

Andrew Nuthall  
22 Pilgrims Lane,  
London,  
NW3 1SN

Our reference: G86  
18<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear Mr Nuthall

**Removal of one ash tree at 22 Pilgrims Lane**

I refer to your instructions dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 2017 asking me to attend at your property, 22 Pilgrims Lane, London, NW3 1SN to carry out a tree inspection. In particular you wished me to advise you with regard to the desirability or otherwise of retaining an ash tree under your control and in the rear garden (Figure 1). The property is within a Conservation Area and therefore trees are protected.

**Figure 1.** Ash tree in rear garden of property and lime in rear garden of 10 Downshire Hill



I attended at the property on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2017 to inspect the trees. The ash is located close to the rear boundary and has a trunk diameter of 410 mm, is 15 m tall and has a canopy spread of 3.5 m to north, 4 m to the south and east and 2.5 m to the west. It appeared to be of normal health and

vigour. The tree has previously experience heavy crown reduction to a height of about 11 m but there is significant recent regrowth. The Camden planning website indicates Conservation Area section 211 notifications for works to the ash tree were received in 1986, 1994, 2000, 2004 and 2011. In each case the council offered no objections to the work. In 2004 the notified works were for a 50% crown reduction and in 2011 it was for a 25% crown reduction. The fact that a severe reduction was carried out in 2004 indicates that the council does not place a high amenity value on the tree, and not enough to put a Tree Preservation Order on it. The tree is subservient to the larger lime which is located in the rear garden of 10 Downshire Hill. The ash can only be glimpsed briefly from Pilgrims Lane and therefore its public amenity value is negligible.

You have informed me that prior to purchasing the property you instructed a firm of consulting engineers to inspect it and provide a report. The report is dated 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and notes that subsidence has occurred and is still occurring in the rear extension:

*The subsidence is almost certainly due to a combination of the clay soil, the southerly aspect of the hill and the mature trees at the end of the garden. The recent movement is not large but has been ongoing for many years pulling away at the junction of the extension with the main house as can be seen by the recent cracks. The external stair is suffering from similar movement and pulling away.*

Removal of the ash tree would provide some degree of relief from subsidence, but the potential ongoing role of the lime cannot be overlooked.

I note that the ash tree is located to the east and it therefore blocks light in the morning through to early afternoon. The lime, to the south east, then takes over blocking light for the rest of the day. Removal of the ash would allow light into the garden for part of the day.

I conclude from the considerations above that it would not be unreasonable to remove the ash. The reasons are as follows:

- 1) The tree is a material contributor to clay shrinkage subsidence;
- 2) The tree blocks a significant amount of light;
- 3) The tree has negligible public amenity value.

I recommend that a Section 211 notice should be sent to the London Borough of Camden for removal of the ash.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Martin Dobson**  
BSc (Hons) Biol, DPhil, FArborA, RCarborA, MEWI

