



Arboricultural and Planning Impact Assessment Report: Wac Arts, Belsize Park, The Old Town Hall, 213 Haverstock Hill, NW3 4QP

Report Date: 10th August 2019

Ref: ASH/PEW/AIASR/0810:19



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Arboricultural Report

Location: Wac Arts, Belsize Park, The Old Town Hall, 213 Haverstock Hill, NW3 4QP Ref: ASH/PEW/AIASR/0810:19 Client: Wac Arts Report Date: 10th August 2019 Rev 1: n/a Date of Inspection: 18th July 2019 Trial Pit Inspection: n/a Prepared by: Philip Wood BSc(Hons)LAM.

Please note that abbreviations introduced in [Square brackets] *may be used throughout the report.*

Instructions

Issued by – Robert Sakula of Ash Sakula Architect on behalf of the Client

TERMS OF REFERENCE – Ashmore Arboricultural Services Ltd. [AAS] were instructed to survey the subject tree(s) within the grounds of the property close to the proposed development, in order to assess their general condition, constraints they may pose to development, the potential impact that the changes on site may have on the tree(s) and identify recommendations (where appropriate) to safeguard or improve the health of the tree(s), providing a brief planning impact and integration statement for the conversion of the carpark to a terrace area. The proposed works are to create a new terrace near to the single established tree on the northwest side of the building. The main envelope of the building is not being extended closer to the tree and the existing car park will have the existing levels raised to provide a new terrace area. The site already has some built structures close to the tree. It is known that the property is listed and is set within a Conservation Area, but the tree is not believed to be subject of tree preservation order [TPO] at this point in time. Therefore, there are planning restrictions on pruning or removing both branches and roots of the tree(s) without reference to the Local Planning Authority. The Local Authority give guidance related to development near trees and where there may be some tree related impact, the proposed development should be assessed by an arboricultural consultant to safeguard the long-term health and well-being of the trees on, or adjacent, to the site for the future sustainability of the local area. Also, where trees are affected or require removal by a proposed scheme the impact should be assessed in accordance with the current standard.

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Executive Summary

The proposal for the site which needs to be considered in relation to trees is to create a new terrace near to the single established tree on the northwest side of the building. The main envelope of the building is not being extended closer to the tree and the existing car park will have the existing levels raised to provide a new terrace area. Plans reviewed by AAS indicated that the proposed design for the raising of the terrace should not be impactive on the tree located in the existing raised planter. The architect has confirmed that the intention is to replace the existing entrance of the car park with a new brick wall which will act as a retaining wall for the raising up of the car park area to provide a level terrace area which will be constructed above the level of the existing impermeable tarmac. This new build up will be permeable or semi-permeable which will aid the availability of moisture precipitation and gaseous exchange compared to the existing fully impermeable tarmac surface. The level of the new terrace area will be achieved by carefully removing or breaking up the tarmac and the new level being built up. The wearing course of the tarmac may be removed but there will be no digging down below the existing wearing course, the new level will be built up to that of the existing planter around the tree approximately 30cm in line with the level of the public footpath outside the site. The scheme is not considered likely to have a significantly detrimental impact on the long-term health of the retained protected Horse Chestnut (T1) or the amenity of the conservation area. There would be the potential for some landscape planting to be improved within the scheme which would enable some softening and greening of the site.

The proposed scheme would not require the removal of any significant trees on or adjacent to the site. The proposed scheme is only close to the RPA of the Horse Chestnut (T1) and this could be adequately protected during construction, subject to appropriate safeguards, tree protection measures and appropriate site-specific sensitive method statements for activities proposed within the root protection zone of Horse Chestnut (T1).

A site-specific assessment has been made which concludes it would be acceptable to construct the scheme and sufficiently protect the root system of the tree on site. The tree on site should be relatively unaffected by the scheme, with the potential to improve the growing environment, if carried out sympathetically with appropriate tree protection measures and this would not result in a negative visual amenity impact to the street scene, as no trees require removal or are significantly affected there should be no material arboriculturaly related planning reason to withholding planning consent.

