# Custom Cutters Tree Specialists
# 5 day Notice

**Local Authority:**

Tree Preservation Officer - London Borough of Camden

**Date of notification:**

2nd March 2010



**Site Address:**

West Hill Court
Millfield Lane
London
N6 6JJ

**Location of trees (Site plan attached overleaf):**

T26/T27: Lombardy Poplar x 2 – adjacent to tennis court

T44: Black Polar x1 – on boundary of property (north) adjacent to driveway

**Reasons:**

*Tree report by Harraway Tree Services (21 January 2010) attached

T26: Lombardy Poplar:
Tree will remain very exposed following the removal of T27 as the 2 trees have grown together since having been established. Therefore in order to implement future planting plan as soon as possible it is recommended that T26 is removed with T27.

T27: Lombardy Poplar:
Tree is heavily decayed and heavily leaning (very recent movement). See attached tree report / resistograph readings for this tree. Immediate removal is required and at present area beneath tree is an exclusion zone due to health and safety threat

T44: Black Poplar:
Tree is heavily decayed and heavily leaning with actively fruiting Rigidoporus ulmaris. See attached tree report

**Prepared by Marcus Foster: BA (Hons); NDipArb; AATech.cert**
**On behalf of Custom Cutters Tree Specialists Ltd**
**February 2010**

# *HARRAWAY TREE SERVICES*

***Tree Management and Training***

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Institute of Chartered Foresters
Registered Consultant

***Member of the Expert Witness Institute***

## TREE INSPECTION REPORT

**Client:** Faraday Property Management Limited, for Clients

**Location:** West Hill Court, Millfield Lane, London N6 6JJ

**Date of inspection:** 21 January 2010

**Inspected by:** J.Harraway FArborA, MICFor

**Instructions received:**
I am instructed by Ian Gilbert of Faraday Property Management (email received 16 December 2009), on behalf of their clients Spiraline Limited, to inspect two mature trees within the grounds of West Hill Court and report on their structural condition. An extract from a site plan supplied by Mr Gilbert showing the trees' position is appended.

**Tree number/identification:** T26 and T27 (from previous survey plan)

**Our reference:** TIR/0110/7

**Tree species:** Lombardy poplar *Populus nigra 'Italica'*

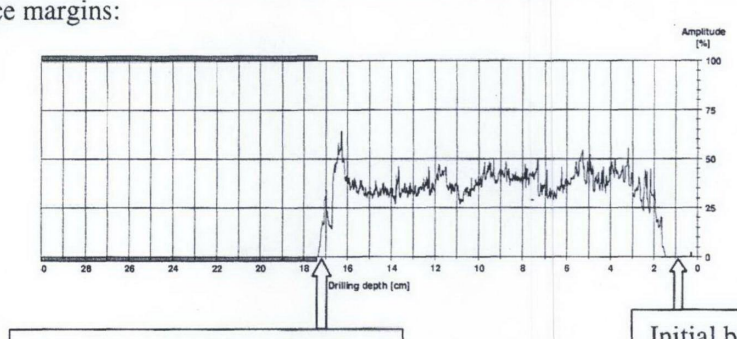
**General description:**
The trees are both 29 metres in height (assessed with a hand-held clinometer) and situated adjacent one another within the landscaped grounds of the property. Their height and the girth of their lower stems suggest that they were planted soon after completion of the building.

The trees provide a prominent landscape feature in the centre of the gardens that complements the Art Deco style of the apartments. However, one of the trees, T27, has developed a distinct lean to the east, suggesting recent movement.

**Method of inspection:**
Following visual inspection and the use of a plastic-headed hammer to tap around the stem (as an initial assessment of the presence of hollowing), the lower stem of both trees was further investigated using a Resistograph F400 decay detecting drill. Brief details of the operating system of this instrument are shown overleaf.

The use of a Picus sonic tomography unit was considered, but the very irregular outline of the stems of trees of this species can make assessment problematic and prone to producing unreliable or exaggerated indications of decay.

