



13 Kemplay Road, Hampstead

Decay Assessment Report

7th May 2016

Client	Kemplay Road Ltd.
Job name	13 Kemplay Road, Hampstead
Report title	Decay Assessment Report
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	Name	Position	Date
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

For information relating to the site description, proposed works and previous arboricultural survey work conducted for the site by GreenLink Ecology Ltd., please refer to (updated) Tree Survey Report ref: 16_1206_Report_NT_GR-V2, dated 11th April 2016 and associated Tree Protection Plan (TPP) ref: 16_1206_TPP_NT_GR_Rev_A.

In summary, the report referred to above identified that the subject tree (T2) had significant basal decay, such that it's Predicted Safe Useful Life Expectancy (PSULE) is limited to circa 10-20 years. As a result of the limited PSULE, the tree was placed in the 'C' category in accordance with British Standard (BS) 5837:2012 *"Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations"* and recommended for removal to enable the proposed development.

In consultation feedback to the planning application, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) Tree Officer (TO) has requested that the extent of the decay is investigated further, to justify the fact that the tree was placed in the 'C' category, which should therefore not be a constraint to development.

1.2 Aims of Study

GreenLink Ecology Ltd. has been commissioned by Kemplay Road Ltd. to conduct a detailed assessment of the decay present at the base of the sycamore tree (T2) in the front garden of 13 Kemplay Road, Hampstead.

The purpose of the report is to establish the significance of the decay at the base of the tree (T2) and evaluate its likely impact on future management.

2 Methodology

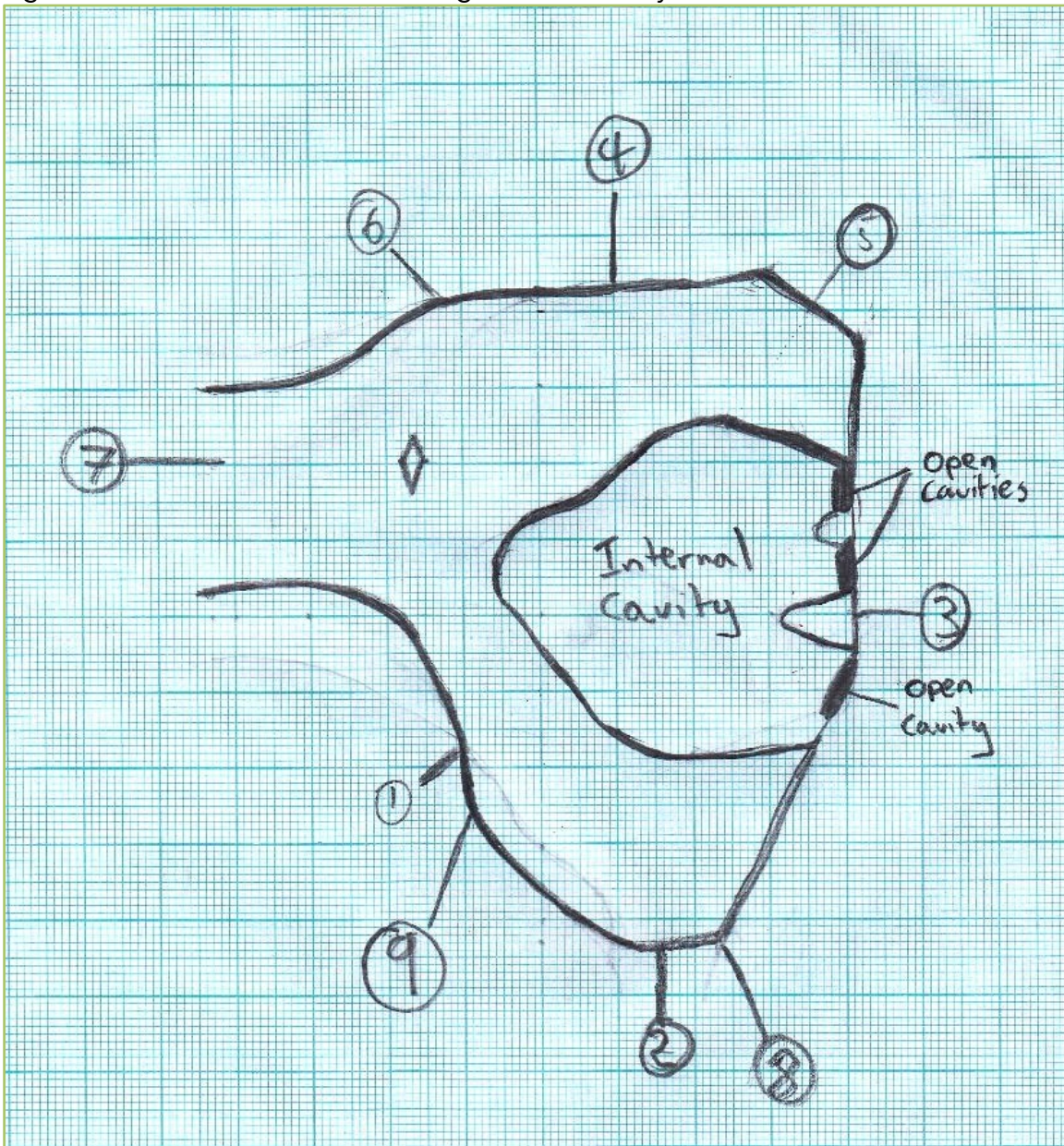
A detailed investigation was conducted by experienced consultant arborist Neil Taylor on 26th April 2016. A resistograph was used at the points illustrated in Section 3.1 below at 100mm above ground level. The resistograph output (Appendix 1) enabled a sketch of the extent of the internal decay to be produced.

