Simon Pryce Arboriculture

Report

Client:	**Mr S Blackie**
Site:	**Rear garden of 2 Gardnor Road, Hampstead, NW3 1HA**
Subject:	**Tree and proposed building work**
Inspection date:	**25 November 2014**
Report date:	**13 December 2014**
Reference:	**14/121**
Author:	**Simon Pryce, B.Sc., F.Arbor.A, C.Biol, MSB, MICFor** **Arboricultural Association Registered Consultant**

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Arboricultural Association
REGISTERED CONSULTANT

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on the instructions of Brosh Architects, who are acting for Mr Blackie in respect of a proposal to extend the rear of the ground floor flat and carry out other work at 2 Gardnor Road, NW3.

1.2 I have been asked to inspect a tree growing in the rear garden and to prepare a report on it and the implications of the proposal, as set out in British Standard 5837: 2012, Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

1.3 This report is based on a site visit and inspection of the tree on 25 November 2014 accompanied by Mr Brosh.

1.4 The tree was measured, its maturity, health and structural condition assessed and it was assigned to category U of the four [A,B,C,U] specified by BS5837. The individual description and other relevant information are contained in the attached schedule and it is shown on the site plans, based on originals prepared by Brosh Architects.

2 Background

The site

2.1 The site is the rear garden of no.2 Gardnor Road, which is about 5m wide by 7m long, level and paved, with a low planting bed along the left hand side and across the rear. It is surrounded by other gardens in Gardnor Road to each side and by a rear garden in Gayton Road to the rear. The boundary with no.1, to the left, is an old low brick wall that has been built up to to about 1.8m with concrete blocks laid flat and left unpointed on the side facing no.2. The wall to the rear is an older looking brick one that is severely dilapidated and starting to collapse. Ground level in the garden to the rear is about 1m lower. The garden is paved, with a low raised planting bed along the left hand side boundary and across the rear.

2.2 The local planning authority is Camden Council and the site is in Hampstead Conservation area.

Proposal

2.3 This is shown on the drawings produced by Brosh Architects and involves extending the house to the rear by about 3m from the main rear wall. The rear boundary wall is rebuilt, the others refurbished and a new planting bed built along each side and across the rear.

Tree

2.4 The only tree in the garden is a flowering cherry growing in the planting bed in the far left hand corner. Its age is not reported, but its size suggests that it is 20 - 30 years old. It has been cut back where it overhangs the boundaries and a low branch over the garden has been cut back some time ago to leave a stump that is decaying. It is a barely significant specimen with no potential to improve and is in category U (remove) of BS5837.

3 Discussion

General comments

3.1 British Standard 5837: 2012, Tree in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations, specifies measures to avoid or minimise damage to trees that are retained on or near construction sites. One of the more important recommendations is that root protection areas [RPAs] are established round retained trees and that no ground work takes place within them. These are normally enclosed by suitable fencing such as weld mesh sections supported by scaffold poles driven into the ground.

3.2 The size of the RPA is based on the size of the tree concerned, the starting point being that for a single trunked tree it has an area equivalent to a circle with a radius 12 times the trunk diameter at 1.5m. The shape and layout of the RPA can be modified, if appropriate, particularly where there is evidence that root spread is uneven. In this case the boundary walls will restrict root growth, particularly to the rear, so most of the root system will be confined to the garden and a more realistic shape would be a quadrant with the straight sides formed by the left hand and rear walls. This has been shown on the existing site plan.

Implications for this case

3.3 The rear extension does not encroach into the tree's RPA, so it could theoretically be built with the tree in situ. However the tree would be affected by the associated work, particularly the work on the sidewall and rebuilding the one to the rear, which is essential for safety. The worst affected part of the rear wall is not next to the tree and its condition appears to be due to lack of maintenance, not any influence of the tree's roots. It needs to be rebuilt irrespective of any other work and ground level to the rear is lower, so that would involve significant disturbance all along the rear boundary. That would inevitably cause some root damage and the cherry is a poor specimen with limited useful life expectancy. There would be no benefit trying to retain it, particularly when a better contribution to local amenity would be achieved by removing and planting a new tree better suited to the site and surroundings after the work is complete.

3.4 The new tree could be in the same corner, although putting it nearer the centre of the boundary would give more space for its roots to develop and reduce overhang over the adjacent garden. There is a range of small to medium sized trees that would be suitable including:

- Saucer magnolia, *Magnolia soulangeana*
- June berry, *Amelanchier canadensis / lamarckii*
- Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum* (tree, not one of the dwarf shrub varieties)
- Rowan / mountain ash, *Sorbus aucuparia* and others

Treework

3.5 The tree work should be carried out in accordance with BS 3998: 2010, Recommendations for Treework, and any other relevant standards. It is essential that the contractor doing the work has appropriate third party and public liability insurance. The Arboricultural Association has a list of approved contractors, published on their web site at www.trees.org.uk.

