Simon Pryce Arboriculture

Report

Client:	**Mrs J Meller**
Site:	**The Rydings, Courtenay Avenue, London, N6 4LP**
Subject:	**Tree condition and safety survey**
Inspection date:	**15th July 2026**
Report date:	**18th August 2026**
Reference:	**26/032**
Author:	**Simon Pryce, BSc, FArborA, RCArborA, CBiol, FICFor**

30 Woodfield Road, Radlett, Herts, WD7 8JD
01923 467600 07710 224906
www.simonpryce.co.uk
info@simonpryce.co.uk

AA Registered CONSULTANT trees.org.uk

Institute of Chartered Foresters

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared for Mrs J Meller of The Rydings, Courtenay Avenue, London, N6 4LP.

1.2 I have been asked to:

- Inspect trees growing in the garden.
- To assess their condition and identify any risks associated with them, particularly safety.
- To prepare a report with my assessment, recommendations for any necessary or appropriate work and a plan showing the trees.

1.3 This section of the report is an overview, the trees concerned are listed individually in the schedule forming the second part and their locations are shown on the attached plan.

Inspection and survey methods

1.4 This survey and report follow the published guidance from the Health and Safety Executive [(1)] , the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) guides [(2)] on common sense management of trees and the LANTRA guidance on tree surveys [(3)].

1.5 The survey was carried out on 15th July 2026. The trees were inspected visually from ground level, aided with binoculars where necessary, and accessible cavities and decayed areas were probed. No climbing inspections or test boring were carried out, as none of the trees needed it on this occasion.

1.6 A four part system has been used to indicate the urgency of the recommended work and trees are colour coded accordingly on the site plan. This uses practical terms rather than setting precise time scales.

a) High risk - mitigate the problem as soon as possible. (red)

b) Moderate risk - mitigate the problem as soon as the work schedule allows. (magenta)

c) Low risk - mitigate any problems as necessary or appropriate, e.g. regular pruning. (blue)

d) Minimal risk - mitigate any problems if desired. (green)

Site plan

1.7 This is based on an Ordnance Survey base plan with the tree plotted by measurement or triangulation from other site features using basic survey equipment. This is not as precise as a full topographic survey, but allows them to be identified unambiguously using the map and schedule.

2 Observations

2.1 The oldest and most significant trees are the mature oaks, which predate the house and are remnants of Highgate Wood. They are naturally long lived and most are in fair or good condition, although tree 10, on the far side of the main lawn has been showing signs of decline for some time, possibly connected with building work at the back of no.2. It has not worsened much in recent years, but tree 11 declined rapidly after the last survey and has been felled.

2.2 There are also some mature limes and holly hedges, probably planted when the gardens were laid out, although the older hollies might be woodland remnants. Most of these are in fair condition although a mature lime had to be felled several years ago due to severe decay at the base and a smaller lime that was being suppressed by it was felled after the last survey. After the initial safety survey trees 17 - 19, growing near the tennis court, were also felled for safety.

2.3 There are also numerous self -seeded birches and sycamores, some of which are growing in unsuitable locations such as the group of sycamores on the rear boundary, item 35, the birch growing out of the retaining wall near the tennis court, item 38. Since the last survey, tree 42, a birch growing near the tennis court, has gone into irreversible decline and needs to be felled for safety.

2.4 There are also some planted ornamental trees such as the Persian ironwood, tree 49. Most of the trees are in fair or good condition and not in need of urgent or major work. It would be advisable to get them checked periodically, either at the same time as the insurance surveys on the ones near the house or if there are any concerns, for instance after high winds.

3 General matters

Tree work

3.1 Any tree work should be carried out in accordance with BS3998: 2010, Recommendations for Treework, by an arboricultural contractor with appropriate third party and public liability insurance. The Arboricultural Association has a list of approved contractors, at https://www.trees.org.uk/ARB-Approved-Contractor-Directory .

3.2 Where trees or other woody plants are removed it is good practice to remove the stumps and main roots in order to prevent colonisation by honey fungus, which can spread into other plants, either killing them or decaying the structural roots while they are still alive, leading to them uprooting. That also makes them less likely to send up sucker shoots, which can be a problem in some species, particularly cherries.

Protected species

3.3 All bats and many birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 and other legislation.

3.4 Tree work should not be undertaken during the nesting season (broadly March to August) unless a survey for nesting birds confirms that none are present. Bats and their roosts are protected and it is an offence to disturb or harm a bat, or to damage places used by bats for shelter. Trees should be inspected before any works start, and if the presence of bats is suspected, works must be stopped and advice sought from a qualified bat specialist.