Given that: the tree in this area of the site should be unaffected by the proposed scheme, there should be no tree related reasons for refusing the proposed scheme. This should be subject to an appropriately worded condition being attached to any planning approval for the implementation of a landscape scheme with appropriate establishment maintenance schedule for any new soft landscape planting (if considered necessary).





Documents Supplied

A number of documents were provided to AAS prior to and subsequent to the site visit and these include, but are not limited to:

AST HORE	Aerial View Wac Arts	Date: 10 th July 19	
ASTHORS	Location Plan	Date: June 2019	Dwg No: OTH-ASA-002
ALC MORT	Existing North West Elevation - Street	Date: June 2019	Dwg No: OTH-ASA-023
ALTHORS	Existing Front Elevation	Date: June 2019	Dwg No: OTH-ASA-021
ALL HORE	Existing Level 2 Plan	Date: June 2019	Dwg No: OTH-ASA-012
AST HORE	Proposed Level 2 Plan	Date: June 2019	Dwg No: OTH-ASA-112

1.0 Scope of Survey

- 1.1 The survey is concerned with the arboricultural aspects of the site only.
- 1.2 This report is only meant to identify the trees within close proximity to the specific section of the site currently being phased for development works, later phases of works if commissioned would need to be separately assessed.
- 1.3 The planning status of the trees was not investigated in extensive detail, but the tree is known to be located within the Belsize Park Conservation Area. It is recommended that an enquiry would need to be made to Camden Council as the Local Planning Authority [LPA] to confirm if there is a tree preservation order in place on the subject tree(s).
- 1.4 A qualified and trained Horticulturalist and Arboriculturist undertook the site visit and prepared the report. The contents of this report are based on this. Whilst reference may be made to built structures or soils, these are only opinions and confirmation should be obtained from a qualified expert as required.
- 1.5 Where reference to trees in third party properties, these trees were surveyed from within the subject property, therefore a detailed assessment was not possible and some (if not all) measurements were estimated.
- 1.6 Discussions took place between the surveyor and no other 3rd parties.
- 1.7 The trees were inspected on the basis of the Visual Tree Assessment method expounded by Mattheck and Breleor (The body language of tree, DoE booklet Research for Amenity Trees No. 4, 1994).
- 1.8 The survey was undertaken in accord with British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction recommendations (where applicable or required).
- 1.9 Pruning works will be required to be in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 (Tree work Recommendations).
- 1.10 The client's attention is drawn to the responsibilities under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), prior to commissioning any tree works.





2.0 Survey Method

- 2.1 The survey was conducted from ground level with the aid of binoculars, where required.
- 2.2 No tissue samples were taken nor was any internal investigation of the subject trees undertaken.
- 2.3 No soil samples were taken.
- 2.4 The height of each subject tree was estimated or calculated by use of a clinometer.
- 2.5 The stem diameters were measured in line with the requirements set out in BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction recommendations.
- 2.6 The crown spreads were measured with an electronic distometer or retractable tape measure. Where the crown radius was notably different in any direction this has been noted on the Tree Survey Plan (appendix A), or in the tree table (appendix B).
- 2.7 The Root Protection Area [RPA] for each tree is included in the tree table, both as a radius of a circle, and as an area. The Theoretical Radial Root Protection Area is illustrated in **Pink** & The Site Specific Assessed Theoretical Root Protection Area is illustrated in **Orange** in appendix A (*Where Applicable*)
- 2.8 All of the trees that were inspected during the site visit are detailed on the Tree Survey plan at Appendix A. Please note that the attached plans are for indicative purposes only, and that the trees are plotted at approximate positions based on the plan provided by the surveyor. The trees on this plan are categorised and shown in the following format: COLOUR CODING AND RATING OF TREES:

Category A – Trees of high quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 40yrs. Colour = light green trunk outline on plan.

Category B – Trees of moderate quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 20yrs. Colour = mid blue trunk outline on plan.

Category C – Trees of low quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 10yrs. Colour = uncoloured/grey trunk outline on plan.

Category U – Those in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10years. Colour = red trunk outline on plan.



