

Dear Gerry Oxford,

re: 3 Frogna Lane 2016/1609/T (TPO REF C761) FRONT GARDEN: 1 x Lime - Remove

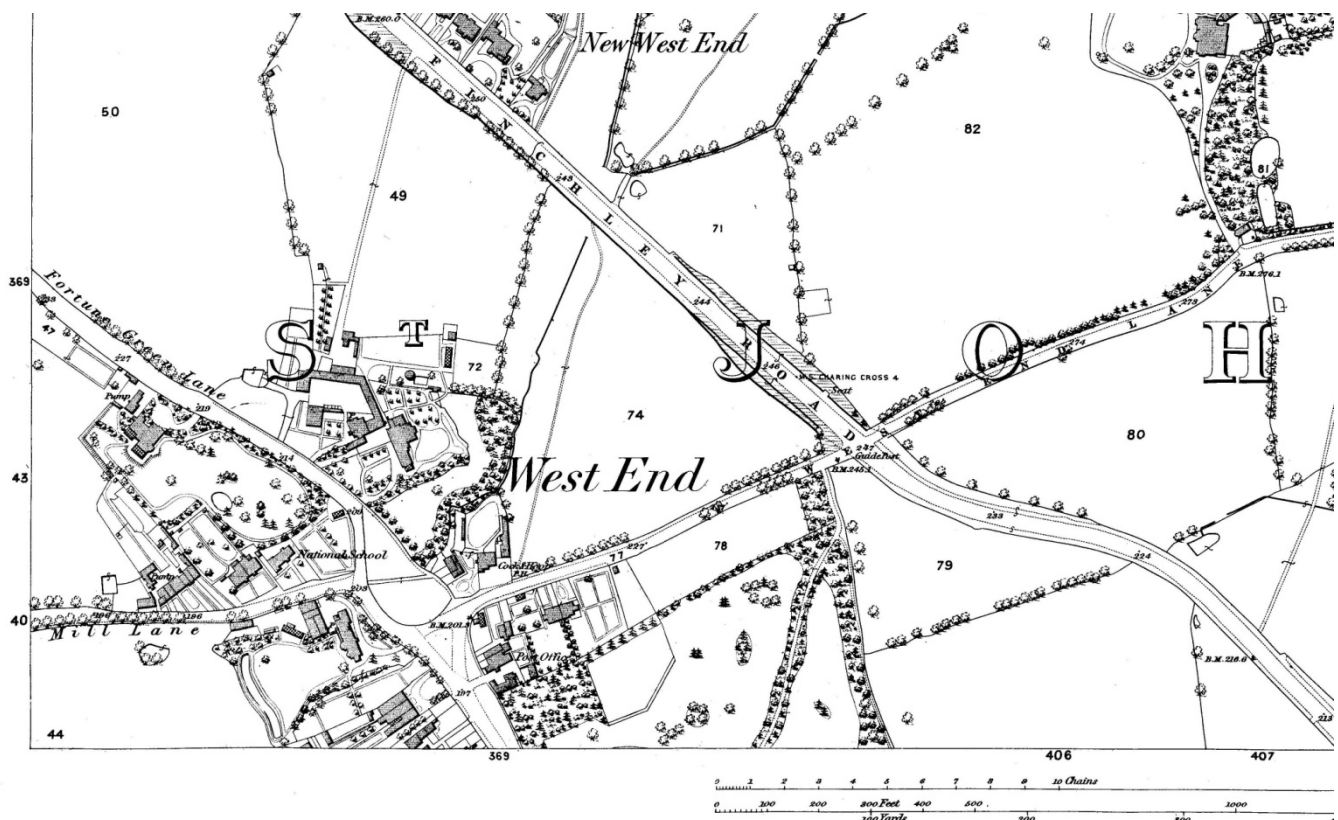
I am requesting a refusal for this Notice of Intent as I do not feel the reasons given for felling this TPO'ed tree are sufficient to warrant its removal.

This tree has been the subject of previous requests to fell it, each without evidence of risk or harm that this tree is supposed to be responsible for:

"Following the recent wet weather, the roots are now in very wet soil (which does not give as much support to a tree as dry soil)" Tree roots do not have 'less support' in wet soil than dry.