Restrictions

3.5 Haringey Council's online map system shows that the garden is in Highgate Conservation Area, so the council must be given six weeks notice of any proposed felling or pruning of trees over 75mm diameter at 1.5m. They can allow this either by confirming in writing that they do not object or by letting the six weeks elapse without making a tree preservation order [TPO], which is the only way they can prevent work of which they do not approve.

3.6 The online map also shows that The Rydings and adjacent house are covered by TPOs. Parts of Courtenay Avenue are covered by the Borough of Hornsey Tree Preservation Order [TPO] no.1, 1954. However no other details are available, so it is not clear which trees might be covered, as the order would only apply to those growing when it was made. However the application process for conservation areas and TPOs is the same, so this makes little practical difference. The council have been allowing the work to date, so there is no reason to anticipate that they might not continue to do so, as there are good reasons for it.

3.7 There are exceptions to the need for consent, including felling dead trees and removing dead wood from live trees [(4)].

Simon Pryce

Simon Pryce, BSc, FArborA, RCArborA, CBiol, FICFor

References

1) Health & Safety Executive (2013) Management of the risk from falling trees or branches, SIM 01/2007/05

2) National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) (2024) Common sense risk management of trees - ISBN: 978-0-900978-77-7 EAN: 9780900978777

3) LANTRA (2009) Basic Tree Survey and Inspection Workbook vol.1

4) HMSO (2012) Statutory Instrument 2012 no.605. The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012

Site: **The Rydings, Courtenay Avenue, London, N6 4LP**

Inspection date: **15th July 2026 by Simon Pryce**

Tree no.	Species	Age	Condition	Comments and recommendations	Cat.
The trees are described in sequence, starting to the rear left of the house and going round clockwise, as shown on the plan. This continues from the report for the insurance company dealing with the trees close to the house, ref 23/023. Trees 17 - 19 have been removed.					
20	Lime group	MA	fair	Row of trees growing along the boundary, some from stumps. Grown on slightly since the previous survey, still sound and healthy looking. • *No work needed at present.*	4
21	Holly	MA	fair	Under the sycamore, but shade tolerant and not unduly suppressed. • *No work needed at present.*	4
22	Sycamore	M	fair	Topped at about 4m in the past and has grown on, sound and healthy looking. • *No work needed at present.*	4
23	Lawson cypress	MA	fair	Growing under the large oak but tolerates shade and is not being unduly suppressed • *No work needed at present.*	4
24	Purple cherry plum	M	poor	Leans over the tennis court and has been cut back previously for clearance. Still clear of the fence and will need cutting again in future, but not an immediate problem. • *No work needed at present.*	4
25	Holly gp	M	good	Row of trees evidently planted as a hedge and left to grow on rather than being trimmed. They are healthy and form a useful screen. There is some ivy growing into them, but it is not causing problems and helps with the screening. Could be topped and trimmed to make a more formal hedge, but there is no compelling need. • *No work needed at present.*	4
26	Holly	M	good	Probably also planted as part of the hedge, although hollies are locally native and slow growing, so it could be a remnant of the former woodland. Leans and has three trunks with narrow forks between them but still sound and healthy. • *No work needed at present.*	4
27	Holly	M	good	Similar to the previous one, twin trunked from near ground level. • *No work needed at present.*	4
28	Sycamore	M	fair	Sound and healthy looking, but has ivy growing up the trunk and into the crown. Not an immediate problem, but will increase the tree's weight and wind resistance. • *Cut ivy stems, following which it will die and gradually disintegrate.*	3