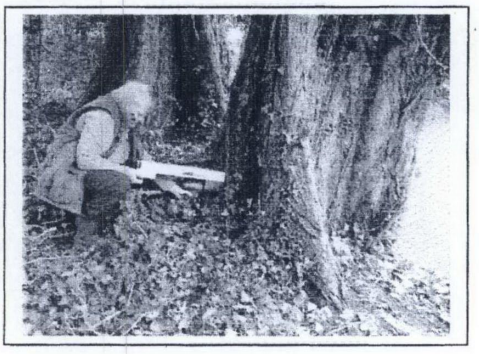
The Resistograph F400 measures the drilling resistance of a very fine drill bit (to a maximum depth of 40cm). Significant drops in drilling resistance are indicative of decay or hollowing. On the example shown below hollowing is indicated at a depth of 17cm and highlighted red in the drill trace margins:




Hollowing encountered at17cm

Initial bark layer

Resistograph in use at the base of T26



**Results of inspection:**

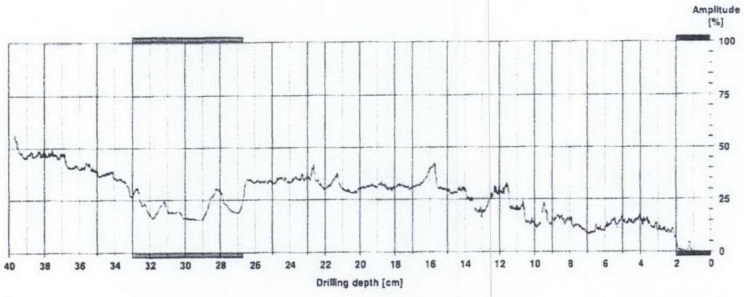
T26, Lombardy poplar:
No significant indications of structural weakness were evident from external inspection, other than a small area of the lower stem on the north side of the stem, which produced a hollow resonance when tapped with the hammer.

The Resistograph was used in four locations around the base of the stem, as follows:

1. West side at a height of approximately 30cm above ground level
2. North side at approx. 20cm
3. North north east side at approx. 20cm
4. South east side at approx. 20cm

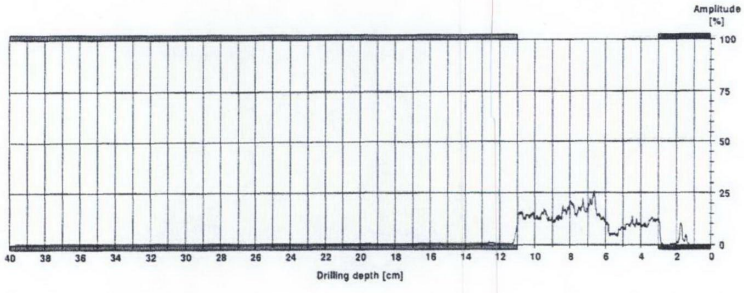
Digitally recorded images of the resultant drill traces are shown overleaf in this order.

1.



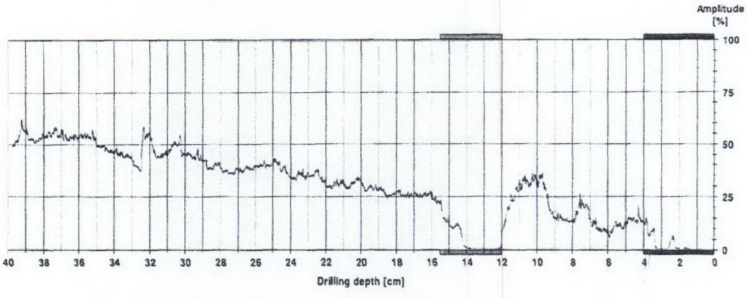

The reduction in drilling resistance at a depth of 28-33cm is unlikely to be due to decay and probably indicates the level at which the probe passed across an area of ingrown (included) bark.

2.



