

08/05/2020

RESUBMITTED COPY:

Your references:

*Planning Application - 2020/1700/T*  
*Site Address 21 Nassington Road London NW3 2TX*

*Notification of Intended Works to Tree(s) in a Conservation Area*

*REAR GARDEN: 1 x Willow (T1) - Fell to ground level.*

Dear Tree Officer,

I would like to object to the felling of this beautiful mature willow tree situated at the very bottom of the rear garden. My reasons are subsumed in the following paragraphs.

1. COMMENTS ON THE APPLICATION

1.1. The application is made by an Insurance Company without, as far as I know, prior consultations.

1.2. What is the damage done to the building ?

In the Application Form, the question :

“ 2. *Alleged damage to property - e.g. subsidence or damage to drains or drives.*” has been answered as “NO” .

2. COMMENTS ON THE ENGINEERING APPRAISAL REPORT

2.1 The Report states that the “ *level of damage is slight* ” ( it’s about some cracking in the building ). Furthermore, the report states that their “ *investigations have not yet been concluded* ” . Hence the causes do not seem to have been determined with certainty.

2.2 About tree roots: the report mentions, in general, and without specifying from which tree that “ *vegetation for which the policyholder and other private owners are responsible is contributing toward the cause of damage* ”.

I have underlined “*contributing*” as it implies that there other causes which need investigating.

### 3. COMMENTS ON THE SITE INVESTIGATION FACTUAL REPORT

3.1. From my reading of this report, I cannot see that it has been ascertained that this willow tree is the cause of the cracking in the building. In their “ *Certificate of Analysis* ” it is stated that “ *Root samples were obtained in sealed packets from the above site with no reference given as to the types of tree or shrub from which they may have originated.* ” (my underlining).

3.2 On the other hand, although seemingly contradictory to the above quotation, the report indicates that the diameter of the roots of the two incriminated willows are between < 1 mm and 1.5 mm at the location of the trial pits. I raise the question as to whether such tiny roots there could have a significant impact on the foundations of the main building ? My understanding is that these houses backing on the railway have particularly deep foundations which may also have been related to underground water in the area.

### 4. COMMENTS ON THE ARBORICULTURAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

From my reading of the report, it seems that they have gone for the easy and quick option (for them) by proposing felling a number of trees. Whereas I would not have objections for the small willow tree (near the boundary wall between Numbers 25 and 23) to be removed because of its proximity to the building I would, on the contrary, strongly object to the removal of the larger willow at the very end / bottom of the garden of Number 21. This willow /in question/ is at a good distance (18 m or 60 feet) from the building at Number 23 and would seem at this distance to be an unlikely source of the cracking. I have no indications that the building at Number 21 which is nearer to the willow has been affected.

Even if there was a root from that tree going all the way for 18 m ( 60 feet ) , its diameter near the building would not be more than the 1.5 mm (as calculated for the roots in the trial pit). It seems unlikely to me to be a cause of the cracking.

### 5. OTHER POSSIBLE CAUSES

Other possible causes should be investigated. For example, a possible cause of subsidence is the nearby large swimming pond / pool encompassing two gardens at Numbers 25 and 27.

A Civil & Structural Engineer reported that :

*“ Ultimately, the deeper parts of the pond would be up to 2m deep, although the total depth, allowing for the thickness of the base construction would be greater than this. At this depth the excavation could undermine the western boundary wall, and in my opinion will require a formal party wall award with the adjoining owner. ”*

Subsequently a section of this wall collapsed. This wall is alongside the extension of the building at number 23.

6. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF PROTECTING THE WILLOW TREE :-

6.1. For its intrinsic value as a tree for the environment and for the amenity of the community including travellers on the railway.

6.2. Among the “ *constraints* ” I note the point about “ *Underground development constraints/slope stability* ”. Indeed this willow is located at the very bottom of the rear garden next to the allotments where there is a pronounced slope.

6.3 This willow tree because of its position provides a healthy natural green screen from the railway. It also lessens the noise from passing trains for the residents of Nassington Road.

As the Camden Tree Section is aware, the majority of nearby residents have already suffered from multiple yearly tree applications aimed at reducing or removing the trees in the nearby gardens of 25 and 27 Nassington Road to open the space for sunlight for the swimming pool.

More generally, the whole line of trees along the railway has already been sadly reduced by a process of attrition over the years.

In conclusion I would respectfully and kindly request the Camden’s Tree Section to turn down the application for the felling of this beautiful willow tree at the bottom of the garden of No. 21 which is enjoyed by so many and useful for the air we all breathe !

Yours faithfully,

Olivier Guignabaudet

