SITE ADDRESS:
9 Riddiford Drive, Burgess Hill, RH15 8RJ

CLIENT:
Brookworth Homes

DATE:
11th February 2026

AUTHOR:
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CHECKED BY:
C.A

REVISION: 02

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1. INTRODUCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.1. Natalie Rowland of Brookworth Homes (the client) instructed the author to survey one Blue Cedar adjacent to 9 Riddiford Drive, Burgess Hill.

1.2. This report was commissioned as the client wanted to understand the condition of this tree. The client also wanted a professional opinion on the possible impact on the tree by a recently constructed closeboard fence adjacent to it and the use of the land around the tree as a private garden.

1.3. The findings in this report do not take account of the effects of extreme weather events, vandalism or accidents. The Tree Consultants cannot, therefore, accept any liability in connection with these factors, nor where prescribed work is not carried out in a correct and professional manner in accordance with current good practice. The findings of this report cease at any time stated within it, or if none are stated after one year from the date of the assessment.

1.4. The author of this report is a qualified LANTRA Professional Tree Inspector with 17 years of experience in tree surveying and making works recommendations, with seven years in local authority and has been within private practice since 2016. He is also a professional member of the Arboricultural Association and meets the Continuing Professional Development requirements.

2. SCOPE AND METHOD OF SURVEY

2.1. This inspection has been carried out from ground level using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) system (Mattheck & Breloer 1994). Visual tree assessment has been the conventional method of assessment used in surveying and inspecting trees for a number of years. This term describes a general approach to tree surveying using visual observation and recording, combined with experience and knowledge of tree biology and structure, to draw conclusions about tree conditions. The VTA system is a systematic approach that guides the inspector through a

process from initial biological and mechanical observations through to diagnosis, using knowledge of failure criteria.

2.2. Tree heights were measured using a TruPulse 200 Laser Rangefinder clinometer; canopy spreads are measured with a Leica DISTO D2 and stem diameters with a diameter tape.

2.3. Prior to starting the survey, the author was made aware that the adjacent buildings and road had been recently constructed (within the last four years). The owner of the adjacent property was not present at the time of the assessment, but access to the tree was possible.

2.4. No tissue samples were taken nor were any internal investigations of the subject tree(s) undertaken. Two hand tools were used to aid in observations, these consisted of a nylon sounding hammer used to tap the tree to ascertain loose bark or cavitation below the bark surface. The second was a metal probe measuring approximately 50cm long used to give an indication of the depth of cavities or to run down the outer edge of the bark just below the soil line to see if there is degradation present. To aid in assessing the upper canopy of trees 5x25 magnification binoculars were used.

3. ASSESSMENT AND OBSERVATIONS

Tree Ref: T1	Details:
Common name:	Blue Cedar
Botanical name:	Cedrus atlantica
Age Class:	Early mature/ mature
Height:	16m
Crown spread	North: 3m, East: 4.8m, South: 6m, West: 6m
Diameter at 1.5m above ground level.	560mm (estimated)

Tree Section:	Visible significant defects/Observations:
Area surrounding the tree:	Growing within a grassed lawn measuring approximately 10m by 14m. The lawn area appears to be part of a residential garden that has the normal outside furniture associated with residential use, consisting of seating, BBQ. etc. There were no flower or shrub beds within the garden, just lawn. On the southern and eastern sides of the lawn was a closeboard fence supported on 11 wooden uprights in the traditional spacing.
Stem Base:	No significant buttressing noted. No significant defects noted on or around the base or on the lower stem.
Stem:	Two recent pruning wounds on the south side of the stem at 2m & 2.5m, measuring approximately 10-13cm in diameter, some resin bleed from around the wounds was noted.
Crown Break/Primary Scaffolds:	Crown break at 4m. The tree has a fairly congested and generally upright branch structure. Crown clearance of 4m to branches and 3-3.5m to branch tips.

	The crown has been reduced on the north side by approximately 3m and has a 3m clearance to the building to the north.
Foliage/Outer Crown:	Minor deadwood scattered within the crown, slightly more than expected for the species. The crown was found to be sparse by approximately 45% from normal for the species. Needle length was found to be significantly reduced. Estimated to be only 60% of its normal healthy size. The sparse crown and reduced needled length indicate a significantly reduced vitality.

Photo 1: Crown overview looking west.

Photo 2: Photos of needles – 14cm long pen for size comparison.

Photo 3: Further view of crown looking northeast.

4. SITUATION REVIEW

4.1. The tree is in a state of reduced vitality, and with the absence of obvious defects explaining its condition, it should be assumed that the issue lies within the rooting environment. This is likely a result of recent development activities very close to the tree. Even with tree protection measures in place that safeguard the theoretical root protection area calculated from BS5837:2012, roots extending

beyond this area may have been damaged. Unlike some hardwoods, Blue Atlas Cedars have a limited ability to regenerate roots. Severing even a small part of the root system can cause long-term water stress. The damaged roots, combined with two periods of drought in the UK in recent years, have contributed to its decline. In the author's opinion, this tree is unlikely to recover from its current condition, regardless of the use of the land around the tree, as the damage from construction and droughts has already occurred.

4.2. Construction of the new wooden closeboard fence has been considered in terms of how it could impact the tree. It is in the author's opinion that it is very unlikely to have had a significant impact on the tree. This is because fence post holes are relatively small (<50cm across) and spaced at approximately every 2m. Over the rooting area of a tree, a fence has a very small footprint and is spaced out over a large area. As the main fencing structure is above the soil level, the fence itself will not act as a barrier to roots.

4.3. Land which is easily accessible to the public does not necessarily have less impact on the health of a tree than one within a private garden. This is because public access does not imply the land is inaccessible; nothing prevents the adjacent properties from using the land as a garden. Regarding the impact on the tree, the author's opinion is that damage has already occurred, and believes the tree will continue to decline regardless of land use.

4.4. Consideration was given to future pressure to prune. This is a subjective topic and very much down to the individuals. The crown height and the trees' orientation mean there will be ample light within this garden throughout the day, all year round. The tree had to be pruned to allow for the building construction. If the tree does live long enough to grow again, it is likely it will need pruning away from the building again to maintain a suitable clearance, regardless of the use of the land from which it grows.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. The tree appears to be in decline, likely possibly as a result of the recent development. The land use around this tree is unlikely to make a significant impact on the tree's chances of survival beyond 10 years.

6. Bibliography

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