Langton Tree Specialists

ARBORICULTURAL ASSESSMENT • TREE PLANNING & DESIGN • LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

# TREE REINSPECTION REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS For Douglas Crescent Gardens

For and on behalf of:

Douglas Crescent Gardens Committee
Edinburgh

September 2014

# Douglas Crescent Gardens
# Tree Survey Re-inspection audit, September 2014

## 1. Scope and Method

The trees included in the survey of October 2011 have been re-inspected on 8th September 2014 following the method adopted in the original survey i.e. visual inspection from ground level. I have placed emphasis on observing and reporting any deterioration of known defects and in observing new defects which could be of significance from a health and safety perspective. I have also looked again at some of the management issues discussed in the report of 2011. This report provides updated recommendations for future management based on this survey and should be read in conjunction with the original report of October 2011 and the re-inspection reports of 2012 and 2013.

## 2. Summary of findings

There are no serious issues to report which require immediate remedial tree work. However, the decline in condition of several mature trees is of ongoing and 3 trees require further investigation. These and other works are listed in table 3 below.

The condition of the late mature Whitebeams is of some concern due to early browning and loss of foliage (less noticeable on Swedish Whitebeam). This is probably a result of climatic conditions and fungal infection ('leaf scab').

Nearly all of the work highlighted in last year's report has been carried out. Two mature Elm trees have been removed, one due to Dutch Elm disease.

The tree work carried out has again been carried out comprehensively and to a high standard.

New planting has been carried out primarily in space left from removal of mature trees. Trees have been planted in 0.6m growth tubes; species include: Rowan, Ash, Hazel, Beech, Oak, Whitebeam and Guelder Rose.

Over the winter an effort has been made to remove young regenerating Sycamore in order to allow other species to thrive.

Young Beech regeneration is still developing well, in areas below the central path. Pole stage Ash, Cherry and Sycamore located near the north boundary is now slender and drawn but thinning can be achieved through identifying individual trees which warrant safeguarding.

## 3. Tree works

**Tree works carried out**

As reported last year, all of the remedial works prioritised in timings 1 and 2 of the report of 2011 have been completed. In addition, all of the recommended works and nearly all of the management works identified in the subsequent reports of 2012 and 2013 have been undertaken: Two mature Elm were removed, as recommended, due to disease: 1674 with Dutch Elm disease and 1647 with ongoing decay and honey fungus. The leaning Elm 1633 has been removed rather than reduced.

A number of young Sycamore trees have been removed over the winter in order to provide space for less invasive species (as identified in the original report of 2011). This has also included the removal of some poor semi-mature trees such as the Squirrel damaged Sycamore beside T1743.

**Tree work outstanding**

Most of the tree work identified in timings 3 and 4 of the original report (2011) remains to be carried out, as work has been prioritised in order to address more hazardous trees.

**Other tree work carried out**

There has been ongoing maintenance with crown lift pruning over the pavement by Douglas Gardens carried out by Ian, along with removal of Holly suckering Holly stems in some areas. There has been some work undertaken to remove re-growth from diseased Elm, which should be continued.

## 4. Tree Condition Findings

The condition of the following trees in table 3 is noteworthy either due to a deterioration of condition since the last survey or for reasons as described; trees earmarked last year should continue to be monitored:-

Table 3: Tree condition: notable changes since last survey and remedial work recommended.

| Tree no. | Species | Description | Action required |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Recommended works (3 months)** | | | |
| 1438 | S. Whitebeam | Significant basal decay; extends below ground level. | Investigate decay at base using increment borer |
| 1446 | S. Whitebeam | Significant basal decay. | Investigate decay at base using increment borer |
| 1626 | N. Maple | Crown with healthy appearance this year; on-going decay at base. | Investigate decay at base using increment borer * |

