GREENMAN
Environmental Management

[redacted]

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[redacted]

4th March 2021

**Re: Assessment of T1 Plane Tree: Highgate Newtown Community Centre, Bertram Street, London, N19 5DQ: Ref: Planning Reference - 2018/5774/P– Subsequent Section 73 Notification to fell and replace**.

Dear Lewis,

In this letter report I have set out my thoughts and observation following various site visits over the past two to three years and subsequent discussions throughout the detailed design phase of this project in relation to T1, London Plane regarding its suitability for retention, the thought processes behind the current decision to remove and replace it via this Section 73 Application.

Relevant background

In summary, our initial site survey was carried out in March 2016 and the external dimensions of T1 have increased slightly however not significantly nor substantively in relation to this scheme. In relation to T1, the calculated Root Protection Area (RPA) extends across the entire Croftdown Road access to the south west, report reference: RCKa_HNCC_AIA_18042016_JP_v4.


Figure 1: Extract from 2016's AIA report RCKa_HNCC_AIA_18042016_JP_v4

Plate 1: View north at Plane trees on Croftdown Road, just north of the proposed site access; contextual view of street scene.

Plate 2: T1 in 2019 behind fence, ground deformation arrowed.

Plate 3: View south west, T1 in 2019 to right (off) plate. Ground deformation visible.

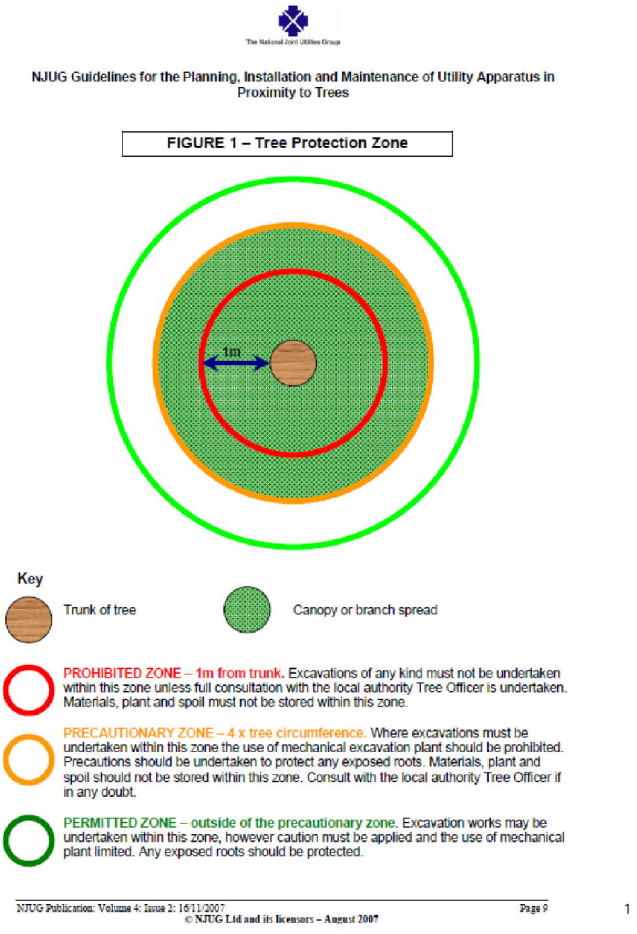
Plate 4: View south at T1 2019. Crown form and historic pollard points visible .

The actual rooting architecture is difficult to predict without ground investigation. The deformation of the footpath surface suggests surface roots therefore potentially compacted subsoil, however until ground is broken, this is not possible to establish until demolition and construction commences.

Further investigations and detailed design

Although the scheme has extant permission 2016/6088/P (as amended by application reference 2018/5774/P) our (GEM's) original (and subsequent) advice that retention would be on balance difficult to achieve given the requirement for vehicle access and the need to ingress and egress service runs into site, given the physical constraints of the location. Guidance delivered in the National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) document for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees (Volume 4) was considered as the details of the emerging substation and additional service runs were developed by the design team. The essence of this is captured in Figure 1 of that document,

shown below. Retention of the tree, despite emerging constraints was a primary driver at every stage in the decision making process.



NJUG Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees

FIGURE 1 – Tree Protection Zone

1m

Key

Trunk of tree

Canopy or branch spread

PROHIBITED ZONE – 1m from trunk. Excavations of any kind must not be undertaken within this zone unless full consultation with the local authority Tree Officer is undertaken. Materials, plant and spoil must not be stored within this zone.

