Arboricultural Report for
Tree Condition & Insurance Purposes

35B Fairhazel Gardens
London
NW6 3QN

[redacted]

MWA CONSULTANT: Andy Clark

REPORT DATE: 24/11/2023

[redacted]

1.0 Introduction and Scope

1.1 This report has been commissioned by the owners of the subject property, 35B Fairhazel Gardens, London, NW6 3QN. The survey was carried out on the 31st October 2023.

1.2 The scope of the survey is limited to a visual assessment of T1 Poplar. The trees were not climbed and assessed from ground level only.

1.3 The brief is to appraise risk with respect to potential direct/indirect damage to the building(s) and surrounding above ground infrastructure from the subject tree.

1.4 The report provides details of tree/vegetation data, a location plan and recommendations to inform potential lenders, insurers, prospective purchasers or current owners of the subject property.

1.5 This report is not a Tree Risk Management Report or a Hazard Analysis Report and should not be used as such.

1.6 The report refers to the condition of the tree(s) and an assessment of the site on the day that the survey was undertaken.

1.7 Our survey of the trees is of a preliminary nature. The assessment of tree health/condition is based on the industry standard method of Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) and no invasive or destructive tests have been undertaken. The report is valid only for typical weather conditions. Healthy trees or parts of healthy trees may fail in normal weather conditions although the risk is significantly increased in storm conditions and as the consequences of such weather phenomena are unforeseeable, MWA Arboriculture Ltd cannot be held liable for any such failures.

1.8 Trees are dynamic structures that can never be guaranteed to be 100% safe; even those in good condition can suffer damage or failure under average conditions. Regular inspections by suitably qualified professionals will help to identify potential problems before they become acute. Any alteration to the subject site or any development could change the current circumstances and may invalidate this report.

1.9 A lack of recommended work does not imply that a tree is safe and likewise it should not be implied that a tree will be made safe following the completion of any recommended work.

1.10 Any legal description or other information given to MWA Arboriculture Ltd is assumed to be accurate.

1.11 We have not been made aware of any current structural problems with the main property. We understand there have been no insurance claims made in relation to structural movements, subsidence, other defects or damage. If any information to suggest that the property has/is suffering from any structural defects is available, we would ask that this is released to us for consideration.

1.12 The tree is however currently causing direct damage to the front boundary wall, with concerns recently raised relating to the wall structural integrity and the potential H&S implications in the event the wall collapses on to the adjacent public footpath.

1.12 We have not carried out any ground investigations or retrieved soil / root samples for testing.

1.13 Any alteration or deletion from this report shall invalidate it as a whole.

1.14 The potential for trees to damage buildings and light structures (patios, retaining walls etc.) can be broadly categorised into two actions:

Direct damage:

This includes damage caused by falling branches or whole trees, the physical displacement of built structures/hard surfacing by tree roots, branches and main stems. Direct damage also includes the blocking of drains by tree roots.

Indirect damage:

This is usually associated with the abstraction of moisture by tree roots from cohesive plastic clay soils below the foundations. This process may result in shrinkage of the soil and differential foundation movement resulting in cracks in the building. The presence of a shrinkable clay soil is required for this type of damage to occur.

Clay shrinkage subsidence damage related to moisture abstraction by trees and other vegetation is not predictable and there are numerous variables which may contribute to the occurrence of subsidence related to vegetation influence including the size, distance and soil drying potential of trees and shrubs, soil properties, foundation depths and weather. This report aims to identify risk where significant vegetation is present however this does not mean that damage is inevitable where an enhanced risk from vegetation is present.

This report should not be relied upon as a definitive assessment of current and or future subsidence risk but should be interpreted and utilised as a guide for current owners, purchasers, mortgage lenders and buildings insurers based on the factual information available.

[redacted]

2.0 Property Description

2.1 The property comprises a semi-detached 2 storey house.

2.2 External areas comprise hardstand parking and garden borders to the front and gardens to the rear.

2.3 The site is generally level with no adverse topographical features.

3.0 Supporting Documents

3.1 No technical reports relating to the structural condition of the property, information on foundation depths or subsoil characteristics have been provided.

4.0 Geology / Soils

4.1 Reference has been made to the British Geological Survey maps for an indicative guide to underlying soil characteristics. The on line 1:50 000 scale map records the bedrock geology as London Clay Formation - Clay, silt and sand. No superficial deposits are recorded.

4.2 The National Soil Resources Institute`s Natural Perils Directory identifies this area as being dominated by soils with an Extremely High clay related ground movement potential. In hot, dry periods, or in areas with large trees / vegetation, soil shrinkage is extremely likely.

