

From: stephen lee

Sent: 14 July 2022 11:48

To: Planning

Subject: to "Planning Trees" w/r Application ref 2022/2676/T 64-66 Argyle St

Re: Notification of Intended works to a tree in a Conservation Area

I am writing from 62 Argyle St, London WC1H 8ER to object to the proposed removal of the tree in the rear garden of 64 Argyle St, writing both in a personal capacity as the owner and occupier of Flat 2 and as Company Secretary of the Management Company which oversees this property .

First of all, to establish the facts of the matter, the tree in question which is situated in the rear garden of 64 Argyle St. is very large, very well established, in very good condition, and very close to the boundary with 62 Argyle St. To be precise at its nearest the trunk of this big tree is only 35 cm from the garden wall constituting the boundary between the two rear gardens.

I imagine you are familiar with the phenomenon of "soil heave", which essentially can be regarded as the opposite of subsidence. Basically a large tree removes a large volume of water every day from the soil as part of its life process. This dries out the soil, particularly in the case of clay soils, such as that underlying Argyle St., causing a reduction in volume, or shrinkage,

In the case of a large well-established tree, such as that at No. 64, this drying out will have reached an equilibrium. When the tree is cut down this water is no longer removed. The shrunken clay absorbs water and over a period of time returns to its original volume, thus causing uplift to the ground and to any foundations or whatever

If despite objections the removal of this tree were to take place it seems a necessary requirement that there should be a very clear statement as to what organisation would be liable for the remediation of future problems related to the removal of the tree if such should occur, such as the consequences of "soil heave", which might include the collapse of boundary walls, and damage to the rear of 62 Argyle St. Would Camden Council be liable in such a situation, as having given permission for the removal without regard for the consequences?

Secondly, the tree is a bulwark against local pollution. There is growing realisation and acceptance that vegetation, and particularly established trees, have a number of direct environmental benefits, they improve air quality, lower ambient temperature in hot weather and of course provide shade. In relation to this ameliorating effect on pollution we should note that Argyle St. is near Euston Road/Kings Cross, where the air quality is reportedly one of the worst in Europe, with levels of pollutants well over the legal limit. My understanding is that policy these days should be to encourage more trees, not cut down those already successfully established, and indeed, that the Labour manifesto for Camden in the recent local elections had a commitment to protect trees.

Thirdly, the tree is a notable local amenity, well liked by local residents of this densely populated area, many of whom use Argyle Walk as a pleasant car-free east-west pedestrian route. The tree in question is the single most significant landscape feature when walking along Argyle Walk and also has long provided a habitat for local birds, including robins, coal-tits, blackbirds, thrushes, and other birds.

In summary, I strongly object to the removal of this tree, and know from talking to passers-by in Argyle Walk that my views are shared by many.

Stephen Lee