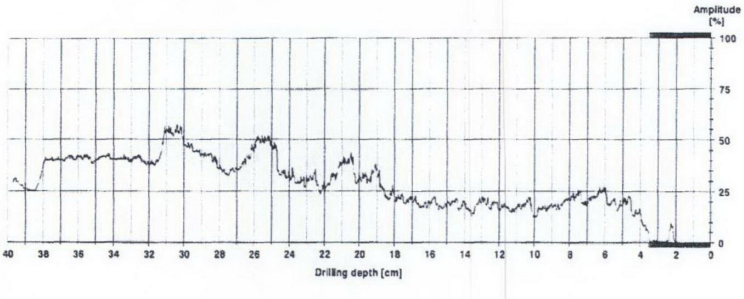

Drilling resistance drops abruptly at a depth of 11cm into a hollow area which extends to at least 40cm, the maximum drilling depth of the instrument.

3.




No decay indicated, but a brief drop at 12-15cm is probably due to included bark.

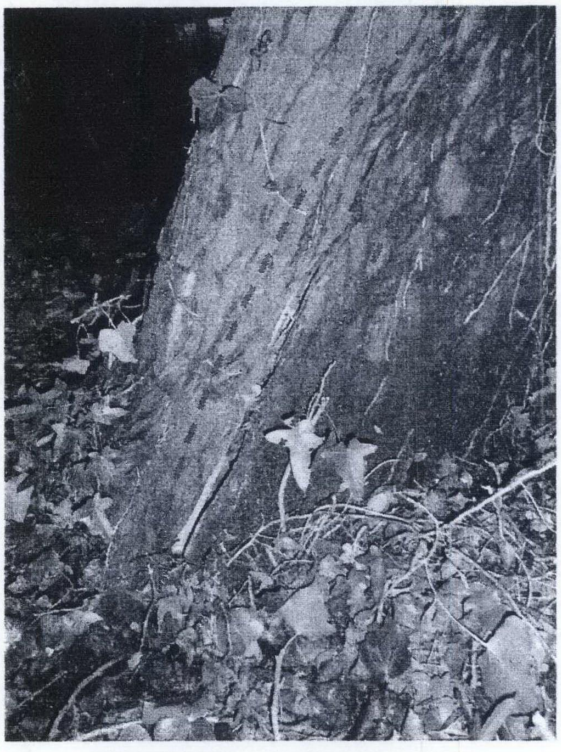
4.




No decay indicated.

*Overall the investigation confirms the presence of hollowing in one location on the north side of the stem of T26.*

T27, Lombardy poplar:
Tapping with the hammer indicated possible hollowing on the west and south sides of the stem. Most importantly, the removal of thick ivy from the lower stem revealed a long crack in a major root buttress on the north west side, on the opposite side from the lean. See photo below:

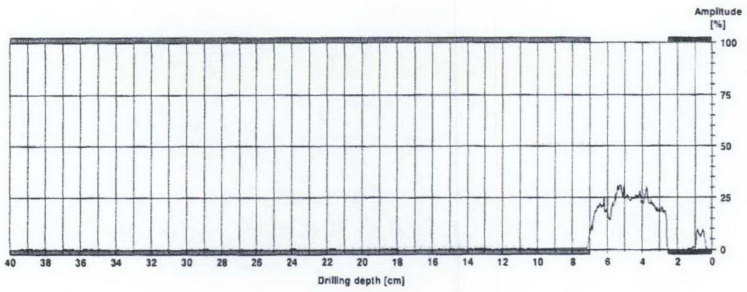


The Resistograph was used in six locations, as follows:

1. West side at an approximate height of 20cm
2. North west side at approx. 30cm, through the cracked root buttress
3. South side at approx. 30cm
4. East side at approx. 30cm
5. North east side at approx. 30cm
6. North side at approx. 20cm

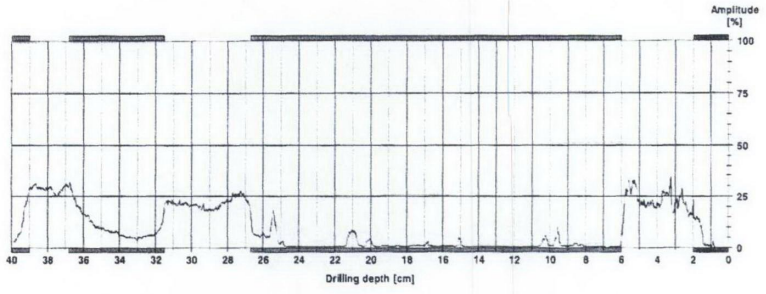
The drill traces are shown overleaf in this order:

1.



