

Simon Pryce Arboriculture

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Date: 16 June 2019
Your ref:
My ref 19/032
FAO Brian Kernahan
By e mail

Dear Brian,

51 Belsize Park Gardens - site for new bin store at the front

1. Further to our site meeting on 16 May I hope this report is helpful.
2. The proposed site for the new bin enclosure is in the front left hand corner of the garden just inside the gate, where there is already a small slightly raised area, surfaced with concrete at the front and with a small area of soil behind that, in which there is a drain inspection cover. You asked me to advise because there is also a shrub growing in the corner of the soil next to the drain, which might be affected by the work.

Shrub

3. The shrub is an established Laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus*) about 3.5m high with a radial spread of 1.5 - 2m. It is a bushy specimen with several stems and smaller shoots from near ground level and the foliage is dense and healthy. The largest stem is about 90mm diameter at 1.5m above ground.

Drain

4. We lifted the cover to inspect the drain, which is about 3m deep. The shaft has severe cracking showing that it was built with bricks and lined with concrete. The uppermost section has vertical cracks in each of the shorter sides and has displaced about 30mm laterally towards the front wall, i.e. away from the shrub. The joints between the sections and the shaft and cover base have opened and there are numerous roots growing through them and the cracks. I did not take samples of these, there is a small pink flowered thorn in front of no.53, but that is the other side of the boundary wall and the only likely source of these roots is the viburnum.

Discussion


Effects on the drain

5. The local subsoil is London clay, which creates a potential for subsidence where roots dry the soil beneath structures, so that it shrinks. However the damage here is clearly due to direct pressure from the main roots of the viburnum pushing the uppermost section of the inspection shaft. It appears that the forward side is now being restrained by the concrete slab, but the other side of the shaft is still under pressure from the roots and the distortion and cracking is particularly severe in the rear left hand corner near the base of the shrub. The cover frame is heavy duty so has not distorted, which makes the damage less obvious than it might otherwise be.
6. The viburnum is mature, but healthy and capable of some more growth, so the problem will worsen if it is left. Pruning can address indirect clay shrinkage problems, but is not effective where the problem is due to direct pressure from the main roots of the tree or shrub. The upper section of the shaft would need to be rebuilt and the cover base refitted, which would inevitably involve major damage to the shrub. It is unlikely to survive that, so the only practical option is to remove it.

New bin store

7. The construction of a new bin store in the front corner of the garden could affect roots, but that is no longer a consideration as the viburnum needs to be removed in order to repair the drain. If the work leaves a reasonable area of bare ground new planting would be possible. If that is done after the work is complete the root systems will adapt to local conditions as they find them, although it would be advisable for any woody species to be farther from the structures.
8. Viburnums are regarded as shrubs rather than trees, but this one's main trunk is just over the conservation area size limit of 75mm diameter at 1.5m above ground, so strictly speaking Camden should be served with a six week Section 211 notice of intent to remove it. In the circumstances it would be reasonable for them to allow that and very hard for them to justify making a tree preservation order (TPO), which is the only way they could prevent it.
9. 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,

