



the tree bureau

Arboricultural consultancy, design and management



**Tree condition report**  
**Southbank International**  
16 Netherhall Gardens  
London NW3 5TH

Report date: 01 11 2024  
Revised: 25 11 24  
Report reference: TCR 7784  
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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report, commissioned by Peter Hill, deals with my assessment of the condition of the trees at the Hampstead Campus during a scheduled visit on 29 October 2024.
- 1.2 My inspection, which was part of the school's continuing general duty of care, was from ground level by visual tree assessment (VTA) following industry-standard procedures (see Appendix C). I considered the trees' health and structure and the potential impact on the safety of people, property and the environment arising from the trees' condition.
- 1.3 As in previous inspections, the main factors I have taken into account when making tree management recommendations include the probability of the mechanical failure of a part or all of a tree; the impact potential (the size, weight or extent of the tree or part that could fail); and the possibility that someone could be injured or something damaged. I have also taken into account the many benefits of trees, aiming for proportionate and balanced recommendations.
- 1.4 General comments about the trees are provided below, with detailed comments on individual trees and recommendations for their management in Appendix A. The location of the trees is given in Appendix B, with the scope of this report in Appendix C.
- 1.5 An aerial massaria inspection (by climbing) was carried out shortly after my inspection from ground level but the contractor has provided little information. I understand that some large-diameter dead wood was removed but it has not been made clear if this was because of massaria infection or some other reason.
- 1.6 Sonic tomography retesting is recommended for the London plane T3.

## 2 Structural issues



### Branch of London plane T4 and pedestrian gateway

- 2.1 Previous discussion and reports have raised the issue of the relationship between a large branch of the London plane T4 and the brick and concrete top of the pedestrian gateway from Nutley Terrace.
- 2.2 As previously explained, the large 'scaffold' branch of the London plane T4 gets slightly fatter each year and it is now almost touching the top of the gateway. If nothing is done, the branch will soon exert pressure on the gateway structure with a risk of damage and falling masonry.
- 2.3 My report of 2023 included specific concern and advised the school/landlords to start work towards a (conservation area) planning application to reduce the height of the gateway.
- 2.4 Action must now be taken to gain permission to reduce the height of the gateway and for suitable precautionary, preventive and protective measures to be taken during construction work to avoid damage to the tree. These measures need to be drawn up by an arboriculturist, and I recommend that an arboricultural method statement be submitted as part of the planning application.

### Air-pump adjacent to the London plane T4

- 2.5 The trunk of the air-pump, or other metal installation, on the wall adjacent to the London plane T4 is growing increasingly close to the metal structure. It would be prudent to find an alternative location for the pump before the trunk gets any closer.



### Dwarf wall and London planes T1, T2 and T3

- 2.6 My supplementary report of 01 11 23 dealt with recommended precautionary measures that Netherhall Education Association should carry out following their removal of soil adjacent to Nutley Terrace. So far as I am aware, this was not carried out. Although I did not see any soil disturbance during my inspection that would suggest tree movement at root level, I am not responsible for any instability caused by the removal of soil from around the tree roots by the person working for NEA.

## 3 Ivy removal

### Ivy removal

- 3.1 You will see in Appendix A that I recommend the removal of the ivy that is climbing high into the crown of the horse chestnut T16. This needs to be carried out in two, or more, stages to prevent damage to the tree and to avoid disturbing legally protected species such as bats.
- 3.2 The removal of ivy from a tree is not recommended unthinkingly because ivy is a valuable native plant. It does not strangle trees or rob nutrients but simply uses the tree as support and a ladder to sunlight. Once aloft, ivy provides crucial refuge, habitat and food for some legally protected birds, bats and insects.
- 3.3 Even so, it is sometimes beneficial to remove ivy because it is outcompeting the tree's own leaves for light, is increasing the weight and leverage on branches, is expanding the 'sail area' that can be caught by wind or is possibly hiding features requiring safety consideration.
- 3.4 Ideally, the ivy stems should first be severed near ground level and the foliage left to die before removal. This is to prevent harm to wildlife and damage to tree bark.

