

Simon Pryce Arboriculture

Report

Client: **Mr M Saluja**

Site: **2 Linksway, Northwood, HA6 2XB**

Subject: **Row of red cedars in front of the house**

Inspection date: **11 November 2021**

Report date: **23 July 2022**

Reference: **21/082/2**

Author: **Simon Pryce, BSc, FArborA, RCarborA, CBiol, MICFor**

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I Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared for Mr Manoj Saluja, the owner of 2 Kinksway, Northwood, HA6 2XB. I have been asked to inspect a row of red cedars growing on the front boundary of the property, to assess their condition and amenity value and to recommend appropriate management.
- 1.2 The trees concerned are covered by my previous report of November 2021 and earlier ones for Mr Saluja and Mr Kelly Vhora, the previous owner. The earlier ones dealt primarily with building work in relation to the trees, but comments in them still apply unless expressly contradicted here.
- 1.3 The November 2021 report was prepared for an application for work on protected trees, which was all granted, Hillingdon Council's reference 36910/TRE/2021/325. This one has been prepared after a review of the red cedars in front of the house following concern about the condition of the trees and effect of the permitted crown lifting.
- 1.4 This report is based on a site visit and inspection of the trees on the morning of 1st June 2022. The inspections were visual and made from ground level. For consistency this report uses the same numbering system as the previous ones and deals with trees 4 - 7 and 9 - 11 inclusive. Detailed individual descriptions of the trees are in the attached schedule and they are shown on the attached site plan. The photographs illustrate the points discussed below.

2 Background

Trees

- 2.1 The trees are a row of western red cedars *Thuja plicata* growing along the front boundary of the property. There is no record of their ages, but they are not a native or naturalised species and were probably planted when the area was developed in the early 20th Century. Half way along the row is a mature oak (tree 8) that is clearly much older and no doubt part of the original local vegetation.
- 2.2 The property is not in a conservation area, but all the trees concerned are protected by Hillingdon Council's TPO no.391, which was confirmed in July 1986. This protects all the Oak, Hornbeam, Silver birch, Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Scots pine and Cedar (*Cedrus* spp) trees growing in area A1, which comprises houses in Copse Wood way and Linksway.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 The row of nine red cedars is 15m long and they are irregularly spaced between about 1m and 3m apart with the nearest are about 1.5m from the oak, indicating that the original spacing was about 1m and that some have been lost in the past. They were clearly intended form a hedge or they would not have been planted so close together or beneath the oak. They all have former topping points at about 3.5m and 6m, indicating that they have been managed as a hedge for most of their lives before being left to grow on. Red cedars are reasonably shade tolerant, but these have still been severely suppressed due to growing close together and in the shade of the oak. As a result they have become increasingly sparse and have bare trunks up to 4 - 5m, so they no longer provide any low to mid level screening as originally intended. However the upper growth shades the front garden despite not being particularly dense.
- 3.2 The provide some greenery in the street scene, but there are many better trees in the vicinity, particularly the oak in the middle of the row, which is largely hidden by them. Although red cedars stand pruning better than many other conifers these are well beyond the point where they could be reduced back to their original dimensions. The recent decision would allow lower branches to be removed, but that would not address the problems.

3.3 If these trees were retained, it would be almost impossible to establish a hedge beneath them, due to the shade and competition for water from the red cedars. One attempt to do so has already failed and the plants had to be removed. Selective removal of the worst suppressed red cedars might help by admitting more light and reducing competition, but they are all declining and the only viable option is to remove all of them in order to plant a new hedge.

The TPO

3.4 Most of the tree species listed in the TPO are locally native and the older hornbeams and oaks predate the estate and make a considerable contribution to its character. The Scots pines, red cedars and true cedars are non-native species but quite a few were planted in the early years of the estate and some have developed into notable individual specimens.

3.5 Red cedars tolerate trimming and in some regards are a better hedge tree than the more commonly used cypresses. These trees were planted and managed as a hedge and, although not managed as such for some time and becoming sparse, they still meet the definition in the high hedges legislation of a *line of two or more trees or shrubs more than 2m tall.* ⁽¹⁾

3.6 These red cedars were not selected for TPO protection, but were swept up by into the order simply by being one of the species named in the schedule. This indiscriminate protection is almost inevitable when TPOs use the Area classification instead of the Individual Tree or Group categories. Current Government advice ⁽²⁾ is to avoid using the Area classification except as a temporary measure:

When should the area category be used?