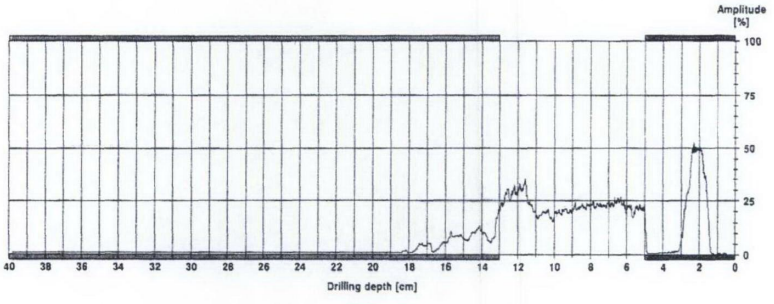

A few centimetres of wood surrounds hollowing at this point which extends to at least 40cm.

2.



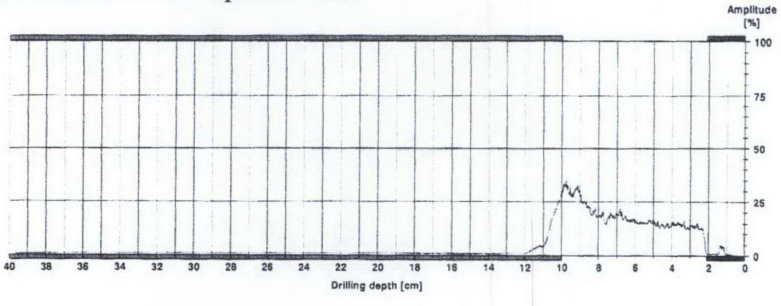

Extensive hollowing is also indicated at this point, interrupted by only brief rises in drilling resistance.

3.



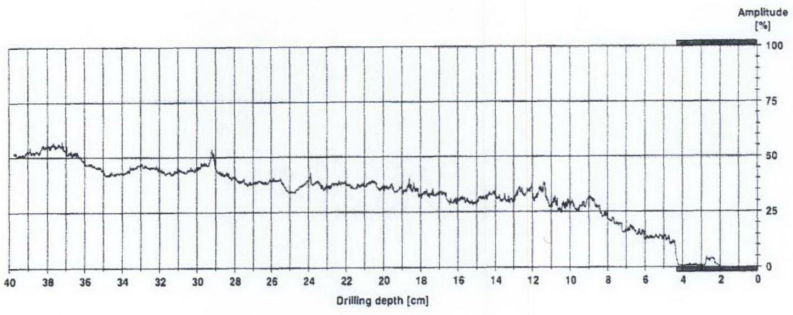

Hollowing is encountered from a depth of 13cm.

4.



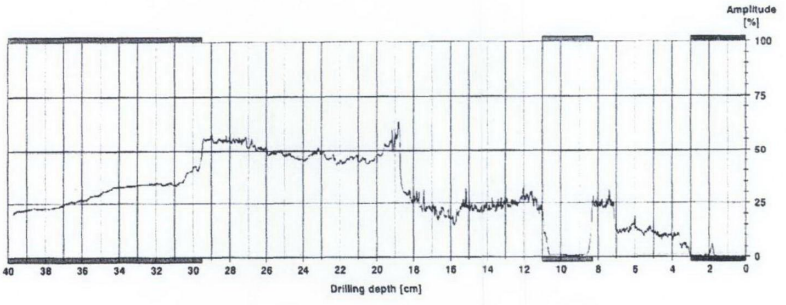

Hollowing indicated from a depth of 10cm.

5.




No decay indicated to the maximum drilling depth.

6.




The brief drop at 8-11 cm is probably included bark. The onset of decay indicated at a depth of 30cm.

