
P2024/2598/FUL Archway Campus

Arboricultural Consultation Note: 12565.ACN.01

Date: 20/8/2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document confirms our understanding of the arboricultural position in relation to the observations made by LUC in their commentary dated 31 July 2026, prepared for the Greater London Authority. In doing so, it is noted that LUC is principally a landscape-focused practice, and the commentary does not identify the arboricultural experience or qualifications of its author. The purpose of this note is therefore not to repeat the submitted arboricultural assessment in full, but to record the extent to which we agree with LUC's observations and to identify any matters where there is a difference of professional arboricultural opinion.

2. Pruning extents: T1-T3 and T5-T12

- 2.1. The concern relating to future pressure for excessive pruning has been addressed within the Second AIA. It is accepted that the trees have historically been managed as pollards, although a full reinstatement of pollarding is not considered necessary given the lapse in management. A cyclical crown reduction of approximately 2-4 m in accordance with BS 3998:2010 is considered acceptable. No further action required.

3. RPA incursions: T3, T5, T8 and T9

- 3.1. The original objection asserted that excavation associated with the proposed sheet piling would result in significant damage to, and adversely affect the health and stability of, trees T3, T5, T8 and T9. However, the additional trial excavations and assessment presented within the Second AIA have materially refined the understanding of rooting extent within the affected areas. The subsequent review acknowledges limited rooting along much of the proposed alignment and concludes that impacts to T3, T5 and T8 would be acceptable. Accordingly, the original objection has been substantially reduced in scope, with any remaining concern now relating solely to T9 rather than representing a wider issue affecting all four trees. The evidence therefore demonstrates that the original concern regarding widespread significant impacts to retained trees has been largely addressed. These are reviewed in turn below:
- 3.2. T3 and T5 response: Agreed. The existing retaining walls, hardstanding and ramp infrastructure adjacent to T3 and T5 represent substantial pre-existing constraints on rooting and are located closer to the tree stems than the proposed sheet piling works. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that the potential for significant root impacts associated with the proposed works has been conservatively assessed. The mitigation measures outlined within the Second AIA are therefore considered precautionary and provide an additional safeguard beyond that which may be strictly necessary based on the site conditions. No further action is required.
- 3.3. T4 Response: Agreed. T4 is now correctly shown for removal within the Second AIA and Tree Removal Plan. The requirement for removal is accepted. No action required.
- 3.4. T8 Response: Agreed. The reviewer concludes that the anticipated root pruning at T8 would not result in a structural issue, notwithstanding that the number of roots affected. No further action is required.

- 3.5. T9 Response part 1: The conclusion for T9 appears to place considerable weight on the number of roots identified for pruning. However, this is difficult to reconcile with the conclusions reached for T8, where a not dissimilar number of roots of comparable size, function and arboricultural relevance were considered acceptable. A less prescriptive approach would recognise that Plane trees typically produce relatively large lateral roots in proportion to stem diameter, and that roots within the 50-100 mm diameter range would be expected at this distance from a tree of this size. In this case, only lateral roots have been identified, with no evidence of major sinker or structural rooting. Since the diameters largely fall within the range that would normally be anticipated, they do not in isolation indicate the loss of an unusually large or predominant component of the overall root system; neither do they suggest a disproportionately significant reduction in rooting volume or anchorage potential.
- 3.6. T9 Response part 2 : It is acknowledged that the trial excavations did not specifically investigate the area associated with the proposed entrance widening adjacent to T9. As such, any assessment of root presence and potential impacts within this area is necessarily predictive rather than definitive.
- 3.7. To provide additional technical confidence, a precautionary package of post-construction monitoring could be secured by condition, relating to T9. This could include an arboricultural clerk of works to document the effect, combined with stability monitoring using TreeMotion, vitality monitoring using ArborCheck, together with appropriate ground amelioration measures within the retained Root Protection Area to promote root development and resilience (perhaps made common to the collection). Such measures would provide an evidence-based mechanism to monitor T9's response over time and enable early intervention should any actual adverse effects be identified.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1. The review confirms that the principal matters raised by LUC have been considered against the submitted arboricultural information, including the Second AIA and the additional trial excavation evidence. In broad terms, there is agreement that the proposed pruning regime is acceptable, that the position in respect of T3, T5 and T8 has been satisfactorily addressed, and that the removal of T4 is correctly identified and justified.
- 4.2. The outstanding arboricultural issue is therefore limited in scope and relates to T9. While it is acknowledged that the entrance widening area adjacent to T9 has not been subject to specific trial excavation, the remaining concern is precautionary and reflects a difference in professional interpretation of potential risk, particularly when compared with the conclusions accepted in respect of T8.
- 4.3. There are no arboricultural matters that would warrant an objection to the proposal, subject to appropriate safeguards. Any residual uncertainty associated with T9 can be managed through planning conditions requiring an updated Arboricultural Method Statement, tree protection and working methodology for the relevant works, and a precautionary post-construction monitoring package, including stability and vitality monitoring together with suitable ground amelioration measures within the retained Root Protection Area.

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Archway Campus - Arboricultural Review

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Date: 31/07/26

Reviewed: K. O'Shea

It has been requested by Greater London Authority to give a review of the documents relating to the arboricultural aspect of the Planning application – Archway Campus Ref- P2024/2598/FUL

The documents reviewed are – Underhill Tree Consultancy – Tree survey & Arboricultural Impact Assessment – Ref UTC-0646-AIA, the original report dated 26 October 2023 and Aspect Arboriculture – Arboricultural Impact Assessment –Ref 12565.AIA.01 dated April 2026. Additionally, the comments within the delegated report have been reviewed in relation to the updated AIA (Arboricultural Impact Assessment) Report by Aspect Arboriculture.