4.3 Site specific soil characteristics and index properties (shrink/swell potential) can only be determined however by sample testing in a laboratory.

4.4 The potential for vegetation to cause clay shrinkage subsidence is also widely characterised by the age, size and soil moisture uptake profile of the associated trees/shrubs.

5.0 Services

5.1 No information relating to the services has been provided. No information or reports relating to the condition of the drains has been made available. Manhole covers have not been lifted or any other inspection of the drains made.

[redacted]

6.0 Appraisal

6.1 The focus of this report is T1 Poplar, a large fully mature tree located on the property boundary to the front and standing adjacent to the Fairhazel Gardens highway and significantly overhanging the road and surrounding third party gardens.

6.2 The tree appears of fair physiological health, however structurally the tree is compromised and suffering from significant main stem decay with a visible open decaying wound to the main stem from approx. 2.0m to approx. 4.5m above ground level on the north-eastern aspect of the main stem. The tree has also been previously pollarded at approx. 5.0m with the crown and scaffold limb structure of the tree now formed of lapsed aging pollard regrowth emanating from the main stem.

6.3 In terms of the risk of direct damage and possible injury from whole or part tree failure this is currently assessed as high. The lapsed aging nature of the pollard regrowth, and the inherent weak stem to trunk unions which occur as a result of pollarding, means there is a foreseeable risk for regrowth-stem breakout to occur. The significant decay of the main stem also greatly compromises the main stem integrity with the potential for main stem failure.

6.4 The tree also stands in close proximity to the front boundary wall and is currently causing significant displacement damage to the wall due to pressure from the main-stem and root-buttress expansion growth. In future years as the tree grows larger with age, this displacement will likely increase leading to potential failure of the wall onto the public footpath. Of note is that the adjacent property No 35C Fairhazel gardens, has recently replaced a section of their own front boundary wall with a section of fencing, which we understand was also damaged by the tree.

6.5 No excavations to confirm soil characteristics have been carried out. The online 1:50,000 British Geological Survey map shows the property to be on a bedrock geology of London Clay Formation - Clay, silt and sand, with no superficial deposits recorded. As such, the clay soils will be susceptible to undergoing volumetric change with changes in soil moisture content, and so moisture abstraction by tree roots may affect soil volumes below the foundations where a significant clay component is present - potentially resulting in building movement (subsidence). This can only be properly determined however by site investigations and the testing of soil samples.

6.6 Reference to the National Soil Resources Institute`s Natural Perils Directory identifies this area as being dominated by soils with a High clay related ground movement potential. Clay related soil shrinkage is unlikely / likely to be extensive in the area and as such the risk of subsidence associated with soil drying by tree/vegetation roots is significant.

6.7 The house appears to be of recent construction and likely significantly younger than the subject tree. The foundations may have been constructed with the presence of the trees taken into account, however this can only be determined by site investigations and excavations to confirm foundation depths and design.

6.8 Given the apparent age difference between the tree and the building, there is a possible heave risk to the building if the tree is removed completely, however without site specific information on subsoil soil characteristics (site investigations would be needed to determine this) and foundation depth and design, a definitive appraisal of tree related subsidence / heave risk cannot be given other than to identify where a risk may or may not be present.

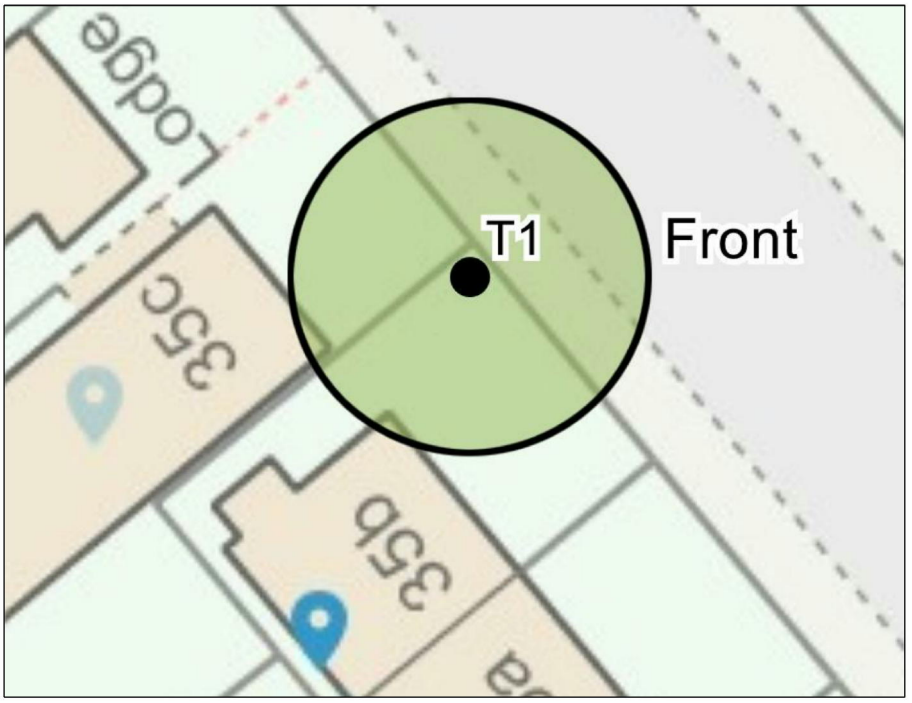
6.9 We note that the tree is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order administered by the London Borough of Camden council. As such any such works to either remove, or prune the tree, or its roots, will require an application to be made to the Council and works may not be completed until consent has been granted by the Council.