*To summarize the results of the investigation on T27, it is clear that widespread decay and hollowing has occurred in much of the lower stem. The long crack in the large root buttress on the north west side is further evidence that the tree is becoming unstable.*

**Observations:**
It is most apparent, from visual assessment and the results of the Resistograph investigation, that not only is T27 extensively hollowed at the base but it is also unstable. I am unsure how long ago the stem developed a lean but the long crack in an important root buttress suggests that the tree's stability is deteriorating.

I therefore consider it a priority that this tree is made safe by felling to ground level as soon as practicable, regrettable as this is to the history and layout of the gardens. I further advise that use of the garden area to the south east of the tree is suspended until this can be achieved (I informed Ian Gilbert of Faradays of this recommendation by telephone on the day of my visit).

Some localised hollowing was also discovered in the base of T26, on the north side. This may well be associated with decay entering through one damaged or dead root and I do not consider it likely that this tree is in an unstable condition at present. However, further deterioration could occur and, if the tree is retained beyond the short term, it should be subject to regular inspection by an arboriculturist and an assessment of decay repeated in, say, three years.

The retention of T26 as a lone specimen could be problematic if the absence of its close neighbour alters its exposure in windy conditions, sufficient to cause an increased rate of limb fracture. Aesthetically also the tree will lack impact and symmetry without its partner, in my opinion. The crowns have developed mutually through their life and growth is somewhat suppressed by their proximity (see photo at end of report).

With the above in mind, I advise that the removal of T26 should also be considered at this time. Advantages of this course of action include increased opportunity to establish two or more suitable replacement plantings and the re-establishment of this feature of the gardens' original layout for future generations of occupiers to enjoy. Lombardy poplars are a fast growing but relatively short-lived species; assuming the pair was established in the 1920s or 30s, they are at an age at which decay and other problems associated with their management are often encountered.

T26 is situated immediately adjacent a well-maintained tennis court, that is presumably frequently used. Although I do not consider the tree's current condition makes it an unacceptable risk to users of the facility, any future structural failure could well lead to damage to the surface of the court and surrounding fencing, if not harm to players.

*In summary, I consider the results of inspection make the removal of T27 a high priority and, although the current structural condition of T26 does not demand it, I advise that consideration is given to its removal in the short term also, to enable the establishment of suitable replacements.*

If the trees are covered by a tree preservation order or are situated within a conservation area, formal application to the local planning authority will be necessary and written consent obtained before any work is carried out. An initial verbal communication with the planning authority's tree preservation officer may expedite consent for the removal of T27, under special exemptions, if its condition is deemed to be hazardous.

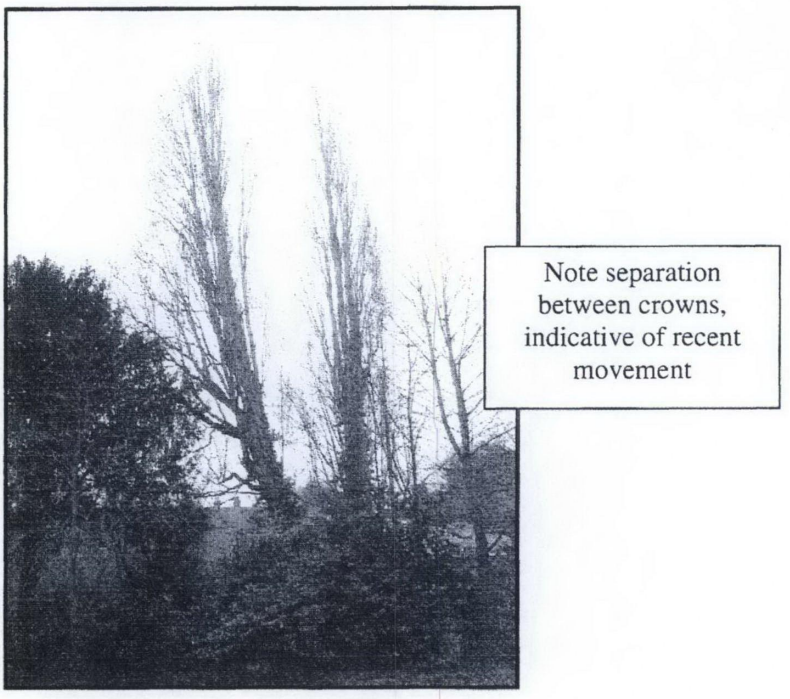
**Recommendations:**

- *Remove Lombardy poplar T27 to ground level as soon as practicable*
- *Consider the removal of T26 in the short term or, if retained, ensure it is subject to specialist inspection, as described in this report*
- *Establish replacement plantings of the same species to provide future amenity*

