

Application to Remove a Private Tree - 15 Sapling Court

Date: March 15, 2017

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 3 - Etobicoke Lakeshore

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located in the rear yard at 15 Sapling Court. The application indicates the reasons for removal are to address concerns that branches overhanging the house are hazardous; and that a retaining wall and stairs in close proximity to the tree are being damaged by tree roots and have also become a hazard.

The subject tree is a sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) measuring 48 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable, and is considered a valuable asset to its surrounding environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned sugar maple tree located at 15 Sapling Court.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history regarding this tree removal permit application.

COMMENTS

Urban Forestry received an application to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located in the rear yard at 15 Sapling Court. The subject tree is a sugar maple measuring 48 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that branches overhanging the house are hazardous; and that a retaining wall and stairs in close proximity to the tree are being damaged by tree roots and also have become a hazard.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed the tree to be in fair condition.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined it is healthy and in good condition, both botanically and structurally. The trunk is straight and does not exhibit any obvious signs of internal decay. The branch attachments appear to be strong. Issues concerning branches overhanging the house can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and the performance of routine tree maintenance, including removal of deadwood. Doing so will also reduce the likelihood of future limb failure.

The tree is located 0.5 m away from a retaining wall. The retaining wall is made of flag stones that can easily be adjusted without impacting the tree. The stone stairway consists of five steps that appear to be in good condition.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and bylaws including the *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Article III*, more commonly referred to as the Private Tree By-law. The Private Tree By-law does not have a mechanism that would allow the removal of the subject tree based on the concerns stated in the tree removal permit application.

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 comments were received in response to the posting.

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 813-20 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, permit approval must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the property owner is proposing to plant one (1) large-growing shade 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 on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting.

Trees improve the quality of urban life and contribute greatly to our sense of community. They help 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 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 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 wind in winter. 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 per cent. The loss of trees in the city due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, compounded with additional tree loss due to the presence of the Asian longhorned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The sugar maple tree at 15 Sapling Court 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. In accordance with the City Council-approved Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan and the Tree By-law, this tree should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Subject tree measuring 48 cm in diameter situated in the rear yard of 15 Sapling Court.

Attachment 2 - Lower trunk of subject tree and surrounding stone work.

Attachment 3 - Arborist Report

Attachment 1 - Subject tree measuring 48 cm in diameter situated in the rear yard of 15 Sapling Court.



Attachment 2 - Lower trunk of subject tree and surrounding stone work.



Attachment 3 - Arborist Report



G L E N W O O D
T R E E S E R V I C E I N C .

ADDRESS:	15 Sapling Court, Toronto
LOCATION ON PROPERTY:	Back left
SPECIES:	Sugar Maple
DIAMETER:	48cm
NATURE OF WORK:	Removal
CONDITION:	Tree is in fair condition, issues are related to its location.
REASONS FOR REMOVAL:	Previous owner of property built wall and steps around base of tree. Root system has started to damage the wall, which presents a hazard as there is a large amount of foot traffic from young children in the area. Branches overhanging house have broken and fallen.
RECOMMENDATION:	Recommend removal of tree.

Christopher Tiseo - Ontario Arborist #400949814

Glenwood - from Sapling to Century

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