This is an argument for water-loving trees like limes to be here, since there is a stream running down the hill here and a well associated with no. 1 Frogna Lane. The whole area here is very wet being just below the spring line on the Claygate Beds/Band D of the London Clay Formation boundary on a steep hill, and these trees would originally have been planted to reduce the waterlogging of gardens here. Where trees have been removed on the other side of St Andrews, the gardens are exceedingly waterlogged. They are essential here for this function.

The tree is part of an historic line of trees present on the 1866 Ordnance Survey map (at this time Frogna Lane was called West End Lane) which is highly accurate for surveyed trees as can be seen here:



This indicates that these trees are going to be 200 to 250 years old, not younger than the house as Jim Quaife indicated. He is an extremely well-respected arboriculturalist and consultant with long experience, however Hampstead trees are clearly different from others he has experience with.

The close placement of these trees is typical of lime avenues or groves of trees in Hampstead, unlike the slightly more distantly-placed veteran hedgerow oaks, as can be seen running northwards a little further up Finchley Road, and the hedgerow line running northeast off that, many of which are still present on Oak Hill Avenue that follows this line. Such lines of trees present on the 1866 OS map are being

mentioned in the draft Local Plan; they are important historically for Hampstead as well as for their immense biodiversity and water using value.

Neither are these trees responsible for subsidence. There is subsidence along the nearby stretch of Finchley Road but this is due to the hydrogeology and topography of the area, plus the cutting and widening of the road more recently.

The argument that the tree is affecting the wall has not been proven. Cracking of the render is principally because it is cement-based, not the more plastic lime-based render.

"Nos. 1 & 3 Frognal Lane and Bracknell Gate are well set back from the road and their main contribution to the character and appearance of the street is the original boundary wall which is partly constructed from "lava" bricks – misfired bricks from the local brickfields." Sadly, if this is the case, these lava bricks are not visible as they are for no 5 and other house higher up the road, due to the render. If the wall is to be used as an argument, it might be wise to remove the render in any case, reveal any lava bricks and make a good repair. There are many examples in Hampstead of where this has been done in a way that allows the trees to be retained.

Finchley Road is described as noisy. This is just what the trees will be useful for. The house would notice the noise much more if the trees were removed, but this would be too late. Replacements will take many decades to re-grow.

The arboricultural consultant used Jim Quaife was involved in a similar case some years ago, where Camden rightly refused the felling of 3 limes in Christchurch Hill. As here, these were limes that were part of an historic line on the 1866 Ordnance Survey map in an area of underground streams and flowing ground water. In this other case Jim Quaife was acting as the inspector for this case, and though he gave a good account of why the trees were worth saving, he nevertheless allowed their felling as he was clearly swayed by the 'householder' who thought regular pruning was too onerous a task.

At the Christchurch Hill site, we now have a situation where an important green corridor has had a huge chunk taken out of it, replaced by 3 birch trees that are doing very poorly, and the owner immediately sold the property for development at a large profit. Too financially onerous was clearly a red herring, and the other residents of Christchurch Hill - particularly those who do pollard their limes and do not consider this important contribution to the streets amenity too onerous - are devastated by this decision and its consequences. Please do not allow this here.

'The tree has become an unreasonably onerous maintenance obligation for the property and is unnecessarily oppressive in combination with the other road frontage trees.' These trees have been here longer than the houses, were clearly present when the property was bought by its current owner and with the suppression of side branches by ivy is hardly a too onerous obligation to warrant felling it.

The argument used by Jim Quaife that the trees block the view of 3 Frognal Lane that provides a positive contribution to the Conservation Area can only be true for the top flats of the block of flats on the other side of the road. For the rest of us on the pavement we only have a narrow view of the house through the gateway as the boundary wall is high. It is this wall and the shrubs behind that block the view, not the trees.



As I mentioned in a previous objection to felling these limes:

"The lime trees here provide good shade and pollution 'seiving' for this part of the road, and will be contributing summer coolness and winter warmth to the block of flats opposite to some degree which have no other trees doing this for them."

My concern is that if Camden allows one tree to be removed then the changed effect of winds and storms on the others means we could risk losing the other trees too. This would have a major impact on the treescape of Frognal Lane at this point.

Please refuse

Dr Vicki Harding

Voluntary Tree Officer, Heath and Hampstead Society