



# PATRICK STILEMAN LTD

## ARBORICULTURAL CONSULTANCY



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### WRITTEN ARBORICULTURAL ADVICE

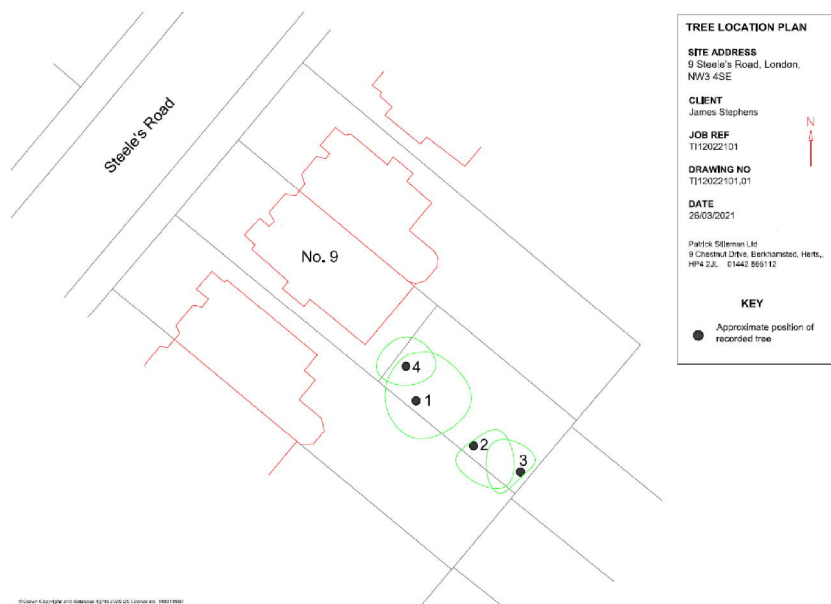
Site	9 Steele's Road, London, NW3 4SE
Date	26 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
Date of site visit	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
Client	James Stephens
Document ref	TI12022101
Subject	Management of trees in rear garden

#### Introduction

1. Our clients have recently moved to 9 Steele's Road and have concerns about three Eucalyptus trees growing in the rear garden, in particular to the largest tree positioned approximately 8 metres from the rear elevation of the house.
2. Our clients' concerns relate to the structural stability of the trees, and the extent to which the tree closest to the house dominates the property and casts excessive shade. They dislike the trees and would like them to be removed.
3. I am advised that the trees are not protected by a tree preservation order (TPO); however the site is located within a conservation area which imposes provisional statutory protection to trees with stem diameters exceeding 75mm at 1.5m above ground level. A consequence of this is that the local planning authority (London Borough of Camden) must be given written notification of work intended to trees at least six weeks prior to the work commencing (Section 211 Notice).
4. I have been instructed to assess the Eucalyptus trees and to provide an opinion as to whether or not it would be reasonable for them to be removed in the context of their condition, the visual amenity that they provide to the wider area, and the suitability for their locations.
5. Whilst on site we discussed a small pear tree and I was asked to include a discussion relating to that tree as well.
6. I undertook a site visit on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### The site

7. 9 Steele's Road is a semi-detached dwelling on the south-east side of the road. It has a single-storey rear extension and small patio. Beyond the patio it has a rectangular-shaped rear garden with a length of 18 metres and width of 10 metres.
8. The largest Eucalyptus (Tree 1) is positioned 0.5 metres from the south-western side boundary wall with the property adjacent, and approximately 8 metres from the rear extension. The two smaller Eucalyptus trees (Trees 2 & 3) are positioned close to the southern corner of the rear garden. The pear tree (Tree 4) is located approximately 1 metre from the patio, which its crown overhangs.
9. The rear garden contains trees and shrubs additional to those which are the subject of this report.
10. The approximate position of trees described in this report is shown in the Tree Location Plan below.



### **Tree 1**

11. Tree 1 is an early-mature Eucalyptus with a height of 17 metres, average crown spread radius of around 4.5 metres, and a stem diameter (measured at 1.5m above ground level) of 490mm.
12. The tree has a single, relatively straight stem which I assess to be solid with no decay or observable structural defects at its base.
13. The tree has a full crown which is re-growing vigorously in response to heavy past cutting (topping), undertaken around 6-8 years' ago I assess based on the size of the re-growth. The past work to the tree would have removed the majority of the crown to a scaffold framework at a height of approximately 11 metres (see Photographs below).
14. The new crown which has developed since the past cutting is formed of multiple slender stems from each former topping point which has resulted in the tree now having a dense crown with numerous closely-spaced leaves through which little light can pass.

