



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

45 Pheasant Lane - Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	April 21, 2015
To:	Etobicoke York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Etobicoke Centre - Ward 4
Reference Number:	P:\2015\Cluster A\PFR\EY06-051215-AFS#21138

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 45 Pheasant Lane. The owners are requesting permission to remove this tree to address the risk of personal injury and property damage due to the location of the tree.

The subject tree is a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) measuring 58 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support removal of this tree as it is healthy, maintainable, and growing in an appropriate location.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) private tree located at 45 Pheasant Lane.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

COMMENTS

An application was received from the property owners of 45 Pheasant Lane for a permit to remove one private tree located in the front yard. The subject tree is a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) measuring 58 cm in diameter. The application states the reason for

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removal is to address safety issues resulting from a heaving walkway and falling branches and to eliminate potential root pressure on the foundation wall of the dwelling. The arborist report, which accompanied the application, indicates that large branches have continued to fall onto the roof since the 2013 ice storm. The owners also indicated that heaving interlocking walkway stones adjacent to the tree have created a trip hazard.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the silver maple tree and observed it to be a healthy mature specimen in good overall condition both structurally and botanically. The arborist report submitted by the applicants does not describe the tree as a hazard; rather the report discusses the "growth potential" of the tree. At the time of the inspection, Urban Forestry did not identify any defects that would indicate this tree is hazardous. The tree could be pruned to reduce canopy spread over the roof and to remove dead limbs in order to address the owners concerns.

The tree is growing approximately 2.5 m away from the foundation of the existing dwelling. The owners have not provided any evidence demonstrating that the foundation has been damaged or that the tree is the cause of any damage. The arborist report discusses the "potential of root pressure on the foundation". Roots are not physically capable of exerting force required to crack concrete or asphalt. They are, however, capable of growing into any available cracks that offer water and air. Tree roots cannot damage a properly constructed foundation wall. However, if there are existing cracks, tree roots may grow into them. Roots do not and cannot go where there is no water. Where a foundation wall has been damaged, repair can typically be undertaken without requiring tree removal.

At the time of the inspection, it was noted that a number of the walkway flagstones adjacent to the tree had heaved. Pavers, concrete or other hard surfaces can lift or crack overtime. This can occur as a result of a number of factors and tree roots are often not the source of the problem. Where this occurs, an appropriate response is to check for tree roots when making the repair. If tree roots are found once the flagstones have been lifted, a qualified arborist can properly cut small roots and if larger roots are found, determine if it is possible to shave down the larger roots to provide a flat surface under the walkway.

As required under *Section 813-19, of City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, a Notice of application sign was posted on the subject property for the minimum 14 day period in order to provide an opportunity for comment by the community. No letters of concern were received in response to the posting.

A permit to remove this tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The owner is appealing this decision.

Should City Council approve this request for tree removal, in accordance with *Section 813-20 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, approval must be conditional upon the owner providing satisfactory replacement planting. The applicant is proposing to plant three (3) replacement trees. However, in this instance, it would be

appropriate for the applicant to provide five (5) trees as replacements, which can be achieved in a combination of planting on site and cash-in-lieu of planting.

Trees improve the quality of urban life and contribute greatly to our sense of community. They are aesthetically pleasing and soften the hard lines of built form and surfaces in an urban setting. Trees contribute to the overall character and quality of neighbourhoods. Studies suggest that social benefits such as crime reduction and neighbourhood cohesion can be directly attributed to the presence of trees.

The environmental benefits of trees include cleansing of air, noise and wind reduction, and protection from ultraviolet radiation. Trees reduce rain water runoff thereby reducing soil erosion and lowering storm water management costs. They also contribute to moderation of temperature extremes and reduction of the urban heat island effect by providing shade during the summer.

Trees provide many economic benefits, including the enhancement of property values. Homes with mature trees have higher value when compared to similar types of homes in similar locations without trees. Mature trees are associated with reduced home energy consumption. Air conditioning costs are lower in a home shaded by trees and heating costs are reduced when trees break the winter cooling effects of wind. Trees are a community resource, which can make the city more attractive to investors, tourists and prospective residents, thus contributing to growth and prosperity.

It is the goal of the City of Toronto to increase the city's tree canopy to 40 percent by 2050. Impacts on the tree canopy in the city due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, the Asian long-horned beetle and the emerald ash borer, make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now, than ever.

The silver maple tree at 45 Pheasant Lane is a valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance this tree has the potential to provide the property owner and the surrounding community with benefits for many more years. Urban Forestry cannot support removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable and there are alternatives which would see the tree preserved.

CONTACT

Max Dida, Supervisor Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416 394-8551, Fax: 416 394-8935, Email: mdida@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director of Urban Forestry

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Photograph of the 58 cm dbh silver maple tree overhanging the roof
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Attachment 2 – Photograph of the crown of the 58 cm dbh silver maple tree
Attachment 3 – Photograph of the walkway adjacent to the 58 cm dbh silver maple tree

Attachment 1



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