

Technical Note 001 Revision A
Pruning required to allow for the construction of the
proposed replacement building

Introduction

A planning application is before the Council to consider the application to replace the building at 150 Holborn. The building is proximate to retained trees and the Council have raised concern at the level of pruning required to the two retained plane trees.

Further concerns were expressed following the submission of our Technical Note 001 that has led to the provision of further information in this revised note.

Consideration

Contrary to concerns our tree report was based on the plans provided to us and we show, using a dashed cyan colour line the extent of the projecting western and southern elements of the proposed building. We have explained before that the report provided our opinion on the level of pruning required and that it was detailed on the Tree Protection Plan.

If we look in more detail at the requirement we should consider the actual appearance of the trees and their relationship to the current and proposed building. Figure 1 below shows tree 1 and its relationship to the current building. It was taken at the time of the tree survey in November 2015. One can see that the tree stem leans away from the building, that also projects over the pavement, and over the road. There is already a significant separation between the existing building and the branches of the tree.

On this façade the proposed 2nd floor building projection is from circa 7m above footpath level and so is above the point at which the stem bends out across the road. Despite the already good separation between building and tree there is a need to prune further branches. One can determine from the photo that these branches are relatively minor in relation to the tree and that their loss does not materially alter the appearance of the tree – the tree is already one-sided as is expected when such large species of tree is grown next to a building.

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Figure 1: Tree 1 showing relationship to existing building

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Figure 2 below, also taken at the time of the tree survey, shows tree 2 and its relationship to the existing building. One can also determine that there is good separation from the existing building. If one looks closely one can see the truncated branch ends associated with current pruning that results in the generous separation. A stray limb extends to the upper right of the picture to cross the southern elevation of the building. It cannot be seen in this photograph but it too is remote from the façade. These ‘outlying’ type branches are vulnerable to breakage as they are subject to abnormal wind loads. At some future point, the tree owner may be obliged to undertake pruning to reduce the branch length and therefore its propensity to breakage.

One can determine from the photograph that the pruning required to accommodate the proposed building will require further shortening of already truncated branches and pruning of other minor pruning. Akin with tree 1 the visual results of the pruning are little different to that experienced with the current regime. Pruning to accommodate this large species of tree so close to a building will merely continue the one-sided appearance

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Figure 2: Tree 2 and its relationship to the building. Tree 1 is in the background where the degree of separation from the building can be seen

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Whilst we specify the work required as pruning to provide 2m separation from the proposed building the actual work, if undertaken in accordance with best practice will be sympathetic to the main branch framework and if, for instance, one of the main stems was within that 2m distance, it would be retained. Other smaller branches would of course be removed but the aim is to achieve harmony between the tree and the building.

As described beforehand there is a need to undertake repeat pruning in future years to maintain the separation, as is undertaken now.

Summary

The photos in this Technical Note reveal current levels of separation and that the proposed pruning, whilst requiring more pruning than at present, has little impact on the appearance of the trees that are already one-sided.

With these large species of tree so close to buildings they will always have a one-sided appearance and require pruning.

Jago Keen

6th August 2016