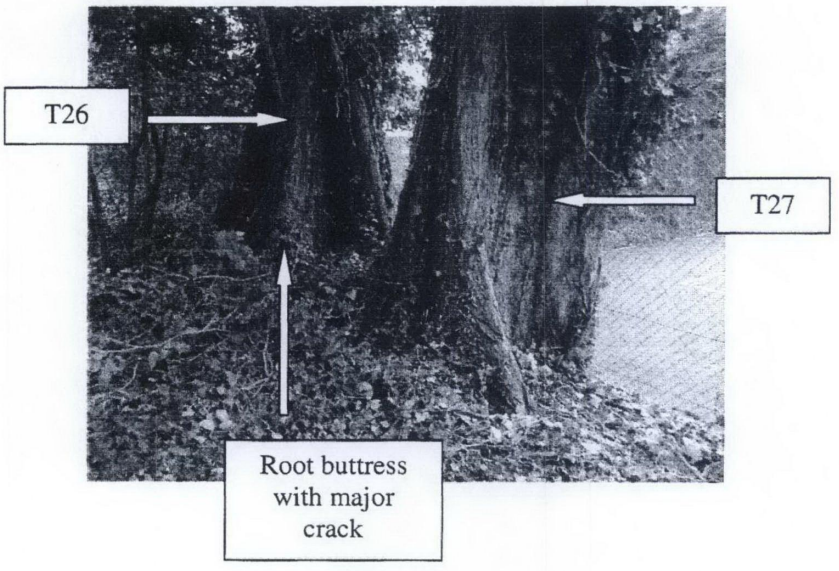
**Signed:** **John Harraway** ***Chartered Arboriculturist***

