximity to the dwelling, the underlying shrinkable clay soils and the age of the property, whilst Tree 3 is in an advanced state of decline with a limited safe life expectancy. The recommendations contained within this report seek to balance the retention of the site's best arboricultural assets against the management of foreseeable risk and potential property damage.

10. Findings (please see appendix 1 for specific details)**Tree 1 – *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana***

Tree 1 is a mature Lawson cypress in fair physiological and structural condition. Although structurally sound, the tree occupies a position that places its root system well within influencing distance of the dwelling. The property was constructed during a period when foundations were typically shallower than modern standards and is underlain by shrinkable London Clay soils, creating the combination of factors necessary for tree-related subsidence to occur. The species is also classified as having a high water demand and is capable of exerting significant seasonal moisture deficits within the soil profile. As such, there is a foreseeable risk that the tree may contribute towards subsidence damage over time.

It is also understood that the property has previously undergone underpinning works following historic structural movement. Whilst the precise cause of that movement cannot be confirmed from this inspection alone, the fact that the building has already experienced sufficient movement to warrant underpinning demonstrates a heightened sensitivity to foundation movement. In my opinion, this further strengthens the argument for adopting a precautionary approach when considering the retention of large, high water-demand trees within influencing distance of the structure. Unlike many of the surrounding trees, Tree 1 offers only moderate public amenity value. It forms a reasonable feature within the front garden but does not make a significant contribution to the wider landscape and could readily be replaced with a more appropriate species better suited to its proximity to the dwelling. Whilst crown reduction could marginally reduce transpiration rates in the short term, this would not remove the underlying influence of the root system, and repeated cyclical pruning would be required throughout the tree's life to maintain any benefit. Such an approach would neither represent good arboricultural practice nor provide a reliable long-term solution to the identified risk.

In my opinion, the retention value of the tree is outweighed by the foreseeable risk posed to the property. Felling therefore represents the most reasonable and proportionate management option, eliminating the potential for future tree-related subsidence whilst having only a limited impact on the overall amenity of the site. A replacement planting in a more appropriate location, or with a species of substantially lower ultimate water demand, would adequately mitigate the modest loss of canopy cover.

Tree 2 – *Taxus baccata*

Tree 2 is undoubtedly the highest quality tree on the site and is in good physiological and structural condition. Although the lower canopy encroaches over the adjacent footpath and the northern aspect has become somewhat elongated, these are relatively minor management issues. A sympathetic reduction of approximately 2–3 metres is recommended to rebalance the crown, improve its overall form and provide more appropriate clearance without materially affecting the tree's significant amenity contribution. There are no defects that give rise to an elevated likelihood of structural failure, and the recommendation should therefore be regarded as routine arboricultural management rather than remedial work. The tree currently presents a low foreseeable risk.

Tree 3 – *Taxus baccata*

Tree 3 is an over-mature yew in poor physiological and structural condition and is now in an advanced state of decline. The symptoms observed are strongly suggestive of *Cryptocline taxicola*, which is commonly associated with poor air circulation within densely wooded environments. Given the tree's limited remaining life expectancy and declining condition, retention offers little long-

term benefit. Furthermore, its continued presence is likely to inhibit the development of the adjacent higher value yew (Tree 2). Felling is therefore recommended, both to remove a tree with diminishing amenity value and to allow the neighbouring specimen greater opportunity to develop. The current level of risk is considered moderate due to the combination of advanced decline and progressive deterioration.

11. Conclusion:

Overall, the tree cover at the site remains of good quality despite there only being three trees present. Tree 2, in particular, is an attractive and prominent yew that makes a positive contribution to both the property and the wider street scene, and there is every reason to retain it for the foreseeable future. The recommended crown reduction represents routine management only and will improve both its form and long-term sustainability without materially affecting its amenity value. Conversely, Trees 1 and 3 cannot realistically be justified for retention. Tree 1 occupies an unsuitable location immediately adjacent to the dwelling, where its high water demand and extensive rooting influence create a foreseeable risk of subsidence to what is already a historically vulnerable property. Tree 3 has entered an advanced state of decline, has very little remaining useful life expectancy and is now detracting from the development of the neighbouring, higher quality yew. In my opinion, the removal of both trees represents sound arboricultural management and will have only a limited impact upon the overall amenity of the site.

