

Simon Pryce, Arboricultural Consultant

Report

Client: Estate Management [Hampstead] Ltd

Site: BAM Estate Gardens, London, NW3

Instruction: Mr G Hamilton for BAM Estates Ltd

Brief: To inspect trees in the gardens, assess and report on their condition and to recommend any necessary or appropriate action.

Inspection date: 6 June 2006

Report date: 8 June 2006

Reference: 06/043

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I Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared on the instructions of Estate Management [Hampstead] Ltd, who manage BAM Estate.
- 1.2 I have been asked to make a visual inspection of the mature trees in the estate grounds, to comment on their condition and to recommend any necessary or appropriate work. The primary concern is the structural condition and stability of the trees and the safety of estate residents and the general public. However other considerations, including the possible effects of the trees on buildings, were also considered.
- 1.3 Some general comments have been made below and the trees are listed individually in the schedule forming the second part of this report, with recommendations for suitable work. They are shown on the attached site plan, which is based on an annotated OS extract supplied by the estate.
- 1.4 The site was visited and the trees inspected on 6 June 2006 by Simon Pryce. The inspections were visual and made from ground level aided by a binoculars where necessary. No climbing is needed, but it is recommended that one tree, a mature cherry, is test bored to assess the decay in its trunk in more detail.

2 The site

- 2.1 The estate comprises the gardens belonging to Buckingham, Avenue and Marlborough Mansions. There are two main parts, 1) the garden to the east of Cannon Hill, surrounded by three of the estate blocks and 2) the garden to the west of Cannon Hill, behind one block of Marlborough Mansions and bounded by Lincroft Mansions to the west and Alexandra Mansions to the south, neither of which are part of the estate.

3 Trees

- 3.1 These are listed and described individually in more detail in the attached schedule, with specifications for work where necessary or appropriate.

East garden

- 3.2 The trees here are a mixture of species, the oldest being some maples, whitebeams and other ornamental species. Most of these are growing on a bank some 1.5m high that runs from north to south across the garden, separating the slightly higher eastern side from the lower lawn to the west. One whitebeam has uprooted fairly recently, apparently due to the ground failing, rather than any major defect in the tree, as the stump is sound looking. Most of these trees have been crown reduced in the last few years and regrown to varying degrees, the most vigorous generally being the maples and one of the larger whitebeams.

West garden

- 3.3 The garden to the west, behind Marlborough Mansions contains some larger growing trees, including London planes, horse chestnuts and limes. Some of these have been removed or reduced recently following claims of subsidence damage in buildings to the west. Most are in reasonably good condition although regrowth will need recutting periodically, especially where they have been reduced to contain their water uptake.

Safety

- 3.4 One lime, tree 41, has signs of possible decay by *Kretschmeriua [Ustulina] deusta* at the base. This causes a brittle rot than can lead to major failure in high winds so the tree should be monitored to check whether this develops. A more immediate problem is tree 35, a wild cherry that leans heavily and has two brackets of *Ganoderma applanatum* at the base. This decays the main roots and lower trunks of infected trees. The tree has been reduced but the brackets have white margins, indicating that they are growing and decaying the tree actively. Decayed trees can sometimes be reduced to lessen the risk of failure, but cherries do not tolerate heavy reduction well. The tree could be test bored to assess the decay in more detail, although its safe useful life is inevitably limited. As there are various other trees in the vicinity there is a strong case for removing it and planting a replacement rather than trying to extend its life with intensive management.
- 3.5 Most other trees are in reasonably good condition although there is a small hawthorn in the east garden, tree 17, that also has some *Ganoderma* brackets growing on the trunk. However these are not active and the tree is not very large or in a location where it would be a major hazard. Regrowing shoots on crown reduced trees can be weakly attached and susceptible to shedding, especially in maples, so most of the reduced trees will need recutting or thinning periodically.
- 3.6 In front of the western block of Marlborough Mansions is a dying laburnum, tree 23. This can be moved in the ground without undue difficulty, showing that the roots are losing their hold, and should be removed without delay. Camden Council have already indicated by letter dated 17 May 2006, that they accept that the tree is dangerous and can be removed without formal consent.

Subsidence

- 3.7 There has been at least one claim that estate trees have caused subsidence in other properties but no reported problems within the estate itself. Most of the trees near estate buildings are more or less fully grown, which reduced the risk of this sort of problem, and many are already cut back regularly to clear buildings. As the local subsoil is almost certainly London clay the possibility of subsidence cannot be dismissed but there is no evidence that any of the trees present an immediate major risk.

