Tree Preservation Order (TPO) Assessment

Location	Garden Fields, Offley, SG5 3DF
Description	TPO assessment of 11 trees at the rear of residential properties to the south of Garden Fields, Offley.
Client	Thomas Howe Graduate Planning Officer of North Hertfordshire Council (NHC)
Surveyors	Nick Seller *BSc (Hons)* (Assistant Arboricultural Consultant, Maydencroft Limited)
Qualifications	Lantra Professional Tree Inspection, Level 3 Advanced Diploma in Arboriculture and Forestry.

Figure 1. Map showing site at the rear of Garden Fields (Source: Google Earth 2022).

Survey methodology

A visual assessment of all trees at the rear of the properties on Garden Fields, Offley was carried out on the 2nd November 2022. Eight of the proposed trees were located within residential gardens of properties on Garden Fields, preventing a close assessment at the base of the trees and their lower stems, although an assessment of crown form, structure and vitality was able to be conducted. The three remaining trees, two at the east end and one at the west end, were located within public areas where close assessment could be achieved. Upon inspection, the second tree from the western end (T10), located within the garden of 37 Garden Fields appears to be removed, although this could not be confirmed due to lack of access to the garden.

The inspection was made using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) methodology, this is a ground-based assessment with no climbing.

The survey was undertaken to ascertain if the tree group in question meets the criteria for statutory designation of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Species composition

The highlighted trees comprise 10 mature English oak *(Quercus robur)*, running in a line from east to west.

Description

This row of oak trees forms a prominent feature at the rear of the residential gardens and surrounding properties on Garden Fields. These trees are clearly visible from the public footpath that runs from north to south along the eastern edge of this group. This group of mature trees is well established and of high arboricultural and amenity value, with no significant defects recorded at the time of inspection.

The tree at the east end of the group has recently been reduced impeding the assessment of its vitality. The tree appears to be structurally in a good condition and should recover well from the crown reduction. Seven trees are located within private gardens, preventing full inspection of the base and lower stems. All trees in this group have healthy crowns and are in good structural condition, having had room to develop and form an aesthetically pleasing feature as a whole and creating visual continuity. The tree at the western end has been previously reduced and has recovered well showing good vitality and forming a symmetrical crown.

Due to the biodiverse nature of English oak *(Quercus robur)*, it should be noted that they have a huge potential for current and future wildlife habitation. These particular genera have the potential to live for 50+ decades and can have significant arboricultural value.

Conclusion

Following the inspection and assessment of the row of trees at the rear of Garden Fields, it has been deemed that all oak trees in this group are suitable for statutory protection under a Tree Preservation Order.

This is due to their high visibility within the local area, the potential for current and future wildlife habitat and long-life expectancy. The trees located within the gardens also form a visual cohesion, which would be compromised if one were to be removed or heavily pruned.

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Assistant Arboricultural Consultant

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Photos

Figures 1 & 2 - View of designated trees from Garden Fields looking south and footpath looking west

Figures 3 & 4 - View of designated trees at the western and eastern ends

Figure 5 – View of designated trees looking north from footpath

Figure 6 - View of designated trees looking northeast from Lawns Close