The crowns of those trees that are proposed for removal or trees where the crown spread is deemed insignificant in relation to the proposed development are not always shown on the appended plan; however, their stem locations may be marked for reference.

All references to tree rating are made in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 Tree in relation to design, demolition and construction.

2.9 TREE PRUNING / REMOVAL: A list of all tree works that are required is included in the tree schedule at Appendix B.

Pruning/removal has only been specified for the following reasons:

- Where works are required for safety reasons.
- Where work is needed to mitigate a legal responsibility or duty.
- Where work is required to improve tree form, or improve the longer-term health and management of the tree in its current surroundings.
- Where the client is considering making improvements to the garden and is looking to open up new opportunities for alternative tree planting.
- Where works are considered appropriate to reduce or mitigate the impact of the tree(s) may or may be likely to have on property.
- Where the trees are not required by the client and they are not considered worthy of the imposition of a Tree Preservation Order.

Where any tree work is needed, this work will be in accordance with British Standard 3998: 2010 (Tree Work – Recommendations).





Horse Chestnut (T1) in raised planter





3.0 <u>Appraisal</u>

3.1 The subject property is located on the corner of Haverstock Hill and Belsize Avenue in the London Borough of Camden, North London. However, the primary tree of interest is located within the front flank car park area in a raised planter. The site does have a few other trees located on it however these are very remote from the area subject of the planning application and are not relevant to be surveyed as part of this AIA assessment. The property is located within a Belsize Park Conservation Area but the tree is not believed to be subject to a TPO. The car park area has a raised profile working away from the public highway and is almost completely tarmaced with the only open soil being within the smaller planter around the base of the tree. The planter and car park hard surface have been present for many years and it is intended to raise the level of the car park to create a terrace seating area.

3.2 The quality of the Horse Chestnut tree:

Having inspected the tree: The Horse Chestnut (T1) is a street front specimen of significant broader amenity to the conservation area, the crown of the tree has a small degree of distance between the branches and the flank elevation of the building but it is in direct conflict with the public highway lamp column in Belsize Avenue which requires pruning to resolve the various conflict issues present, which would require further notification to the local planning authority:

- The Horse Chestnut (T1) is located in a small raised brick planter adjacent to the boundary, the surface level of this planter is at the same level as the public footpath. The public footpath is located at a raised level compared to the road level of Belsize Avenue. The planter is surrounded by tarmac on both the site and the public footpath. The specimen is a maturing tree which has moderate vigour, but is in direct conflict with the adjacent highway lamp column and with the crown starting to impede the highway due to the low crown; having not been pruned for some period of time. The tree appears stable with good extension growth and the tree is causing slight distortion of the tarmac car park surface in a few places.
- Some relatively minor pruning of the tree will resolve some of the conflict issues in the short-term subject to no objection by the local planning authority. No significant pruning of the tree is required to the proposed development works identified in the planning application.
- The tree is looking stressed due to the commonly found impact of Guignardia leaf blotch and the Horse Chestnut Leaf minor, though no significant action is required, beyond normal hygiene practices when clearing leaf litter.

The relevant details of the tree inspected have been included within the appended schedule.





3.3 At the point of inspection, the tree had no obvious fungal fruiting bodies visible from the ground inspection, which would normally help to identify trees of imminent hazard, which are factors that identify specific limits to a tree's appropriate retention in high foot fall areas or small contained garden situations. The Horse Chestnut however does have a number of areas of dieback of the old large pruning wounds which have some small pockets of interstitial decay though there is reasonable callus tissue around these points. The tree is of fair vigour though the tree would benefit from increased permeability of the hard-landscaped areas surrounding the tree.