Planning restrictions

- 3.8 The site is in a designated Conservation Area, so Camden Council must be given six weeks notice of any proposed felling or pruning of trees over 75mm diameter at 1.5m. They can allow this either by confirming in writing that they do not object or by letting the six weeks elapse without making a tree preservation order [TPO]. Hedges, shrubs and climbing plants are outside the scope of this legislation.
- 3.9 Three trees are protected by Camden's TPO no C427 of 2004. Trees T1, cherry plum, and T2, sycamore are trees 28 and 34 of this report, respectively. T3 is a cherry and almost certainly tree 35 of this report although tree 36, also a cherry is growing close to it. These trees would normally need formal consent for any work, although T35 is approaching the point where it would be exempt under the provisions of section 198 [6] (a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This allows dead, dying and dangerous trees to be felled after giving the council five days notice, as with the laburnum, tree 23.

Other matters

- 3.10 Any treework should be carried out in accordance with BS 3998: 1989, Recommendations for Treework, and any other relevant standards. It is essential that the contractor doing the work has appropriate third party and public liability insurance.

- 3.11 Where any trees or other woody plants are removed it would be advisable to remove the stumps and main roots if possible. Apart from being unsightly and often inconvenient stumps are frequently colonised by honey fungus [*Armillaria* sp.], which can then spread and infect other trees nearby. Susceptible species are often killed and in other cases it can decay the roots while the tree is alive, making it unstable.



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Site: **BAM Estate grounds, London NW3**

Inspection date: **6 June 2006 by Simon Pryce**

Tree no.	Species	Age	Condition	Comments and recommendations	Cat.
The trees are described in order, starting in the garden south of Avenue Mansions then the garden to the west of Marlborough Mansions. They are also numbered on the attached site plan, based on an OS extract supplied by the estate.					
Avenue Mansions garden [East garden]					
1	Whitebeam <i>Sorbus aria</i>	M	poor	Has sparse foliage and some signs of die back. The main fork at 2.5m is sound on one side but on the other there is an exposed wound and the fork has started to split. The sparse foliage will have reduced the load on this area but also makes the tree less tolerant of any pruning to reduce its weight. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brace the two main limbs, remove any major dead wood and monitor.</i> 	2
2	Purple cherry plum <i>Prunus pissardii</i>	MA	fair	Leans over a footpath but is well rooted and not large enough to be hazard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No work needed at present, but should be monitored.</i> 	4
3	Winter cherry <i>Prunus subhirtella autumnalis</i>	M	fair / poor	Contains a large amount of dead wood but this is common in this species and it is not large enough to be a significant hazard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dead wood could be removed but this is not urgent.</i> 	4
4	Goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i>	MA	fair	Base is slightly distorted where it has grown over the edge of the concrete , otherwise sound and healthy. Branch ends are growing close to the building. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Branch ends will need to be trimmed back from the building but this is not urgent</i> 	3
5	Whitebeam <i>Sorbus aria</i>	M	fair	Growing on the bank crossing the garden, leans but there are no obvious signs of instability. Has been reduced in the past and regrown vigorously with dense clusters of shoots round the pruning points, which are increasing its weight and wind resistance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reduce back to the earlier reduction points and reshape.</i> 	2
6	Norway maple <i>Acer platanoides</i>	MA	fair	Drawn up where it has grown between the whitebeam and the next tree. Has also been reduced in the past and has some new shoots growing from round the reduction point. These appear reasonably sound at present but are prone to being shed if allowed to become too crowded. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thin the growth from the pruning points to favour stronger shoots.</i> 	3
7	Norway maple <i>Acer platanoides</i>	MA	fair	Similar to the previous one, has been left rather one sided by the recent loss of another whitebeam nearby. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thin the growth from the pruning points to favour stronger shoots.</i> 	3
8	Plum <i>Prunus</i> variety	M	poor	Has sparse foliage and some decay in an old wound in the trunk but is still reasonably attractive and not large enough to be a major hazard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No work needed at present but its safe life is limited.</i> 	3

