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## **Tree Condition Assessment**

### **London Zoo - Tree 2015 Horse chestnut**

**Client**  
ZSL

**Prepared by**  
Patrick Stileman BSc(Hons), MICFor, Dip. Arb (RFS), M.Arbor.A

**Date**  
8<sup>th</sup> January 2015

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 **Brief:** I am instructed by Sven Seiffert, Horticultural Manager for London Zoo, to provide an assessment of a horse chestnut tree located adjacent to the London Zoo car park. I am to provide an assessment of the risk that it poses and to provide recommendations for remedial work.
- 1.2 **Tree location:** The tree is located on the edge of the main car park for the zoo, next to Prince Albert Road. The tree is recorded on the ZSL London Zoo tree management software as Tree 2015.
- 1.3 **Statutory protection:** The tree is located within a conservation area which is administered by the London Borough of Camden.
- 1.4 **Background:** Over the recent Christmas period the tree suffered the failure of a significant stem on its southern side at a height of approximately 7 metres. This caused some damage to a large lateral limb on the south side which was left vulnerable, and end-weight reduction to improve stability of the southern limb was performed under the statutory exemption for dangerous trees.
- 1.5 **Site visit:** I visited the site and assessed the tree on 6th January 2015.

## 2 THE TREE

- 2.1 The tree is a mature horse chestnut which has had past crown management performed in response to identified defects. It has a height of approximately 16 metres and a stem diameter of approximately 900mm.
- 2.2 The tree has suffered recent failure of a central stem at a height of 7 metres on the southern side. The broken surface is visibly decayed and it appeared to have failed as a brittle fracture. It is apparent that the failure of the central stem caused damage to a large lateral stem on the southern side. At the time of my visit the damage had been cleared and crown reduction had been performed to the southern stem to provide temporary stability.
- 2.3 The long lateral limb on the south side of the tree has a longitudinal strip of decay on its upper surface. This limb now has increased exposure following the loss of the central stem and although it appears to have been satisfactorily stabilised in the short term, the failure of the central stem has increased its vulnerability.

- 2.4 On the north side of the tree facing the road there is an upright stem which supports approximately 50% of the crown.
- 2.5 There is currently no indication that the stem on the northern side has decayed wood within it. The stem is now more exposed following failure of the stem on the southern side; however its height was reduced in 2011 and this appears to provide short-term stability.
- 2.6 I consider that the large decayed wound (with the decay likely to spread further quite rapidly), the increased exposure of the northern stem and southern limb following the recent failure, makes the retention of this tree no longer viable given its location adjacent to a busy road and car park. I consider that the emergency work undertaken is likely to have provided adequate short-term stability which provides sufficient time to make a formal notification to the London Borough of Camden to remove the tree.

### **3 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 I recommend that Tree 2015 is removed within three months. Notification for this work to the London Borough of Camden will be required through a formal Section 211 Notice.

### **4 LIMITATIONS**

- 4.1 Trees by their very nature will always pose a certain level of risk and this report is not intended to provide recommendations for the complete removal of risk from the tree inspected. The report is based on my assessment of the tree and provides recommendations for management which I consider to be reasonable and defensible.

*Patrick Stileman*

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**Photograph 1**



**Photograph 2**

