



Landmark Trees

Our ref: LGA/35TPW/AIA/Ltr\_01

Nick Bell  
Tree and Landscape Officer  
London Borough of Camden  
5 Pancras Square  
London N1C 4AG

31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

Dear Mr Bell,

Re: Objection to planning application 2020/1025/P at 35 Templewood Avenue, London NW3 7UY

I write in response to the 22/3/20 objection to the above application from the Reddington Frogna Neighbourhood Forum. Planning consent was sought in 2017 (ref: 2017/4498/P) to construct a basement under the entire house, create a new double-volume entrance/hall, an extended 2nd floor of the east-west wing and a new car lift access to the basement carpark from Templewood Avenue. The Arboricultural Report from GHA Trees informing that application, GHA/DS/13360:16, assessed the impact of the proposals as follows:

- 6.1 The following trees are proposed for removal as part of the new development, as these specimens could not be effectively retained, due to their position in relation to the new structure(s):

T8, T9 (relocate within site), T10, T11, T12 and G13

All of the trees to be removed are of limited significance and some are in poor health or of poor form as detailed within the tree table at appendix B. The tree planting in the garden has been undertaken with a lack of appreciation for the potential growth of some of the tree species and some of these trees now pose a threat to the site features.

- 6.2 All of the trees to be removed have been given a C category grading in accordance with BS 5837. It is therefore felt that these trees should not act as a limitation on the effective use of the site, or impose any significant constraints on the layout (see table 1 BS5837).

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On this basis, consent was granted in 2018. The current scheme has the same felling requirement, and so maintains the planning status quo therein. There has been no major change in policy detail that would indicate a different approach to planning.

Whilst the protection of the environment and townscape have increasingly become a priority for planning policies cited in our own report, there remains at the heart of the guidance a call for expert judgment and discretion over the protection of individual constituents of those resources. It is as much quality as quantity that is to be assessed, and categorisation is at the heart of the specific guidance for tree consultants and officer alike in British Standards Institute: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction BS 5837: 2012 HMSO, London. It is this standard, the GHA Trees report referenced in assigning the above trees a C category (low quality). I have nothing to add to this assessment, which was accepted by the council at the time of their decision to grant consent, other than it remains valid in principle (though I upgraded T11 a little and downgraded T12 some in my own survey).

With regards to the request that a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) be designated on trees impacted by the proposals, I would respond that the current planning application is the appropriate framework for considering trees as material constraints on development. TPO's are more appropriate vehicles for more unilateral tree protection measures, most readily associated with property management decisions. Under special circumstances, it may be appropriate to designate a TPO on a development site, where there is a real threat of unilateral action on the developer's part, but in this instance, 1. the applicant has engaged multilaterally with the planning process, employing a reputable arboricultural consultant known to the authority; 2. the trees are already protected by the Redington and Froggnal Conservation Area, whereby it is a criminal offence to prune, damage or fell such trees without permission from the local authority. Finally, 3. it is unlikely the trees recommended for felling would qualify for a TPO (as having special amenity as opposed to merely partial visibility) in the first place, when previously agreed in planning documentation to comprise low-quality trees in unsuitable locations,

The point is not that trees can be removed willy-nilly to pave the way for development, but rather that development provides an opportunity for a new broom to sweep clean. Few would think to plant a gum tree or exotic fir or pine in such locations these days, as the GHA Trees report states above:

... of these trees is detailed within the tree table at appendix B. The tree planting in the garden has been undertaken with a lack of appreciation for the potential growth of some of the tree species and some of these trees now pose a threat to the site features.

There is no policy requirement to maintain the mistakes of the past in perpetuity. Following the Lord Mayor's advice, in 7.21 of the London Plan, it is the Right Tree in the Right Place that is the desirable outcome, and so maintaining a resilient and viable environmental resource as a result for the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require further information.

Yours sincerely



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Registered Consultant  
Chartered Surveyor, Forester & Environmentalist