Restrictions

3.6 Where a development inevitably involves the removal of trees in conservation areas or protected by tree preservation orders (TPOs), the permission for the work includes deemed consent to remove the tree or trees concerned. In this case the tree is not under the footprint of the extension, so it would be advisable to specify in the application that it is to be removed and replaced, in order to avoid any doubt.

cont...

4 Conclusions

4.1 The cherry is a poor specimen with minimal amenity value and no potential to improve.

4.2 The extension does not encroach into the tree's RPA, but it would be difficult to refurbish the side wall with it in situ. It would have to be removed to rebuild the rear wall, which is necessary for safety irrespective of any work on the house.

4.3 Removing the cherry and planting a more suitable replacement would make a better long term contribution to local amenity.

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Tree no.	Species	Age / vigour	Ht. m	Spread				Dia. mm	RPA rad m	RPA area m^2	Crwn ht. m	Comments and recommendations	Cat
				N	S	E	W						
The tree is growing in a raised bed in the far left hand corner of the rear garden as shown on the site plans.													
1	Flowering cherry *Prunus serrulata* variety	MA/L	7	1.5	2	1	3	190	2.3	16.5	2.5	The root stock has formed a swollen, distorted base, which is common in flowering cherries, and the lower trunk is misshapen at the graft indicating possible weakness. Several lower branches been cut in the past leaving wounds from which new shoots are growing and a decaying stump on the W side of the trunk. The tree has been reduced lightly in the past and the crown is one sided where it has been cut back over the side and rear boundaries. The main building work is outside the tree's RPA, but the side wall needs to be refurbished and the rear wall rebuilt, which would damage the tree if it was retained. It has no real public amenity value and its life expectancy is severely limited. The rear wall needs to be rebuilt regardless of any proposal for building work on the house. A suitable replacement tree planted after the work is complete could mature to make a much better contribution to the area.	U

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Notes

Observations are made from ground level unless stated otherwise.
Trunk diameters are measured in millimetres at 1.5m above ground or at the narrowest point between the root buttresses and branch flare in multiple trunked trees; in such cases this is indicated by [c].
Crown spreads are taken from the trunk centre to the end of the longest live branches in the directions indicated [usually the four cardinal compass points]
Crown height is the clearance under the lowest significant branches.

Tree ages are estimated as below, based on the normal life expectancy of a tree of the species concerned on the site:

Immature.	[IM]	Newly planted or self-set tree.
Young	[Y]	Young tree that is established but has not yet attained the size or form of a fully developed example of its type.
Middle aged	[MA]	Between one third and two thirds of its estimated lifespan.
Mature	[M]	Over two thirds of it's estimated life span.
Over mature	[OM]	Declining and/or approaching the end of it's natural lifespan.
Dying/Dead	[D]	Dead/dying or so badly decayed that it should be removed without delay if a potential threat.

Vigour is assessed on the basis of what is normal for that the species concerned as:

High	[H]
Normal	[N]
Low	[L]
Dead / dying	[D]

Root protection areas [RPAs] - BS5837:2012

For single trunked trees these are calculated as an area equivalent to a circle with a radius 12 times the trunk diameter at 1.5m. For multiple trunked trees it is based on the diameter of a single trunk that would have the same cross sectional area at 1.5m.

Any deviation from a circular plot should take into account the following factors whilst still providing adequate protection for the roots.

- The shape and disposition of the root system when known to be influenced by past or existing site conditions, such as the presence of roads, structures and underground services.
- Topography and drainage.
- The soil type and structure.
- The likely tolerance of the tree to root disturbance based on factors such as species, age and past management.

