

Mr S Avery  
Bell Cornwell  
St Mary's Court  
The Broadway  
Amersham  
Buckinghamshire  
HP7 0UT

12 July 2011

Our Ref: 7214-Let1-DC

Dear Mr Avery

**Re: Proposed redevelopment of The Phene Arms, Chelsea, London**

Thank you for sending through the plans of the proposed development for The Phene Arms. You have asked me to comment on the impact of the development with regard to existing trees on and adjacent to the site and in addition to new tree planting proposals. As you know I visited site on 27 April 2011 and my colleague, Jeremy Barrell, carried out a site visit on 16 May 2007 and provided a report to Trevor Lahiff Architects Ltd on the tree issues at that time.

I have been sent a series of plans by Trevor Lahiff Architects showing the proposed basement development. During our initial involvement in 2007, two trees (a mature tree of heaven and a sycamore) were identified as growing within the garden of the pub adjacent to Margaretta Terrace,. Both trees were noted as having serious structural defects and were proposed for removal due to their poor condition. The tree of heaven was removed and replaced with a new silver birch. The sycamore was not removed at that time and remains on site today. This sycamore has major internal decay and further decay at the pollard points. Therefore, as identified in 2007, the tree poses an unacceptable hazard, as identified in 2007, and should be removed as soon as practically possible.

A mature acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) grows just within the neighbouring garden adjacent to the eastern boundary. Although this trees grows in very close proximity to the existing boundary wall (see photo 2), there will be no impact upon the rooting zone as this wall is to be retained and the piling work set back from it, within the existing building footprint. However, simply in view of the close proximity of the tree to the boundary wall, I would not consider this as a tree suitable for long term retention and it

may be that Elliot Wood (Structural engineers) will have a view regarding the potential for direct damage from future incremental growth.

The replacement tree planting is proposed within the area set aside for drainage, at the junction of Phene Street and Margareta Terrace. This space will allow for the future development of two trees with their positions at this junction maximising their potential to contribute to local amenity. The position of the new trees will also allow them to develop without creating an unreasonable conflict with the future use of the building. With regard to species choice, birch was considered a suitable species for the replacement of the tree of heaven and I suggest two extra heavy standard Himalayan birch (*Betulus jacquemontii*).



**Photo 1:** Showing the adjacent acacia **Photo 2:** showing the close proximity of the acacia to the boundary wall (View from above)

In summary, the sycamore to be removed has severe structural defects as originally identified in 2007 and should not be considered a constraint on any form of redevelopment of this site. The design allows for sustainable tree planting and fully conforms in this respect with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Subterranean Development Supplementary Planning guidance. The acacia growing within the adjacent property will not be affected by the proposed changes and in view of its close proximity should not be considered a long term tree.

Please call me if you need further clarification on any of these points.

Yours sincerely

David Cashman **DipArb(RFS) CUEW FARborA MICFor**

**Enclosure:** 1: Brief qualifications and experience of David Cashman

**Copy:** Mahir Hiranandani (Trevor Lahiff Architects)

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## Enclosure 1: Brief qualifications and experience of David Cashman

- 1 Qualifications:** I hold the City and Guilds Certificate in Arboriculture, and the Royal Forestry Society's Professional Diploma in Arboriculture, which is the premier qualification within the Arboricultural Profession. I am a Fellow and Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association. I am a Chartered Forester and a member of the Royal Forestry Society. I am an Expert Witness accredited through the Bond Solon training programme.
- 2 Practical experience:** I have worked in local government and commercial tree management for over 30 years. I started my career as an apprentice arborist at London Borough of Sutton where I gained valuable experience and practical skills in all aspects of arboriculture. In 1986, I was promoted to Assistant Arboricultural Officer (Technical) within the Borough. In 1987, I joined Aspan Leisure, a commercial tree company, where I managed a busy tree section dealing with private and council contracts across southern England. In 1993, I joined New Forest District Council where I stayed for 10 years as a Tree Officer. In addition to making and administering Tree Preservation Orders, my other duties included consulting on major development proposals, acting as an expert witness at planning inquiries and administering tree work contracts. In 2003, I joined Barrell Treecare as a practice consultant bringing my public sector planning expertise to the private sector.
- 3 Relevant experience to this project:** During my service with New Forest District Council, I worked closely within a team including urban designers and landscape architects, providing detailed guidance to developers on major housing schemes. This gave me invaluable experience in balancing tree retention with new landscaping to create high quality residential developments.
- 4 Continuing professional development:** I keep professionally current through subscription to professional/industry publications and by regular attendance at seminars and conferences. I have presented workshops in New Zealand and America and frequently speak to UK audiences about trees in a planning context.

