

Delegated Report

Officer	Application Number(s)	Application Address
Liam Vincent	2025/0374/T	16 Woodchurch Road NW6 3PN

Proposal(s)

Original:

(TPO REF: C18A-G2) FRONT GARDEN: 1 x London Plane (T1) - Fell in sections to ground level. 4 x London Planes (T2 - T5) - Reduce height down to the first (historic) points of reduction, (approx. 6m - 7m to be removed).

Amended:

(TPO REF: C18A-G2) FRONT GARDEN: 5 x London Planes (T1 – T5) Reduce all aspects of the crowns back to the most recent pruning points (approx. 3.5 - 4m regrowth to be removed)

Recommendation(s): Grant Consent for AMENDED application for works to trees covered by a TPO

Application Type: Application for works to trees covered by a TPO

Consultations

Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	28	No. of responses	1	No. of objections	0
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Summary of consultation responses:

The Council received one response of support from notified adjoining neighbours, which is as follows:

I live next door and I am writing to express my support for my neighbour's proposal to significantly prune the trees on their property. As someone who deeply values the environment and appreciates the vital role that trees play in urban ecosystems, I do not take this lightly. However, the trees in question have caused significant damage to both our properties, and I believe that responsible pruning is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of our homes while maintaining the health of the trees.

I strongly support a solution that strikes a balance between preserving the natural beauty and biodiversity of our area and addressing the ongoing structural concerns. Proper, well-considered pruning will not only help mitigate further damage but also promote the long-term health of the trees, ensuring they continue to thrive in a more sustainable way.

CAAC/Local groups* comments:
*Please Specify

From CRASH:
CRASH notes that all five of these plane trees are subject to TPOs as they form an important part of the streetscape and public amenity. It is notable that the front wall has been damaged by the trees for more than a decade and left unrepaired. CRASH notes permission was given to reduce the height of them four years ago but it would seem that this work was never carried out. CRASH does not object to the proposed reduction in height to previous points but does object to felling of T1 which is the largest of the trees. Damage to front garden walls and lifting of paving stones in a front garden should not be adequate enough reason for felling this mature tree.

Assessment

The Council has received a TPO application proposing to remove one (T1) and reduce the crowns of four other (T2 – T5) mature Plane trees, growing within the front garden of a residential property on Woodchurch Road which is located in the South Hampstead conservation area.

The trees are highly visible within the street-scene, visible from West End Lane to the west and for 50-75m to the east along Woodchurch Road. They have historically been managed by crown reduction, pruned back to the framework as a 'high pollard'. They are all in a good condition with no obvious defects or dysfunction.

The work to remove T1 and to reduce T2 – T5 is proposed to deal with damage to *'the wall and the pavement in front of the house'*, allegedly caused by the trees. The reductions proposed in the current application is to prune T2 – T5 to the original pollard point at approximately 3.5m above ground level, which would result in straight stems with no upper canopy framework remaining. This proposed work is too severe – it would remove almost all of the amenity values that the trees offer to the street scene and the wider community. It is also likely to cause significant stress to the physiological systems of the trees and could result in a decline of their condition. The removal of T1 is disproportionate response to the damage to walls and the pavement – engineering solutions could be found to address the issue without the total loss of the tree.

These works would be refused. There are no robust reasons for the proposed reductions to be carried out, and total loss of T1 is not an acceptable outcome to address the damage to the built structures.

The agent has since amended the specification of proposed works to *'Reduce all aspects of the crowns back to the most recent pruning points (approx. 3.5 - 4m regrowth to be removed)'*.

The Council does not object to the amended work proposals.

It is recommended that the amended proposed works be granted consent.