| Recommended works (12 months) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1468 | Ash | Young tree, located adjacent to wall and increasingly affecting adjacent Pear tree | Remove tree |
| Near 1532 | Ash | Small young tree growing through boundary fence 20m east of 1532 | Remove tree |
| 1543 | Horse Chestnut | Lower branches in contact with boundary fence | Minor crown lift over fence |
| 1587/8 | Elm | Minor dead wood/die back in twigs. | Monitor condition during summer '15. |
| T1589 | Lime | Crown die-back and black exudates on lower stem (N) extending up tree | Monitor |
| T1708 | Sycamore | Very large wound with further on-going decay | Monitor |
| **Management works (1-3 years), when possible** | | | |
| Near 1408 | Rowan | Laurel affecting Rowan sited to east of 1408. | Prune Laurel away from Rowan. |
| 1461 | Cherry | Girdling root from adjacent Holly | Remove girdling root* |
| 1463 | Cherry | Girdling root from adjacent Holly | Remove girdling root* |
| 1477 | Horse Chestnut | Minor black exudates at 3m (S) on main stem | Monitor* |
| Near 1495 | Rowan | Planted tree being supressed by adjacent Holly | Prune back Holly |
| 1507 | N. Maple | Increasingly developing over boundary towards Water of Leith | Remove tree |
| 1532 | Sycamore | Hanging branch from mature Ash at 5m near path | Remove hanging branch |
| 1555 | Lime | Small attachment from ground level growing over path. | Remove smaller north stem |
| 1612 | Lime | Small diameter dead wood over edge of lawn area at 5m height | Remove dead wood at 5m over lawn |
| 1684 | Lime | Minor crown separation to south | Monitor stability |
| 1751 | Horse Chestnut | Single area of bleeding at tree base (SE) | Monitor condition |

*Reported 2013

## Other issues and explanations

- There are no new concerns regarding the mature Ash reported last year: The minor crown separation between T516 and T517 has not increased. There is still some evidence of soil cracking near the base of T1738 but this appears to be a result of drying rather than root movement.

- The Whitebeams in the garden have suffered from a premature browning of foliage (less pronounced on Swedish Whitebeams such as 1454). In my opinion, the browning and early leaf loss is likely to have been caused by a combination of dry conditions in summer (causing wilting) combined with fungal 'leaf scab' infestation. It is hoped that these trees will improve next year.

- The Horse Chestnuts in the gardens exhibit a browning of the leaves known as 'Guignardia leaf blotch,' caused by the fungus Guignardia aesculi. This disease

affects the leaves well in to the summer and is not generally life threatening. This is the first time I have noted this disease in the gardens. It is a disease which has been progressing north in recent years. Noticeable in T1508 (near bridge).

- T1594 Cherry was previously quite severely reduced for safety reasons in but the emergence of epicormic shoots in the crown will help to increase foliage mass and reinvigorate the tree.

- The condition of the mature Wild Cherry trees (such as 1599) has improved following leaf shot/blossom wilt earlier in the summer.

- The Limes beside Douglas Crescent are developing epicormic growth on lower stems. This should be removed either annually or every 2 or 3 years, preferably as part of garden maintenance.

**New tree planting**

New planting has been carried out replacing trees removed due to condition or poor form. Species include: Rowan, Ash, Hazel, Beech, Oak and Whitebeam. In places there is also natural regeneration of Holly. Most trees are protected with 0.6m growth tubes. I would suggest that if Beech does not perform well in growth tubes, as is sometimes the case, these could be replaced with spiral shelters

As I suggested last year, in future a few Elm could be planted using newly trialled varieties, with resistance to Dutch Elm disease.

Some of the planting is outlined below:-

Planting carried out:-

- Removal of T1647 Elm: 1 x Whitebeam and 3 no Beech (Elm regeneration)
- Young Sycamore (1565): replaced with group of Hazel and 1 no Oak
- Laburnum 1573: replaced with a new Oak and Ash
- Rowan planted behind (north of) Lime 1416
- Hawthorn planted beside 1407 Lime
- Sycamore 1664 removed: 3 Beech planted
- H. Chestnut 1723: 6 Rowan and several Ash and hazel (may need hand weeding)

Further suggestions:-
Plant groups of Hazel and Box on steeply sloping ground where light permits e.g. replacing 1678 (accompanied here by a single Ash or Beech)

**Thinning of pole stage trees**

The area of woodland along the north boundary and mainly east of the bridge over the Water of Leith has groups of pole stage trees which are now drawn and slender.

Promising individual trees will be identified this autumn and thinning will aim to benefit these trees by providing improved crown space.

- West of T1489: remove 4 x pole stage Ash/N. Maple. (These trees have improved light following the removal of T1632 (Elm)
- West of T1492: thin Elm/Cherry (now very slender)
- West of T1510: thin Cherry trees, removing 3 trees

## 5. Recommendations

1. Remedial action should be carried out as identified in table 3

2. All tree work should be carried out in line with BS 3998: 2010 *'Recommendations for Tree Works'*.

3. As the trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) the Local Authority should be consulted prior to carrying out any of the new recommended remedial arboricultural work.

4. New planting proposals should be discussed with the Local Authority on an informal basis, if possible.

5. Due consideration should be given to the appropriate legislation concerning Birds and Bats, as recommended in the report of December 2009.

6. The trees should be re-inspected on a regular basis, with mature and late mature trees adjacent to roads and buildings inspected annually.

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12th September 2014