

Delegated Report

Officer	Application Number(s)					
Liam Vincent	2023/2753/T					
Application Address						
1 Kings College Road, London NW3 3ES						
Proposal(s)						
REAR GARDEN: T1 - sycamore tree (12m) with large sections of bark missing on main trunk near crown break - take down to ground level.						
Recommendation(s):	No Objection to Works to Tree(s) in CA					
Application Type:	Notification of Intended Works to Tree(s) in a Conservation Area					
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	15	No. of responses	1	No. of objections	1
Summary of consultation responses:	One objection was received, that the (three) trees are a visual amenity, blocking the view to the tower block on Fellows Road.					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>	None received.					

Assessment

The S.211 notification is to carry out removal of a medium-large sized (“12m” tall) Acer (Sycamore) tree in the rear garden of a residential property on Kings College Road, situated within the Belsize Park Conservation Area. The reason for the removal of the tree has been given as:

“...large sections of bark missing on main trunk near crown break.”

The tree is one of three forming a coherent crown grouping in the rear garden of the property on Kings College Road.

There has been one objection to the proposed removal received, based upon the visual (screening) amenity that the tree provides, namely of the view to the tower block on Fellows Road from the rear of 53 Eton Avenue.

Regarding serving a TPO as a mechanism to retain the tree, there are several criteria that must be considered when assessing the suitability of a tree for a TPO which can be broken down as follows (taken from the current planning practice guidance that LPAs use when assessing a tree):

Visibility

The extent to which the trees or woodlands can be seen by the public will inform the authority’s assessment of whether the impact on the local environment is significant. The trees, or at least part of them, should normally be visible from a public place, such as a road or footpath, or accessible by the public.

In this case, the Sycamore tree in question is moderately visible from the southern end to mid-point of Kings College Road, forming part of a group made up of three trees in the rear garden of the property.

Individual, collective, and wider impact

Public visibility alone will not be sufficient to warrant an Order. The authority is advised to also assess the particular importance of an individual tree, of groups of trees or of woodlands by reference to its or their characteristics including:

- *size and form;*

The Sycamore is a medium-large tree but is not in any way a noteworthy example of its species. Historic pruning (crown lifting) has reduced the amenity the tree currently provides. It is exhibiting signs of structural dysfunction on the lower stem, with large areas of necrotic bark.

- *future potential as an amenity;*

Due to the trees current observed physiological state, it is very likely that the structure of the tree will become compromised, and the safe life expectancy of the tree will decline. The trees position relative to the adjacent buildings will continue to result in pressure to prune the tree, preventing it from reaching its full potential.

- *rarity, cultural or historic value;*

The Sycamore is not of a rare species or of any known cultural or historic value.

- *contribution to, and relationship with, the landscape;*

It is acknowledged that the tree makes a reasonable contribution to the landscape to the rear of the properties, however the physiological dysfunction noted significantly reduces the weighting that this can be given when considering a TPO.

- *contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.*

The tree is considered to make a reasonably positive contribution to the character of the conservation area however this is limited to being part of a small group to the adjoining rear gardens and the southern half of Kings College Road.

Other factors

Where relevant to an assessment of the amenity value of trees or woodlands, authorities may consider taking into account other factors, such as importance to nature conservation or response to climate change. These factors alone would not warrant making an Order.

- The tree offers some benefits in terms of reducing pollution, absorbing CO2 and habitat provision; however, the current legislation does not put sufficient weight on to these factors to justify serving a TPO.
- The attribute of softening the visual impact of the building on Fellows Road for the rear of the property on Eton Avenue is cited – that this visual screening would be lost.

For the reasons outlined above, it is not considered expedient to serve a TPO on the tree and we do not object to the works.