- 3.5 Tree surgeons or others carrying out the work must by law have procedures in place for checking for legally protected wildlife before starting work and for dealing with any wildlife encountered despite prior precautions.
- 3.6 Once the ivy stems have been severed, it is important for someone to be designated to keep a close eye on the condition of the dying ivy and to call for the removal of any large sections of ivy that could fall on someone or something. In any event, tree surgeons should return to site about 6 months after severing the stems to remove the dead material. Again, wildlife breeding and hibernation periods should be factored in. If feasible, the removed ivy stems would be left on the ground for 24 hours – to allow any hidden wildlife to escape – before removal off site.




## 4 Reinspection

- 4.1 Given the age, condition and location of the trees in areas of high target occupancy, and assuming that recommended work is carried out, it would be prudent to arrange the next condition inspection from ground level within 20 months – by the end of June 2026.
- 4.2 Sonic tomography retesting of the London plane T3 should be carried out by October 2025 at the latest, as a prudent precautionary measure.
- 4.3 An aerial inspection for massaria should be carried out within 18 months of this report, or earlier if any large branch falls. Such an inspection must be carried out by an experienced tree surgeon trained in aerial inspections and capable of providing adequate detail of what was found. A record of branches removed, their location and diameter should be provided to assist long-term tree management decisions.

## 5 Recommendations





- 5.1 Arrange for the recommended permissions, tree work and reinspections. (The school is aware that all the trees are legally protected because they grow in the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area and by the Tree Preservation Order TPO 20H, of 1957.)
- 5.2 Engage a competent, insured tree surgery company, working to the British Standard BS3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations.
- 5.3 Retain this report to assist future tree management and to provide a written record of duty of care measures.




## APPENDIX A – TREE INSPECTION

Tree ident on plan	Species and dimensions where needed	Condition and observations	Preliminary management recommendations	Reason	Priority/ timescale
T1	<i>Platanus x hispanica</i> London plane	The bark softening in the strip of disrupted trunk bark NW does not appear to have increased and no significant feature was seen in the crown. A crown reduction may be appropriate within the next five years.	Massaria reinspection within 18 months.	Duty of care	By end of May 2026.
T2	<i>Platanus x hispanica</i> London plane	No new features of concern were seen. A crown reduction may be appropriate within the next five years.	Massaria reinspection within 18 months.	Duty of care	By end of May 2026.
T3	<i>Platanus x hispanica</i> London plane 	The burr and the wood at the edge (right hand/South West side) of the wound occlusion continue to decay. The condition of pieces of the decayed, friable wood suggests that a white rot fungus has infected the tree, but I have never seen fungal growth. Sonic tomography testing has previously been carried out and retesting is recommended by October 2025. Several small patches of dark bark, rather like a residual bleed, are present on the trunk E and should be checked during the next inspection from ground level. A crown reduction may be appropriate within the next five years.	Arrange sonic tomography retesting by October 2025.   Massaria reinspection within 18 months.	To inform tree management decisions.  Duty of care By end of May 2026.	By the end of October 2025.  By end of May 2026.

Tree ident on plan	Species and dimensions where needed	Condition and observations	Preliminary management recommendations	Reason	Priority/timescale
T4	<i>Platanus x hispanica</i> London plane	The lowest western scaffold branch is almost touching the top of the wall.  The air pump is also now very close to the tree. A crown reduction may be appropriate within the next five years.	URGENT: arrange planning permission to modify the arch above the door on to Nutley Terrace. Arrange an arboricultural method statement to minimise damage to the tree and to help get the application approved. Then carry out the work as swiftly as possible before the branch touches the arch.  Find an alternative location for the air pump.  Massaria reinspection within 18 months.	To prevent damage to buildings and the tree and possible injury.  To prevent damage to the tree, pump and wall. Duty of care.	As soon as possible, with work completed by the end of 2025.  As soon as possible.  By end of May 2026.
T5	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> sycamore	Satisfactory.	None essential immediately.	-	-
T6	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> sycamore	Satisfactory.	None essential immediately.	-	-
T7	<i>Tilia x europaea</i> common lime	Satisfactory.	None essential immediately.	-	-
T8	<i>Tilia x europaea</i> common lime	Nothing new visible.	None essential immediately.	-	-
T9	<i>Ilex altaclarensis</i> 'Golden King' variegated holly	The tree to has been inappropriately pruned and is now dying back at the crown apex. The tree will probably survive but may be distorted.	Ask gardeners and others to leave pruning to professional tree surgeons.	To prevent inadvertent damage.	On going.
T11	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> holly	Fair.	None essential immediately.	-	-