PRECAUTIONARY ZONE – 4 x tree circumference. Where excavations must be undertaken within this zone the use of mechanical excavation plant should be prohibited. Precautions should be undertaken to protect any exposed roots. Materials, plant and spoil should not be stored within this zone. Consult with the local authority Tree Officer if in any doubt.

PERMITTED ZONE – outside of the precautionary zone. Excavation works may be undertaken within this zone, however caution must be applied and the use of mechanical plant limited. Any exposed roots should be protected.

NJUG Publication: Volume 4: Issue 2: 16/11/2007 Page 9



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Figure 2 From NJUG Vol. 4

As the following sketches indicate, the proposed service runs and substation location brought the tree in to further conflict with proposed infrastructure and it has been assessed that the safe retention of the tree is not compatible with the service and access requirements essential to deliver the proposal. These emerging designs only became apparent after initial permission was granted. In addition the access requirements for vehicle access during and

[1] http://streetworks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/V4-Trees-Issue-2-16-11-2007.pdf

post construction would put increased load pressures on the rooting environment. This decision has not been taken for expedience, but as part of a considered mitigation package (detailed below) and taking in to account of exposure, location, potential further threats to its stability and longevity. In addition, the impacts to the tree from necessary demolition activities have further left the tree exposed and the final to decision to replace T1 with another specimen, set within a properly specified planting pit with appropriate irrigation and substrate will guarantee the establishment and flourishment of the replacement for the long term.

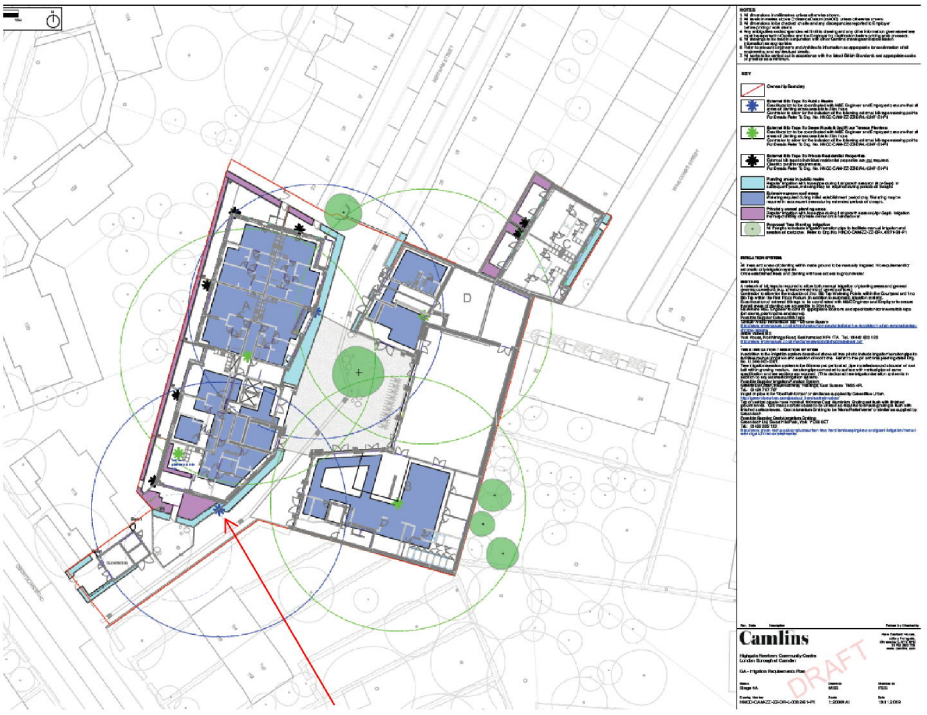


Figure 3: Extract from HNCC-CAM-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-0082-S1-P1 GA - Irrigation Requirements Plan.pdf . location of tree to replace T1 arrowed.

Another factor to be considered is the current condition of the tree, as observed in November 2020 when registered arboricultural consultant Matthew Searle of Treework Environmental Practice carried out a Capital Value Assessment of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) on T1. This assessment took place post-demolition and indicated that some level of necessary ground disturbance may have caused unseen root damage and highlighted the 'island effect'

of the tree were it to remain in the same position. The current proposal, to remove T1 and replace with the EH Standard *Ulmus* sp. in more or less exactly the same position, but within the established required network of services and within a properly specified planting pit[2] will result in a guaranteed more stable and long lasting arboricultural feature than attempting to retain the existing Plane pollard t1. The establishment of the replacement tree will be monitored monthly during the growing season and will be guaranteed for 5 years.

