

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 21 Elderfield Crescent

Date: March 4, 2025

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Acting Director, Urban Forestry, Environment, Climate and Forestry

Wards: Etobicoke Centre - 2

SUMMARY

This report requests that Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 21 Elderfield Crescent. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns about property damage and safety related to falling branches; potential root damage to the foundation; and roots lifting the patio stones.

The honey locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) measures 42 cm in diameter. The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. The permit was denied, and the applicant is appealing the decision. Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision as to whether a permit may be issued when an applicant appeals the denial of a permit of a tree protected under the By-laws.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry, Environment, Climate and Forestry recommends that:

1. Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 21 Elderfield Crescent.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history related to this tree removal permit application.

COMMENTS

The City of Toronto received an application for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located in the rear yard at 21 Elderfield Crescent. The honey locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) in question measures 42 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns about property damage and safety related to falling branches; potential root damage to the foundation; and roots lifting the patio stones.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in fair to good condition. This report noted that the tree is in good overall condition and has approximately 20 per cent deadwood throughout the crown. The tree is located 4 metres from the house foundation, and the roots are lifting the patio area.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Removal of deadwood can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and the performance of routine tree maintenance which will prevent and reduce the risk of falling deadwood respectively.

The City did not receive any supporting information that the foundation was damaged and in need of repairs. The tree is located 4 metres from the house. It is extremely rare for trees or their roots to cause damage to a well-constructed foundation from this distance. Over many decades, foundations may develop cracks or leaks due to material deterioration and/or environmental factors like water freezing and thawing. These conditions can create tiny gaps that fine roots of nearby trees can grow into, potentially accelerating the rate of deterioration. However, such age-related deterioration could also occur in the absence of trees and their roots.

Staff did not observe damage to the foundation and the patio. Hard landscape features such as interlocking unit pavers are more prone to damage by tree roots, when they have not been properly designed, built, nor maintained. When built to accommodate future root growth and expansion, and properly maintained over time, any conflict with trees or their roots is more likely to be manageable and can typically be resolved without removing the tree.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. Through the inspection and review of the arborist report, a permit to remove the tree was denied by Environment, Climate and Forestry. The applicant is appealing this decision. Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision as to whether a permit may be issued when an applicant appeals the City's decision to deny a tree permit.

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 to provide an opportunity for comment by the community. No comments were received in support of, nor in opposition to the application to remove the tree in question.

The City has reaffirmed its canopy target of 40 per cent by 2050. One approach to support achieving this target is to protect healthy trees from injury and removal whenever possible.

Protecting the urban forest is critical in building climate resilience as urban centres continue to face increasing development, impacts due to climate change in the form of extreme weather events, and natural threats such as invasive pests. Toronto's urban forest provides \$55 million in ecosystem services and benefits annually. Services such as air pollution removal, reduction of storm water runoff, and carbon sequestration all contribute to climate resilience. Protecting and expanding tree cover helps to mitigate exposure to extreme heat events through shade and transpiration.

A sustainable and expanding urban forest also supports the City of Toronto's goals to improve quality of life and well-being of its residents. A higher density of trees in a neighbourhood has been shown to significantly improve physical and mental well-being by reducing blood pressure, decreasing stress levels, and by promoting physical activity. Economic benefits include enhancements to property values, increased tourism and consumer spending.

In keeping with the City's Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan, Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy, and the Tree Protection By-laws, the honey locust tree at 21 Elderfield Crescent is a valuable part of the urban forest, providing numerous aesthetic, social and economic benefits to the property owner and the local community and therefore should not be removed.

Environment, Climate and Forestry recommends Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 21 Elderfield Crescent. Should Etobicoke York Community Council grant this request for tree removal, the following recommendation may be adopted, in accordance with the City's Tree By-law permit requirements:

- 1) Etobicoke York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 21 Elderfield Crescent and require the applicant to provide five replacement trees which can be achieved in a combination of on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting to the satisfaction of the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Raymond Vendrig
Acting Director, Urban Forestry, Environment, Climate and Forestry

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the honey locust tree at 21 Elderfield Crescent; June 26, 2024

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the patio stones adjacent to the honey locust tree at 21 Elderfield Crescent; June 26, 2024

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the honey locust tree at 21 Elderfield Crescent; June 26, 2024



Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the patio stones adjacent to the honey locust tree at 21 Elderfield Crescent; June 26, 2024

