



Crane Ash dismantle project Longhedge, Salisbury



OVERVIEW

Tree Technique was approached by a local building firm to assess the removal of a mature Ash tree on a building plot adjacent to the A345 near the recently developed, Longhedge housing estate near Salisbury in Wiltshire.

BACKGROUND

A site meeting was arranged between the builder's site manager and Tree Technique's work surveyor, to inspect the tree and discuss options and methods to remove the tree economically, efficiently and safely. An initial risk assessment was also undertaken to identify risks and hazards.



PLANNING

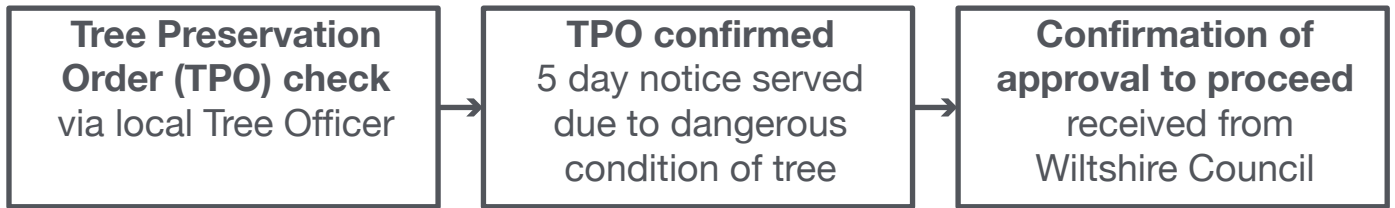
It was identified that the overall condition of the mature tree was poor, partially due to Ash die-back but also taking into consideration other factors like soil compaction. With the tree being located so close to the road, the soil around a large portion of the root system would have been compacted over time by passing traffic and this could have a negative impact on the health of the tree.

The survey concluded that traffic management was essential, with half of the canopy overhanging a live lane of an 'A' road. The tree would also have to be dismantled in sections from height.

Dismantling from a mobile elevated work platform (MEWP) was considered a safe method of aerial work, but the concern was raised about falling debris so close to a live road with moving traffic.

There was a large, grassed area close to the tree that was an obvious place to use for a drop zone and there was enough space to set up a 60-tonne crane. A crane on site would enable large sections of the tree to be removed independently and lowered into a drop zone away from the road. This solved all the hazards identified above.

LEGAL CONSTRAINTS



SITE SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT

Following on from the initial risk and hazard assessment, once the team arrive on site they review this information which forms part of the site specific risk assessment (SSRA) which is then completed and all the team are briefed and sign the SSRA.



RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The team and machinery were selected from our resources and with the crane being on-site for only one day, they had to ensure all the arising's could be dealt with efficiently and that it could all be cleared from the site within the allocated timeframe.

The 14" Bandit wood chipper was selected for its fast and efficient chipping speed. This chipper also enabled them to `digger feed` with the 3-tonne Arb-digger, mitigating any manual handling from the risk assessment.

The Unimog and 20-tonne silage trailer were also selected for chip capacity, to remove any need to tip off during work and had the capacity to lower large sections of timber directly from above. The 19-tonne low loader trailer was selected for the efficient removal of smaller timber that was too big to chip.

For the composition of the tree team, the most experienced climber with crane operations and ground staff that could operate the Arb-digger efficiently were selected.



TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Different types of traffic management were considered during the planning stage. A road closure was not felt necessary as they felt the tree could be removed occupying a single lane of the road only. Traffic lights seemed the obvious solution, with the option to stop both lanes of traffic, if required, when dealing with the limbs close to the live lane. A traffic management company was engaged to deal with the supply and installation of the lights and the application to highways for the permission required.

A call was also made to the crane company to discuss available dates, so that the traffic management, crane and tree team could all make themselves available on the same day to complete the work. The crane operator was also selected as one that had worked together with our tree teams many times before.




COMMENCEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

A date was selected, and all parties booked that date in the diary to ensure they could all meet up on the day and complete the work together.

The occupants of the neighbouring property were informed of the proposed date, as the entrance to their property was extremely close to the tree.

OUR APPROACH



On the day, all the respective parties met up at the parking area to the rear of the site, so the site could be surveyed by foot and exact locations to set up machinery were discussed.

Permission had been given from highways to commandeer one live lane of traffic from 8 am. It was felt that the job could be completed comfortably within a 6-hour day, so the team held off until 9 am to give local traffic time for school runs and travel time to work uninterrupted.

The site-specific risk assessment was undertaken to identify any risks posed. Telephone cables and power lines were highlighted to the team members. The site was made secure using tree-cutting signs, cones and barrier tape. Ground protection was put in place where the crane would be set and where the drop zone would be, to protect from damage from the Arb-digger turning.

A bird survey was undertaken and nests in an adjacent tree were spotted. The climber was made aware to avoid the nests and ensure no branches could be dropped near that area.

Communication was discussed and agreed upon between the Arborist and the crane operator.

