

Delegated Report

Officer

Tom Little

Application Number(s)

2021/0970/T

Application Address

130 Greencroft Gardens
London
NW6 3PJ

Proposal(s)

FRONT GARDEN: 2 x Limes (T1 & T2) - Fell to ground level.

Recommendation(s):

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	12	No. of responses	13	No. of objections	12
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>The Council received 12 objections to the removal of the limes and 1 support which are summarised below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of sufficient evidence in the reports provided to justify felling of the trees - the recommendation is not proportionate to the minor damage caused and the casual link is tenuous. 2. Conservation status & amenity value - the trees make up the conservation area that is South Hampstead and contribute greatly to the overall appearance and character of the area. 3. Biodiversity - bees, birds and other wildlife depend on sufficient habitat to survive - by felling the trees, their ecosystem is diminished. 4. Loss of privacy & overlooking - removing the trees will expose homes, further invade privacy and the right to quiet & private enjoyment of our properties. 5. These mature lime trees have been well cared for and regularly pruned over the years. They contribute significantly to the leafiness of this conservation area, and there is in any case a paucity of trees on the north side of Greencroft Gardens. The planning application report concedes that there is no damage to the adjoining building, and only a moderate adverse effect to its front steps. In fact, there has been virtually no visible damage to the front steps over a very long period. I have been living directly opposite No.128 for more than thirty years, and have noticed no significant damage to the steps in all that time. At most, there is slight erosion to one corner of the bottom step. Whether or not this is attributable to the roots of the lime trees (and this is something that seems at best questionable), to fell two perfectly healthy and well looked after trees at the behest of insurers, and for so trivial a reason is, in this day and age, quite unjustified. 					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>	<p>The following objection was submitted on behalf of the Collective Residents Active in South Hampstead (CRASH):</p> <p>I am writing to very strongly object to the proposed felling of the plane trees at 130, Greencroft Gardens. There would appear to be not nearly enough compelling evidence to destroy these trees and much more good reason needed to do so. I hope Camden will look into this very carefully before taking a decision.</p>					

Assessment

The lime trees are highly visible from the street, they are considered to provide a high level of visual amenity and to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The trees appear to be in good condition and have a significant safe useful life expectancy.

The notification alleges that the trees are a contributory cause of clay shrinkage subsidence in the property.

The evidence submitted includes details of the damage occurring and data from trial pits and boreholes. The evidence does demonstrate the presence of live lime roots below the foundations. However, no data from crack or level monitoring has been submitted demonstrating cyclical movement associated with seasonal water uptake by vegetation. The soil is described as made ground in the trial pit and borehole logs, as stated in the submitted documents this means that some of the tests for soil desiccation are inappropriate and have not been carried out. The data available for assessing the level of desiccation using liquid limit or plastic limit and moisture content is inconclusive. Additionally the drain survey describes the drains as damaged and in need of repair. The possible effects of the damaged drains and made ground have not been adequately discounted.

The evidence submitted at this time does not demonstrate that, on the balance of probabilities, the tree is a contributing to the damage and is therefore considered insufficient to justify the removal of a tree considered worthy of protection by a TPO.

It is recommended that a tree preservation order is served to protect the visual amenity the tree provides and preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.