The area category is one way of protecting individual trees dispersed over an area. Authorities may either protect all trees within an area defined on the Order's map or only those species which it is expedient to protect in the interests of amenity.

The area category is intended for short-term protection in an emergency and may not be capable of providing appropriate long-term protection. The Order will protect only those trees standing at the time it was made, so it may over time become difficult to be certain which trees are protected. Authorities are advised to only use this category as a temporary measure until they can fully assess and reclassify the trees in the area. In addition, authorities are encouraged to resurvey existing Orders which include the area category.

Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 36-029-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

3.7 This advice is also in the DoE Planning Circular no.36/78, Trees and Forestry.

Application

3.8 On 10th June I contacted Hillingdon Council by email in order to discuss this and agree a way forward. The response from their Senior Business Support Officer was that as the trees are protected any proposed work would need an application with arboricultural reasons for carrying out the work. This report has been prepared for that.

4 Other matters

Tree work

4.1 Any tree work should be carried out in accordance with BS3998: 2010, Recommendations for Treework, by an arboricultural contractor with appropriate third party and public liability insurance. The Arboricultural Association has a list of approved contractors, at <https://www.trees.org.uk/ARB-Approved-Contractor-Directory> .

Wildlife

- 4.2 All bats and most birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 and other legislation.
- 4.3 With a few exceptions listed in schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, all birds, nests and eggs are protected. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild bird, or disturb a nest whilst it is in use or being built. Tree work should not be undertaken during the nesting season (broadly March to August) unless a survey for nesting birds confirms their absence.
- 4.4 There were no obvious signs of bat activity, but bats and their roosts are protected and it is an offence to disturb or harm a bat, or damage, destroy or obstruct any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not. Trees should be inspected before any works start, and if the presence of bats is suspected, works must stop and advice sought from a qualified bat specialist. The Bat Conservation Trust is on 0845 1300228.

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References

- 1) HM Government - Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, Part 8 ss65 - 84
- 2) HM Government online TPO guidance
<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/tree-preservation-orders/>
- 3) Department of the Environment / Welsh Office 1978 Circular no.36/78, Trees and Forestry

