

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 20 Shirley Crescent

Date: April 17, 2020

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: 24 – Scarborough-Guildwood

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 20 Shirley Crescent. The application indicates the reasons for removal are to address concerns that the tree's roots are causing multiple leaks in the foundation of the house, and that the tree has outgrown its current location.

The subject tree is a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), measuring 156 cm in diameter. The Tree By-law does not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to one privately owned tree located at 20 Shirley 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 privately owned tree located in the rear yard of 20 Shirley Crescent. The subject tree is a silver maple measuring 156 cm in diameter. The application indicated that the request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree's roots are causing multiple leaks in the foundation of the house, and that the tree has outgrown its current location.

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

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that the tree is healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. The tree is located in the back yard of the property and 3 metres west of the house.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting enough force to lift or crack a properly constructed and maintained foundation. Roots cannot grow where there is no water or air. However, if proper drainage is not provided, heaving or cracking may occur as a result of water freezing and thawing, creating spaces where tree roots may grow.

Most damages to foundations can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal. Waterproofing of the foundation, if not already done, would prevent roots from growing in any existing cracks or other openings in the foundation.

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, Trees, 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 including concerns related to the tree's size.

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 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 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 long horned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The silver maple tree at 20 Shirley 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 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: Figure 1 - Staff photograph showing a side view of the silver maple tree canopy and rear roof line at 20 Shirley Crescent, November 20, 2019.

Attachment 2: Figure 2 - Staff photograph showing proximity of the silver maple tree to house, facing north at 20 Shirley Crescent, November 20, 2019.

Attachment 1: Figure 1 - Staff photograph showing a side view of the silver maple tree canopy and rear roof line at 20 Shirley Crescent, November 20, 2019.



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