

Mr S Harper,  
38 Brookfield Park,  
London,  
NW5 1ET

Date: 03 August 2017

Your ref:

My ref 17/048

FAO

**By e mail**

Dear Mr Harper,

**Sycamore tree at Holly Village, Swain's Lane**

1. Further to my visit and inspection of the tree on 12 July I hope this report is helpful.
2. You asked me to advise because the branch ends are encroaching on the house, potentially causing damage, and you want to alleviate other problems including shade and the honeydew that drips from the tree.

**Background**

*The tree*

3. The tree is a mature sycamore growing in the grounds of Holly Village, close to the front left hand corner of no.38. Close access was not possible, but it is readily visible from your property and the road. It is about 17m high and has a single vertical trunk approximately 600mm in diameter. The first main branches start at about 5m and the crown has radial spreads between about 7m to the NE over Swain's Lane, increasing to 10 - 12m to the SW and SE. One of the lowest major branches is on the SE side facing your house, so the crown overhangs the drive next to your house and the branch ends are starting to touch the gable wall of the house.
4. The foliage is slightly sparse and there is some scattered dead wood, but that is normal in mature trees and this one is reasonably healthy looking. There are no signs of major pruning or other work in the past. There is also no evidence of structurally significant decay, although it was not possible to make a full inspection of the tree's base.
5. Most of the problems you are experiencing relate to the growth of the major low branch extending towards the house and the smaller one to the east (right as seen from your side). Removing the large branch entirely would create a large wound on the tree's trunk and would involve working back beyond the boundary but it would be possible to alleviate the problems without needing to do that. I have specified suitable work below and attached two annotated photographs, which show what is intended reasonably well.

**Specification**

6. Low main branch growing more or less directly over the front boundary of no.38, as shown on the photographs:
  - a) Remove secondary branches growing downwards from the larger one to increase clearance to about 6m.
  - b) Shorten end growth of this branch, and those above where necessary, by up to 2m to clear no.38
7. Smaller branch to the right of the main one, as seen from no.38.
  - a) Shorten end growth back to a point vertically above the boundary.
8. All work is to be carried out in accordance with BS3998:2010, Recommendations for tree work.

**Restrictions**

9. Holly Village and your house are in Dartmouth Park Conservation Area, so Camden Council must be given six weeks notice of any proposed tree work. They can allow that either by confirming that they do not object or by letting the six weeks lapse without making a tree preservation order (TPO) to prevent the work. Camden's web site does not have site specific information on TPOs, so it is possible that the sycamore is already protected by one. However the process for serving a six week conservation area notice and making a TPO application are the same, the difference is the way the council administers them, so that does not make any practical difference from our viewpoint. I have prepared this report and attached sketch plan so it can be submitted to Camden Council with the application.
10. As the tree is in Holly Village there is no direct control over it, but I gather that you have been having amicable discussions with them about work on the tree. There is a common law right for neighbours to cut back growth that extends over adjacent property back to the boundary, whether or not the tree owner agrees. The work I have suggested does not involve cutting back beyond their boundary, but the right does not override statutory protection, so Camden's consent would still be needed.
11. I hope this is helpful but if you have any queries or wish to discuss the matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

*Simon Pryce*

Simon Pryce

## Photographs

