HGY/2026/2312 - 23 Shepherds Hill, Hornsey, London, N6 5QJ

Works to trees protected by a TPO. T2 Sycamore - Fell and treat stump with eco-plugs 1. The above tree works are proposed as a remedy to the differential foundation movement at the insured property and to ensure the long-term stability of the building

This application should be treated in conjunction with HGY/2026/2311 as the TPO covers a group of trees in the rear gardens of 23 - 25 Shepherd's Hill. Please note that the goat willow, T5, is not specifically mentioned on the application. We assume that if the applicant wants it felled, they will make a separate application.

The trees are a significant feature of the landscape and can be seen through the gaps between the houses in Shepherds Hill, from the garages serving the neighbouring Tor House, and above the roof line of the houses in Priory Gardens.

It is part of a stand of mature trees in the gardens between Priory Gardens and Shepherds Hill reaching towards Queens Wood to the East, and to the Council and TfL wooded land to the West. That in turn links to Queens Wood along the back gardens of Wood Lane, and to the Parkland Walk.

It is one of the Green Stepping Stones identified in the emerging Local Plan. Highgate,

Haringey and London Policies promote Green Stepping Stones and Ecological Corridors.

The statement of Reasons 350691, is full of unreferenced assertions and comments without

supporting evidence.

The engineering report draws heavily upon previous reports submitted with previous applications which were found wanting.

No evidence has been submitted showing the siting or the effects of any cracking which was

assessed as "slight Category 2" by Sedgwick in 2020. There is no measured or visual

evidence of cracking. Photographic evidence and measurements of cracking should be

submitted.

The Engineering Report has graphs where 'missing' years when no readings were taken, are

shown as straight lines. This is misleading and the separate groups of readings should be

shown by 'breaks. These readings only show changes in movement levels. There seems to

be the same order of movement over the seasons in different years.

The garden of number 23 stands well above the garden of number 25 where there is a high retaining wall.

The trees grow on a very steep slope. The drop from the trees to the rear of the house in Priory Gardens is 3 metres over 39 metres, and the drop to Priory Gardens itself, is 5 metres over 64 metres. Felling these trees and killing them will destroy the root systems holding the clay together and possibly triggering a mudslide into the street below.

The trees not only stabilise the soil but the canopy shades the ground so less moisture is lost in intense summer sunshine. In heavy rains the leaves slow the rain, allowing to penetrate the soil rather than running off and flooding the properties below.

The applicants figures on the carbon costs of felling as opposed to underpinning, should be challenged and a sum for CAVAT should be calculated.

Trees planted elsewhere on the planet will not make up for mature trees lost in Highgate.

Historical Applications

Over the years, applications to fell individual trees have been listed under either 23 or 25.

This makes it difficult to follow the series of applications to fell trees in this significant stand of trees. The problems are compounded by the submission of a poor sketch map in the current application. It would appear that the trees have been renumbered, so it is hard for to identify which particular trees are being referenced and how they relate to trees in previous applications. The first application seems to have been in 2001, HGY/2001/1426, which was withdrawn. Sadly the records were destroyed in the Tottenham Riots.

HGY/2019/1047 Works to tree protected by a TPO:T1 Sycamore – Fell

And HGY/2019/1048 Works to tree protected by a TPO:T2 Sycamore - Fell

In both cases The Officer Report States

The tree forms aerodynamically one canopy feature with the tree in 23 Shepherds Hill. It is publicly visible from the surrounding area and makes a significant contribution to the landscape amenity of the area.

The damage is reported to be to the rear left single storey projection of the building. The supporting documentation does not demonstrate that the tree is involved in the current damage to the property.

CON/2020/0066 T6 & T7 Ash - Fell to combat subsidence at 23 Shepherds Hill

There was no objection to the two ash trees being felled and this should have had some effect on 'subsidence'.

HGY/2020/2607 Works to trees protected by a TPO.T2 Sycamore Fell

This application was withdrawn.

Tree Officer Report objected because,

The tree location plan is inaccurate, and it is not possible to identify which tree this proposal relates to. Please seek clarification from the agent in order for us to determine the appropriateness of the proposal. Informative – Consideration should be given to the cyclical crown reduction of the Sycamore tree, at the rear of the house. Level monitoring may indicate that the crown reduction is enough to stabilise building movement and allow for the retention of this tree. Consideration should also be given for the replacement of removed trees with appropriate species to ensure the continuation of amenity within the conservation area. The Pine tree T3 needs to be made safe either by bringing down to a safe height if possible (for conservation reasons) or removal. There is a duty to replace dead, dying and dangerous trees in a Conservation Area.

There was an E-mail from a Stuart Farman (flat 1 23 Shepherd's Hill) attached including,

Apparently this is a shared cost with number 25 (?) although given their building sits around 3 metres lower than ours, I have some doubts as to how related their tree issue is with the cracking in our building. We also have cracking and movement adjacent to number 21 and have had for some considerable time, which at around 10-15 metres away from number 25, gives me further cause for concern that the issue may not be solved by removing these trees.

A later letter from Stuart Farman, on the application record seems to rely on the findings of the insurers investigators to support the felling of the tree.

HGY/2025/0199 Crown reduce T2 Sycamore tree as marked on the photograph (proposal description amended 24.04.2025)

The application to fell was amended to a severe reduction.

Permission was given for significant pruning works, but it is unclear whether there has been any such a pruning.

Louise Lewis

for Highgate Neighbourhood Forum