

31 Lady Margaret Road, LONDON NW5 2NG

Regeneration and Planning
Development Management
LB of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
WC1H 8ND

yr ref: 2014/5052/T

October 9 2014

Dear Mr Watson,

re REAR GARDEN: 1 x Tree of Heaven – Remove

I am astonished at your decision to OBJECT to the removal of this tree and wish to appeal against your decision.

1. The tree is not 'highly visible from the public realm' as you claim: it can be seen by neighbours from their private gardens, and by people walking down Ascham Street for a brief moment if they look south as they pass along a 50 foot section of the street;

2. Camden have recently [presumably] agreed [within the last 3 to 4 years] to the removal of a Tree of Heaven from a front garden in Falkland road – i.e. much more of a 'public amenity' than mine [incidentally one of only three or four trees recently removed from front gardens or the pavement within the neighbouring four streets, all of which would have been very obviously 'in the public realm'];

3. 'The tree is considered to be of high amenity value': I am not aware that as a private citizen the contents of my garden need to have any amenity value for anyone except those directly affected by those contents, viz me and immediate neighbours;

4. Ailanthus Altissima 'could be considered an invasive species'; it is an invasive species and I have been told that Camden themselves would never consider planting it except in public spaces and then not in roadways anywhere in the borough. The tree in question is now 60 feet high, and is really a forest giant quite out of place in a small London garden;

5. The setting of seed to which you refer is one of several reasons why I [and at least two neighbours] wish it to be removed. This year June was a particularly pleasant time but for four weeks I was unable to sit in the garden or hang any washing out there; neither was my neighbour in number 29 able to let her three little boys use the garden to play as the 'setting of the seed' consisted of an unrelenting rain of sticky seeds and flowers and stalks into our gardens. The slightest shower converts this into a sticky dark mass which is extremely difficult to remove from play structures or garden furniture; the sheer size of the tree means that there is nowhere in the garden free from this mess;

6. In the autumn this is followed by the fall of numberless stalks after leaf-fall, which again need to be raked up and cleared from hard surfaces and from a small flat roof; the effect of this latter collection is that the drain pipe from that roof is often blocked;

7. The tree clearly takes a lot of moisture from my garden; this summer my lawn was noticeably less green than neighbours' lawns – indeed seriously dried out. The flower bed that the tree sits in is exceptionally difficult to cultivate with any real success. For the garden and those of the family who use it the tree cannot possibly be described as an 'amenity';

8. There is minor subsidence at the back of our house which I consider likely to be caused by the extensive root system;

9. Finally, I do not accept that the tree does anything to conserve the character of this part of the conservation area, and I believe that the borough's efforts to conserve the character would be better spent on chasing up neglectful landlords and people whose front hedges stretch far over the pavements.

I am sending copies of this letter to my neighbours to update them on this debate; and copies also to my councillors.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Elizabeth Monck

cc. Councillor Meric Apak
Councillor Jenny Headlam-Wells
Councillor Georgia Gould