

**Magnolia at
Cannon Hall , Cannon Place . Hampstead. NW3 1EJ.**

Visited Wednesday 17th January 2024.

The owners, Mr & Mrs Wright, are proposing to extend the conservatory and are seeking advice with regard to retaining an adjacent Magnolia.



The largest stem of the Magnolia is 120mm diameter (at 1.5 metres from ground level). It is circa 6 metres tall and is bushy with many potential target pruning points.



It is believed that the next door house, Cannon Cottage, has a cellar underneath the raised bed in which the Magnolia is growing.



The adjacent drain cover was lifted.
The invert level of the drain is circa 500 mm below cover level, this drain is for rainwater.



Magnolias are amongst the earliest evolved flowering plants and are extremely robust. Magnolias have thick fleshy roots. All empirical evidence points to the Magnolia having all of its roots within the raised bed. It is presumed that part of this bed is on the lid of the cellar below. Pavers could be lifted and the planting bed could be extended.



Preferred option-

The Magnolia is lying perfectly to be pruned back house side to fit the conservatory in. The top can also be target pruned back. The Wisteria vine can be detached from the wall and moved towards the pavers. The bed can be cut back house side and extended in the opposite direction.

Other options-

The entire Magnolia could be slid further along the wall by hand by skilled arborists or even be moved by washing the roots and handballing to a new planting pit.

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Target pruning is described in section 7.2.5 of BS 3998 (2010) "Treework –recommendations".

It is most unlikely the Magnolia would meet the Boroughs criteria for a tree preservation order. That is if the Borough regarded the Magnolia as a tree and not a shrub. If it was regarded as a tree it would be category C as described in BS 5837 (2012) "Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction-recommendations" due to stem diameter.

For interest only - Cornish gardeners used to chop the roots of Magnolias in order to get the plants to flower more profusely. (Cornwall has one of the national collections of Magnolias).