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Tree no.	Species	Age	Condition	Comments and recommendations	Cat.
9	Weeping silver pear <i>Pyrus salicifolia pendula</i>	M	good	Healthy, small ornamental tree. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed. 	4
10	Japanese maple <i>Acer palmatum</i>	M	fair	Has some narrow forks and a slight infestation of chestnut scale, which is unsightly but not very harmful. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present, chestnut scale could be removed with a nylon brush if required. 	4
11	Purple leafed crab apple <i>Malus</i> spp.	MA	good	Healthy, relatively young tree. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present. 	4
12	Norway maple <i>Acer platanoides</i>	MA	fair	Has been reduced in the past like the others, regrowth is not particularly dense at present. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thin regrowth lightly 	3
13	Pink hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	M	fair	Growing under the maple and crab apple but not unduly suppressed. Has been reduced in the past and grown on. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present. 	4
14	Purple crab apple <i>Malus</i> sp.	M	fair	Contains some minor dead wood but is healthy otherwise. Appears well rooted but is growing on the bank and leans slightly down it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thin the crown by 15 - 20% and lightly shorten the branch ends to lessen the load on the root system. 	3
15	Ash leaf maple <i>Acer negundo</i>	M	fair	Leans heavily but looks well rooted and has evidently grown like this for most of its life. Ends have been reduced and grown on. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce branch ends back to the former reduction points. 	3
16	Pink hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	M	fair	Has been reduced in the past and grown on. Has a cavity in the trunk but no signs of active decay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present, but should be monitored. 	4
17	Pink hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	M	poor	Has also been reduced in the past. Has a cavity in the trunk with brackets of one of the <i>Ganoderma</i> fungi growing on it, but these are old and the decay appears inactive at present. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present, but should be checked annually if retained. 	2
18	Norway maple <i>Acer platanoides</i>	MA	fair	Leans slightly, otherwise sound and healthy. Has been cut back from the building fairly recently. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will need to be cut back every 2 - 3 years to maintain clearance from the building. 	3
19	Cappadocian maple <i>Acer cappadocicum</i>	MA	fair	Has some cuts at 2.5 - 3m where lower branches were removed in the past but these are callusing well and there are no signs of significant decay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present. 	4

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Tree no.	Species	Age	Condition	Comments and recommendations	Cat.
20	False acacia <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	MA	fair	Twin trunks that appear to have originated as shoots from the stump between them. The tree is reasonably healthy, but is pushing the low wall and pillar nearby. These do not appear dangerous, but the lean will increase as the tree grows. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No urgent work needed but the wall will need repair or rebuilding if the tree is kept. 	4
Frontage of Marlborough mansions					
21	Purple cherry plum <i>Prunus pissardii</i>	M	fair	Has been cut back from the building recently and is starting to regrow. Slightly one sided but sound looking. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No urgent work needed but will need to be cut back periodically in future and it would be beneficial to reduce the street side lightly to stop it becoming overly asymmetrical. 	3
22	Birch <i>Betula pendula</i>	M	poor	Has been topped recently and is starting to regrow. Will become bushy as this continues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present but will need thinning in future. 	4
23	Laburnum <i>Laburnum anagyroides</i>	D	dying	Has hardly any foliage or flowers and can be moved in the ground indicating that its root hold is failing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove for safety. Camden Council have been notified and agree that it is exempt from the usual Conservation Area requirement to give six weeks notice. 	1
24	Purple cherry plum <i>Prunus pissardii</i>	M	fair	Has been cut back to clear the building, more asymmetrical than no.21. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No urgent work but will need cutting back again and reshaping to prevent it from becoming too asymmetrical. 	3
Garden behind Marlborough Mansions [West garden]					
25	Winter cherry <i>Prunus subhirtella autumnalis</i>	M	good	Has some minor die back, healthy otherwise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present. 	4
26	Crab apple <i>Malus</i> spp.	M	good	Healthy and in good condition. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed. 	4
27	Winter cherry <i>Prunus subhirtella autumnalis</i>	M	good	Has some minor die back but is healthy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed. 	4
28	Purple cherry plum <i>Prunus pissardii</i>	M	fair	TI of the TPO. Has had lower branches removed and been cut back from the nearby building. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present but will need cutting back and reshaping in future. 	3
29	Hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	M	poor	Leans where it was suppressed by a large plane growing near the boundary and recently felled. Has advanced decay in the trunk but this does not appear active and it is not large enough to be a significant hazard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work needed at present, but should be monitored. 	3