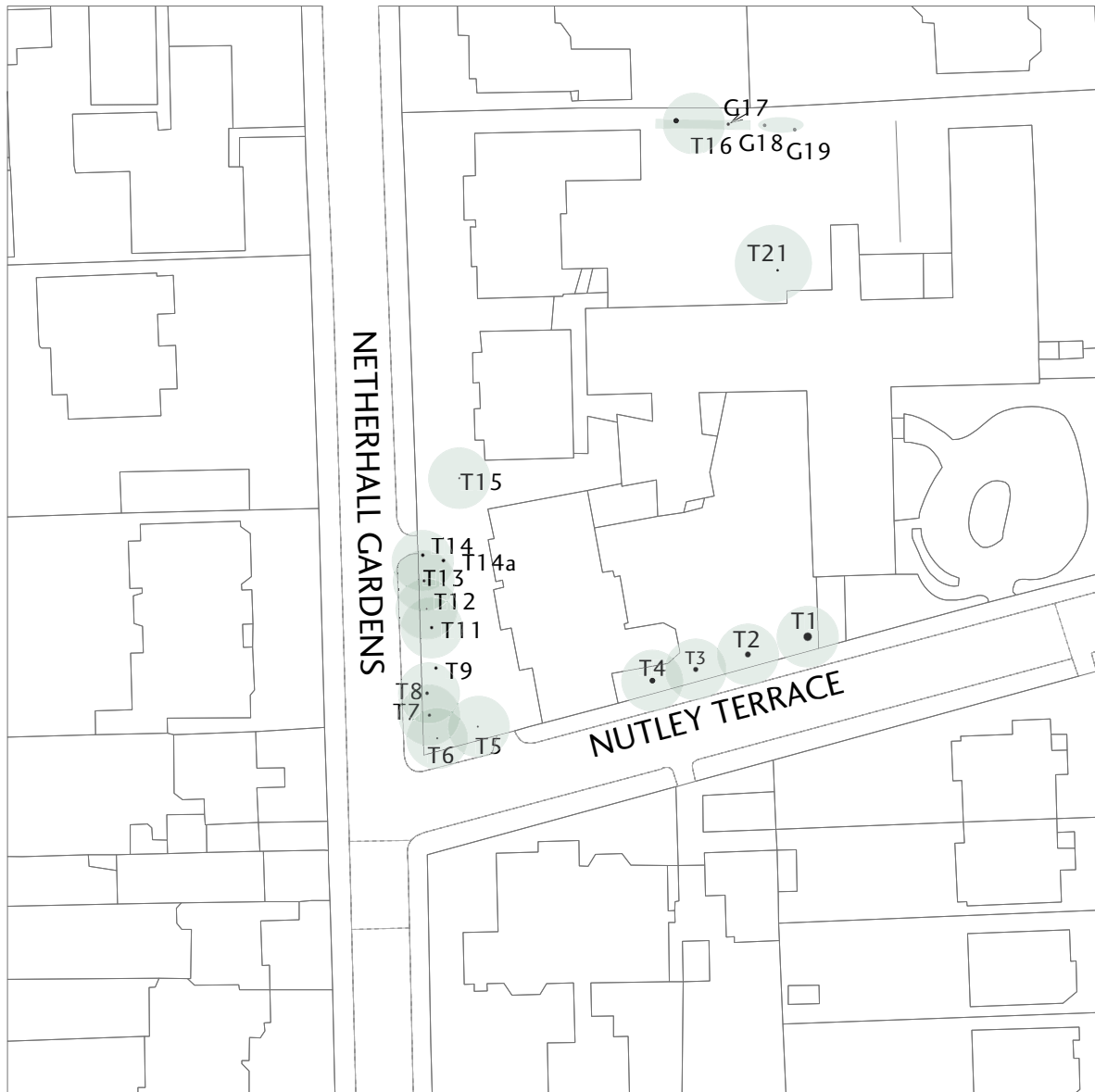
Tree ident on plan	Species and dimensions where needed	Condition and observations	Preliminary management recommendations	Reason	Priority/timescale
T12	<i>Tilia x europaea</i> common lime	<p>Crown satisfactory but tree starting to grow low over the footway and growing into the boundary fence.</p> 	<p>Lift over the footway and highway to provide about 2.4m vertical clearance from ground level.</p> <p>Adapt the adjacent fence so that the tree does not 'engulf' it, leading to tree structural problems.</p> 	<p>To prevent injury, damage and nuisance.</p> <p>To prevent long-term structural problems.</p>	<p>Winter 2024-25.</p> <p>As soon as possible.</p>
T13	<i>Tilia x europaea</i> common lime	<p>Lowest S and SE branches starting to suppress the beech T14a.</p> <p>Tree touching part of the boundary fence.</p> 	<p>Cut back lowest the lowest S and SE branches by about 1.5m from branch tips.</p> <p>Cut back the adjacent fence so that the tree does not 'engulf' it.</p> 	<p>To reduce beech tree suppression.</p> <p>To prevent long-term structural problems.</p>	<p>Winter 2024-25.</p> <p>As soon as possible.</p>
T14a	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> 'Dawyck Purple' fastigate copper beech	<p>Some black sooty mould on honeydew on leaves, caused by sap-sucking insects on the adjacent limes. Slightly suppressed.</p>	<p>None essential immediately.</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>

