

Marchmont Community Centre
Report on structural effects of trees on near-by structures.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Conisbee have been asked by Kings Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association as part of structural works to a proposed extension and refurbishment of the Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London, WC1 to comment on trees near to the rear of the property, in the communal walkway between Kenton Street and Marchmont Street.

- 1.1.1 This report is based on a site visit on Tuesday 17th March 2007. The weather was warm and bright.
- 1.1.2 The report provides information on the trees and any effect they may have structurally to their surroundings, particularly in relation to the retaining wall and existing and proposed rear-extensions of 62 Marchmont Street.
- 1.1.3 A site investigation on the 21st April took a borehole down 5m near to the brick retaining wall in the rear basement courtyard of the Marchmont Community Centre and two trail pits were made near to the foundations to the rear of the property. Results from this Site Investigations will also be commented upon.
- 1.1.4 It is unknown if the planted tree has a root barrier system.
- 1.1.5 We are not arboriculturalists and as such any further information required on the trees should be made by such a qualified person.

2.0 Information

2.1 There are four trees/shrubs located near to the retaining wall which forms the rear boundary line of 62 Marchmont Street. The retaining wall is 1.7m high with an approximately 1.9m high, 215mm thick (minimum) brickwall over. One of the trees was planted, and the other three have come to be there through self-seeding or sprouting.

- 2.2 The tree that was planted is a Rowan, or Mountain Ash. It is approximately 7m high and lies 1.2m from the retaining wall. This has sprouted a small secondary tree whose height is approximately 3m and is approximately 1m from the retaining wall.
 - 2.2.1 Rowans may be expected to reach a mature height of 11m and are known to be moderately thirsty trees (NHBC Standards Appendix 4.2-B)
 - 2.2.2 The secondary tree is about 0.5m from the main tree – this may well be very close to a root barrier system, if one exists, and could well penetrate it if trying to gain moisture.
- 2.3 The shrub is thought to be a Cotoneaster, which has self seeded directly next to the wall. These shrubs are known to have considerable potential to cause damage to foundations/retaining walls.
- 2.4 There is another seedling directly next to the wall, identity unknown, however this presently is young and whilst has not done any damage to the internal (courtyard) face of the wall/retaining wall, is likely to have begun some root penetration through the wall
- 2.5 If a root barrier system is in place, this may not necessarily give 100% protection against the trees roots keeping within the barrier, which could particularly be the case if the ground is very dry and the tree needs to meet its own water demands by reaching water.
- 2.6 A bore-hole near to the retaining wall, approximately 2.2m from the tree, though 3 metres below it, to an additional depth of 5m, did not have any live roots in it. Nor were there any roots in the trail pits next to the property.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The trees are presently causing no visible harm to the retaining wall or rear additional to the Marchmont Community Centre.
- 3.2 The planted Rowan (or Mountain Ash) has not yet reached its mature height, and as such may still have the potential cause damage to the retaining wall.
- 3.3 The Rowan must be kept well pruned and maintained to ensure it does not have growth spurts which could put additional demand on its roots and therefore the subsoil around it.
- 3.4 The secondary Rowan tree, which presently is very slender, should be removed as this is closer to the retaining wall, and possibly outside/very close to any root barrier system, if present, and therefore highly likely to cause damage to the retaining wall and wall over if left to mature.

- 3.5 The Cotoneaster should be removed as is highly likely to do damage to the wall/retaining wall in the future.
- 3.6 The seedling next to the wall should also be removed before any (further) damage is done to the wall/retaining wall.

PHOTOS.



Photo 1, Bases of tree trunks and shrub.

Photo 2: Trees/shrub in relation to retaining wall and existing rear addition (in foreground).

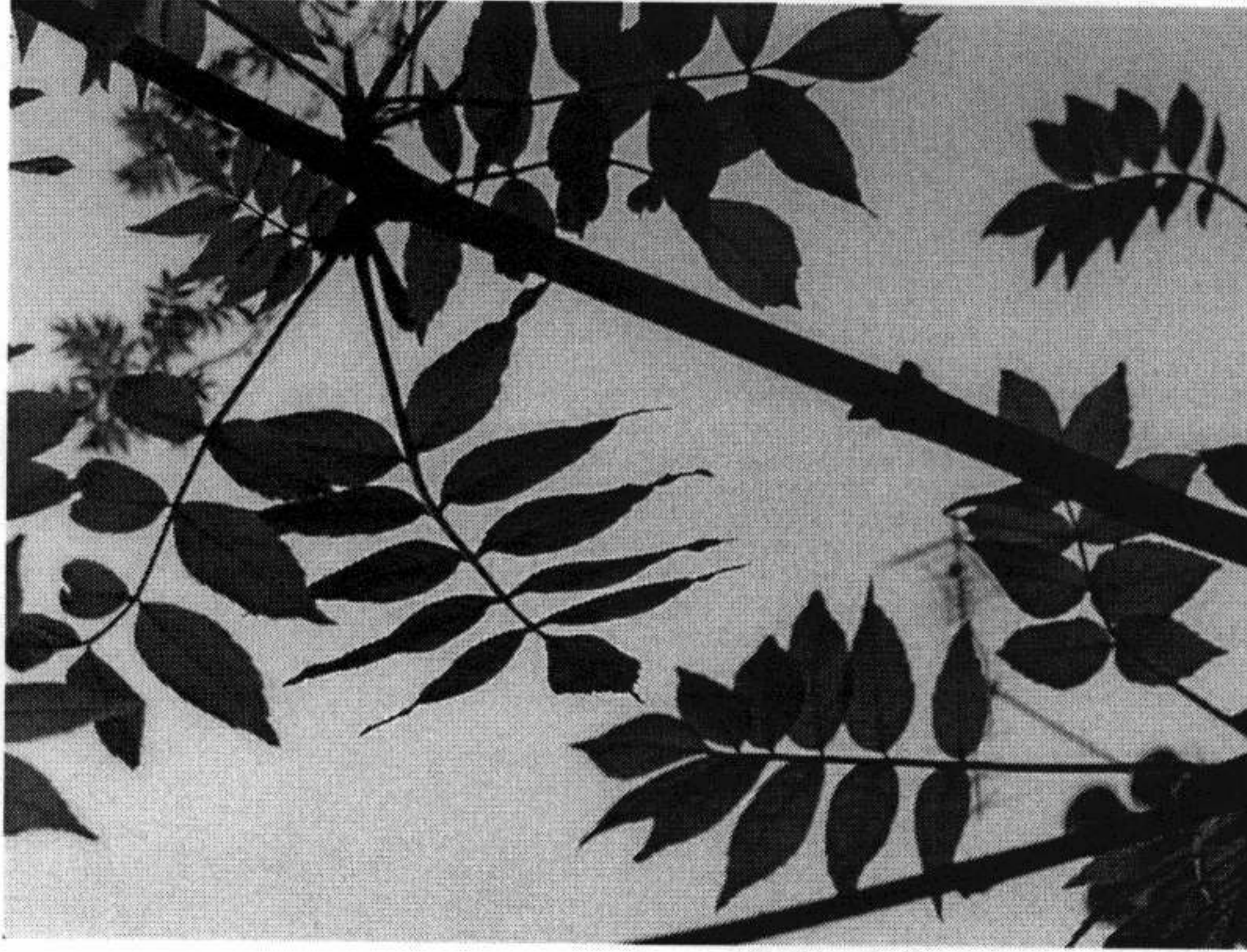


Photo 3: Compound leaves of Rowan

Photo 4: View from Marchmount Community Centre rear courtyard: view to the retaining wall, wall over and seedling and Rowan beyond.