There have been no changes to the design layout between the two updates, and the same drawings have been utilised by Aspect Arboriculture as they did not complete an update of the tree survey. There is only one change to the tree removals with the addition of one Cat B tree T4.

The main objections that were raised by the tree officer related to the TPO'd London Plane trees along Highgate Hill.

-The proximity of the proposed Buildings A, B and C to the trees, T1-T3 and T5-T12 would cause future problems to the residents and would require pruning greater than what is considered acceptable.

This has been addressed within the second report, stating these trees have historically been pollarded and therefore the reduction would not be a change in management. However, it is also noted that these are lapped pollards and from google street it is evident that this pruning method has not taken place since 2008 at the latest. Therefore, rather than a full pollard, it is recommended that the crown be reduced to the minimum necessary to fulfil the current objective. This is in line with guidance with BS:3998:2010. Therefore, the reduction of between 2-4m on a cyclical cycle would be acceptable.

-The incursion of the excavation to install the sheet piping within the RPA (Root Protection Area) would result in significant damage and harm to the existing trees and affect the health and potential stability of trees T3, T5, T8 and T9.

Within the original AIA report there were some trial excavations which have established the limited rooting extents in three locations. There have been further excavations completed, included within the second AIA covering T6 – T11. This excavation has determined the rooting extents along the proposed building alignment. Within the report, it averages that the number of significant roots affected is 1.3 per tree approximately, and due to the position and size, these are adventitious roots rather than structural. It also highlights that to support the trees it would be beneficial to improve the conditions of the area of the roots within the retained portion of the RPA.

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Looking at the specific rooting concerns of the tree officer

T3 – no further excavations were conducted around this tree; however, due to the significance of the existing hard standing and the retaining wall that is currently to the north east of the tree, closer to the tree stem than of the proposed piling, it is interpreted that the piling should not affect significant rooting, similarly for adjacent tree T1 and T2. These comments were not included within the second AIA.

T5 – Similarly to T3, no additional excavation took place although there is currently significant hard infrastructure to the north east of the stem in the form of a ramp. This ramp has multiple retaining walls and therefore the excavation and installation of the sheet piling would be within this area and therefore acceptable. These comments were not included within the second AIA.

T8 – The second AIA concluded that an average of 1.3 roots of a diameter above 25mm would be affected. However, looking specifically at T8 it would appear to be the requirement to prune five roots; although it could be argued that one of these roots may be from T7 as it is on the point of the overlap of the two RPA's. This is over the average 1.3 stated although it is considered that the pruning of four roots would equally not cause a structural issue.

The Tree Protection plan does state that the existing levels behind the sheet piling should be retained. The highlighted potential stability issues raised have been addressed in the second AIA with the potential of further investigations to be used to monitor over time, this could include ArborCheck and TreeMotion. These could be used if there is concern that the severing of eight roots could have stability issues, although as these roots have not been identified as structural roots this is unlikely to be required other than to give a form of security due to the position of the trees adjacent to the highway. It is highlighted within the second AIA to be precautionary that the use of vacuum suction technique is used for any excavation for the sheet piling, which will help reduce the likelihood of damage to the retained roots.

T9 – The number of roots requiring pruning on the diagram within the second AIA is eight, although again three could be argued to belong to T10 instead due to being in the overlap area. This would bring the root pruning number between five and eight for T9. Due to the number of roots identified requiring pruning this would be a significant impact to the tree and I would agree with the tree office on this issue that the excavation require to install the sheet piling would cause detrimental damage to the tree's physiology and risk stability to the tree.

The change of level between T3 and T5 has been highlighted that it found be a change of level of 1.9m

T4 is within this area. Within the original AIA it was not highlighted for removal on the Tree Removal Plan. Within the second AIA it has now been shown for removal. It is agreed that it is not feasible to retain the tree with the proposal and therefore removal is the only option.

The new entrance between T8 and T9 and the excavation of almost 1m –

This entrance does currently exist, although it is proposed to be widened on the side of T9, although to the side furthest away from the stem. Therefore, at this distance it is assumed that these trees would not have structural roots, this could be confirmed under trial excavation. This has not been covered with the second AIA and compounds the issue relating to the pruning of T9 roots. Therefore, it is not acceptable.

The proposed woodland walk if further excavation is required

In some locations there is existing hardstanding which will limit the impact to the rooting area. Final levels have not been identified for the full length of the walk so it has had to be presumed that the finish levels work with the cellular confinement system and no further excavation will be required.

Proposed installation of concrete play elements beneath mature trees and new trees

Concrete play elements are proposed within the RPA of trees which have already been affected by the incursion of the sheet piling and cellular confinement. Additionally, further excavation and compaction within the RPA will occur during ongoing use. I would agree with the Tree officer comment on the concern of the position of these Play Elements.

Proposed Tree Planting

Concern over the Birch Grove-

The trees within the birch grove have been placed at very close proximity which has been further proven within the Landscape Statement – Within the drawing it is shown the anticipated tree growth at 10 and 25 years. Within parts of the planting there is significant overlap which would prevent suitable development of the canopy. I support the tree officer comment relating to this.

Overall, the second AIA has addressed some of the concerns raised by the Tree Officer although not all. The additional trial excavations have highlighted that in all but one of the trees it is acceptable to be used. It however is not viable to be used adjacent to T9 as there are too many roots required to be severed along with the additional roots for the installation of the widened access point.

Within the woodland walk it is recommended that it is confirmed that the cellular system levels can be incorporated and the concrete play elements should be removed from this area due to the further impact.

The landscape plan should be reviewed relating to the birch tree planting locations given the tree officers concerns.