***Photograph 1.*** Former size of crown following past topping indicated by broken red line



**Photograph 2.** *Zoomed view of crown through gap between buildings. Former topping point on principal stem indicated by red arrow*



15. I do not consider that structural failure of Tree 1 is currently foreseeable – the base appears to be sound, and the vigorous crown indicates that the roots, and vascular system generally, are fully functional. The tree's crown currently appears to be stable; however as the re-growth continues to develop in size and weight there is future potential for branch failure at the point where they are likely to be poorly attached to the past cutting points in the tree.
16. The tree's crown is heavily shading and dominant to the property with the tree positioned in close proximity to, and due south of, the patio. The tree is evergreen and as a consequence heavy shading from the tree is year-round.
17. It is apparent that the tree is growing rapidly (see Photographs 1 and 2), and has high growth potential. Dominance of the tree to the property will increase as the tree grows if action is not taken.

18. Whilst I do consider that further pruning to the tree is a potential option, I do not consider that this would be sensible management for the long-term, and do not recommend it. As a genus, Eucalyptus trees do not prune well as they develop profuse new growth from adventitious buds at each pruning point resulting in a dense, rapidly-growing crown on potentially weak attachment points, as has happened with Tree 1. The trees are best left un-pruned which keeps the crowns open. If the tree were to be pruned again, doing so to an arboriculturally acceptable standard would involve a maximum crown volume reduction of 30% (some 2-3 metres only off the height) with each pruning point in turn stimulating rapidly-growing multiple new stems which would compound the crown density problem. To keep the tree in check, regular repeat pruning is likely to be required every 2 years or so, which would be an onerous requirement.
19. Tree 1 was poorly selected for the location that it was planted in, and the person who planted it clearly gave no thought to the tree's likely mature dimensions. The tree's dominance and shading clearly was an issue in the past, resulting in its heavy topping from which it has re-grown. It is this frequently-made fundamental mistake of planting a tree which is inappropriate for its location which is the cause of the difficulties now encountered.
20. Tree 1 does not have high public visual amenity value. From Steele's Road it is visible in a single, small position only through the narrow gap between 9 Steele's Road and the house adjacent. Otherwise it can only be seen as a private amenity from rear gardens in the area.
21. For the reasons set out above I consider that there is clear justification for the tree's removal and I support this as a management option.

### **Trees 2 and 3**

22. Trees 2 and 3 are both very poor quality, suppressed Eucalyptus trees with heights of approximately 10 metres. They have slender, heavily-leaning stems with diameters of approximately 200mm, and crowns with pronounced asymmetry to the south and north respectively, with the crown of each tree growing into the other.
23. The trees have poor future prospects with no potential to develop into amenity features of value.
24. Being located in the southern corner of the small garden, Trees 2 and 3 cause moderate shading to the amenity space. The trees have high future growth potential and the shade that they cast will increase with time if the trees are left.
25. As with Tree 1, there are no reasonable pruning options available for Trees 2 and 3.
26. There are no public views of Trees 2 and 3.
27. For the reasons set out I consider that removal of Trees 2 and 3 is an entirely sensible management option.

**Photograph 3.** Trees 2 and 3. The base of each tree is indicated with a blue arrow.



#### **Tree 4**

28. Tree 4 is a pear tree growing close to, and overhanging the patio. It is a mature tree with a height of 5 metres and stem diameter of 340mm. Tree 4 has re-grown from heavy past crown reduction (approximately 5-6 years' ago I assess based on the size of re-growth) and has low crown vitality.
29. At the base of the tree on the north side there is a *Ganoderma australe* fungal fruiting body. My assessment of the stem using a sounding mallet is that decay associated with the fungus is not significant, and I do not consider that failure of the tree is currently foreseeable particularly given its small crown volume.
30. I do not consider that there is any requirement to undertake work to the pear tree at this stage; however it is a small tree of low significance which cannot be seen from the public domain, and if there is a desire to remove it in order to create a more open patio this would be entirely defensible.

**Photograph 4.** Tree 4. *Ganoderma* fruiting body indicated with a blue arrow.



### Conclusions

31. For the reasons set out I consider that removal of all four trees is defensible and in the case of the Eucalyptus trees comprises sound management.
32. The largest of the trees (Tree 1) was heavily topped around 6-8 years ago I assess, based on the diameter of the re-growth, and in that time has developed a large, dense crown through which little light can penetrate. The tree has a high growth potential and the nuisance caused by the tree will increase with time if no action is taken. I do not consider that pruning is a sensible option - if pruned to the maximum arboriculturally acceptable extent this would retain 70% of the existing crown volume, and rapid re-growth from the pruning points would soon exacerbate the problem.
33. Trees 2 and 3 are small, very poorly formed slender, leaning specimens with low future potential.

34. Tree 4 is a relatively small tree and could reasonably be retained; however if there is a personal preference for it to be removed this would be understandable and should not be unacceptable to the local authority.

This completes my advice to date.



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