Regular inspections of the retained tree(s) by a suitably trained or experienced arboriculturalist should be carried out. Subsequent remedial works will ensure that trees are maintained in a suitable manner to exist in harmony with the new structures and its occupants for many years to come

3.4 **The Proposal**:

The main emphasis of this assessment has been to consider the potential impact of the proposal and provide recommendations for safeguards to protect the tree during the development proposal while enhancing the growing condition of the tree in the longer term. The proposal for this area of the site which needs to be considered in relation to the tree is to replace the existing car park with a new level accessible terrace seating area. The architect has confirmed that the intention is to replace the existing entrance of the car park with a new brick wall which will act as a retaining wall for the raising up of the car park area to provide a level terrace area which will be constructed above the level of the existing impermeable tarmac. This new build up will be permeable or semi-permeable which will aid to enhance the availability of moisture precipitation and gaseous exchange compared to the existing fully impermeable tarmac surface. The level of the new terrace area will be achieved by carefully removing or breaking up the tarmac and the new level being built up. The wearing course of the tarmac may be removed but there will be no digging down below the existing wearing course, the new level will be built up to that of the existing planter around the tree approximately 30cm in line with the level of the public footpath outside the site.

All new pathways and soft landscaping areas within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of the retained trees should be designed using no-dig, up and over construction and in close co-ordination with the retained arboriculturalist using porous materials (where appropriate or practical as to be indicated in the final landscape detailing). Where hard surfaces or foundations are to be emplaced or removed within the RPAs; site specific method statement(s) should be produced with direct input from the retained arboriculturalist and appropriately monitored with onsite supervision of the arboriculturalist for tree/tree root sensitive stages, where required or conditioned.





3.5 Site Levels:

The cross-sections currently provided shows more clearly that the scheme is to be implemented by carefully raising the permeable surface of the existing car park to the level concurrent with the top of the existing raised planter structure which is above that of the existing ground level and does not require any lowering of the ground levels and this conforms with advice following the principles of the guidance note APN12. As it is not proposed to lower the site levels, it is possible to increase these using appropriate techniques to enable the new terrace surface to be installed without undue impact to the tree, as the existing surface is not permeable and raising the level with a permeable granular fill will not cause a reduction in the potential evapotranspiration and gaseous exchange potential of the Root Protection Zone (RPZ).

From assessment of the site it is understood that there is a general slope of the drive/soil area near to the entrance before it rises towards the base of the raised planter where the trunk of the tree is located. This works propose work in favour of the proposed scheme which shows the existing driveway and proposed terrace levels (including construction makeup) demonstrate that the level will be raised, which can be achieved by utilising a geogrid cellular containments system that does not require any excavation below the level of the existing driveway sub-base.

No level changes should occur within the root protection zone of any of the retained tree(s), beyond those proposed for the terrace as assessed as part of this report.

3.6 **Crown to Building Relationship:**

The existing height of the crown of the tree is such that the proposed structure would not require any additional pruning of the tree to achieve the proposal, though some relatively minor pruning has been identified as part of the standard good arboricultural maintenance of the tree. (See appendix A)

3.7 **Proximity of New Building and Paving:**

No new buildings or extensions are proposed with the RPA of the retained protected tree but there is alteration to the hard surfacing as noted. Some safeguards will be required to protect the tree for works in, or near to the RPA. If final appropriate design solution and precautions are taken, or conditioned, as part of the final design and planning process it is our view that it is possible to achieve the new altered terrace without undue impact. The established impermeable tarmac driveway will be retained while any other internal works are carried out to the main Wac Arts building and the raised trunk of the tree within the raised planter will be protected by tree protection fencing or hoarding. This will continue to act as tree root ground protection until the new perimeter boundary retaining wall has been constructed, which is considered to be acceptable.



3.8 Services Routes and Drainage Connection:

It is understood that the services routes and drains will remain as existing within the RPA of the retained protected tree. Should any new connections be required these will either be outside the RPA of the tree or the located within the proposed raised area of fill and will be installed at a level not below the existing tarmac surface. As a design principle any new services must be introduced into the building on the furthest side of the building from the tree and these should also be in armoured cable and ducted above or within the subbase of the existing tarmac if required. Where these are at a very shallow level, there will need to be some form of steel plate protection and tape warning placed over them. The exact specification must be checked with the relevant expert, but the above principles or similar must be followed, if this differs significantly this must be checked with the arboricultural consultant employed by the client or the LPA tree officer. They must not be excavated into the soil profile below the level of any undisturbed soil on site unless the excavation for any trench is arboriculturally supervised or the soil airlanced/blown out of the way to enable a services trench to be formed without significant root loss, but only if all other options have been fully exhausted first. Any proposed services and connection route should be indicated on the final plans.