3 Results

Nine resistograph tests were carried out at 100mm above ground level and a sketch drawn of the cross section of the tree, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

The numbered points represent each resistograph test, the output of which can be seen in Appendix 1. Eight of the nine tests completed showed areas of no resistance which signifies an internal cavity. The results enabled a sketch of the cavity to be drawn onto the cross section to give a visual representation of the resistograph readings.

Figure 1: Cross section sketch showing extent of decay



4 Assessment

The results of the original survey (ref: 16_1206_Report_NT_GR-V2) indicate that the tree is approximately 17 metres in height with a crown diameter of approximately six metres. The tree appears to have been pollarded in the past 20 years. The regrowth from which appears to have been further reduced in the past 5-10 years. Any low branches of the tree have been removed, giving a crown clearance of six metres.

The value of the target area within falling distance of the tree is considered to be high.

No fungal fruiting bodies or rhizomorphs were found. Three open cavities at the base of the tree on the eastern side were recorded and are illustrated in Figure 1 above.

The results of the resistograph tests show that the tree has significant internal decay that is likely to compromise its structural integrity, although the extent of the decay is not considered sufficient to require its immediate removal. However, the current height of the tree means there is a high lever arm effect imposed on the weak point at the base. A reduction in height of five metres would significantly reduce the lever arm effect but would result in the majority of the canopy being lost, reducing the tree's ability to photosynthesise and therefore resist the fungal pathogen attacking the base of the tree. Furthermore, a significant reduction of the tree will detract from its amenity value within the context of the street scene.

Although not immediately essential on the grounds of safety, a sustainable approach to the management of the tree would be remove it and replant with a more suitable species such as silver birch (*Betula pendula*).

The two mature sycamore trees either side of the subject tree will continue to provide tree cover when viewed from either end of the road until the replacement tree becomes established.

5 Recommendations

Crown reduction work would likely result in a further loss of vitality as the tree's ability to photosynthesise would be reduced. This would likely result in the tree's capacity to resist the fungal pathogen being further diminished.

Therefore, it is recommended that the subject tree should be removed. The stump should be ground out and the area replanted with a more suitable species such as silver birch.

6 Conclusions

In response to consultation feedback to the planning application, GreenLink Ecology Ltd. was commissioned to conduct a detailed assessment of the decay present at the base of the sycamore tree (T2) in the front garden of 13 Kemplay Road, Hampstead.

As a result of the assessment, it has been established that the tree has significant internal decay, resulting in the structural integrity of the tree being compromised.

It is expected that the likelihood of structural failure will increase over time and if the tree were to fail, the value of the target area is considered to be high.

A reduction in height of five metres will significantly reduce the likelihood of failure at the base of the tree. However, due to the high canopy of the tree, this will significantly reduce the tree's ability to photosynthesise and therefore resist the pathogen. The amenity value to of the tree will also be lost, so a more sustainable approach is considered to be the removal of the tree and subsequent replacement with a more suitable species (e.g. silver birch).