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30	Lime <i>Tilia x europaea</i>	MA	fair	Has been pollarded at about 4m when younger, allowed to grow on and been reduced in the last few years. The new growth at the top is dense. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Could be improved by thinning the new growth at the top by 20 - 25%.</i> 	3
31	Crab apple <i>Malus</i> spp.	M	poor	Leans heavily due to the large plane nearby and has a cavity in the trunk. This is also weakened slightly by the ingrown upright branch at about 2m. Reasonably healthy otherwise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reduce end growth by 20 - 25% and reshape.</i> 	2
32	London plane <i>Platanus acerifolia</i>	M	fair	Has been pollarded when younger and allowed to grow on. There are also signs of a lighter reduction in the past at about two thirds of its current height. Healthy but is starting to encroach on the building. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cut back to the previous reduction points</i> 	3
33	Pink horse chestnut <i>Aesculus x carnea</i>	M	poor	Has been topped in the past and regrown, not very vigorously. Has some cankers on the trunk, which are common in this species, but no signs of significant decay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No work needed at present, but should be monitored.</i> 	3
34	Sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	M	fair	T2 of the TPO. Healthy but has recently been reduced and is starting to grow on. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No work needed at present but new growth will need to be cut back or thinned every 3 - 4 years.</i> 	4
35	Wild cherry <i>Prunus avium</i>	M	poor	Probably T3 of the TPO. Leans heavily and has active brackets of <i>Ganoderma applanatum</i> at the base. Sounding with a hammer suggests that there is significant decay at the base and in the main roots. It leans heavily over the garden and has been reduced in the last few years. It could cause considerable damage if it failed and would not tolerate heavy crown reduction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assess decay by test boring - likely to need felling if this is found to be severe.</i> 	1
36	Wild cherry <i>Prunus avium</i>	M	fair	Possibly T3. More upright than the previous one and has no signs of decay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No work needed at present.</i> 	4
37	Purple crab apple <i>Malus</i> spp.	MA	good	Healthy, relatively young tree. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No work needed at present.</i> 	4
38	Sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	MA	fair	Has been pollarded when younger and more recently reduced. Starting to regrow. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New growth will need to be reduced or thinned every 3 - 4 years.</i> 	4
39	London plane <i>Platanus acerifolia</i>	MA	fair	Has been pollarded when younger and recently reduced, apparently following structural problems in the church nearby. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New growth will need to be cut back every 1 - 2 years.</i> 	3

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40	Lime <i>Tilia x europaea</i>	MA	fair	Has also been reduced although it does not appear to be close enough to any buildings to have caused any problems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cut back new growth every 3 - 4 years.</i> 	3
41	Lime <i>Tilia x europaea</i>	M	fair	Has also been reduced recently. Sound looking but has possible early fruiting bodies of <i>Kretschmeria [Ustulina] deusta</i> at the base on the north side. This can cause a severe brittle decay, making trees liable to fail at the base. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reinspect the base annually for signs of the fungus developing. Mature fruit bodies look like a blackened crust.</i> 	2
42	Lime <i>Tilia x europaea</i>	MA	fair	Leans due to growing near the large horse chestnut. Has a scar at the base but no signs of major decay and has been reduced in the last year or so. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No work needed at present but new growth will need cutting back or thinning periodically.</i> 	4
43	Horse chestnut <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	M	poor	Leans to the west and has a long cavity in the trunk. The centre is decayed, but there is a reasonable thickness of callus growth at the edges of the wound and the upper growth has recently been thinned. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No work needed at present but new growth following the pruning will need to be cut every 2 -3 years.</i> • <i>The cavity should be reinspected annually and, if the decay progresses, heavier reduction or felling might be warranted.</i> 	2
44	Wild cherry <i>Prunus avium</i>	MA	fair	Leans due to the horse chestnut but is relatively young, sound and healthy. Has recently been reduced. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No work needed at present.</i> 	4



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Notes

Tree ages are estimated as follows:

Immature.	[IM]	Newly planted or self-set tree.
Semi mature	[SM]	Young tree that is established but has not yet attained the size or form of a fully developed example of its type.
Young middle aged	[YMA]	Between semi mature and middle aged.
Middle aged	[MA]	Between one third and two thirds of its estimated lifespan.
Mature	[M]	Over two thirds of its estimated life span.
Over mature	[OM]	Declining and/or approaching the end of its natural lifespan.
Dying/Dead	[D]	Dead/dying or so badly decayed that it should be removed without delay if a potential threat.

The category system is intended to give a general indication of the urgency with which trees need attention, but should be used with the more detailed observations and comments. Colours relate to drawings where applicable.

Category. Tree condition

- 1 Trees needing urgent attention in the interests of safety [0 - 3 months].
- 2 Trees needing attention without undue delay [3 - 12 months].
- 3 Trees that can be retained safely with a moderate amount of work or reassessment in the near future [12 - 24 months].
- 4 Trees needing little or no work in the foreseeable future to keep them safe [24 - 36 months].

Terms used in the survey relate to British Standard 3998: 1989, Recommendations for tree work unless otherwise stated.

Observations are made from ground level unless stated otherwise.



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Drawn by: Simon Pryce, B.Sc., F.Arbor.A, C.Biol, M.I.Biol, M.I.C.For, based on on OS extract supplied by BAM Estates		Scale: Not to scale