Simon Pryce Arboriculture

Report

Client:	**Kernahans Property Consultants**
Site:	**Mulberry and Vane Close, High Street, London, NW3 5UN**
Subject:	**Tree survey**
Inspection date:	**30 July 2020**
Report date:	**12 September 2020**
Reference:	**20/065**
Author:	**Simon Pryce, BSc, FArborA, RCArborA, CBiol, MICFor**

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1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on the instructions of Kernahans Property Consultants.

1.2 I have been asked to inspect trees growing in the communal areas of Mulberry and Vane Closes, to assess their condition and potential problems associated with them and to specify any necessary or appropriate work.

1.3 This report is based on a site visit on 30 July 2020. The inspections were visual and made from ground level.

1.4 Trees here are covered in my two previous reports listed below. These were prepared some time ago, but comments in them still apply unless expressly contradicted in this one.

1. May 2001, ref 01/032, which addressed potential subsidence issues following a subsidence claim at no.12 Vane Close and covered all the nearby trees, including those in private gardens and one in the street.
2. May 2004, ref 04/023, which covered damage to the retaining wall near the plane trees next to the High Street and damage to a different retaining wall by a sycamore that has been removed.

1.5 The attached schedule contains comments and recommendations for individual trees and they are shown on the site plan. Left and right are used as if facing buildings from the front, unless noted otherwise.

2 Background

2.1 Vane and Mulberry closes are on the south side of Hampstead High Street and both consist of 2 and 3 storey town houses that date from about the 1970s.

Ground conditions

2.2 I have not seen any site investigation results but the 1:50,000 scale online British Geological Survey shows the underlying geology as a mixture of clay and other materials (Claygate beds) that lies between the sand and gravel at the top of the hill and the London clay lower down the hill and under much of the rest of N London.

Previous problems

2.3 The clay based subsoil creates a potential for trees to cause subsidence, although I gather that there have been no problems in Mulberry Close and, as far as I am aware the only one in Vane close was at no.12 in about 2000. There are no details of that but the house has evidently been stabilised by managing the nearby plane tree, no.7 of this report.

2.4 There has also been cracking and distortion in the wall on the front boundary and next to the entrance, which evidently predates the houses. This was addressed after my inspection in 2004 by repairing the wall and pier and strengthening with reinforcing bars. There is some cracking and signs of distortion in the section facing the road, which does not appear to be an imminent problem, although it would need inspection by an engineer or surveyor to confirm that.

3 Trees

Planes 1 and 2

3.1 These are the two most significant trees and both were topped at about 8m early in their lives then would have been maintained by periodic recutting. However that evidently ceased at some point and they were left to grow on and develop large natural looking crowns. They are close together, so the crowns are co-dominant and have merged to form a combined canopy. For most practical purposes they should be managed as a pair, although tree 2 is closer to the buildings and the entrance, so will need some individual attention.

3.2 Both were crown reduced some time before 2001, but there are no signs of any significant work since then although in 2016 Camden granted TPO consent for tree 2 to be crown lifted to give 1 - 3m clearance from structures and to provide clearance over the highway and path. It is not clear whether that was done but the consent expired after two years, so is no longer valid. Both trees now have lower branch ends less than 5.5m over the carriageway, although these are small and not causing major problems.

3.3 Tree 1 is farther from the buildings than tree 2, which overhangs the back of nos. 9 and 10. The main limbs are well above the roof but the smaller secondary branches are hanging down over the roofs creating a curtain like effect. This reduces light and leaves and other debris gets into gutters. Shortening the ends of the smaller hanging branches to give about 4m clearance would alleviate that appreciably with no appreciable effect on the tree's health or appearance.

3.4 The trees have coexisted with the buildings for at least three decades with no reported foundation problems despite several very dry summers during that period. If they were implicated in future then more intensive management such as significant reduction and recutting would need to be considered, but the cost and commitment of that kind of intensive management would not be justifiable simply as a precaution.

3.5 The wall is being affected mainly by direct pressure from roots of tree 2. That will increase in time but the tree's growth is slowing as it ages, so further the process will be slow. Pruning top growth will reduce water uptake, but would not slow the expansion of the trunk base and main roots sufficiently to make a difference.

Plane no.7

3.6 This is much younger than the other two and has been implicated in subsidence at no.12. The reduction and regular pruning has evidently been sufficient to prevent further problems and it is important that this continues in order to maintain the benefit.

Other trees

3.7 The elder, tree 3, is a small growing low risk species, unlikely to cause problems. The birch, tree 4, which replaces a cherry removed due to decay is also a low risk species, but has a branch touching the roof of the house. The lime next to the entrance to the communal garden of Vane Close is in good health but lower growth is starting to impinge on the entrance and the road.

Tree work

3.8 Any tree work should be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Recommendations for treework by suitably qualified and insured arboricultural contractors. The Arboricultural Association has a list of approved firms at https://www.trees.org.uk/ARB-Approved-Contractor-Directory .

3.9 The trees are in Hampstead conservation area, so Camden Council would need to be given six weeks notice of any proposed work to trees over 75mm diameter at 1.5m above ground. They can allow that by confirming that they do not object of by letting the six weeks lapse without making a TPO to prevent the work. In that event, or if trees are already protected, it would be necessary to make an application for consent. Camden's application records show that tree 2 is already covered by a TPO and it is likely that tree 1 is as well, but their web site has no information about individual TPOs, so an enquiry would need to be made to confirm that.

[redacted]

Simon Pryce, BSc, FArborA, RCArborA, CBiol, MICFor

Trees inspected by Simon Pryce, 30 July 2020

Tree no.	Species	Distance	Height	Trunk dia.	Est. age	Comments and recommendations
The trees are described in sequence, starting next to the High Street and going to the rear towards Vane Close. m/s = multiple stemmed.						
1	London plane	6m	21m	1m	120+	Large healthy mature tree, pollarded at about 8m when younger, but has been left to grow on and develop a natural looking crown. Co-dominant with tree 2 and the crown edges of both are quite low over the highway, although this is small growth that is not creating a major obstruction. • *Trim low growth over the highway to give at least 5.5m clearance.*
2	London plane	8 + 4m	22m	1m	120+	Similar to the previous tree, lower growth is close to the roofs. • *Trim low hanging growth to give up to 4m clearance over the roof and at least 5.5m over the highway.*
3	Elder	0m	5m	m/s	30+	Small growing low water demanding species. • *No work needed at present.*
4	Birch	5m	12m	200mm	10+	Planted to replace a cherry that was removed. Established and growing well and is among the lower risk trees near buildings, but has a branch resting on the house roof. • *Remove branch on the roof of the house.*
5	Lime	2 + 7m	15m	480mm	40+	Healthy specimen that has grown on well since the previous inspection. • *Trim lower growth to give 5m clearance over the road and at least 3m over the steps and path.*
6	London plane	8m	12m	550mm	40+	Healthy specimen that is reduced regularly in connection with problems at no.12 and is growing on vigorously between cuts. • *Continue reducing to former pruning points, every 2 years.*

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	Site: Mulberry and Vane Close, London, NW3 5UN	Scale: 1:300 at A4
	Date: 30 July 2010	Original drawing: Simon Pryce