3.9 **Assessment of Retained Tree's Root Protection Area:**

Section 4.6.3 of BS 5837: 2012 states that the Root Protection Area (RPA) of each tree should be assessed by an Arboriculturalist considering the likely morphology and disposition of the roots, when known to be influenced by past or existing site conditions.

Further to AAS's site visit, it has been advised that the Horse Chestnut (T1), should not be considered as a material constraint to the development in arboricultural terms, if works are undertaken with due care and subject to the appropriate final specification of the terrace fill material and permeability of Therefore, in arboricultural terms, and subject to the final surfaces. appropriate tree protection measures, where required, the scheme is considered acceptable as it would not negatively impact on the specimen proposed for retention on the site. Currently, the only significant structure proposed within the theoretical RPA of the tree proposed for retention is the increased level of the terrace compared to the existing car park. There will be an incursion into the theoretical RPA of the Horse Chestnut (T1) as part of the construction working area which is already protected to some degree by the existing tarmac and with some additional measures should not have any significant negative effect on the retained tree. Appendix A shows the Theoretical Radial RPAs (in Pink) of all of the trees and The site-specific Theoretical Root Protection Area is illustrated in Orange (where applicable).





3.10 **Tree Protection Measures**:

Section 4.6.3 of BS 5837: 2012 states that the Root Protection Area (RPA) of each tree should be assessed by an Arboriculturalist considering the likely morphology and disposition of the roots, when known to be influenced by past or existing site conditions.

It can be seen from the plan in Appendix A that some tree protection measures will need to be provided to the retained Horse Chestnut (T1). The tree is located in a raised planter which will help protect the tree from any accidental abrasion which will require some additional protective fencing or hoarding even though the ground around the tree is extensively hard surfaced, just to avoid damage to the tree's trunk. If implemented with appropriate care, this should not be sufficiently detrimental to withhold planning approval. In addition, some tree root ground protection measures could be used while the raising of the final surface is being achieved to avoid any damage or compaction of the soil below the existing surfacing. If implemented with appropriate care, this should not be sufficiently detrimental to withhold planning approval.

The tree protection fencing (where required) will be erected prior to any commencement of works on site and where any soft stripping or internal works of the building is required in the close proximity of tree and removed only when all development activity is complete or unless agreed as part of a conditioned Arboricultural Method statement for the landscaping works. The protective fencing will be as that shown in BS5837 (See Appendix C)

The fence must be marked with a clear sign reading (or similar):

TREE PROTECTION FENCING Construction Exclusion Zone – No Access, Do Not Move".

DISMANTLING PROTECTIVE BARRIERS: Protective barriers must only be completely removed when all machinery, and equipment has left site. A minimum of seven days notice should be given to the local planning authority prior to dismantling works begin.

- 3.11 Reference should be made to the tree survey schedule in Appendix B for details of tree(s) on an individual basis.
- 3.12 Reference should be made to the indicative sketch plan of the tree protection fencing/barrier in accordance with BS5837 in Appendix C.





4.0 <u>Conclusion:</u>

- 4.1 There is no proposal to remove any trees and as such there should be no reason to warrant refusal of the scheme on detrimental tree impact grounds.
- 4.2 Any works proposed within the Wac Arts building and new retaining wall along the front boundary of the car park area are outside the influence of the RPZ of the retained and protected Horse Chestnut (T1). Part of the boundary retaining wall will be within the RPZ of the Horse Chestnut (T1) and this section can only be removed, replaced or rebuilt in a like for like location as the existing old boundary wall foundation unless otherwise agreed. Subject to appropriate tree protection, where required, should not be considered as a material reason to



refuse planning consent for the proposed scheme, subject to appropriate conditions being attached to any approval.