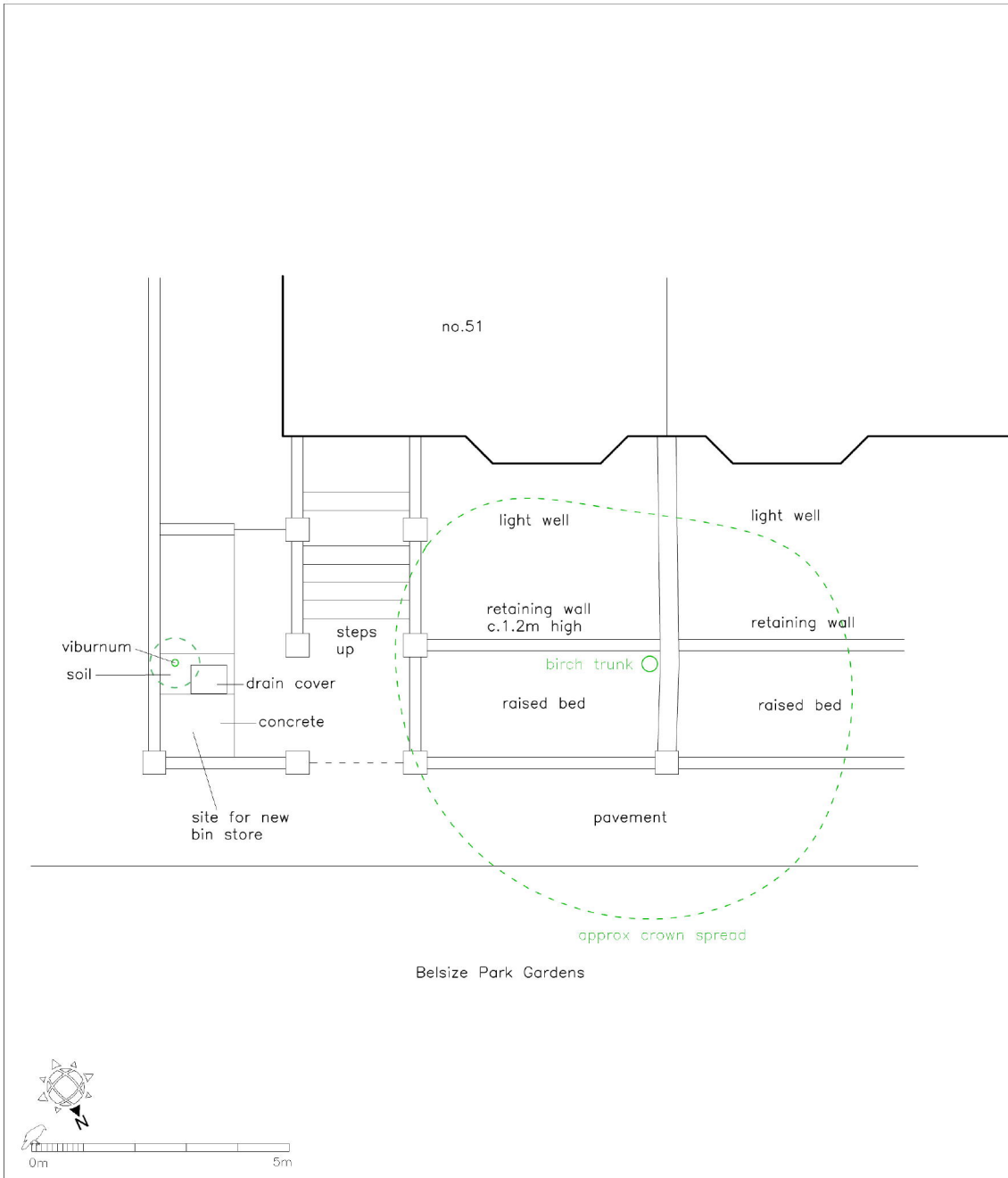


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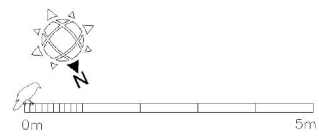
Photograph



View into the drain, showing severe cracking and the base of the viburnum to the far right, as seen from this direction.



Belsize Park Gardens



Simon Pryce Arboriculture CP House, Otterspool Way, Watford, WD25 8HP tel 01923 467600 info@simonpryce.co.uk www.simonpryce.co.uk	Client: Kernahans Property Consultants	Ref: 19/032	Rev:	Notes:
	Site: 51 Belsize Park Gardens, London, NW3 4JL	Scale: 1:100 at A4		
	Title: Shrub, damaged drain and new bin store at the front left	Original drawing: Simon Pryce		
	Date: 16 May 2019			