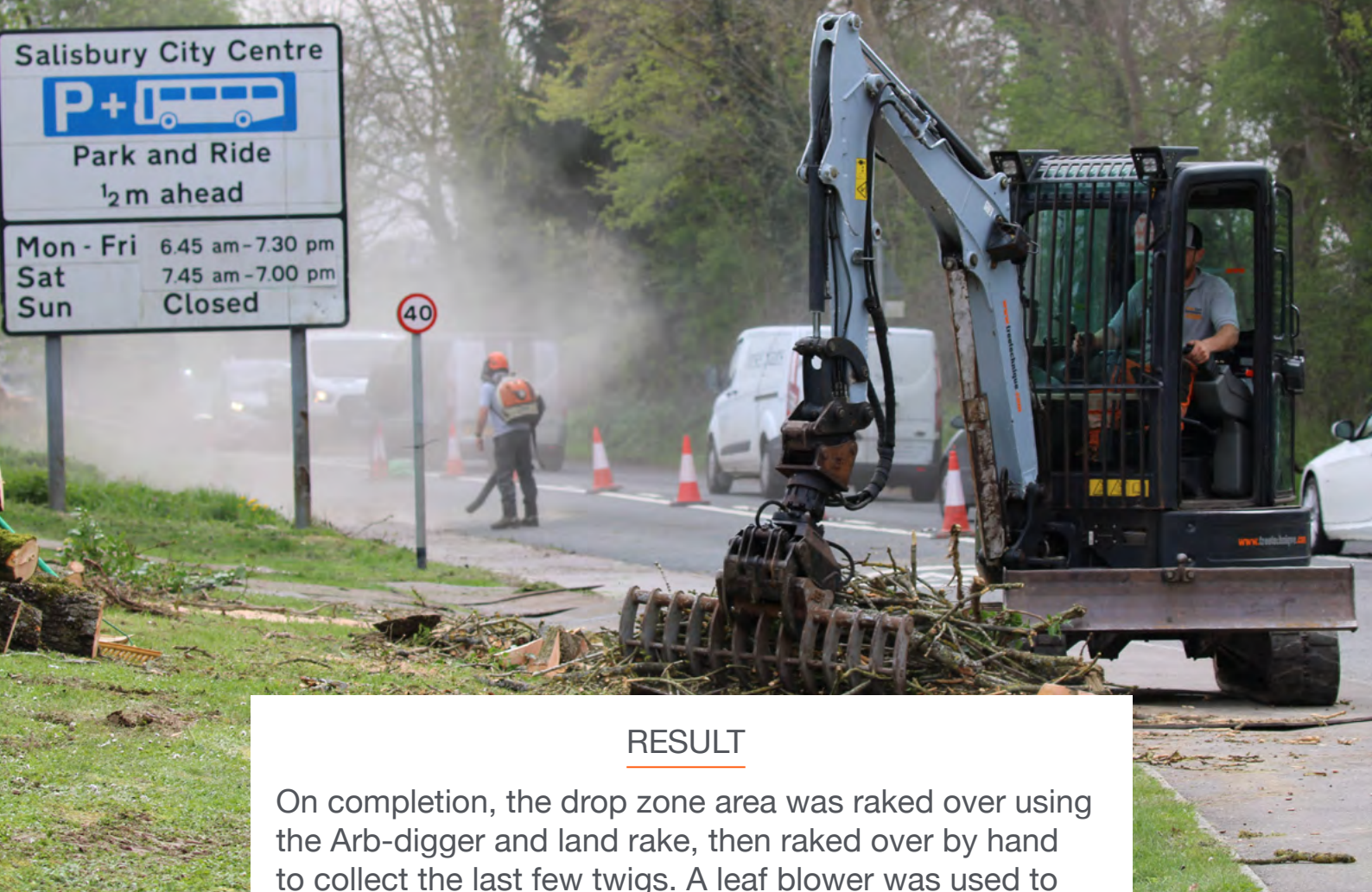
After all the machinery was set up in the agreed positions the climber was lifted and lowered into the canopy of the tree. Methodically the tree was sectionally dismantled with the crane lifting each section and lowering it into the drop zone near the chipper, digger and trailers.

All the material was cut into either cord length and stacked to one side or small enough sections to be fed into the chipper by the digger.

Once all the brushwood had been chipped and processed the last couple of large sections of timber were lowered directly into the top of the silage trailer, ready to be hauled to the yard, which was conveniently located around 4 miles away.

Once the silage trailer was tipped off the return journey to collect the low loader and cord timber was made. This was also hauled back to the yard for firewood stock.





RESULT

On completion, the drop zone area was raked over using the Arb-digger and land rake, then raked over by hand to collect the last few twigs. A leaf blower was used to achieve the final, tidy finish.

All the signs, cones and barrier tape were collected back up, as well as the ground protection mats and the site was handed back over to the traffic management company with permission for them to remove the traffic lights.

99% of the whole Ash tree was recycled, with the larger timber being processed for firewood and the wood chip being moved on to the bio-mass industry.

CONCLUSION

The entire job ran exactly to plan and within the estimated timeframe and budget agreed. The client approved the work.

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