

Mr M Offord  
GMS Estates Limited  
32 Great James Street  
LONDON  
WC1N 3HB

24 November 2011

Our Ref: 11358-Let1-DC

Dear Mr Offord

**Re: Tree condition report at Conquest House, John Street, London**

Thank you for your recent instruction to carry out a tree condition survey on a single London plane tree at Conquest House. As you know, I carried out a site visit on the afternoon of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011. The weather at the time of my inspection was bright and sunny with good visibility. My inspection was ground based only. I have included a summary of my qualifications and experience for your information at Enclosure 1.

Conquest House is located at the junction of John Street and Theobolds Road and is currently undergoing refurbishment. The tree grows within the north western corner of the courtyard of Conquest House. It is approximately 25m in height with a stem diameter in excess of 1200mm. It is in good general condition and I did not find any defects on the main stem or within the upper crown that gave concern for further investigation. The tree dominates the courtyard with branches growing towards the flats within Theobolds Road, the Mews to the west and Conquest House. The branch growing towards the flats to the south, has been reduced back at some stage in the past (see photo 3). We have on our files an email from the architects working on the scheme at the time, stating that a tree work application was approved by the council for specific pruning work in 2005 which included reducing the longer lateral branches. The branch to the south has clearly been reduced back from the flats as there are now several new branches emanating from that cutting point. The closest branch is still approximately 2m from the flats. Similarly, the closest branch to Conquest House is on the eastern aspect (see photo 4) with a clearance of about 2m. I believe this is reasonable and would not suggest that any further works to create more clearance on these two aspects is required at this stage. A low branch on the north west aspect does overhang the properties to the west with small diameter branches now touching parts of the roof (see photo 5). This branch has been reduced back in the past, probably following the 2005 consent

for tree work. The regrowth should now be reduced back again to create a minimum clearance from the roof and branches of 2m.



**Photo 1:** Showing the London plane growing within the north west corner of the courtyard of Conquest House.



**Photo 2:** Showing the broad open crown.



**Photo 3:** Showing the branch on the southern aspect growing towards the flats, previously reduced as part of the 2005 consent for tree work. The current clearance between the tree and the flats is about 2m.



**Photo 4:** Showing the proximity of the branches near Conquest House on the eastern aspect which is about 2m from the branches to the building.





**Photo 5:** Showing the lowest branch on the western aspect with the branch tips touching the neighbouring roof.



**Photo 6:** A close up view of the same branch on the southern aspect showing the regrowth from the previous pruning.

In summary, the tree is a mature London plane in good general condition with no visible defects. Pruning to reduce the lowest branch on the western aspect to create a clearance of 2m from the adjacent buildings is all that is required at this stage. In view of the trees position and proximity to the adjacent properties I would advise that the tree is inspected every two years. It is likely that the branches on the southern and eastern aspects, as discussed above, will require shortening by the time the next inspection is due. From my discussions with the site agent I understand that the only access to the courtyard is through the building itself and that all materials arising from the work will need to be carried out through the building. Contractors quoting for the proposed tree work will need to be aware of this and factor this into their quotation.

I have not checked with the Council but I understand that the tree is protected by way of a specific Tree Preservation Order and it grows within a designated Conservation Area. Therefore, it will be necessary to consult with the council prior to carrying out any work. I advise that the work is carried out by a contractor from the local authority list and preferably one approved by the Arboricultural Association. Their Register of Contractors is available free from Ullenwood Court, Ullenwood, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 9QS; phone 01242 522152; website [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk). The contractor should carry out all tree works to BS 3998 *Recommendations for Tree Work* as modified by more recent research.

Please call me if you need further clarification on any of these points.

Yours sincerely

David Cashman DipArb(RFS) CUEW FArborA MICFor

Enclosure 1: Brief qualifications and experience of David Cashman



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- 1 **Qualifications:** I hold the City and Guilds Certificate in Arboriculture, and the Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma in Arboriculture, which is the premier qualification within the Arboricultural Profession. I am a Fellow and Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association. I am a Chartered Forester and a member of the Royal Forestry Society. I am an Expert Witness accredited through the Bond Solon training programme.
- 2 **Practical experience:** I have worked in local government and commercial tree management for over 30 years. I started my career as an apprentice arborist at London Borough of Sutton where I gained valuable experience and practical skills in all aspects of arboriculture. In 1986, I was promoted to Assistant Arboricultural Officer (Technical) within the Borough. In 1987, I joined Aspan Leisure, a commercial tree company, where I managed a busy tree section dealing with private and council contracts across southern England. In 1993, I joined New Forest District Council where I stayed for 10 years as a Tree Officer. In addition to making and administering Tree Preservation Orders, my other duties included consulting on major development proposals, acting as an expert witness at planning inquiries and administering tree work contracts. In 2003, I joined Barrell Treecare as a practice consultant bringing my public sector planning expertise to the private sector.
- 3 **Relevant experience to this project:** During my service with New Forest District Council, I worked closely within a team including urban designers and landscape architects, providing detailed guidance to developers on major housing schemes. This gave me invaluable experience in balancing tree retention with new landscaping to create high quality residential developments.
- 4 **Continuing professional development:** I keep professionally current through subscription to professional/industry publications and by regular attendance at seminars and conferences. I have presented workshops in New Zealand, Australia and America and frequently speak to UK audiences about trees in a planning context.