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Our ref: SJA ltr 16216-01

Dear Martin,

Re: Project H – Witanhurst, 41 Highgate West Hill N6: Inspection of one lime tree (no. 655)

I write further to your instruction to undertake a visual tree inspection (VTA) of one tree (common lime no. 655) growing opposite No. 91 Highgate West Hill, in order to assess the tree's likelihood of structural failure, and the likelihood of any such failure causing harm to persons or property and the severity of the consequences of any such failure.

I visited the site on Wednesday 25th January 2017. Weather conditions at the time were dry and overcast and being deciduous, the tree was not in leaf at this time of year.

I have recorded the tree's species, dimensions, age, physiological and structural condition and have presented these in the attached tree survey schedule, along with recommendations for remedial works necessary and time scales in which the work should be carried out. I have also considered the damage that the radial growth of the tree roots may be causing to the adjacent retaining brick wall and pavement.

Whilst on site I was informed that the occupiers of the properties on the opposite side of Highgate West Hill have expressed concerns over the structural stability of the tree as have numerous bus drivers who pass the tree regularly. Both the properties on the opposite side of the road and the road itself are within falling distance of the tree.

On initial inspection it was noted that the trunk was covered in hessian and chestnut palings to a height of 1.5m. This was there to protect the trunk from damage during any construction activities on

the site, and so in order to inspect the tree fully this protection was removed so that any defects that may have been beneath would be visible.

The tree appeared to be of normal physiological condition with average bud density and shoot extension growth throughout the crown. No evidence of any fruiting bodies of decay fungi were present at the time of inspection either on the ground, at the base, trunk or in the canopy of the tree. There was evidence that the crown had previously been reduced although this was only minor and not to any significant amount.

The tree has a single trunk to a height of 2m where it divides into two co-dominant stems, and both the trunk and the two stems lean heavily over the road to the south-east. The height of the tree was measured to be 19.5m. The two co-dominant stems have a tight compression fork with evidence of included bark meaning that this is a weak union and at increased risk of failure which is further increased due to the heavy lean of the stems. This is the main defect with this tree and I assessed the risk of failure of this part of the tree, according to the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Risk Assessment methodology, as **possible**.

In terms of potential target, if this part of the tree were to fail the failed stem / stems would reach both the road and the houses on the opposite side of the road. The road is a busy road and has a **frequent** occupancy rate.

Due to the size of the parts being large with the stem diameters of the co-dominant stems estimated to be 260mm and 350mm in diameter the consequences following any such failure are **severe.**

Using the ISA risk rating matrix with the results as discussed above, I have determined the risk associated with this defect as **moderate** and therefore remediation works are recommended to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Main structural roots were found to be exposed on the south-east side of the trunk from 0.55m above the footway to 1m, this is where the boundary wall would have been higher to match the adjacent sections of wall at 1.2m high. It was evident that these roots have displaced this top section of wall which has resulted in its removal; the lower section of wall still stands but is now bowing considerably towards the pavement at the location of substantial structural roots on the south side of the trunk. As this root continues to grow radially it will exert increased pressure on this section of the wall which will inevitably result in further damage to it which will require either repair or removal. There was also evidence of previous repairs being carried out to the pavement adjacent to the tree which it is assumed was damaged by the roots of this tree.

In terms of visual amenity, this is a significant tree in terms of size and is readily visible in views along Highgate West Hill from both directions and due to its significant lean it stands out from the other trees along the road. However, the view along the road in both directions would not be significantly altered if this tree were to be removed, as there are other significant trees adjacent which would give the impression of an unbroken tree line along this section of the road when viewed from either direction following the removal of this specimen. Consequently, the tree is not an essential component of the local landscape.

In conclusion therefore, due to the risk of failure of this lime tree which has been assessed as moderate using the ISA methodology, the potential for it to cause further damage to the adjacent retaining wall and footpath and the insignificant change to the arboricultural character of the area if this tree were to be removed, I recommend that this tree is felled to ground level within 4 weeks of the date of this letter. The location of the tree is shown on the attached tree works plan (SJA TWP 16216-01).

I trust this provides you with sufficient information for now, however please do not hesitate to get back if you have any comments or queries.

Your sincerely,

Tom Wawman