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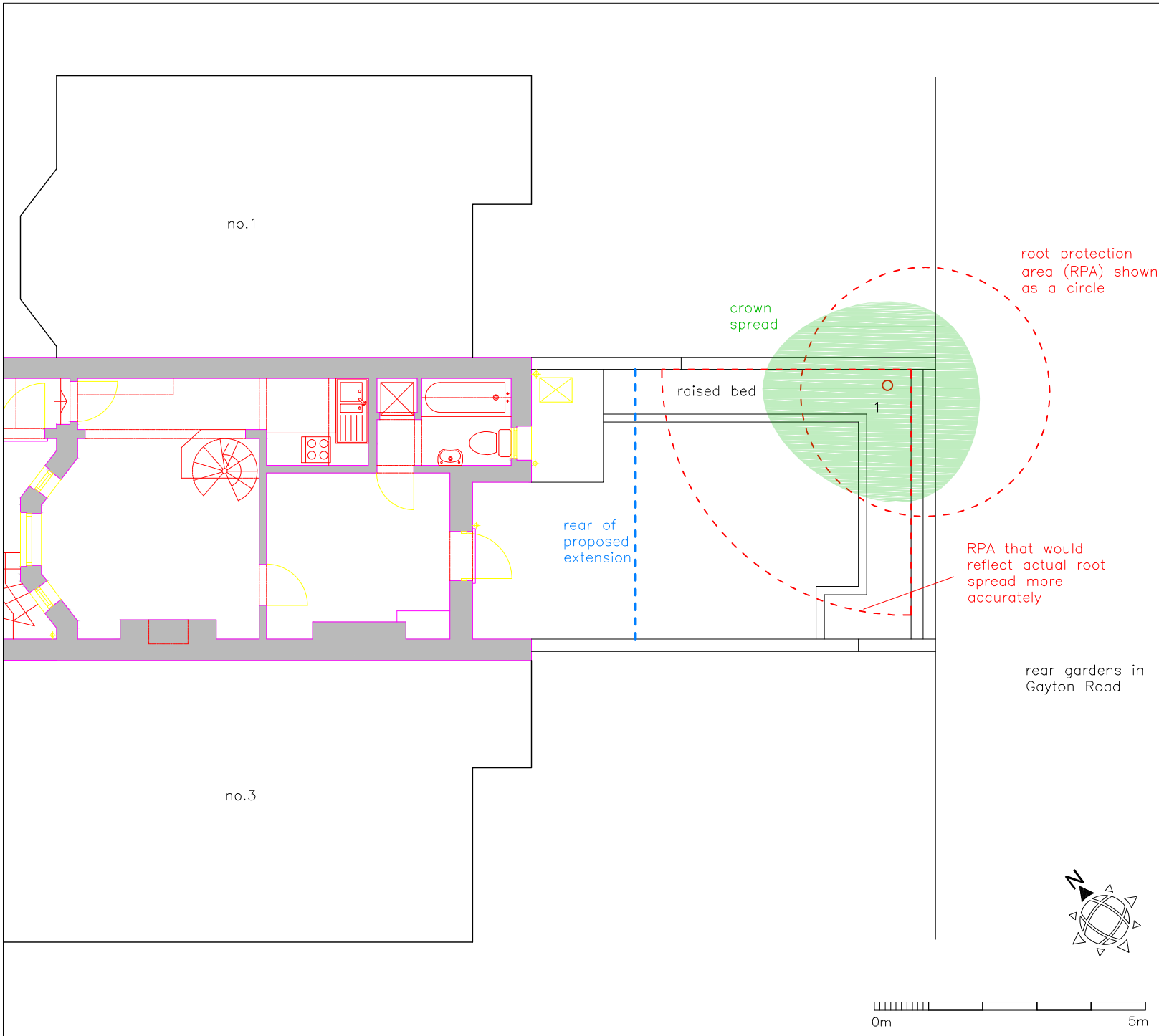
Tree categories – based on BS5837: 2012, Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations

Trees for removal				
Category and definition				**Colour code**
Category U				**Red**
Those in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years	• Trees that have a serious, irremediable structural defect, such that their early loss is expected due to collapse in the foreseeable future, including any that will become unviable after the removal of other U category trees. (e.g. where, for whatever reason, the loss of companion shelter cannot be mitigated by pruning.) • Trees that are dead or showing signs of significant immediate and irreversible decline. • Trees infected with pathogens significant to the health and/or safety of other trees nearby, or very low quality trees suppressing better ones nearby. *NOTE: Category U trees can have existing or potential conservation value which it might be desirable to preserve.*			
Trees for retention				
Category and definition	**Criteria – sub categories**			**Colour code**
	1 – mainly arboricultural values	**2 – mainly landscape values**	**3 – mainly cultural / conservation values**	
Category A				
Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years.	Trees that are particularly good examples of their species, especially if rare or unusual; or those that are essential components of groups or formal or semi-formal arboricultural features (e.g. the dominant and/or principal trees within an avenue)	Trees, groups or woodlands of particular visual importance as arboricultural and/or landscape features	Trees, groups or woodlands of significant historical, commemorative or conservation value. (e.g. veteran trees or wood -pasture)	**Green**
Category B				
Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy at least 20 years.	Trees that might be included in category A, but are downgraded because of impaired condition (e.g. presence of significant though remediable defects, including unsympathetic past management and storm damage), such that they are unlikely to be suitable for retention for beyond 40 years; or trees lacking the special quality necessary to merit the category A designation.	Trees present in numbers, usually growing as groups or woodlands, such that they attract a higher collective rating than they might as individuals; or trees occurring as collectives but situated so as to make little visual contribution to the wider locality	Trees with material conservation or other cultural benefits.	**Blue**
Category C				
Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150 mm	Unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories	Trees present in groups or woodlands, but without this conferring on them significantly greater collective landscape value; and/or trees offering low or only temporary/transient landscape benefits	Trees with no material conservation or other cultural benefit.	**Grey**