The following extracts illustrate sketches associated with proposed services and ducting (gas, water and electric) accessing the site off Croftdown Road showing the proximity to T1. Spatial constraints mean that alternative runs are not possible.

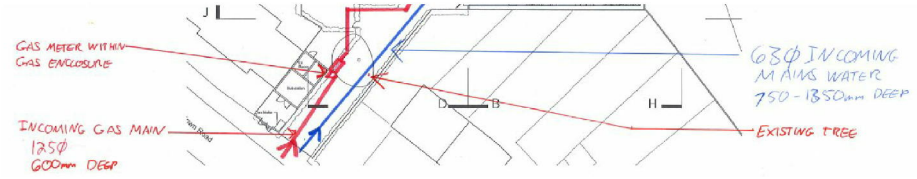


Figure 4: Extract from sketch drawing: 20190305083621942.pdf. T1 arrowed.

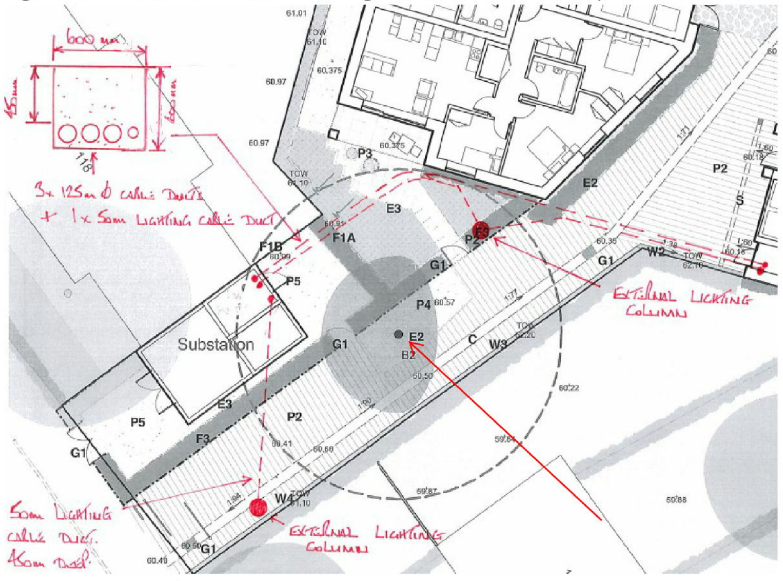


Figure 5: Extract from sketch drawing: Electrical Services Around Existing Trees. T1 arrowed.

<u>Proposed removal and replacement strategy</u>

[2] https://greenblue.com/gb/tree-pits-basics/

Details of the replacement tree are as follows: The species selected, in discussions with the Landscape Architects and members of the local community via an active constructors working group will be an extra heavy standard 6 – 8m *Ulmus* Lutece = 'Nanguen'[3], a Dutch Elm Disease resistant cultivar of Elm. An attractive tree which will bring diversity from the relative monoculture street tree represented by the more locally common London Plane. Its suitability has been confirmed by the local planning authority Tree Officer. Irrigation and establishment will be guaranteed through the details shown on Camlins Landscape Architect's plan: HNCC-CAM-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-0082-S1-P1 GA - Irrigation Requirements Plan.pdf which is appended to this letter report.

Conclusions

As set out within this letter report, following further detailed design and technical investigations regarding the construction of the approved development, it has become clear that due to the need to provide service and utility runs from Croftdown Road to the development, coupled with the temporary haulage route, T1, in our opinion, would unfortunately suffer potentially unsustainable damage and energies and efforts at retention would be better spent, for the longer term in the new specimen discussed above. While sub-optimal (to retaining the existing tree) the next best course of action (and potentially provide betterment in the long term) is to therefore secure its replacement with a new high quality specimen. The replacement tree discussed above has been selected following consultation with the Local Planning Authority and neighbours as part of the project's ongoing community engagement.

I hope the above is useful to you, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any further information on any of the details listed here.

Yours faithfully,

Jon Price

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[3] https://treesandshrubsonline.org/articles/ulmus/