Site: **The Rydings, Courtenay Avenue, London, N6 4LP**

Inspection date: **15th July 2026 by Simon Pryce**

Tree no.	Species	Age	Condition	Comments and recommendations	Cat.
29	Lime			Removed since the previous survey.	-
30	Lime	M	good	Large healthy tree. Pollarded at about 5m in the past and grown on, still sound and healthy. • *No work needed at present.*	4
31	Holly	M	good	Twin trunked from near ground, but sound and healthy. • *No work needed at present.*	4
32	Oak	M	fair	Leans over the building and boundary and has a mound at the base on the tennis court side, possibly due to ground movement in the past but there are no signs of instability. It has been cut back on the far side and there is die back in the top. • *Reduce crown by up to 4m in height and spread and reshape.*	2
33	Oak	M	good	Pair of close growing co-dominant trees. Nearer one leans over the building but they are sound and healthy otherwise. • *No work needed at present.*	4
34	Oak	M	good		
35	Sycamore gp			Removed since the previous survey.	-
36	Oak	M	good	Has some minor dead wood, otherwise sound and healthy. • *No work needed at present.*	4
37	Lime	Y	fair	Drawn up due to growing under the oak and sycamore but sound and healthy. • *No work needed at present.*	4
38	Holly	MA	fair	Foliage sparser than before indicating decline, but that is a slow process in hollies. • *No work needed at present.*	4
39	Sycamore	M	fair	Leans as it was growing close to a beech in the garden to the side that was uprooted recently. It is now more exposed but is well rooted and the trunk and main limbs are sound looking. • *No work needed at present, could be reduced and reshaped if the need arose.*	4
40	Birch			Removed since the previous survey.	-
41	Cherry			Removed since the previous survey.	-
42	Birch	M	dying	Has a moderate lean towards the court and was in reasonable condition in 2023, but has declined rapidly since then and is beyond any remedial work. • *Remove.*	2
43	Cypress	M	good	Has slightly sparser foliage than before, but is sound and healthy. • *No work needed at present.*	4

Site: **The Rydings, Courtenay Avenue, London, N6 4LP**

Inspection date: **15th July 2026 by Simon Pryce**

Tree no.	Species	Age	Condition	Comments and recommendations	Cat.
44	Sycamore	MA	fair	Leans towards the court due to shade from the large oak behind, but looks sound and well rooted. • *No work needed at present.*	4
45	Lawson cypress	M	good	Healthy specimen set back from the boundary. • *No work needed at present.*	4
46	Birch	M	good	Leans slightly, healthy, but has a large dead branch above the play area. • *Remove dead wood..*	2
47	Wild cherry	M	good	Leans slightly but sound and healthy, flowers well. • *No work needed at present.*	4
48	Lawson cypress	M	good	Fastigiate (upright branched) form. Sound, healthy specimen in a prominent location next to the lawn. • *No work needed at present.*	4
46	Persian ironwood	MA/N	good	Leans, has some dead wood and is shaded by other trees, but sound and healthy. • *No work needed at present.*	4
50	Hedge	M	fair	Consists of a row of yews next to the boundary wall, with a row of younger looking Leyland cypresses to the front just behind the retaining wall next to the lawn. Where the wall steps out round tree 10 there is a single yew that is trimmed in with the cypresses. The individual trees in each row are one sided and lean but the hedge as a whole is healthy and forms an effective screen. Side growth is trimmed up to about 7m and the cypress tops are growing beyond that. • *Continue trimming. Top growth could be cut down to the top of the trimmed sides but that is not critical.*	4

Simon Pryce

Simon Pryce, BSc, FArborA, RCArborA, CBiol, FICFor

Site: **The Rydings, Courtenay Avenue, London, N6 4LP**

Inspection date: **15th July 2026 by Simon Pryce**

Notes

Terms used in the survey relate to British Standard 3998: 2010, Tree work - Recommendations, unless stated otherwise.

Observations are made from ground level unless stated otherwise.

Age [life stage]