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Client:
Mr Stuart Blackie

Site:
2 Gardnor Road, Hampstead,
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Title:
Tree and proposed building work existing site

Date: 25 November 2014

Ref: 14/121 | Rev: a

Scale: 1:100 at A4

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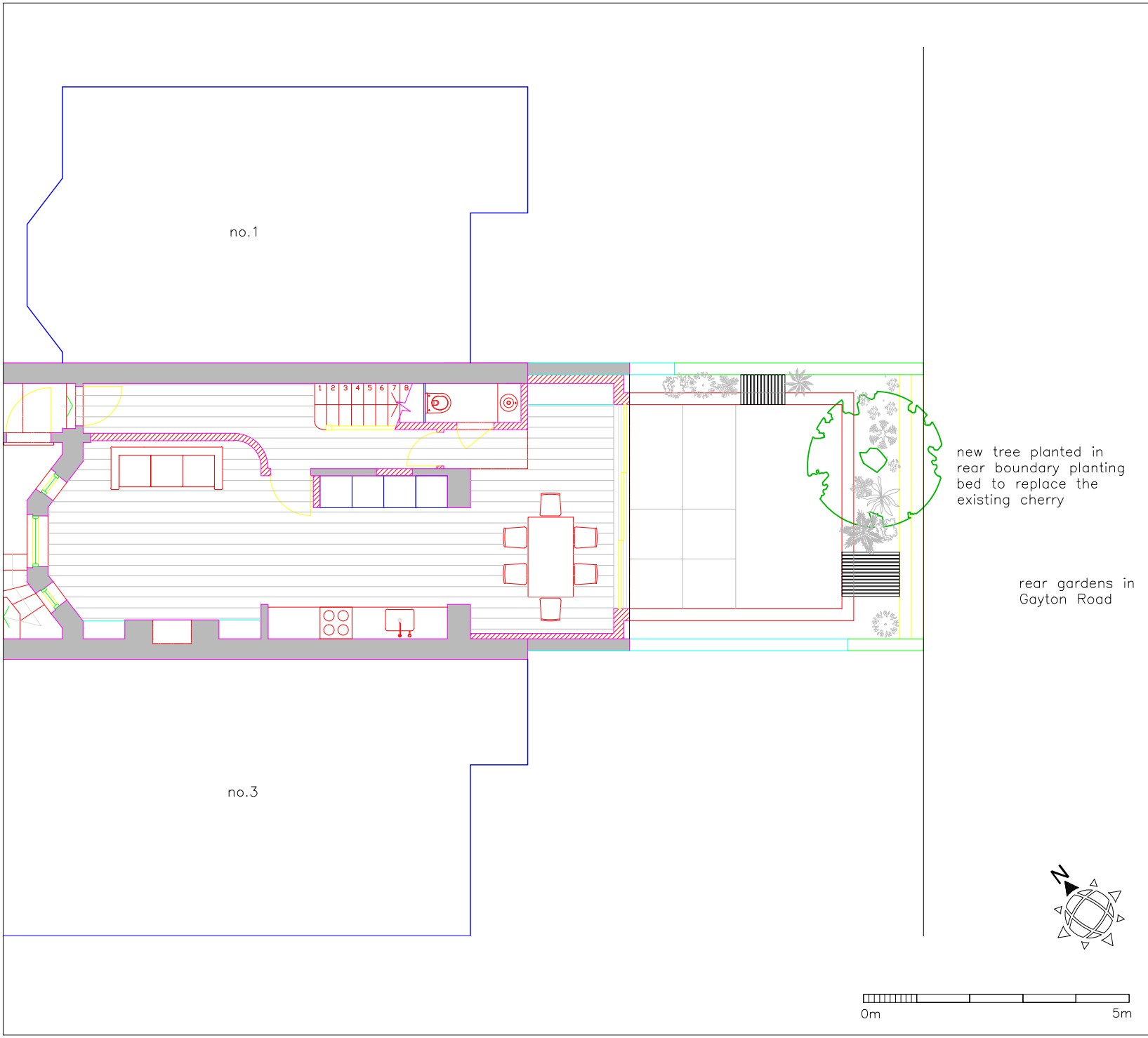
Original drawing:
Brosh Architects

Root protection areas [RPAs] are colour coded according to retention category from BS5837:2012, Trees in relation to demolition, design and construction:

A = green
B = blue
C = grey
U = red - dashed - also used to denote dead trees with no RPA

Crown spread = mid green



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