- 4.3 The removal, or breaking up, of some of the existing car park and introducing a new raised level access terrace, with the soil level inside the RPAs of retained tree remaining at its existing level will all be within the theoretical so this will require sensitive working practices. It must be made clear within any contract documents that there will be no additional excavation below the removal of any tarmac wearing course within the RPA/RPZ of the retained trees. Subject to appropriate precautionary measures and appropriately specified construction detail (including build up materials) these works should be acceptable and not be considered as a material reason to refuse planning consent for the proposed scheme, subject to appropriate conditions being attached to any approval.
- 4.4 Use of existing hard surfacing as ground protection measures is a reasonable way of maintaining root protection for the retained tree for as long as possible, while maximising the available working room on site subject to the approval of this report by the LPA.
- 4.5 Subject to precautionary measures as detailed above including tree protection fencing and retention of the existing hard surfaces until final landscaping as tree root ground protection for the Horse Chestnut (T1), the proposal will not be excessively injurious to the tree being retained and should even improve the existing growing conditions providing an increased chance of available moisture.
- 4.6 There will be no appreciable post development pressure, and certainly none that would oblige the council to give consent to inappropriate tree works post development.
- 4.7 Site supervision is outlined in this report (though not considered absolutely necessary for this current application scheme due relatively limited tree related conflict) but if the LPA approve the scheme subject to requiring site supervision. More detailed could be provided as part of a release of condition, detailing timing and scheduling.
- 4.8 Should the client obtain planning approval, subject to conditions, we would be able to assist with further ongoing advice and monitoring, where required, subject to a separate fee proposal.



5.0 <u>Recommendations:</u>

- 5.1 The Planning approval should not be withheld and site works should progress as follows to ensure the healthy retention of the trees:
 - a. Tree works, in accordance with BS3998 (where required).
 - b. Installation of all tree protection measures (where required).
 - c. Construction.
 - d. Hard & Soft landscaping
- 5.2 Site supervision An individual e.g. the Site Agent or AAS's retained arboricultural consultant (if directed by the LPA within their detailed planning condition requiring arboricultural supervision), must be nominated to be responsible for all arboricultural matters on site. This person must:
 - a. Be present on the site throughout the project or at agreed times in any conditioned Arboricultural Method Statement
 - b. Be aware of the arboricultural responsibilities.
 - c. Have the authority to stop any work that is, or has the potential to cause harm to any tree.
 - d. Be responsible for ensuring that <u>all</u> site personnel are aware of their responsibilities towards trees on site and the consequences of the failure to observe those responsibilities.
 - e. Make immediate contact with the local authority and / or retained Arboriculturalist in the event of any related tree problems occurring whether actual or potential.
- 5.3 It is recommended, that to ensure a commitment from all parties to the healthy retention of the trees, that details are passed by the architect or agent to any contractors and sub-contractors working on site, so that the practical aspects of the above precautions are included in their method statements, and financial provision made for these.

Report Date: 10th August 2019

Revision 1: n/a

Philip Wood *BSc (Hons) LAM* Principal Consultant For and on Behalf of Ashmore Arboricultural Services





Appendix A

Tree Survey and Tree Protection Plan

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Appendix B

Tree Survey Schedule

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KEY: Tree No: Tree number (T= individual tree, G= group of trees, W= woodland); Crown = the leaf bearing part of the tree; TFD= To Facilitate Development Proposal (subject to confirming ownership); Tree Species: Sp.= sub species or cultivar of main species; NT = Neighbours Tree (Tree on adjoining land); GL = Ground Level; AGL = Above Ground Level; DWS = Deadwood and Stubs; NWR = No Work Required Diameter: MS = Multi-stemmed; N/S = Not Surveyed (unable to inspect/restricted visibility or access); Age class: Young (Y), Young Mature (Y/M), Semi Mature (S/M), Mature (M), Over mature (O/M), Veteran (V) Height (Ht): Measured in metres +/- 1m





Appendix C

Standard Tree Protection Fencing

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BS 5837: 2012

Tree Protection Barrier/Fencing



- 4 Weldmesh wired to the uprights and horizontals
- 8 Approx. 0.6m driven into the ground









End of Report

Ashmore Arboricultural Services Limited



