

Simon Pryce Arboriculture

Report

Client: Mrs J Meller

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

Subject: Tree safety and condition survey

Inspection date: 8th March and 13th April 2023

Report date: 31 May 2023

Reference: 23/024

Author: Simon Pryce, BSc, FArborA, RCarborA, CBiol, FICFor

I Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared on the instructions of Mrs J Meller of The Rydings Courtenay Avenue, London, N6 4LP. I have been asked to inspect trees in the rear garden, to assess their health, structural condition and any safety issues, and to specify any necessary or appropriate work.

Survey

- 1.2 This report supplements my previous report, ref 21/025 on the condition and safety of trees farther from the house that were not included in the previous insurance reports. In order to avoid confusion the numbering system starts at 20 to continue from the earlier reports. The trees are shown on the attached site plan, which is the same for all the reports.
- 1.3 This survey and report follow the published guidance from the Health and Safety Executive and the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) guides on common sense management of trees.
- 1.4 The survey was carried out on 8 March and 13 April 2023. The trees were inspected visually from ground level, accessible cavities and decayed areas were probed. No climbing inspections or test boring were carried out, as that was not required with any of the trees.
- 1.5 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.
1. Extreme risk - mitigate the problem as soon as possible - (red).
 2. High risk - mitigate the problem as soon as the work schedule allows - (magenta).
 3. Moderate risk - retain and monitor the tree or mitigate the problem as necessary - (blue).
 4. Low risk - mitigate the problem if desired - (green).

Site plan

- 1.6 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 - trees

- 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, which is in the garden of no.2 is dying and probably beyond any remedial measures. If left it will be a hazard to both properties, so the owners should get it professionally checked and
- 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. A smaller lime, no.29, that was growing under that tree leans heavily and, while a detailed inspection did not find any decay this was hindered by the raised ground level and the tree has no real potential to improve. Three trees near the tennis court, trees 17 - 19, were also felled for safety.
- 2.3 Others trees include 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. There are also some planted ornamental trees such as the Persian ironwood, tree 49.

- 2.4 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.

Simon Pryce

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Site: The Rydings, Courtenay Avenue, London, N6 4LP
 Inspection date: 8 March and 13 April 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 2021, still sound and healthy looking. • <i>No work needed at present.</i>	4
21	Holly	MA	fair	Slightly drawn up due to growing near other trees, otherwise healthy. • <i>No work needed at present.</i>	4
22	Sycamore	M	fair	Topped at about 4m in the past and has grown on, sound and healthy looking. • <i>No work needed at present.</i>	4
23	Lawson cypress	MA	fair	Growing under the large oak but tolerates shade and is not being unduly suppressed • <i>No work needed at present.</i>	4
24	Purple cherry plum	M	poor	Leans over the tennis court and has been cut back previously for clearance. Not an imminent problem but will grow back. • <i>Cut back to clear court.</i>	3
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. Could be topped and trimmed to make a more formal hedge, but there is no compelling need. • <i>No work needed at present.</i>	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 sound and healthy. • <i>No work needed at present.</i>	4
27	Holly	M	good	Similar to the previous one, twin trunked from near ground level. • <i>No work needed at present.</i>	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. • <i>Cut ivy stems, following which it will die and gradually disintegrate.</i>	4

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Tree no.	Species	Age	Condition	Comments and recommendations	Cat.
29	Lime	MA	poor	Leans heavily as it was growing under a large lime that was removed in 2019 due to severe decay. Was carrying heavy ivy but that has been cut. Close inspection found no signs of decay, but ground level at the base has been raised, which was part of the problems with the removed tree. Not an immediate hazard but is being suppressed by the larger tree in the next garden and has no potential to improve. Remove.	2
30	Lime	M	good	Large healthy tree. Pollarded at about 5m in the past and grown on. 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 has some minor dead wood, but is sheltered by the others in the group and is sound and healthy. No work needed at present.	4
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	MA	poor	Group of self-seeded trees being suppressed by the larger oaks and leaning heavily over the garden to the rear. One has a narrow, weak fork and a wound on the lower trunk with extensive dead bark and decay. Fell the group.	2
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	Slightly sparse foliage. 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	MA	poor	Self-seeded, growing out of the stone retaining wall and will damage it if left. Remove.	2
41	Cherry	Y	poor	Leans towards the tennis court, has canker and decay. Remove	2

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Tree no.	Species	Age	Condition	Comments and recommendations	Cat.
42	Birch	M	fair	Has a moderate lean towards the court and some dead wood, but is sound and healthy otherwise. No work needed at present.	4
43	Cypress	M	good	Has slightly sparser foliage than before but is sound and healthy. No work needed at present.	4
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 but sound and healthy No work needed at present.	4
47	Wild cherry	M	good	Sound healthy specimen, flowers well. No work needed at present.	4
48	Lawson cypress	M	good	Fastigate (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	Shaded by others 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 that 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

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Notes

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

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.

Extreme	1	Mitigate the problem as soon as possible.
High	2	Mitigate the problem as soon as the work schedule allows.
Moderate	3	Retain and monitor the tree or mitigate the problem as necessary.
Low	4	Mitigate the problem if desired.



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Client:
Mrs J Meller

Site:
The Rydings, Courtenay Avenue,
London, NW6 4LP

Title:
Tree surveys

Date: 8 March and 13 April 2023

Ref: 23/023-25

Rev:

Scale: approx 1:500 at A4

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Original drawing:
Simon Pryce

Trees are colour coded according to
urgency

Red - Extreme - urgent attention

Magenta - High - address as work
schedule allows

Blue - Moderate - monitor or address as
necessary

Green - Low - no urgency

Grey - removed trees or stumps