

From: Vicki Harding
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2024 12:05 PM
To: Nick Bell; Planning
Subject: Application number: 2024/1250/T

Dear Nick,

I wonder if encouragement to withdraw this DD Notice could be given to the owner or the agent until actual evidence that the tree is a risk can be forthcoming?

So far the photographs show some veteranisation features - hollowing of the trunk from central rot. This on its own would merely indicate the tree is healthy and allowing beneficial fungi to rot out its heart wood. Again, this alone would have the effect of making the tree more supple and **less** likely to fall in strong winds etc. - as occurred during the hurricane of 1987 when zero of the roughly 500 veteran trees on the Heath were uprooted compared to the many hundreds of mature trees whose root plates were uprooted. Their trunks were all solid and thus less flexible when blown about by such strong winds. While canopy size also plays a part, the lack of beneficial central rot presented greater stiffness and more resistance to the wind so that the trees failed at the soil-root interface.

Only photographs of central rot have been shown. There are

- no photographs of the canopy, the likely degree of wind sail present, or the canopy's balance over the trunk. The photograph of the trunk only shows the first foot or so, but indicates there may be no lean.
- no evidence of any targets that the tree might pose a risk to IF it did fall,
- no picus or other tests indicating the thickness of remaining trunk around the central rot,
- only 1 photograph of the tree's base and its structural roots (apparently OK), or tests to them so we do not know if there is a risk element here.

This tree seems to be doing what Ted Green described as encouraging the 'eiffel tower' effect that he pointed out for many trees on Hampstead Heath during his walk there to show us what his experience of veteran trees saw of Hampstead Heath's. Of the 'eiffel tower' trees that I surveyed on Area 5 of the Ancient Tree Survey of Hampstead Heath in 2003-5, all are still intact as far as I'm aware. The veteran trees that I surveyed and have fallen since are those that received too much compaction to their roots by footfall or vehicles.

I'm not saying this tree is not a risk, I just question that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that it is a risk, and who to.

It seems to pose no risk from what has been shown so far.

With all good wishes

Vicki

Dr Vicki Harding
Society Tree Officer
Heath & Hampstead Society