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ARBORICULTURAL CONSULTANT

Section 7.

Permission is being sought for the removal of Sycamore T1 as indicated on the attached location plan.

The tree is a large mature specimen with reasonable leaf colour and density and no major indications of the presence of decay or similar issues that would cause concern as to structural integrity.

It has probably been topped in the distant past all as indicated by the branching pattern but again, there is no immediate evidence of structural weakness at the probably pruning point.

The simple issue is that with the tree being located only some 3.8m from the rear elevation of the property in a compact rear garden of only 6m in depth, the presence of the tree together with associated issues such as shade, litter and honeydew depositions create an unacceptable juxtaposition for residents.

It is understood that the tree was retained originally within the development due to its presence on the edge of the green belt and was therefore of screening and amenity value. Since that time however, the adjacent land to the west has been fully developed (Emley View and Weavers Close) thereby negating the original importance of the tree.

The expected root protection area of this tree based on an approximate stem diameter of 700mm is 8.4m radius. This root zone clearly extends up to and possibly beneath the dwelling although any access beneath the foundations would now be expected to be minimal. The root protection area would also be expected to extend across much of the length and breadth of the garden and due to the presence of the structure, root morphology would not be symmetrical and would be expected to extend well outside the theoretical minimal rooting zone where soils permitted.

The presence of adjacent trees in similar proximity to dwellings would also be expected to extend in an asymmetrical pattern and the entire rear garden area is therefore likely to be within root zones.

Such a reasoned presumption is reflected in Mr Webb's comments that the production of a good grass sward is difficult and the establishment of any new plants or hedging is always problematic.

In respect of shade, the attached location plan has been amended to show the classic shade pattern as prescribed within BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations which, can be observed to have impacts across a large proportion of the (useable?) rear garden area. Sycamore do have a dense leaf canopy that exacerbates shade problems which in a woodland environment, together with its massive viable seed production, assists with the species domination of plant diversity

Leaf debris and general litter from the tree is an obvious nuisance although in practical terms, leaves can be blown for many metres in strong winds. The presence of the tree in such close proximity does however permit debris to fall directly into the guttering that in turn requires clearing on a very regular basis and certainly more frequently than normal expected routine operations.

The honeydew depositions from the tree also fall directly onto the useable garden area and during the summer constantly coats any children's play equipment and garden seating or similar with an undesirable sticky coating.

This situation also creates health problems for their youngest son who, Mr & Mrs Webb have found from experience, reacts badly to the honeydew depositions necessitating that he has to keep his skin fully covered when playing out in summer to avoid a flare up of his eczema.

Although the reasoning for such problems have not been fully researched, the following response from the National Eczema Society Helpline has been received by the Webb's;

From: Helpline
Sent: 06 July 2020 14:53
To: James Webb
Subject: RE: Sycamore Trees

Dear James,

Thanks for your email.

Pollens, including tree pollens, are universal allergens for people with eczema (along with grass and house dust mite). This means that if everyone with eczema had allergy tests, these three environmental triggers would be positive in nearly all of them.

Sycamore tree pollen is known to be moderately allergenic and this will be worse in the Spring when pollen is shedding. Alder, hazel and birch have the most allergenic tree pollen. Tree sap may be irritant (if touched), as it closely resembles colophony / resin, and reaction to these substances is common in rubber allergy. We suggest stays away from the sycamore tree and does not touch the sap. In the Spring, keep windows closed and position the washing line away from the tree.

Please see Allergy UK's website for more information on pollen and tree allergy: <https://www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms>. Please let me know if you have any other questions.

Best wishes,

National Eczema Society Helpline

Effectively therefore, due to a combination of tree species, size, location in proximity to approved dwelling, shade and seasonal issues, the presence of the tree creates an unacceptable environment and felling is therefore being requested.

In consideration of the Council's own guidelines and their current Local Plan, LP33 advises that:

The Council will not grant planning permission for developments which directly or indirectly threaten trees or woodlands of significant amenity value.

They continue;

Proposals will need to comply with relevant national standards regarding the protection of trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

LP24 notes;

Good design should be at the core of all proposals in the district and should be considered at the outset of the development process, ensuring that design forms part of pre-application consultation of a proposal. Development briefs, design codes and master plans should be used to secure high quality green, accessible, inclusive and safe design, where applicable.