Tree ident on plan	Species and dimensions where needed	Condition and observations	Preliminary management recommendations	Reason	Priority/ timescale
T14	<i>Tilia x europaea</i> common lime	Satisfactory but helping to suppress the beech T14a.	Remove lowest SSW front branch. to prevent suppression of the beech. 	To reduce beech tree suppression.	Winter 2024-25.
T15	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i> tree of heaven	Sparse crown. Some branches becoming vulnerable to wind/ precipitation damage. 	Selectively reduce the crown by about 1-1.5m from branch tips. to reduce leverage on long branches (up to 5m long) and remove dead wood.	To reduce leverage on exposed or long branches (up to 5m long).	Winter 2024-25.
T16	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> horse chestnut	No access to trunk base. Heavy growth of ivy into upper crown. See also Section 3 of this report. 	Sever the ivy at its base and leave to die. Keep an eye on the dead ivy branches and arrange for their removal if they look as though they could fall over the green top or neighbouring property. Ensure that all the dead ivy is removed with 9-12 months.	To prevent competition by the ivy for light and to reduce the 'sail' area of the crown that could be caught by wind.	Winter 2024-25.  By end of 2025.



Tree ident on plan	Species and dimensions where needed	Condition and observations	Preliminary management recommendations	Reason	Priority/ timescale
G17	about 11 <i>X Cuprocyparis leylandii</i> Leyland cypress	No access. Group of trees now forming a row 7.2-8.8m high. The trees are growing too tall for their setting; leaving them will lead to problems in pruning them at a later date.	A crown reduction for these trees was recommended previously but appears not to have been carried out. Reduce the crown apex by up to 4m from existing branch tips, or to the last reduction points. (This is a heavier reduction than would normally be specified for most trees, but the species should be able to tolerate it.)	To manage the scale of the plants in their setting and prevent neighbour complaints.	Winter 2024-25.
G18	<i>Aesculus indica</i> indian horse chestnut and <i>Sambucus nigra</i> elder	Multi-stemmed chestnut and elder, both touching or oversailing the boundary wall.	Cut back the elder where it is touching the boundary wall. Remove the dead stems of chestnut and elder. Select one strong horse chestnut stem and allow it to grow on as a standard tree, removing all the rest.	To prevent damage and the manage the size of the trees in the restricted area of growth.	Winter 2024-25.
T19	<i>Aesculus indica</i> indian horse chestnut	Multi-stemmed.	Either select one most upright stem, for instance the front right and remove the others. Or cut back branches at the back that are touching the boundary wall.	To prevent damage and the manage the size of the trees in the restricted area of growth.	Winter 2024-25.
T21	<i>Acer cappadocicum</i> cappadocian maple	The wounds on the eastern side of the trunk, previously noted, have occluded (sealed and reinforced themselves).	None essential immediately.	-	-

# APPENDIX B – TREE LOCATION PLAN



Title: Tree Location Plan

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Drawing reference: TLP 7784

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Scale: base plan 1:500 @ A3. trees not to scale.

