



Dear Alyce Keen

When we moved here, into this flat, in this house, we had chosen to for a number of reasons and several of them were what we felt were positive aspects of the position: views (on all sides), the trees, everything that was green and well-established and likely to remain so in a conservation area. The patterned brick wall and a 7 ft high Griselinia tree, deserving special mention here.

Later, we noticed the other attractions of the cottage. We knew nothing of the Norman Foster extension until we were shown it from the inside. Externally it is almost invisible from our side of the property. It is the form and colouring of the cottage that give value to it and (to some extent) its connection with the Roebuck pub, which does have a protection order on it.

Well, the Griselinia grew beyond anything anyone imagined, and may well be a quite exceptional specimen now. With creative pruning opening it up from the garden side, it makes a most special feature, appreciated also by birds and bats, since it is evergreen.

In the thirty years we have lived here, we've never imagined that anyone would contemplate the destruction of this feature. Some years ago the great brick wall was reinforced and (possibly) underpinned. So the dangers of an ancient, unstable wall, two storeys high being condemned, disappeared. It would be classified as a solid wall. Its position makes it a centre round which other gardens (Pond St and HH Gardens) are spread out. We get the wall and the tree, gardens to the north get the back wall of the cottage, which has interesting details, and those living on 2nd and 3rd floor levels get the roof. The great brick wall has of course protected the Griselinia and I'm sure it would be impossible to remove the wall and keep the tree, which would no doubt suffer from the radical change in environment, as would we.

It is also necessary to consider the movement of ground water in this area. In early 1996 after a long period of heavy rain, virtually the whole garden slumped towards the north and pushed over the long brick wall between us, No 33 and No 31 which is at a level about 2ft 6 lower than us. A number of small elder trees 'caught' the wall and it remained at about 30 degrees to the vertical. Building a new wall cost around £7000. We are very glad to have Vicki Harding of the Heath and Hampstead Society to project the problems that might arise from changing any structures.

Lastly I would mention a major practical problem, namely the issue of access from and to Pond St for all the threatened demolition and construction work that will spill out at about the most congested part of Pond St already.

Yours sincerely

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