

**From:** Lindsay Douglas

**Sent:** Thursday, March 14, 2024 11:51 AM

**To:** Planning

**Subject:** Jeffreys Street RA response to set of five planning applications

**Jeffreys Street Residents Association**

**Response to planning applications:**

**23 Jeffreys Street London NW1 9PS 2023/4700/T**

**11 Jeffreys Street London NW1 9PS 2024/0848/T**

**17 Jeffreys Street London NW1 9PS 2024/0849/T**

**19 Jeffreys Street London NW1 9PS 2024/0850/T**

**29 Jeffreys Street London NW1 9PS 2024/0851/T**

The Jeffreys Street Residents Association objects to this set of five planning applications for alterations to mature trees in private gardens in Jeffreys Street for the following reasons:

a) Permission has not been sought for the correct trees or properties.

The applicant is a housing association and is referring to a car parking area for a housing block on Farrier Street. They do not own the trees they wish to alter and the trees are not on their property. Their guess over who on Jeffreys Street owns each tree is wrong and they therefore have not applied for permission for the properties and the trees they aim to alter within this conservation area. There is no tree in the garden of number 11. There are two separate willows at number 23 with different maintenance schedules. Permissions for key trees in the area, such as the largest central acer at 21 and those at 31, have not been mentioned in the application, and so permission cannot be gained for those under this application, though 21 must be targeted -- just as others have been incorrectly identified as single trees, ignoring groups. Any consultation whatsoever with residents could have resolved this. Permission should be rejected for being inaccurate and so incorrect as to be meaningless.

b) We would seek to discourage this deliberate lack of consultation with tree owners while the housing association discourteously submits applications on behalf of these private properties: An unprofessionally combative and disrespectful policy decision has been made by the housing association not to consult or notify the owners of these properties and trees before submitting planning applications on their behalf. The Jeffreys Street Residents Association would like to heavily discourage this avoidant way of trying to 'get around' local residents about actions that will negatively impact the gardens they own, potentially damaging trees, privacy and views. There is no reason for an aggressive policy against the tree owners and these hostile actions must not continue in future.

The Jeffreys Street Residents Association seeks a mature and responsible approach from the housing association that involves engagement with the tree owners and or the Jeffreys Street Residents Association. If they had offered owners any agency and disclosed clear diagrams of their pruning plans for each tree, they may have seen the start of a collaborative process.

c) There is in this case a concerning precedent for greatly overreaching any legitimate pruning. In the past, 'cutting back' from the housing association has rigorously overstepped the brief and taken far more than the branches that overhang the boundary, threatening the health of the trees, risking die-back, ruining their attractiveness and their ability to act as a screen. They have even in the past surprised tree owners by carrying out major tree works without applying for planning permission at all. Trust in the quality of the planned works has therefore been lost. Owners are concerned that without a warming in attitude at the housing association towards consultation with the tree owners, permission to alter the trees will be abused once more, resulting in damage to their trees.

d) They have no legitimate reason to alter the crown of the trees. The crown of each tree rests above each private garden, does not overhang the boundary and is not the housing association's legitimate concern. Residents manage the height, depth and health of their own trees and wish to continue to use the trees to obscure their view of the housing

association. The trees are expensively maintained by each individual owner on different schedules and in collaboration with other neighbours. The creation of particular tree shapes has cost many thousands of pounds in expert tree surgery work. The leaf cover provides privacy for the bathrooms and bedrooms that face the housing block in addition to its aesthetic qualities as a screen.

e) Residents' ongoing schedule for privately and individually managing the health and shape of their trees would be undermined and trees would be harmed by uninformed alteration.

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Here are two examples:

At No 19, A cluster of three acers has been maintained by expert and expensive tree surgeons over years to create a thin fan shape that could easily be punched through and ruined. The depth no longer exists to provide a screen if cut into by someone who is unaware of the overall plan for the trees' growth and the shallowness of the shape.

At No 23 a tree surgeon successfully treated a mature willow tree for a fungal infection in 2021, removing two thirds of the trunk and leaving a small amount of leaf-bearing branch on which its fragile future is dependent. Imprudent alteration by those unaware of the tree's treatment would simply kill the tree. This tree has been mistakenly identified for permission for alteration, perhaps as well as the large willow nearby.

f) Both references to "most appropriate" pruning points on "or adjacent to" the boundary line are too wide as to be open to misuse and need consultation with the owners of the trees. Rigorous pruning is not appropriate, required or a legitimate action. The trees' yearly growth reaches in the other direction, away from the boundary wall with the car park, stretching over private gardens towards the sun in the South and West. We would suggest that gentle cosmetic work to trim the ends of branches in line with the boundary wall is sufficient in all cases and that decisions about 'most appropriate' or 'adjacent' work reached within private property should be the decision of the tree-owners only.

g) This boundary of mature trees is a nesting area for many species of bird. Residents may list jays, magpies, thrushes, starlings, woodpeckers, blackbirds, great tits, blue tits, wrens, robins and wood pigeons as resident, attracting tawny owls and sparrow hawks. From an environmental management point of view it is inappropriate to carry out tree works in nesting season and the area should not be disturbed until this year's chicks can be sure to have fledged.

We on the Committee of the Jeffreys Street Residents Association ask that the five applications be refused so that they may be re-formulated more accurately and more modestly, following consultation with the owners or via the Jeffreys Street Residents Association. We also recommend that any future agreed work is carried out outside of nesting season.

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Douglas

Secretary

Jeffreys Street Residents Association

19 Jeffreys Street, NW1 9PS

Further names can be provided of all Committee members supporting this response if requested.