

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2023/4021/T	E. Peel	12/10/2023 15:07:14	OBJ	<p>I strongly object to the proposed felling of the lime tree outside 65 Canfield Gardens by the agents (Sedgwick) acting for the insurers of the property next door, but one, at 69 Canfield Gardens. It appears that the Freeholder and managing agent of 65 Canfield Gardens was not even notified of this proposal to fell their own tree!</p> <p>The lime tree in question is a sound and attractive specimen and adds significantly to the amenity of the streetscape, substantially supports biodiversity and is a significant carbon sink and is highly visible to the public. As such the South Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal document would strongly suggest its retention, and its complete felling would go entirely against the ethos of this Conservation Area with its verdant streetscape.</p> <p>However, at an estimated height of some 19m and estimated crown spread of 12m the tree does appear to have been lacking in recent prudent tree management measures to control its height and crown spread. As the volume of the tree increases, so do its water abstraction demands and this can cause increased seasonal settlement and then heave of the underlying clay soil.</p> <p>A sensible approach with a tree of this size in relatively close proximity to buildings is therefore to carefully and regularly manage its size through crown reductions etc. The solution is NOT generally to entirely fell it as this will have potentially equally severe consequences due to the substantial 'heave' that might follow as the water content of the clay subsoil permanently grows to a higher level. This will then also risk the even nearer buildings at 65 and 67 Canfield Gardens (which seem, incidentally, not to be reporting any significant damage partly or wholly attributable to this tree, despite being much nearer to it.).</p> <p>The agents' report and the 'arboricultural assessment' report are characteristically 'binary' and blinkered in their findings and recommendations. The choice is not simply between entirely felling the tree or retaining it at its current large size. The third and much more valid option is for it to undergo some tree management works to reduce its height and crown spread and thereby reduce its volume and water uptake and root spread. It is deeply to be regretted that insurers agents and their own risk assessment agents typically completely ignore this option, particularly in a Conservation Area.</p> <p>It stretches credibility that the (allegedly) lime tree roots of only 2mm diameter that were found in only one of the boreholes (all the others seem to have been abandoned) at a distance of as far as 12.5m from this tree could, alone, be the cause of such cracks at 69 Canfield Gardens. But also note that no pictures of the cracks has been provided and nor do they seem to be being monitored for seasonal variations. Please also note that the last three summers have been amongst the hottest and driest for many years, which will have had the general effect of drying out the clay subsoil in the whole area more than previously, and this may also have contributed to the fact that the cracks have only been noticed relatively recently.</p> <p>It is suggested that a TPO should be applied to the tree, with the condition that the owner should be required to undertake some early tree management works, to reduce its height and volume to an extent to be agreed with the Camden Trees Officer. It would seem that, as it is so highly visible to the public and in good condition, the main criteria for the application of a TPO have indeed been met.</p> <p>Please reject the application for complete felling of the tree.</p>