6.10 However in this instance, given the evident structural deficiencies in the tree and the resulting foreseeable risk of failure/collapse, in our opinion the tree no longer provides a suitable amenity asset worthy of statutory protection and as such the tree should be removed on H&S grounds – irrespective of the damage to the front boundary wall.

7.0 Table 1 - Tree Details

Tree No.	Species	Height (m)	Dia. (mm)	Approx. Crown Spread (m)	Dist. to structure (m)	Condition	Age Range	Location
T1	Poplar	25.0	1100 *	21.5	4.5	Fair	Semi-Mature	Subject Property
Observations & Management History	Subject to past management/pruning - previously pollarded at approx.5.5m. Large open decaying wound to NE side of main stem from approx. 2.0m to approx. 4.5m. Active fungal fruiting brackets evident in cavity – limited view from ground level but appear to be possibly juvenile *Rigidoporus spp*. Causing direct damage to front boundary wall – with stem to structure contact evident including reaction wood encompassing wall structure. Tree appears older than property – possible heave risk in the event of removal.							
Recommendation	Remove (fell) to near ground level and treat stump to inhibit regrowth – subject to TPO application to London Borough of Camden.							

8.0 Site Plan



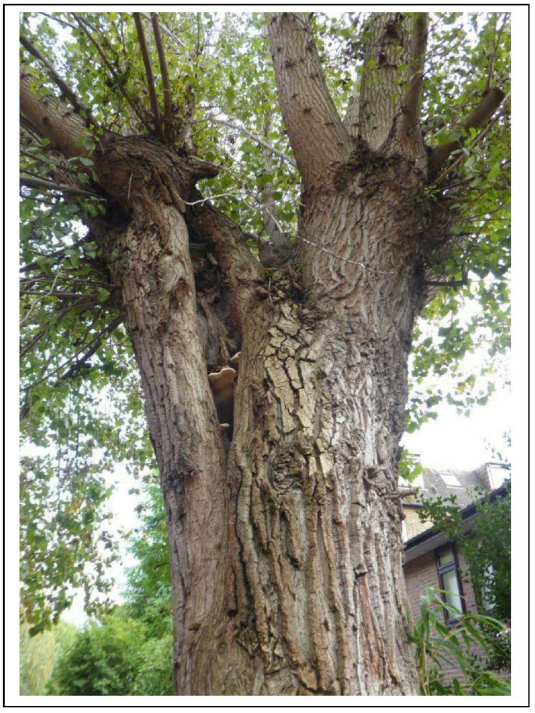
Plan Indicative only

9.0 Photographic record

Overview from south of T1 Poplar

View from south of pollard points at approx. 5.5m

[redacted]



View from north of significant main stem decay to NE side from approx. 2.0 to 4.5m

View of active fungal brackets in decay column

[redacted]

View of main stem in relation to adjacent boundary wall / fencing

View of wall damage with main stem reaction wood encompassing wall structure

[redacted]

10.0 Disclaimers

10.1 The information and opinions expressed in this report is offered in the interests of sound arboricultural management and should not be interpreted as a recommendation to proceed with the purchase of the property or for mortgage lenders to advance a mortgage charge on the property or for insurers to offer cover for the subject property.

10.2 MWA Arboriculture Ltd are employed as Arboricultural Consultants and are not qualified to offer formal advice relating to structural or geotechnical matters. If the opinion offered within this report does not allow you to evaluate the risks for your purposes, we advise that you employ the services of a Chartered Engineer, geotechnical specialist or other appropriate specialist.

10.3 If it is intended to undertake any recommended tree works, before any work is undertaken a check should be made with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to ascertain if the trees are subject to a tree preservation order (TPO), if the property is located within a conservation area (CA) or Trust scheme, or subject to planning conditions. If either applies LPA consent is required before any work can be undertaken.