Photographs

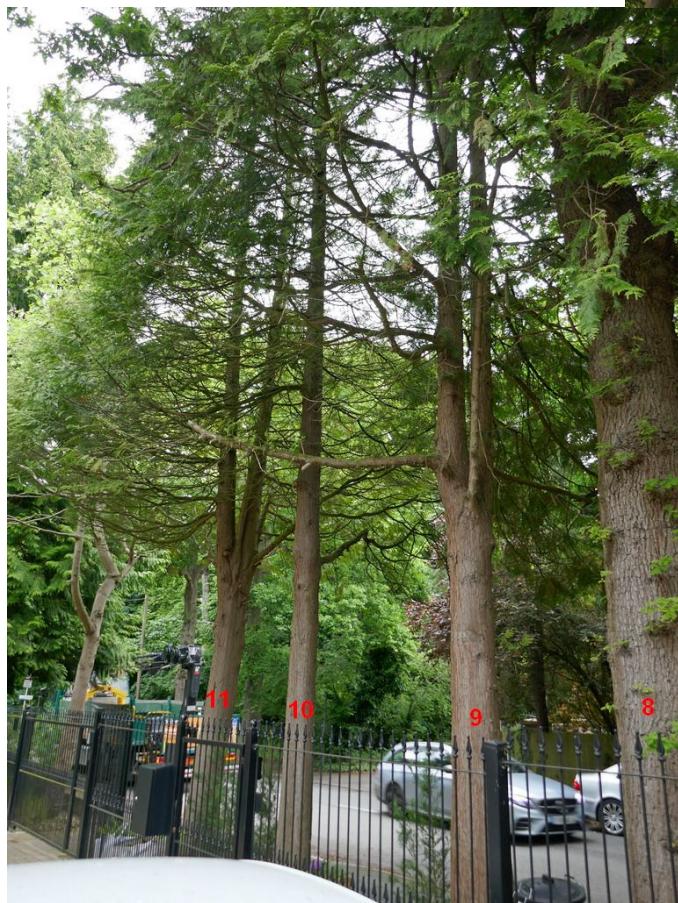
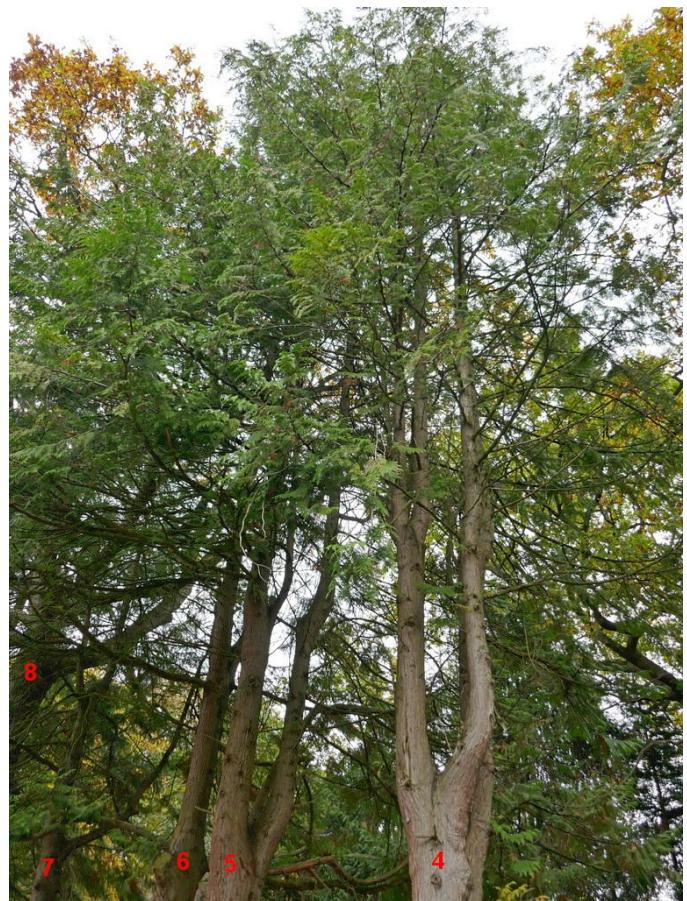


1) From Linksway - tree 8 is the oak



2) From the other direction

3+4) From the front garden of no.2, showing former topping points and sparse foliage