**Date:** **25 January 2010**

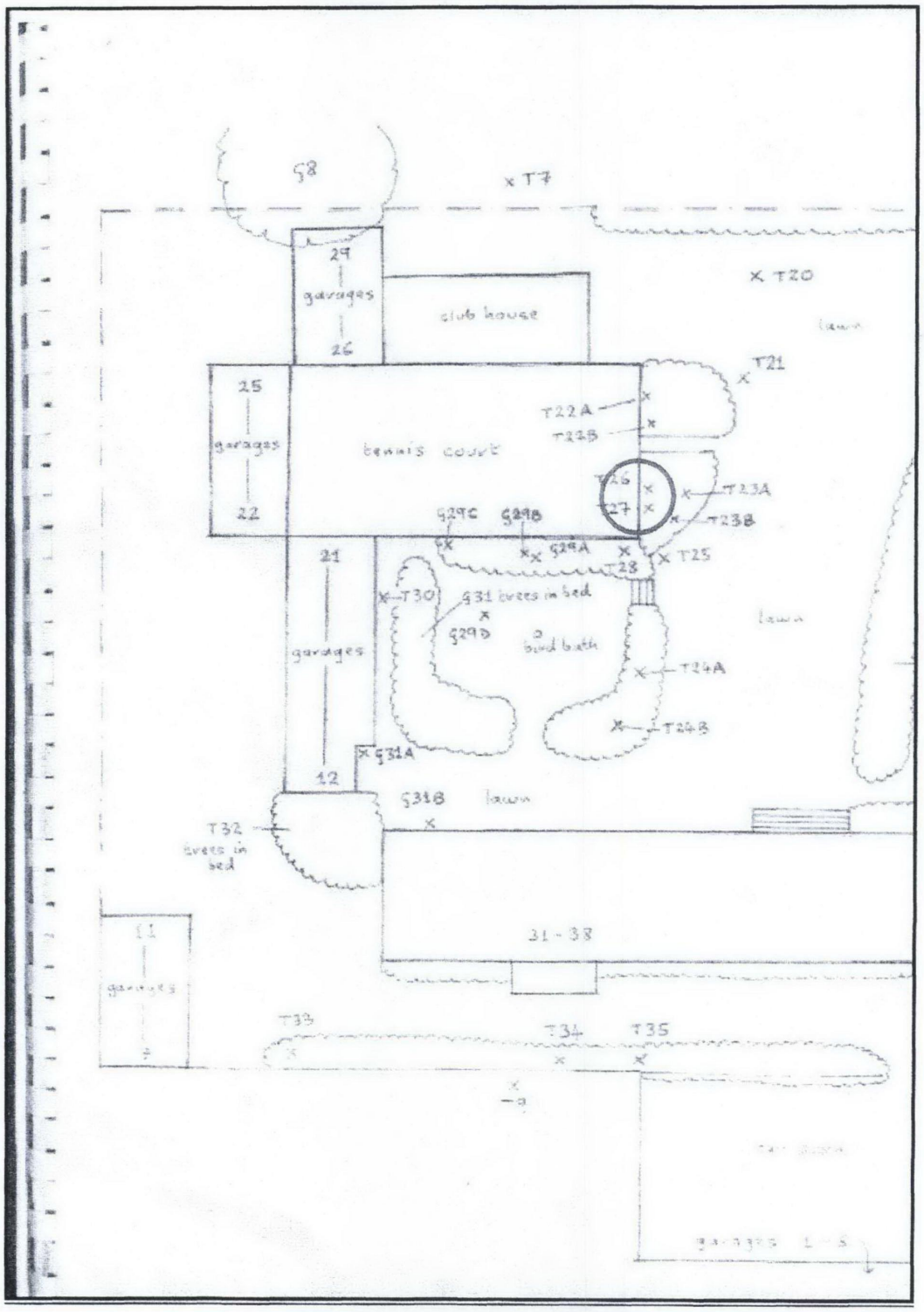
View of the two trees from the north:




Lower stem of both trees:

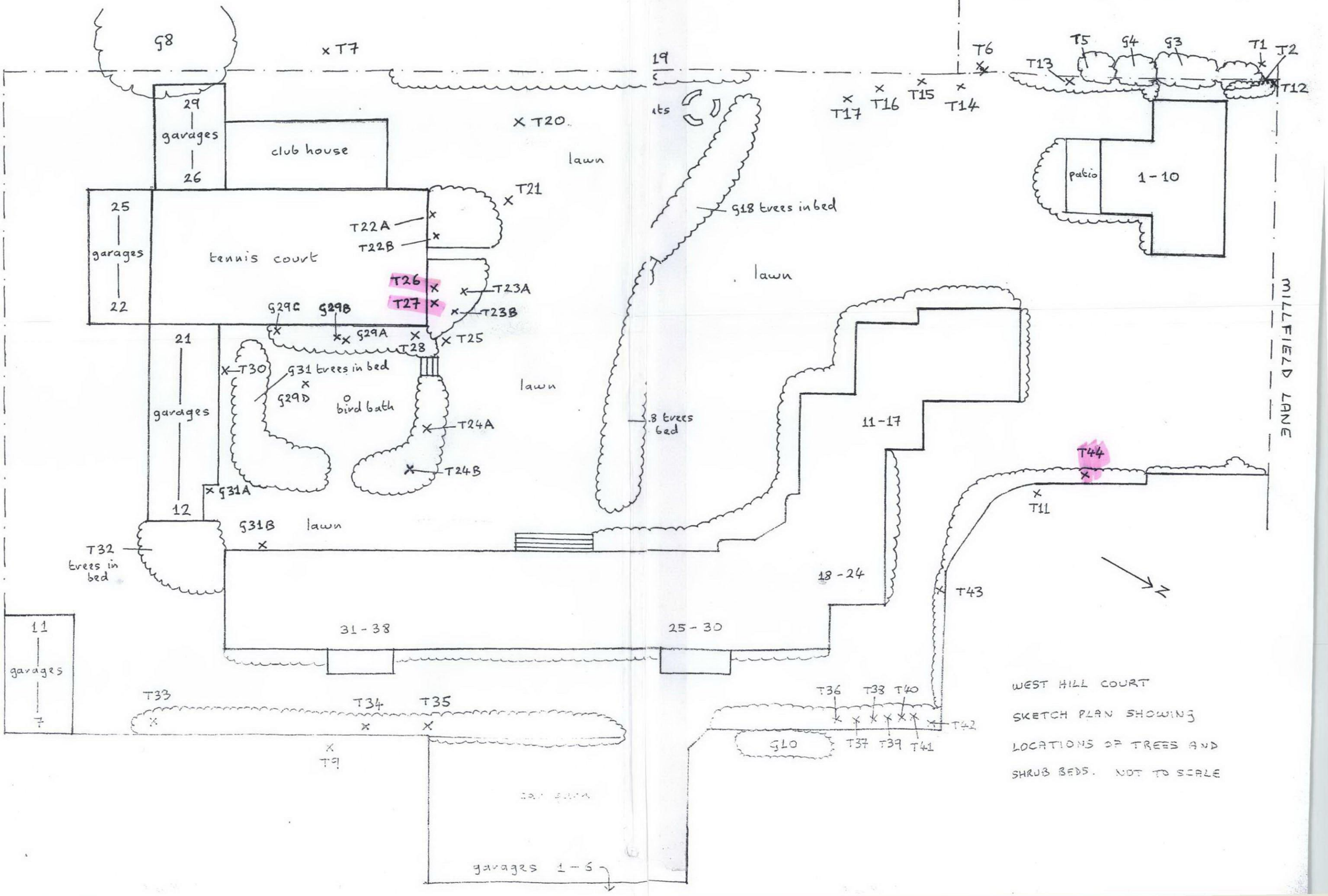


Extract from site plan, showing trees' position, adjacent tennis court:



**TREES IN GROUNDS OF WEST HILL COURT** cont.

| Ref no. | Location | Species | Ht. m. | Age | Condition and Comments | Work Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T43 | Adjacent to bend in drive opposite flats 18-24 | Common Lime | VL | M | Base and trunk appeared sound but were obscured by dense ivy growth.<br><br>Quite a lot of moderate sized dead wood and some branch ends have been lost, mostly due to squirrel damage. Appeared generally sound and healthy. | Raise canopy to clear 3m. over drive within next few years, clearance adequate at present. |
| T44 | On NE boundary opposite rear corner of flats 1-10 | Hybrid Black Poplar *Populus x canadensis* | L | LM | Actively fruiting *Rigidoporus ulmarius* at base. Decay evaluation by Harraway Tree Services in May 2005 showed that about a third of the trunk had either decayed or deteriorated.<br><br>Continued deterioration is highly likely to have occurred since then. The trunk now sounds hollow around about 50% of its diameter. Re-evaluation in 3 to 4 years' time was recommended by John Harraway.<br><br>The tree is a re-grown pollard from about 10m. Re-pollarding at that level was recommended in 2005 but the tree work contractor reduced the tree at about 12m. instead.<br><br>Bark has died back to varying degrees from 50% of the newly reduced branches, this is a predictable outcome of the work that was carried out.<br><br>There is currently about 2m. re-growth, this will be even more likely to break off as a result of the bark die-back.<br><br>Pollarding at a new, higher, level is undesirable both from a physiological and a structural point of view. See report for more details.<br><br>Several small cavities in trunk as well as a large cavity at 9m.<br><br>Tree is still at risk of falling, the likelihood of this occurring will depend how much more advanced the decay is since the previous evaluation. | I recommend that this tree is felled.<br><br>If, however, there is a strong desire to retain the tree then I recommend that the decay evaluation test is repeated as soon as possible.<br><br>If the evaluation test shows that retention is feasible it will be essential to manage it as a pollard at the height recommended previously. |




WEST HILL COURT

SKETCH PLAN SHOWING LOCATIONS OF TREES AND SHRUB BEDS. NOT TO SCALE