

168 Alfred Avenue – Application to Remove a City Tree

Date:	September 14, 2015
To:	North York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 23 – Willowdale
Reference Number:	P:\2015\Cluster A\PFR\NY09-090615-AFS#21784

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located at the front of 168 Alfred Avenue. The owner is requesting removal of this tree to facilitate a proposed landscaping plan, which includes installation of a retaining wall and driveway widening.

The subject tree is a honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) measuring 53 cm in diameter, located on the City-owned road allowance fronting 168 Alfred Avenue. Urban Forestry does not support removal of this tree as it is healthy and 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) City-owned tree fronting 168 Alfred Avenue.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

COMMENTS

An application was received from an agent of the property owner of 168 Alfred Avenue to remove one (1) City-owned tree located on City road allowance fronting the property.

The subject tree is a honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) measuring 53 cm in diameter. The application to remove the tree is to facilitate proposed landscaping which includes the installation of a stone retaining wall and driveway widening to a 6 m wide double driveway. The arborist report that accompanied the application supports the proposed plan.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined it is healthy and in good condition both botanically and structurally. The tree has a marginal amount of deadwood throughout its canopy, which can be addressed through pruning.

The tree is located at the south west portion of the front yard in an elevated area retained by a new stone wall. Currently there is a jog in the driveway in order to accommodate the tree protection zone. The owner of 168 Alfred Avenue proposes shifting the existing retaining wall and driveway to the west in order to provide unobstructed access to the garage. Shifting the retaining wall and driveway to the west would require removal of the subject tree as the resulting injury would be significant. Sufficient space is available to access the driveway and garage while retaining the subject tree by maintaining the current driveway alignment.

A permit to remove the 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 813-6 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article II*, approval must be conditional upon the owners providing payment of the appraised value of the tree, and satisfactory replacement planting. The applicant would normally be required to plant one (1) replacement tree. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the owner to provide five (5) replacement trees, which can be achieved in a combination of planting on site and cash-in-lieu of planting. The owner will also be required to provide a tree planting security deposit to cover the cost of removal, replacement and maintenance of trees to be planted on City property.

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, quality and enjoyment 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 rainwater 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 mitigate the cooling effects of winter 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 honey locust tree 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 therefore does not support removal of this tree.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE



Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Photograph of the 53 cm diameter honey locust tree at the front of 168 Alfred Avenue