In consideration of such guidance any preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment for a new development of a similar layout and tree presence would clearly identify major conflicts both in respect of the Council's Local Plan and the nationally accepted guidance within BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations.

Impacts arising from BS5837:2012 would be reasonable expected to include shade, the presence of the property within the expected root protection area of the retained tree, the tree's canopy up to and extending over the dwelling, the domination of the outside amenity space by the tree / canopy, seasonal nuisances and future pressure for removal, all as indicated in section 5.3 *et al*.

Whilst acknowledging that all such Policies and Standards have been produced since the dwelling was constructed, they have been produced in the knowledge and experience gained by previous planning decisions and construction operations and clearly indicate that less than desirable works were approved that have resulted in conflicts.

Having said that, BS5837:1991 Guide for Trees in relation to construction – the Standards that were relevant at the time the property was constructed, advise quite clearly in Section 6 – Planning, page 9 that;

6.3 Proximity of trees to structures

6.3.1 The physical size of a tree can dominate a building. This can give rise to concern about the tree's safety, can cause unreasonable obstruction of light and views, and provoke objections about leaves or other falling debris. These factors are often the most significant when considering the juxtaposition of trees and buildings, and can only be satisfactorily resolved by ensuring that the trees have adequate space including allowance for future growth. It is necessary to consider the requirements of future tree planting, as well as existing trees.

6.3.2 The sheer size of the tree, particularly when it is moving in strong winds, can cause apprehension to occupants of buildings. For this reason, when locating buildings, the ultimate height, weight and branch spread of a tree, the aspect relative to strong winds, and the changes in exposure, all need consideration. The mature size of any individual tree species will be influenced by its growing conditions and expert assessment may be needed.

6.3.3 Excessive shading by trees should be avoided. This will depend on the aspect of the tree from the building, the proximity of windows, particularly of

And continues on page 10;

living rooms, and on the foliage size and density which can vary enormously with species.

6.3.4 If siting a structure near to a tree, the existing spread of branches and future growth of the tree should be taken into account. Tree branches can otherwise be damaged by continuously whipping against the structure, and branch ends may have to be cut back repeatedly, possibly spoiling the shape of the tree.

6.3.5 Leaves of some species may cause problems, particularly in autumn, by blocking gullies and gutters which are not regularly maintained. Squashed berries may cause slippery patches especially on pavings, while accumulation of honeydew may be damaging, particularly if allowed to remain on paintwork of buildings or vehicles (see appendix A).

6.3.6 Caution should be exercised when considering thorny trees close to pathways, and such trees should be avoided where young children play, although they can provide a physical barrier (see appendix A).

6.3.7 Brittle branches are characteristic of certain species (see appendix A) and their removal may be necessary where they could present a danger.

6.3.8 Trees can cause damage to buildings that are too close to them unless precautions are taken in the design of foundations and/or superstructure. A choice should be made of either maintaining a suitable separation between tree and building, or taking the necessary structural precautions (see clause 10).

It appears that regrettably such nationally accepted guidance was not adhered to or given reasonable consideration at the time of the application and as predicted; the physical size of the tree dominates the building, concerns have arisen about safety, obstruction to light, leaves and other debris and the presence of honeydew.

An indication of the dominance of the tree can be clearly observed from the attached Google image.

As such it is reasonable to conclude that the application to remove the tree is not a spurious, unreasonable or unpredictable requirement, it could have been readily foreseen at the design and planning application stage but was evidently dismissed.

It is acknowledged that removal will have some impact upon visual amenity but, due to both the historic build form of the immediate environment plus the more recent development within Emley View and Weavers Close, views of the tree from public areas outside the site have been become restricted and in many instances, it is only the upper sections of the canopy that are visible from further afield as indicated in the attached photograph.

Although the property does have a relatively restricted rear garden, our Clients have indicated that they would replant three new trees of a smaller stature along the rear boundary to both provide screening from the west, perpetuate tree presence within the area and enhance wildlife habitat.

Species proposed would be:

Prunus x schmitti.

Sorbus aucuparia "Joseph Rock"

Crataegus monogyna "Stricta"

Sizes to be Standard – 8-10cm girth. 3-3.25m overall height.

All items are relatively fastigate, would be able to achieve a reasonable height without causing conflicts in respect of radial spreads and provide colour fruit and flowers of general benefit to the environment.

Planting locations to be agreed with Kirklees Trees Team.