The above points are considered to support the categorisation of the tree in the original (updated) tree survey report, ref. 16_1206_Report_NT_GR-V2.

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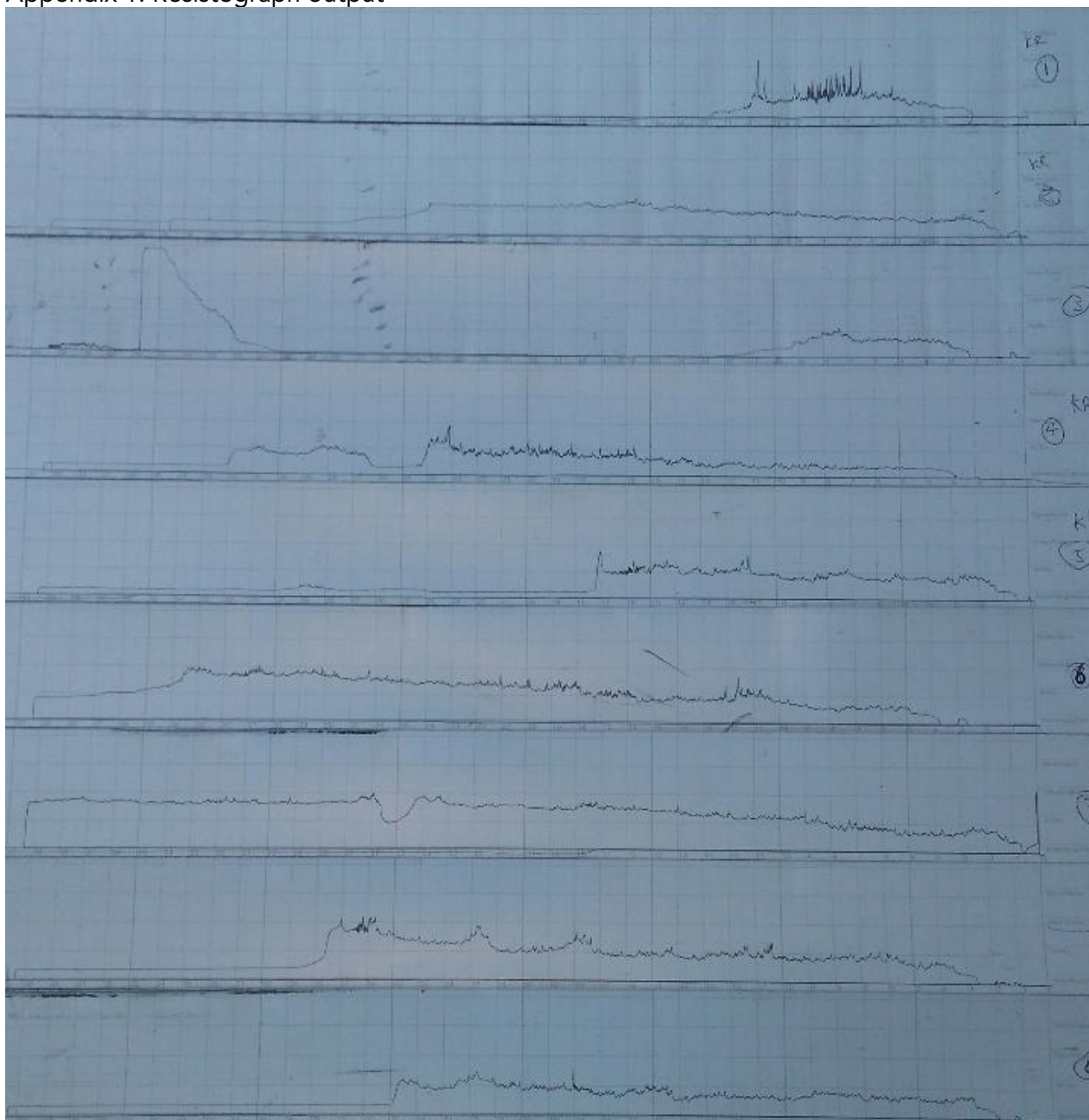
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8 Appendices

Appendix 1: Resistograph output



Appendix 2: Supporting photograph

Photograph 1: View of the base from the east