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Client: Southbank International School, Hampstead Campus

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Site: 16 Netherhall Road, London NW3 5TH

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Date: 25 11 24

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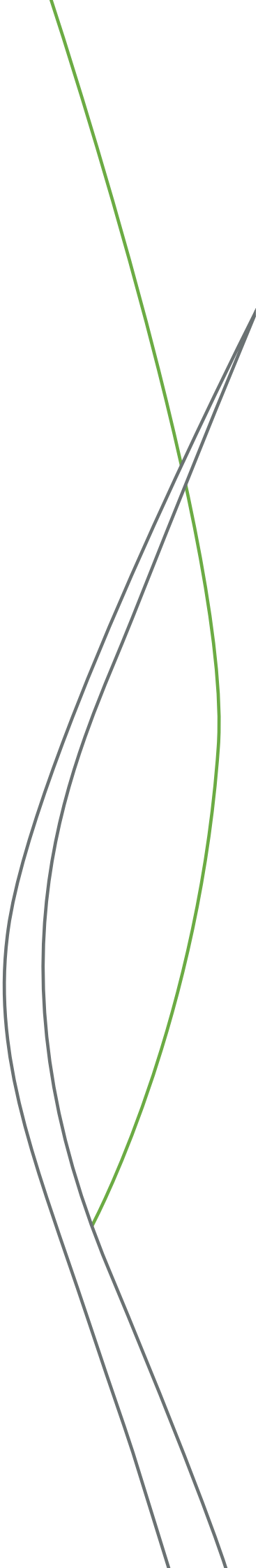
This drawing is based on Ordnance Survey map co-ordinates 526368,184950, supplied under licence by Streetwise reference 298485. Tree positions are approximate and not to scale.  
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Tree identification T1, G4 etc  
 ● Representational tree



## APPENDIX C – SCOPE

- 1 This report is based on arboricultural criteria only. Any comment relating to non-arboricultural matters must be viewed as provisional and referred to appropriate specialists for confirmation and specification.
- 2 My tree inspection was a visual tree assessment (VTA) of the above-ground parts of trees from ground level, using a nylon mallet, metal probe and binoculars, following industry-standard procedures based largely on the principles described in *The body language of trees – A handbook for failure analysis*, by Claus Mattheck and Helge Breloer, Research for Amenity Trees No. 4; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003; and *Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management*, by David Lonsdale, Research for Amenity Trees No. 7; Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, 2001. This was an independent and impartial assessment of the condition of the tree and was not influenced by any financial interest in tree pruning work.
- 3 No invasive investigation, such as test-boring of a tree, was carried out and no branch, leaf, fruit or root samples were collected for analysis. No assessment was made of factors in relation to potential subsidence or heave damage to structures, as this was outside the scope of my instruction.
- 4 The report recommends tree management aimed at reducing the risks from significant hazards to an acceptable level. Even so, trees are dynamic and sometimes unpredictable organisms, changing as they mature and decline, in response to altered conditions around them (including weather), or for reasons that research has not yet fully explained. Care has been taken in the tree inspection and the application of knowledge, training and experience, but the tree management recommended can be based only on what was visible on the days of inspection.
- 5 I understand that there has been no change in the use of the school or changes to the surrounding vicinity that would increase the risk of harm from whole or part tree failure since my last visit. This report concentrates on issues arising since the previous inspection, and aims for reasonable and proportionate tree management as part of the school's overall duty of care.
- 6 **This report is for the private and exclusive use of the school for the management of the trees on the Hampstead Campus. It may be used to brief tree surgeons but must not be used for tree work applications, building development, insurance or any other purpose without the express permission in writing of The Tree Bureau. If extracts are needed, please just ask.**
- 7 It has not been possible to access the base of the trees next to the green top play area for some years. It would be helpful if this were made possible for a subsequent visit.



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