

By e-mail only

Mr P Godfrey  
Zen Developments  
Hillview House  
1 Hallswell Parade  
LONDON NW11 0DL

6 March 2015

Our Ref: **14285-Let2-MW**

Dear Mr Godfrey

**Re: Trees 13 and 14 at 14 Netherhall Gardens, Hampstead, London,**

Further to previous correspondence issued by my colleague Jeremy Barrell (letter 14285-Let1-JB dated 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014) relating to trees 13 and 14 located on the southern boundary of 14 Netherhall Gardens, adjacent to the junior school building of the South Hampstead High School; I write regarding the site meeting we had with Mr Remington (Camden Borough Council Tree and Landscape Officer) on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015 to discuss the potential issues and concerns relating to the retention of trees 13 and 14.

After our discussions with the Tree Officer regarding the potential impact on the trees from the piling operations, it was agreed in principle that trees 13 and 14 can be removed subject to significant roots being found beneath the retaining wall. It was accepted that their loss would have a significant visual impact on the street scene so the provision of large trees will be required as mitigation. On this basis, further root investigations were undertaken that positively identified there were significant roots along the line of the existing wall closest to T13 and T14 (Images 1 and 2).



**Image 1:** Root investigations along the retaining wall revealed a number of significant roots



**Image 2:** The roots found beneath the retaining wall need to be severed to accommodate piling works

The tree officer has now been to site to review the root investigations and has confirmed that these trees can be removed subject to adequate mitigation planting being provided to the Council's Tree Department (confirmed in his email dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015 in Enclosure 1).

On this basis, further advice has been taken from a number of tree specialists on the suitable species and necessary ground work preparation required to provide large trees in the space available along the boundary. Several species options are available from these nurseries but once larger trees are required, the species choice becomes more limited. On this basis, the best choice we have available is semi-mature dawn redwood trees about 8m in height.

**Visual Impact Assessment:** In addition to the tree planting details, a brief visual impact study has been requested by the Tree Officer to support the replacement proposal. On this basis, I have included an aerial image below to provide a visual overview of the trees in their locality and a brief statement with relevant images to support the loss of the trees.



**Image 3:** Trees 13 and 14 are indicated by the green canopy outline and the main view and impact from the loss of the trees will be in the direction indicated by the red arrow (see Image 6). The blue arrow indicates views from the northern end of the site (see Image 8).

Both trees 13 and 14 have been regularly pruned in the past, and have developed asymmetrical crowns with the bulk of the growth growing towards the road or the school building (Images 4 and 5). Tree 14 has heavy ivy growth smothering much of the upper crown and branches regularly encroach onto the adjacent school building. These trees were originally categorised as category C (*"Trees of low quality ... Unremarkable trees of very limited merit of such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories"*) according to the British Standard 5837 categorisation method i.e. they are not worthy of retention in a development context, unsuitable for their location and unlikely to be sustainable for the longer term. This means that the trees never really have the potential to reach their optimum size or provide the best visual amenity possible for this species of tree in this location.



**Image 4:** Trees 13 and 14 looking north towards the boundary with the school



**Image 5:** Trees 13 and 14 from within the garden of 14 Netherhall Gardens, looking towards the south

The local surroundings are generally sylvan in character with a large proportion of the properties well covered in trees (Image 3). When considering the loss of trees 13 and 14, there will be some visual impact when viewed from the southern end of Netherhall Gardens (Image 4). However, they cannot be easily seen from the other end of the street or from other public viewpoints in the locality. Whilst they provide some canopy cover to the locality, the most prominent trees in the vicinity are the London planes along the boundary which restrict views of trees 13 and 14 when stood at the northern end of Netherhall Gardens (Image 6). On this basis, I consider that these trees will buffer the initial visual impact whilst the new proposed trees become established along the school boundary and there is unlikely to be a significant visual impact to public amenity when the trees are removed. The Tree Officer has suggested that fastigiated oaks are acceptable but unfortunately we were only able to obtain these at 6m in height. Therefore, new dawn redwood trees 8m in height recently grown and prepared in Barcham's tree nursery (Image 7) are proposed instead. These trees have the potential to fill the gap and provide contrast and colour throughout the year whilst still being sustainable with their upright growth habit close to the school building. Provided careful ground preparation is undertaken to ensure the trees have enough future rooting space and maintenance is provided to get them established, these trees will minimise any visual impact on the locality in the short to medium term. To demonstrate the possible visual impact with this proposal, I have provided a conceptual image with trees 13 and 14 shown removed and new trees with similar characteristics to the proposed dawn redwoods in their place (Image 8). Although the existing trees were not in leaf at the time the original photo was taken, it still demonstrates very well that the canopy gap can be easily filled along the boundary to minimise the visual impact on the street scene.