Subject to the completion of the recommendations contained within this report, no further remedial works are anticipated in the immediate future. Tree 2 should continue to be managed through periodic inspection as part of good arboricultural practice, and I would expect to revisit the site during 2029 to reassess its condition and review any changes that may have occurred since this inspection.

12. Recommendations

- i. Follow recommendations paragraph within appendix 1.
- ii. Re-inspection date of July 2029.



Matthew Rowden *ABC ProfDipArb L6, BTEC NatDipArb L3*

13. References

- a. BS3998:2010
- b. Modern Arboriculture, Alex Shigo
- c. The body language of trees, Dr Claus Mattheck

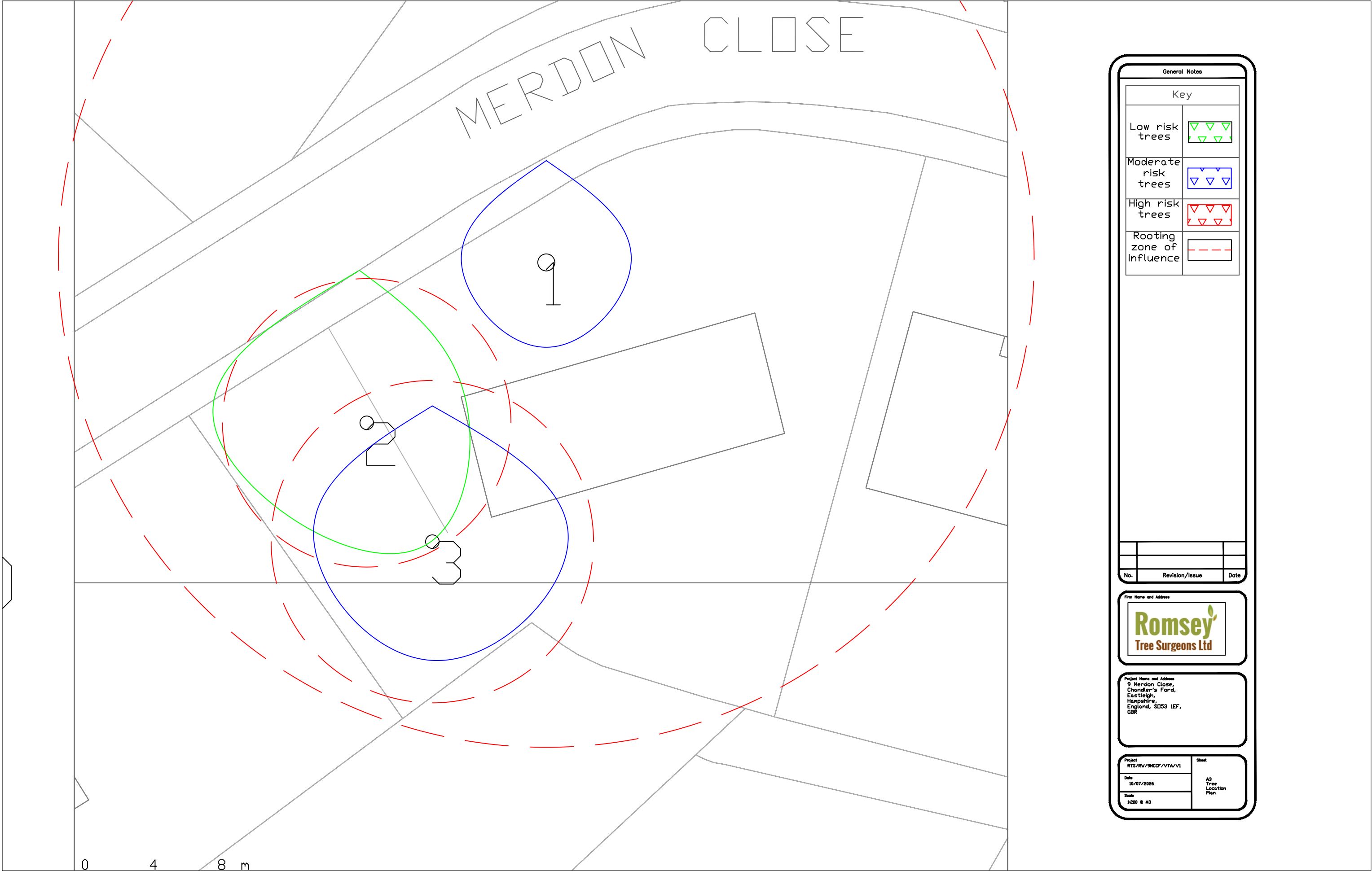
- d. Plant Biomechanics, Karl Niklas
- e. NTSG Common sense risk management of trees 2011
- f. Beyond Hortlink. N. Hipps 2004

