

Delegated Report

Officer

Tom Little

Application Number(s)

2020/4750/T

Application Address72 Compayne Gardens
London
NW6 3RY**Proposal(s)**

REAR GARDEN: 1 x Large laurel- Fell to ground level.

Recommendation(s):

No Objection to Works to Tree(s) in CA

Application Type:

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

Consultations**Adjoining Occupiers:**

No. notified

No. of responses

1

No. of objections

1

Summary of consultation responses:

1. The wholesale removal of tree cover in this conservation area continues to accelerate. It would be outrageous if the subjective statement: "the tree/shrub is not particularly attractive or of note" were now considered sufficient reason to destroy a mature, established tree in an area whose "green and leafy" nature was cited by the Council as one of the main reasons for designating it as a Conservation Area subject to a Section 4c Notice.

CAAC/Local groups* comments:

*Please Specify

None

Assessment

As the laurel is not covered by a TPO it was subject to a section 211 notification of intended works to trees in a conservation area, unlike a TPO application there is no requirement to give reasons for the proposed works. A section 211 notification gives the LPA six weeks to consider objecting to the proposed works. If the LPA wishes to object then it must serve a tree preservation order on the relevant trees. There are several criteria that must be considered when assessing the suitability of a tree for a TPO which can be broken down as follows (taken from the current planning practice guidance that LPAs use when assessing a tree):

Visibility

The extent to which the trees or woodlands can be seen by the public will inform the authority's assessment of whether the impact on the local environment is significant. The trees, or at least part of them, should normally be visible from a public place, such as a road or footpath, or accessible by the public.

In this case, the laurel in question is not visible or has very low visibility from a public place, it is not considered to provide significant visual amenity to the public.

Individual, collective and wider impact

Public visibility alone will not be sufficient to warrant an Order. The authority is advised to also assess the particular importance of an individual tree, of groups of trees or of woodlands by reference to its or their characteristics including:

- *size and form;*
The laurel is not a particularly large tree, it is not in any way a noteworthy example of its species.
- *future potential as an amenity;*
The tree is unlikely to grow much beyond its existing size and its position relative to adjacent buildings will prevent it from ever becoming visible from a public place..
- *rarity, cultural or historic value;*
The apple is not of a rare species or of any known cultural or historic value.
- *contribution to, and relationship with, the landscape;*
It may be considered that the tree makes a reasonable contribution to the landscape to the rear of the properties, however the lack of visibility from the public realm significantly reduces the weighting that this can be given when considering a TPO.
- *contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.*
The tree may be considered to make a reasonably positive contribution to the character of the conservation area however this is limited to the rear gardens.

Other factors

Where relevant to an assessment of the amenity value of trees or woodlands, authorities may consider taking into account other factors, such as importance to nature conservation or response to climate change. These factors alone would not warrant making an Order.

The tree offers some benefits in terms of reducing pollution, absorbing CO2 however the current legislation does not put sufficient weight on to these factors to justify serving a TPO. The species is not considered to be particularly beneficial in the UK from an ecological perspective as it can become invasive in certain habitats, outcompetes more beneficial species in woodland understory can be very hard to eradicate.

On balance, due to the lack of visibility it would not be expedient to bring this tree under the protection of a TPO.