**Image 6:** The most visible trees along the northern end of Netherhall Gardens are the London planes which restrict views of trees 13 and 14 and will buffer any initial impact from their removal. The blue arrow indicates the direction of view illustrated on Image 3



**Image 7:** Dawn redwood trees like the one in this image are available from the nursery at approximately 8m in height



**Image 8:** Illustrative photoshop image of dawn redwood trees viewed from the street to give an estimated visual interpretation of what it might look like when the trees are first planted. The red arrow indicates the direction of view illustrated on Image 3

In the context of these observations, my opinion is that the early removal of these trees which are BS 5837 category C will offer an opportunity to improve the overall character of the site. Whilst their loss will be noticeable in the immediate vicinity, on balance, there is a large percentage of tree coverage in the locality that will buffer these losses and once the trees are removed, it will allow the provision of new sustainable trees that will offer instant screening and enhancement to the overall canopy cover in the area.

I would be happy to provide further explanation and clarification if required.

Yours sincerely

Mark Wadey ND Arb CUEW MArborA MICFor

**Enclosure:** 1: Email from Mr Remmington (Camden Borough Tree Officer)

Letter to Zen Developments about the management of trees at 14 Netherhall Gardens, Hampstead  
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Enclosure 1: Email from Mr Remmington (Camden Borough Tree Officer)

**From:** Remmington, James [mailto:[James.Remmington@camden.gov.uk](mailto:James.Remmington@camden.gov.uk)]  
**Sent:** 02 March 2015 11:02  
**To:** Paul Godfrey; Rose, Charles  
**Subject:** RE: 14 Netherhall Gardens

Dear Mr Godfrey,

Apologies for the late response.

I can confirm that, following your exploratory excavation, the rooting environment uncovered would not allow for the satisfactory retention of trees T13 and T14 as part of the approved scheme.

I also confirm that the council is open to the removal and replacement of these trees on that basis - subject to a suitable amendment to the existing application.

Given that trees are a material consideration in the planning process, the application should take the form of a material amendment, supported by an arboricultural report based on the findings of the recent excavation.

Additionally, given that the main issues with the trees is their visual amenity, I would also like to see a brief visual impact study undertaken to support the proposed replacements – this can either be a separate undertaking, or it can be included with the arboricultural report.

It is considered that fastigate Oak is an acceptable species for the replacements. However, the existing trees are shown in the original arboricultural report as being 17 and 18m high and based on this, the council's preference is for replacements larger than 5-6m.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions.

Kind regards,

James Remmington  
Tree and Landscape Officer

Telephone: 020 7974 4816

**From:** Paul Godfrey [mailto:[paul@zenddevelopments.co.uk](mailto:paul@zenddevelopments.co.uk)]  
**Sent:** 17 February 2015 09:33  
**To:** Remmington, James; Rose, Charles  
**Subject:** 14 Netherhall Gardens

Dear Mr Remington

Trees 13 and 14 at 14 Netherhall Gardens, London, NW3 5TQ

I am writing to set out the findings from our site visit which took place on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February.

## Enclosure 1: Email from Mr Remmington (Camden Borough Tree Officer)

As you are aware we exposed the ground on the corner of the site which showed expensive roots directly below the existing surface levels from trees T13 and T14.

Due to the permission, allowing for the construction of a basement carpark access ramp beside the trees, as well as the issues regarding the adjoining school, it is now common ground between us that the trees cannot be safely retained.

In this regard we proposed to remove and replace the trees with suitable native species. At present we are proposing new semi-mature trees of about 5–6m in height, preferably fastigate oaks. Our intention would be to carry out these works as part of an amendment to the extant permission.

I would be grateful if you could confirm that, given the documentary and on-site evidence, you are in agreement that the trees can be replaced and that an amendment to the current application would be an appropriate way of formally agreeing the removal of the trees.

I have also attached a letter from Burrells dated 13th November 2014. As you can see, Jeremy advised that the two trees should be removed and replaced with two new semi-mature trees of about 5-6m in height, preferably fastigiated oaks or another native species, with narrow crown form. I would be grateful if you are able to give a view on the acceptability of the proposed size and species of the new trees.

I look forward to hearing from you


Kind Regards

Paul Godfrey



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