

Application to Remove Two Private Trees – 56 Roxborough Street West

Date: September 27, 2017

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 27 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove two (2) privately owned trees located at 56 Roxborough Street West. The application indicates the reason for removal is to address concerns about the condition of the trees, as they have elevated and thinning crowns.

The subject trees are two Colorado spruce (*Picea pungens*) trees, measuring 36 cm and 33 cm in diameter. The Private Tree By-law does not support the removal of these trees as they are healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove two (2) privately owned trees located at 56 Roxborough Street West.

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 two (2) privately owned trees located in the front yard of 56 Roxborough Street West. The subject trees are Colorado spruce tree, measuring 36 cm and 33 cm in diameter. The request to remove

these trees has been made to address concerns over the condition of the trees, as they have elevated and thinning crowns.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed these trees to be in good condition botanically; and fair condition structurally. The report indicates the crown has been elevated by approximately 50% of its then total height and that landscaping around the base of trees has damaged the root system.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the trees and at the time of inspection determined that, while the canopy of the trees has been raised over the years, they were healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally.

Concerns were raised in the arborist report that the thinning crown may have been caused by possible root damage sustained during landscaping work performed by the previous property owners. Despite this concern, the arborist report identifies the canopy as being only slightly sparser than prior to the renovation, suggesting that any potential root damage sustained was minor in nature.

Concerns were also raised regarding a greater possibility of windthrow effects, due to the raised crowns. Urban Forestry staff conducted a Tree Risk Assessment and determined at the time of inspection that the subject trees had a low risk of structural failure. The Tree Risk Assessment methodology used is an evaluation tool developed by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). The trunks did not exhibit any obvious signs of decay or structural defects that would make them more prone to failure. The root systems appeared structurally sound without any heaving. In addition, there were other tall trees nearby on the street that would reduce the effects of high winds. It was therefore determined that the trees were at a low risk of structural failure.

At the time of processing the application, these trees were being protected throughout a major home renovation following a tree protection plan that was permitted by Urban Forestry. New front stairs were installed on piers in order to avoid excavation within the minimum tree protection zones and a combination of horizontal and vertical hoarding was installed throughout the entire front yard, in order to protect the trees from any damage or compaction from construction. These protective measures were in place at the time of inspection.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and by-laws including 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 trees 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. Two (2) comments in opposition to the removal of the trees were received.

A permit to remove the trees 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 issuance must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the applicant is proposing to plant two (2) replacement trees. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide ten (10) 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 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 two (2) Colorado spruce trees at 56 Roxborough Street West are a valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance, these trees have 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 Private Tree By-law, these trees should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
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Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 –Photograph of the two Colorado spruce trees measuring 36 cm and 33 cm in diameter.

Attachment 2 –Photograph of the two Colorado spruce trees measuring 36 cm and 33 cm in diameter.

Attachment 3 –Photograph of the two Colorado spruce trees measuring 36 cm and 33 cm in diameter.

Attachment 4 – Photograph of the two Colorado spruce trees measuring 36 cm and 33 cm in diameter, showing vertical and horizontal tree protection hoarding in place.

Attachment 1 - Photograph of the two Colorado spruce trees measuring 36 cm and 33 cm in diameter.



Attachment 2 - Photograph of the two Colorado spruce trees measuring 36 cm and 33 cm in diameter.



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Attachment 4 - Photograph of the two Colorado spruce trees measuring 36 cm and 33 cm in diameter, showing vertical and horizontal tree protection hoarding in place.