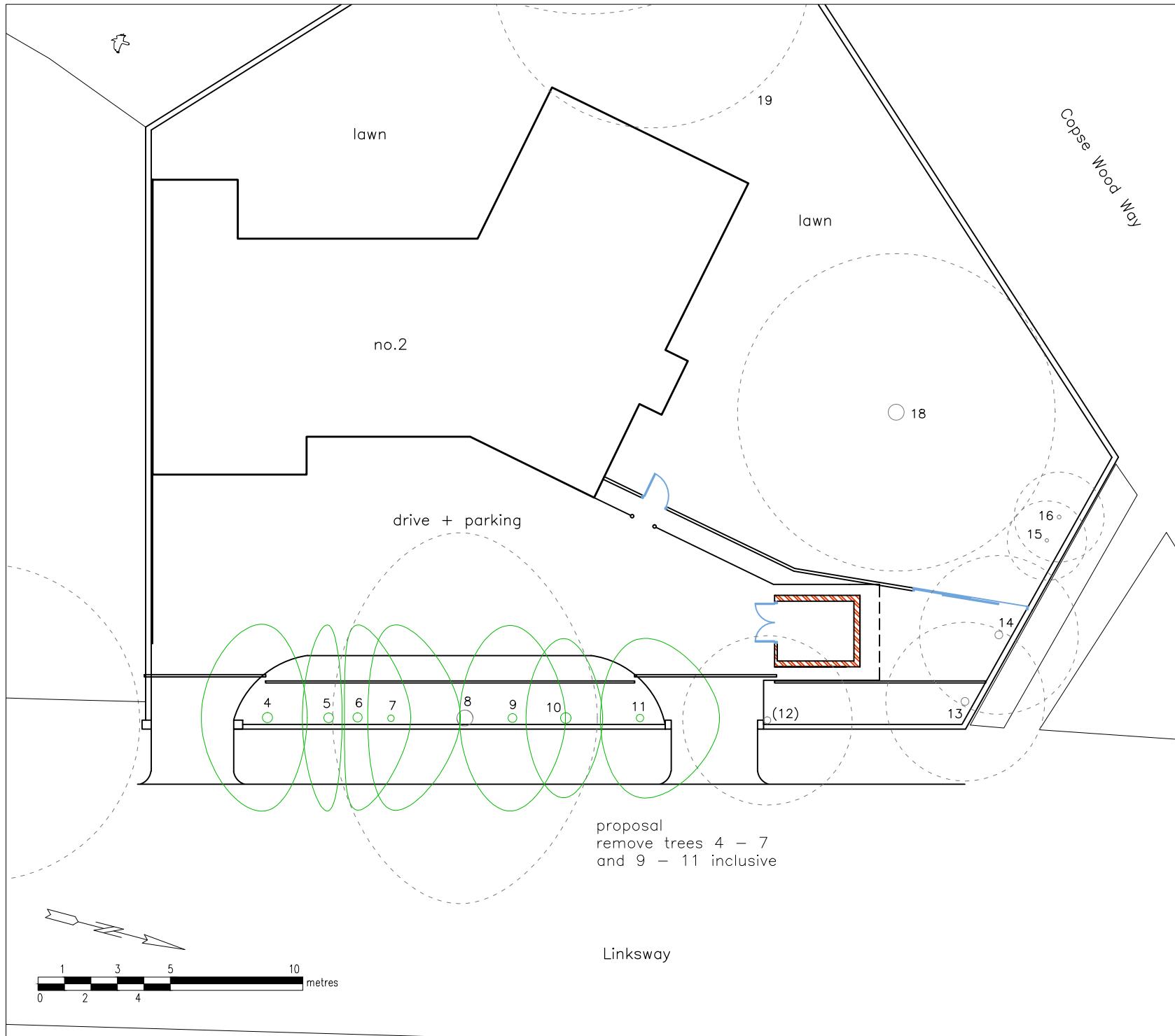
Site: 2 Linksway, Northwood, HA6 2XB

Inspection date: 1 June 2022 by Simon Pryce

Tree no.	Species	Ht	Dia	Comments
The trees are described in sequence from left to right as seen from the road in front.				
4	Red cedar	18	400	Has previous topping points at about 3.5m and 6m which, together with the close planting distances between the trees, confirms that the line has been maintained as a hedge. There is also a bulge just above ground there the trunk had deformed and developed a pressure pad where it was in contact with the previous wall. Crown spread is less restricted to the left than in the other trees, as it is growing next to the entrance, but the foliage is very sparse.
5	Red cedar	16	380	Has topping points at the same heights as tree 4. Very close to tree 6, so the crown is flattened that side and on the other side due to proximity to tree 4.
6	Red cedar	16	370	Has the same topping points as the others and a laterally flattened crown due to growing very close to tree 5.
7	Red cedar	10	240	Smaller than the others due to growing under the oak and being suppressed by it and the other red cedars.
9	Red cedar	15	370	Same topping points as the others, close to the oak, but not as suppressed as tree 7.
10	Red cedar	14	300	One of the smaller trees due to growing close between 9 and 11 as well as beneath the oak and has sparse foliage.
11	Red cedar	15	350	Crown spreads farther to the right than the others due to being next to the entrance, but mid and upper level foliage is sparse. Narrow potentially weak fork at the lower topping point.

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Client:
Mr M Saluja

Site:
2 Linksway, Northwood, HA6 2XB

Title:
Tree survey - site plan

Date: 1 June 2022

Ref: 21/082 Rev:

Scale: 1:200 at A4

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Original drawing:
Simon Hands and Associates

Notes:
Trees covered by this report are shown by
symbols, others are shown by dashed lines