

Mistry, Asha: WCC

From: Roberts, G (cllr)
Sent: 11 February 2017 12:34
To: Walker, John: WCC
Cc: Nigel Hughes; , Barbara: WCC
Subject: Re: 39 Brook St Catalpa tree [TMA150307]

Dear John,

we visited the tree the other day and it is my view that the first course of action would be to give it a good pruning and see how it responds. Catalpas are often severely pollarded in France where they line the streets. They bounce right back in spring so this catalpa may not object at all to being cut back and should come back stronger.

. It has had branches removed in the past and there are signs of growth at a lower level as a result.

Because it was not planted in the centre of the courtyard it leans inwards to the centre looking for light and has been allowed to grow upwards unchecked, the courtyard is dark and covered in ivy which it is proposed to remove and that will give it more light and could help it regain its shape

There are several reasons why no hasty decisions should be made including the provenance of the tree. Colefax and Fowler are famous for inventing English country house style. It's original owner was American born Nancy Lancaster who knew everyone from Churchill down. She was Nancy Astor's niece, Joyce Grenfell's cousin and Jeremy Tree's mother and when she died at 97 I went to her funeral. My companion had married into the family of famous gardener Gertrude Jekyll and has a Jekyll garden of her own and I am hopeful she will be able to fill in the gaps in the tree's history.

So far we know that Nancy Lancaster's family owned and had to sell a plantation Mirador in Virginia in the Southern U.S. where catalpas come from. She loved Mirador so much that when she married Ronnie Tree he bought it back for her. The age of this tree suggests she may have planted it herself and certainly cherished it because it reminded her of her roots in Mirador.

It would therefore be very much part of the very beautiful listed building it adorns where she started her world famous decorating firm.

Another friend of mine is looking out some early pictures of the courtyard which he remembers show a large tree. If it is the catalpa it will be identifiable by its large leaves.

Catalpas love enclosed courtyards and thrive in city pollution which they obviously help to absorb so it is in the right place and of timely interest,

Obviously if it really is dangerous this is another matter though there may be ways to be stabilise it without cutting it down. Grosvenor's tree specialist has pointed out some damage but whether this is a Health and Safety issue is not conclusive. A party was held under its branches as recently as Christmas and no concerns were expressed at the time. As your report says it provides a lovely outlook for the surrounding properties and from the upper stories of Colefax it really comes into its own.

I see the report indicates another tree, a small cherry, is also earmarked for removal and there is no mention of it being dangerous. The overall objective therefore would seem to be to clear the courtyard

The premises is about to be marketed and it would be interesting to see the opinion of future occupants meanwhile I don't think we should jump to any irrevocable conclusions. I will share any further information when I have it

Regards Glenys

Sent from my iPhone

On 10 Feb 2017, at 17:29, Walker, John: WCC <JWalker2@westminster.gov.uk> wrote:

External Sender

Nigel

I am now confused.

So far the discussions with Barbara Milne have been over the poor condition of the tree. Your email of 1st February seems to concentrate on the issue of amenity and whether or not a TPO should have been made on this basis. Up to this point and looking at your email of 24th January, it was the condition of the tree that was the cause of concern, and it was the extent of decay which warranted further investigation. Barbara Milne has suggested John Harraway is an experienced arboriculturist in assessing decay (01903 756153 / 07831 651090, john@harrawaytrees.co.uk). Subject to the extent of decay it may be possible to keep the tree, but if the tree is indeed hazardous such that its removal is required, then the TPO will not be appropriate, in which case we can invite a further 5 day notice or an application to fell depending on whether the tree could be deemed exempt from the requirement to apply for consent.

The difference of opinion between your arboriculturist and the Council's arboricultural officer on the appropriateness of the TPO on the grounds of amenity is not something we can agree by a shortcut to the normal process. The view of my arboriculture officer is the tree has amenity value and I know Cllr Roberts and local residents share this view. Of course you can lodge an objection on this basis but it may be that if indeed the tree is hazardous then it becomes irrelevant anyway.

Please find attached the report recommending the making of the TPO. For information, since the report was written a local resident has written to support tree retention.

John

John Walker
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From: Nigel Hughes [<mailto:Nigel.Hughes@grosvenor.com>]
Sent: 07 February 2017 17:49
To: Walker, John: WCC
Subject: FW: 39 Brook St Cataipa tree [TMA150307]

Just to keep you in the loop. The first picture is from an unusual angle – you are looking down the length of the trunk that is foreshortened by the camera but you can clearly see the decay and fissures in the fork of the tree. The green at the top of the photo is moss covering the base of the trunk which again has numerous cavities and area of rot.

As per my previous email, it would be helpful to see Barbara's assessment of the tree.

Kind regards

Nigel

From: Tim Moya [<mailto:Tim.Moya@tma-consultants.co.uk>]

Sent: 07 February 2017 17:30

To:

Cc: Nigel Hughes; bmilne@westminster.gov.uk; Desk

Subject: 39 Brook St Catalpa tree [TMA150307]

Glenys and Ron

Thank you for taking the time to meet at Brook Street today. As promised, I have attached three photographs which I took today from the fire escape, a view which I had not previously experienced.

I think the photographs are fairly self-explanatory but in relation to the discussion we had today I think the following points are worth making:

Photo 1 shows the level of decay at the main fork which is not visible from ground level.

Photo 2 shows one of the lateral branches in the mid crown which has previously been reduced. The response to pruning has not been promising with extensive exposed dead wood now visible at the elbow half way down the branch.

Photo 3 shows a branch in the lower crown which has now split longitudinally (at a previous pruning point).

I believe that these photographs and our inspection of the tree today support my original view that the tree is in a fragile and unsafe condition.

We discussed alternative management options on site but I believe that the tree's past response to pruning and its evident current condition demonstrate that crown reduction would not address the safety concerns or prolong the life of the tree.

As also discussed, Grosvenor would be happy to plant another semi-mature Catalpa as a replacement for the tree.

TIM MOYA
Director



TIM MOYA ASSOCIATES

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