Appendix 1 - Tree survey schedule

Tree no. on plan	Species	Ht (M)	Crown spread (M) N E S W	Stem dia. @1.5m (mm) Zone of influence (m radius) NHBC water demand classification.	Life stage	Estimated remaining contribution in years	General observations Physiological condition- P Structural condition - S	Preliminary management recommendations	Priority
1	<i>Chamaecyparis lawsonia</i>	23	6 5 5 5	780 28.75 High	M	<20	P- Fair S- Fair Zone of influence overlaps property structure and due to property's age and location on London clay soil, there is a foreseeability of subsidence damage. Although publicly visible, the tree is not particularly high value.	Fell	Moderate
2	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	17	9 6 8 9	980 8.5 Low	M	>40	P- Good S- Good Canopy too low over footpath. High value tree, but amenity could be improved by reducing long, leggy growth to N aspect to retain a more uniform shape. Lower canopy has previously been reduced.	Reduce in height and spread by 2-3m to balance canopy.	Low
3	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	19	8 8 7 7	#850 9.5 Low	OM	<5	P- Poor S- Poor Yew tree in rear garden in advanced state of decline, suggestive of <i>Cryptocline taxicola</i> infection due to poor airflow in this densely wooded area. In order to preserve the integrity of the higher value tree 2, this should be felled.	Fell	Moderate

Survey schedule key

1. Tree ID: Refers to numbers as shown in the tree location plan.
2. Species: scientific name
3. Height (measured in meters)
4. Crown spread (measured in meters at the points of North, South, East and West). Where “#” is used as a suffix, the measurements are approximate.
5. Stem diameter measured at 1.5m height in mm.
6. Life stage: Young (Y) (small trees at a very early stage of their growth), young mature (YM)(larger trees at an early life stage with the potential to still grow considerably larger), Mature (M)(trees which have reached their maximum size and are self sustaining at the point), Over mature (OM) (trees that are beginning to decline and starting to die back from the tips), Veteran (V)(trees that are rapidly in decline and steadily losing canopy spread), Dead (D)
7. Estimated remaining contribution in years: Until such a time as any residual amenity is lost.
8. General observations - a visual assessment of the physiological and structural condition of the tree, classed as :Poor, fair, good, dead, decline. Physiologically refers to the vitality and vigour of the tree; Structural refers to the presence of physical defects within the tree's structural makeup. For example, a multi stemmed tree from a lapsed pollard with multiple defects in those unions, but with good vitality and good leaf cover would be classed as physiologically good, but structurally poor.
9. Preliminary management recommendations - recommendations to maintain the tree as part of the proposals, or assessing whether its retention is viable, whether it be the suggestion of aerial inspections, remedial pruning, or detailed decay inspections.
10. Likelihood of causing damage/ harm: None, low, moderate, high and critical. These mean that respectively, the recommendations are to be actioned with no time scale and within 5 years (green canopy spread), 1 year (blue canopy spread), 6 months (red canopy spread). Trees to be felled with have the canopy spread denoted in a dashed line with colour coordinated to their priority.



General Notes

Key

Low risk trees	
Moderate risk trees	
High risk trees	
Rooting zone of influence	

No.	Revision/Issue	Date

Firm Name and Address

Romsey
Tree Surgeons Ltd

Project Name and Address

9 Merdon Close,
Chandler's Ford,
Eastleigh,
Hampshire,
England, SD53 1EF,
GBR

Project RTS/RV/9MCCF/VTA/V1	Sheet
Date 10/07/2026	A3 Tree Location Plan
Scale 1:200 @ A3	