

**From:** Rob Whitby  
**Sent:** 16 March 2021 17:24  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Comments on application 2021/0970/T

## **Application Reference: 2021/0970/T**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write in relation to application 2021/0970/T, which proposes the felling of two limes trees at 130 Greencroft Gardens, NW6 3PJ. The application has been made by 128 Greencroft Gardens.

After careful consideration of the application and its supporting documentation we do not believe that the evidence presented supports the recommendation to fell both trees to the ground. Furthermore, the application makes no effort to consider the impact of the removal of the trees on the soil below 128 and 130 Greencroft Gardens, nor its impact on the South Hampstead conservation area.

Detail of our analysis is as follows:

1. Insufficient evidence to support the recommendation to fell the trees: The Engineering Appraisal Report, states that "no significant movement" was detected in the main building of 128 Greencroft Gardens between 1/9/2020 and 2/11/2020 and small cracks in the front steps "show[ed] significant recovery", with cracks "between the front elevation and entrance steps hav[ing] reduced in width by around 2mm". The report goes on to state that "since the lime trees' water demand is lower during the winter months the ground conditions are rehydrating, which in turn is causing the steps to recovery". It is clear from this analysis that there is a seasonal fluctuation in soil density, but that an equilibrium - within a small range - exists. Given that the arboricultural report has been undertaken only "on a preliminary basis" (section 3.4), and that the report notes that pruning of vegetation is a "proven technique [to] control total soil water loss thereby minimising soil shrinkage" it is not clear why the report recommends felling the trees over a more proportionate recommendation of managing the trees through pruning.
2. Lack of consideration of the impact of removing the trees on the soil: The arboricultural report notes that both trees are mature in nature and stand over 15m tall. Whilst it is impossible to state exactly how long the trees have been in their current location it is safe to assume that they have been there for many decades. If the trees are felled to the ground their root network - which we can assume is quite extensive - will die, possibly leading to greater soil instability than leaving the trees in place. We would expect this point to have been professionally considered ahead of any recommendation to fell the trees.
3. Lack of consideration of the trees' contribution to the South Hampstead conservation area: The trees are visible from the street. They positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area. The trees also provide a degree of screening to 130 Greencroft Gardens and to neighbouring houses. We would expect this point to have been considered in the application given the protected nature of the area.

Based on the reports provided we argue that the issue highlighted by 128 Greencroft Gardens can be effectively managed by regular pruning of the trees as opposed to felling. In terms of management, both trees are already subject to regular professional maintenance (i.e. pruning). Maintenance had been planned for March 2020, but was unable to take place due to covid restrictions. This meant that the trees had unusually dense leaf cover in the summer of 2020. In December 2020 both trees were extensively pruned and will therefore require far less water in summer 2021. Please see picture attached taken on 16/3/2021. The management company of 130 Greencroft Gardens will continue to manage the trees with regular pruning.

**In summary we do not support the proposal to fell the trees to the ground and we ask that the Council rejects application 2021/0970/T.**

Yours faithfully

Mr Michele Scuro & Mr Robert Whitby

