

Delegated Report

Officer

Tom Little

Application Number(s)

2021/2963/T

Application Address121 Canfield Gardens
London
NW6 3DY**Proposal(s)**

REAR GARDEN: 1 x Sycamore (T1) - Fell to ground level.
1 x Sycamore (T2) - Reduce and reshape by approx. 2m - 3m, clean out crown.

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

46

No. of responses

5

No. of objections

5**Summary of consultation responses:**

1. 'To allow space for a studio/shed' should not be a sufficient reason to remove a tree.
2. The removal of trees is eroding the character of the rear gardens in the area.
3. Reducing trees because they are encroaching on another property seems cavalier.
4. This is a conservation area and the Council has a responsibility to protect trees.
5. This is a polluted area and the trees reduce pollution and have significant health benefits, removal of trees will affect people's health.
6. We also object this with respect to the "Trees, green spaces and biodiversity strategy" of South Hampstead.
7. Trees can cool cities by between 2C and 8C. When planted near buildings, trees can cut air conditioning use by 30%, and, according to the UN Urban Forestry office, reduce heating energy use by a further 20-50%. One large tree can absorb 150kg of carbon dioxide a year, as well as filter some of the airborne pollutants, including fine particulates. Please reconsider, educate yourselves and protect the natural environment.

CAAC/Local groups* comments:

*Please Specify

None

Assessment

As the sycamore listed for removal 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 Government 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 sycamore tree 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 sycamore is not a particularly large tree, it is not in any way a noteworthy example of its species. The sycamore has been suppressed by more significant adjacent trees.
- *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 sycamore is not of a rare species or individually of any known cultural or historic value.
- *contribution to, and relationship with, the landscape;*
It is 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 is considered to make a contribution to the character of the conservation area however this is limited to the rear gardens. In this case there are other trees present which make a more significant contribution.

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 and wildlife habitat however the current legislation does not put sufficient weight on to these factors to justify serving a TPO.

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

The reduction works to the adjacent sycamore are in line with previous works to the tree and are therefore considered to be good arboricultural practice. They are considered to be reasonable in the context of the situation and proximity to surrounding buildings.