

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 175 Walmer Road

Date: August 26, 2019

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 11 – University-Rosedale

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 175 Walmer Road. The application indicates the reasons for removal are that the tree is in poor condition, in close proximity to the dwelling, and interfering with overhead service lines.

The subject tree is a White Spruce measuring 36 cm in diameter. The Tree By-law does not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 175 Walmer Road.

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 privately owned tree located in the rear yard of 175 Walmer Road. The subject tree is a white spruce measuring 36 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree is in poor condition suffering from fungal diseases and is in conflict with the dwelling and service lines.

The arborist report which accompanied the application describes the tree to be in fairly poor condition due to a fungal disease causing needle cast. The arborist also indicated to Urban Forestry that the tree is suffering from *Cytospora* canker and needle cast. Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy both structurally and botanically. Shedding needles were observed under the tree and determined to be normal and characteristic behaviour. Signs and symptoms of *Cytospora* canker or needlecast were not observed at the time of inspection.

A small deck was constructed by the owners without receiving the required permit to injure from Urban Forestry. There is construction currently occurring at the adjacent neighbouring property that is nearby the subject tree. Urban Forestry anticipates that the tree will withstand these impacts and will continue to survive well.

A telecom line originating from the rear laneway extends over the rear yard and attaches to the dwelling. The conflict with the telecom line is minimal and was observed at the peripheries of the lowest hanging southern branches. This can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices.

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 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 by the community.

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 issuance must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the applicant is proposing to plant one replacement tree. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide five 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 white spruce at 175 Walmer Road 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/Ravine 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 – Figure 1: May 15, 2019 TPPR staff photograph of the white spruce measuring 36 cm in diameter.

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: May 15, 2019 TPPR staff photograph of the white spruce in relation to the dwelling, the newly installed rear deck at 175 Walmer Road, and ongoing construction occurring at 173 Walmer Road.

Attachment 3 – Figure 3: May 15, 2019 TPPR staff photograph showing service lines conflicting with the white spruce at the peripheries of the lowest hanging southern branches (left side of photograph).

Attachment 1

Figure 1: May 15, 2019 TPPR staff photograph of the white spruce measuring 36 cm in diameter.



Attachment 2

Figure 2: May 15, 2019 TPRR staff photograph of the white spruce in relation to the dwelling, the newly installed rear deck at 175 Walmer Road, and ongoing construction occurring at 173 Walmer Road.



Attachment 3

Figure 3: May 15, 2019 TPPR staff photograph showing service lines conflicting with the white spruce at the peripheries of the lowest hanging southern branches (left side of photograph).

