

Application to Remove a City Tree - 41 Cameron Crescent

Date: August 11, 2017

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 26 - Don Valley West

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located on the road allowance adjacent to 41 Cameron Crescent. An applicant on behalf of the owner is requesting removal to address concerns of the tree's root system interfering with a newly installed weeping tile system, front walkway and porch.

The subject tree is a tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) measuring 20 cm in diameter. The City Street Tree By-law does not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located on the road allowance adjacent to 41 Cameron Crescent.

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 for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located on the road allowance adjacent to 41 Cameron Crescent. The subject tree is a tulip tree measuring 20 cm in diameter. The request for a permit to remove this tree has been made to address concerns of tree roots interfering with a newly installed weeping tile system, front porch, and walkway.

The arborist report that accompanied the application did not describe any structural or botanical issues of concern. Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally.

Urban Forestry does not support the claim that the subject tree's roots will interfere with the proper operation of a newly installed weeping tile system. Trees roots typically grow within the top 60 cm of soil far above the depth of a foundation weeping tile system.

The existing dwelling at 41 Cameron Crescent was undergoing renovations at the time of Urban Forestry's site inspection in March 2017. The renovations appeared to include waterproofing of the existing foundation wall located approximately 3.8 m north of the subject tree.

Urban Forestry found no evidence that the subject tree's root system is in conflict with the new front walkway or porch. The site plan received with the application indicates that the existing walkway will be located approximately 3 m from the subject tree. Roots are not physically capable of exerting the 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 walkway. 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 walkway or foundation wall has been damaged, repair can typically be undertaken without requiring tree removal.

The subject tree does not obstruct the walkway, porch or addition. If, in the future, the tree's crown begins to interfere with any of these structures, there are options to address the concern without requiring removal of the tree, such as pruning lower branches.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and by-laws including the *City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Article II*, more commonly referred to as the City Street Tree By-law. The City Street 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.

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

Should City Council approve this request for removal of the City-owned tree, in accordance with *Section 813-10.B* of the *City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Trees, Article II*, permit issuance must be conditional upon the owner providing payment of the appraised value of the tree to be removed (\$916.00), agreeing to have the tree removed at the owner's expense, as well as providing satisfactory replacement planting.

In this instance, it would be appropriate for the owner to provide five (5) replacement trees for the tree to be removed, which can be achieved with a combination of on-site planting 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 for a period of two years for all trees to be planted on City property.

Trees improve the quality of urban life and contribute greatly to our sense of community. They help to 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 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 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 tulip tree located adjacent to the property at 41 Cameron Crescent 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 Street Tree By-law, this tree should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
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Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Photograph provided by the applicant of the tulip tree taken before construction

Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Photograph/conceptual plan provided by the applicant of the tulip tree in relation to the renovated home

Attachment 3 - Figure 3: TPPR staff photograph of the tulip tree taken during construction

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Photograph provided by the applicant of the tulip tree taken before construction



Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Photograph/conceptual plan provided by the applicant of the tulip tree in relation to the renovated home



Attachment 3 - Figure 3: Photograph of the tulip tree taken during construction