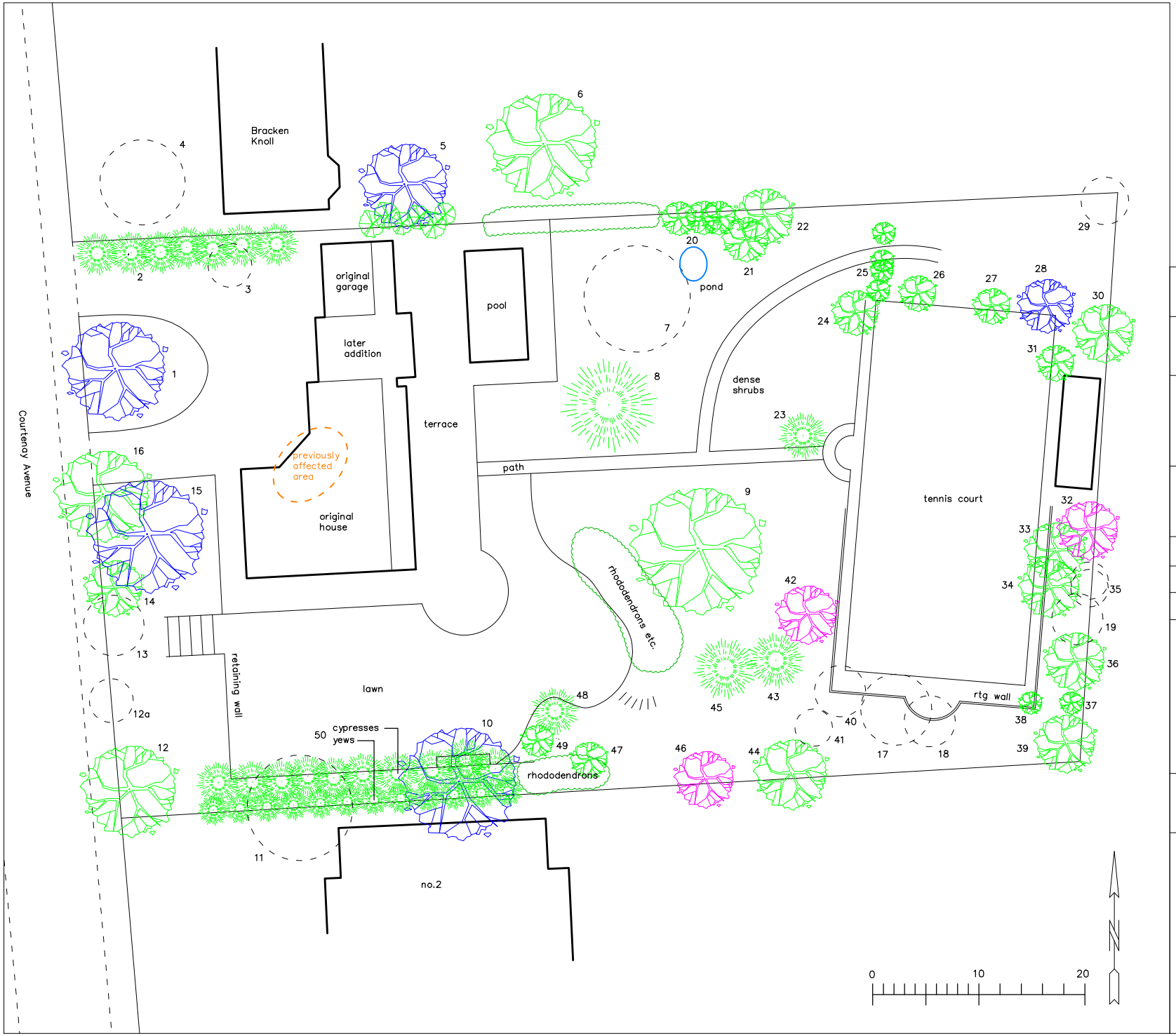
Assessed as below:

Immature.	[IM]	Newly planted or self-set tree.
Young	[Y]	Tree that is established but has not yet attained the size or form of a fully developed example of its type.
Middle aged	[MA]	Between one third and two thirds of its estimated lifespan.
Mature	[M]	Over two thirds of its estimated life span.
Veteran	[V]	Old tree with features including hollow trunk, old wounds etc. that give high landscape, ecological and cultural value.
Dying/Dead	[D]	Dead/dying or so badly decayed that it should be removed without delay if a potential threat

Category (Cat.)

This gives a general indication of the urgency with which trees need attention, but should be used with the more detailed observations and comments. Colours relate to drawings where applicable.

High	**1**	Mitigate the problem as soon as possible.
Moderate	**2**	Mitigate the problem as soon as the work schedule allows.
Low	**3**	Mitigate any problems as necessary or appropriate. (e.g. regular pollarding, pruning needed for clearance)
Minimal	**4**	Mitigate any problems if desired. (e.g. occasional light trimming or shaping)



Simon Pryce Arboriculture

Client:
Mrs J Meller

Site:
The Rydings, Courtenay House,
London, N6 4LP

Title:
Tree survey

Date: 15th July 2026

Ref: 26/031+032 | Rev:

Scale: 1:500 at A4

30 Woodfield Road,
Radlett,
Herts,
WD7 8JD
01923 467600
07710 224906
info@simonpryce.co.uk
www.simonpryce.co.uk

Original drawing:
Simon Pryce on OS Base plan

Trees are colour coded according to urgency

Red - High - urgent attention

Magenta - Moderate- address as work schedule allows

Blue - Low - address as necessary or appropriate

Green - minimal - no urgency

Grey - removed trees or stumps

© Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey