

November 2012

MEMO TO: Maurice Jones
FROM: Mary Joy Scala
DATE: June 20, 2013
RE: 1600 Grady Avenue Tree Removal Request

Background

In September 2012, Lynn Hall Ward and Barbara Lucas came to the BAR meeting to request removal of 6 trees (3 magnolias and 3 poplars) from the Preston Court Apartments to correct an ongoing water infiltration problem in the basement (staff report attached). **The applicant deferred because the BAR wanted to see a plan** for how storm drainage would be handled/tied into the City main:

The Board is truly not convinced that the removal of the trees will solve the problem. They do feel that there are technical solutions that should be looked at. They feel the trees have been abused over the years and if pruning was done correctly the problem would have been prevented. They feel the applicant has not presented enough information and would suggest a deferral. The BAR asked for spot elevations; show how drainage will make the fall from the foundation area to the storm drain or daylight; show a conservation plan for the Beech and Pecan trees.

- In November 2012 The BAR allowed staff to administratively approve removal of one poplar tree. The request had come by letter from Ashley Cooper Davis (letter attached) to remove one poplar immediately to allow completion of building waterproofing.

*Staff asked if the BAR would allow **administrative approval of removal of one poplar tree** at 1600 Grady Avenue, with the removal of the other 5 trees to come back to the BAR. They agreed, and stated their intent to require the care and protection of the **Pecan, Ash, and Beech trees**, and replacement of the six trees to be removed. They noted the replacement trees should be big trees, and Poplars are especially suited to the site.*

Current Request

The property manager, Barbara Lucas, called last week and requested immediate removal of an Ash tree located on the left side of the property. This Ash tree was not included in the original request to remove six trees, and was specifically mentioned by their arborist as being in good health (arborist letter attached). Since the matter was deferred by the BAR in September 2012, no plan or additional information had been submitted.

Barbara Lucas indicated it was an emergency situation, so I suggested she could appear at the BAR meeting under "Matters Not on the Agenda" to have a short (5 minute) discussion. The BAR discussed the request briefly, and reiterated their previous request for a plan, and questioned whether it was a true emergency.

City Council Appeal

Richard Harris in the City Attorney's office has confirmed that the request to remove one Ash tree at Preston Court Apartments may not be considered by City Council until it has been properly noticed and acted upon by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR).

Therefore, I called Barbara Lucas today and emailed Lynn Hall Ward (who has previously signed the applications as property owner) to inform them of this decision. I told them they could make application to the BAR for their July 16 meeting. If the BAR denies their request, then they could legally appeal to City Council.

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Walden, Ebony
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2012 11:47 AM
To: 'Cooper Planning'
Cc: Scala, Mary Joy
Subject: RE: Site Plan Amendment: Preston Court Apartments

You need to include the caliper of the tree to be removed, amendment application and fee (\$250). I believe this needs to be approved by the BAR as well before I sign off. Mary Joy, please confirm.

Ebony

From: ashleycooper78@gmail.com [mailto:ashleycooper78@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Cooper Planning
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2012 11:36 AM
To: Walden, Ebony
Subject: Site Plan Amendment: Preston Court Apartments

Hi Ebony,

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I have attached the information that I think you need in order to make your decision regarding the removal of the one poplar tree at 1600 Grady Avenue. Let me know if there is anything else that we need to provide.

Thanks,
Ashley

--

Ashley Cooper, AICP
Cooper Planning
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Charlottesville, VA 22903
434-409-9127
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November 20, 2012

Preston Court Apartments
Ms. Barbara Lucas
1600 Grady Avenue, Apt. 105
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Ms. Lucas,

This letter is designed to address the major trees around 1600 Grady Avenue in Charlottesville by concentrating on their size, location, health condition and impact on the building, specifically water damage and moisture issues. A key component for my determinations are the owner's efforts to eliminate water damage within the building and the need to re-grade the heaved up lawn areas. They have also expressed to me that they plan to re-landscape and plant trees appropriate to the size of the small spaces.

I suggest keeping the American Beech tree at the front left, by working the grading around this tree and installing a root barrier on the building side, as this area has already been dug up. The tree should be pruned for building clearance and dead branches. In addition, the soil should be evaluated to maximize the plant's health. A soil sample can be taken, tested and a treatment recommended based on the soil test results. Any new grading should be kept away from under this tree.

The White Ash tree at the front left is generally healthy and has some weak unions. There are many exposed roots on a hump area that is taller than the soil level by the building. This tree could be saved if there was not a water issue within the building. With the need to have the water issue addressed and without the tree, grading this area to slope away from the building would be greatly improved and would allow more area under the Beech tree to be preserved. I suggest it be removed. If you were to keep it, I would suggest pruning it for building clearance and dead branches and treating it for Emerald Ash Borer.

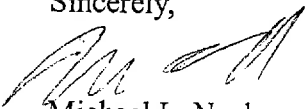
The three Tulip Poplar trees at the front center to the front right have all been severely topped and their health has been greatly compromised. The two on the far right have very poor root flairs and have had their roots damaged by new lines being dug through them. The tree at the front center has had soil piled on both its trunk and the roots, from digging around it on one side to help with the building preservation for water issues. The root flairs are not visible. All three trees are on a humped up / raised area; therefore, re-grading would be improved with their removal. I suggest removal of these trees.

The Pecan tree at the right side is healthy and has had some root damage from the installation of new lines. I suggest any new grading needed should be kept away from under this tree. This tree should be pruned and the soil tested as recommended for the American Beech tree.

The two Southern Magnolia trees at the left side and the one Southern Magnolia at the right side are generally healthy and have all been severely topped. All areas under these trees are impacting water to flow away from the building. The locations of these trees are too close to the building for maximum plant size and growth. I suggest removal so re-grading can be done.

Upon your review, please let me know if you have any questions or wish to discuss my suggestions. I thank you for the opportunity to be of service, and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,



Michael L. Neal

ISA Certified Arborist #MA-0042

A.S. Landscape Horticulture, KRCC

B.S. Ornamental Horticulture, Cal Poly

Tree Care Industry Assn Member

VA Licensed Commercial Pesticide Applicator, 33588-C

Disclaimer: Arboristry® Associates, Inc. and I, acting as agent will not be held responsible for any other trees or shrubs not specifically referred to in this letter and for which I was not specifically requested to observe and report on.

Cooper {CP} Planning

November 15, 2012

Dear Members of the Board of Architectural Review,

On behalf of the Preston Court Limited Partnership, I am writing you concerning the Preston Court Apartments Building property located at 1600 Grady Avenue. This property has been before you for an initial discussion regarding the removal of several trees on site and provisions for adequate site drainage and grading to protect the historic structure. Our purpose in this letter is to request your consideration for administrative approval of the removal of one poplar tree to allow for the completion of building waterproofing as soon as possible.

At this time, we have been coordinating with various professionals to create a site plan amendment that would address all proposed changes and improvements to the site in a comprehensive document. The Amendment would be reviewed by City Staff as well as the Board of Architectural Review and will include the following information: Existing Conditions, Grading and Drainage, Landscape and Conservation. This will give all reviewers a full perspective of the plan to improve the site while also ensuring that all code requirements are being met. We understand that the design, review and approval process may take several months to complete.


While we plan to begin design work on the site plan amendment now, of immediate concern is the proper completion of the current foundation waterproofing as soon as possible. The owners would like to finish the necessary maintenance to the building foundation and close up this section of the site with dirt as soon as possible so winter conditions and exposure do not compromise this portion of the building. To do so, we really need to be able to move forward with the removal of one of the poplar trees so we are not disturbing this same area twice.

The Poplar Tree in question has been determined to be in poor health by several professional arborists. The tree has been rotting for many years and recent severe storms have brought down major branches from all of the Poplars on the front of the site. It has also been determined that the planting area is too small for this type of large canopy tree and that these Poplars will never thrive in this location. As you are aware, the removal of this one tree will have no significant impact on the canopy coverage for the site. The significant Beech, Pecan and Ash trees have been determined to be the primary contribution towards site canopy and character.

As presented in the BAR meeting, the building foundation has never been waterproofed previously, nor does the building have any working drainage system in place. The City of Charlottesville Public Works crew has also confirmed that there is no existing City Storm Drain for this site either; something which they consider very rare. Given that the site is bedrock, the ground around the building is also acting as a sponge and holding water directly against the building. As a result of these factors, much of the basement level has been exposed to significant water damage. Thus, the owner has begun the proper measures to ensure the protection of the historic building. Photos of this area and the Poplar Tree are included.

We are excited to come before you in the near future and present a comprehensive and thoughtful vision for the Preston Court Apartments site. In the meantime, we hope that you will consider allowing staff to grant an administrative approval of the removal of one tree that is in very poor condition to allow for the proper preservation and maintenance of this historic structure. Please let us know if there is any additional information we can provide to assist in your consideration.

Sincerely,


Ashley Cooper, AICP

Site Images:





BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS

1185 FIVE SPRINGS ROAD, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22902-8785 • (434) 971-3020 • FAX (434) 971-1331

10/15/12

Preston Court Apartments
1600 Grady Avenue
Apt. 11
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Gentlemen,

Enclosed you will find a Tree Conservation Plan for the proposed tree removal and water management plan at Preston Court Apartments. This plan is designed to specify the necessary tree protection methods and procedures required to minimize construction stress on the trees that will be impacted by this project, as well as to identify existing trees that would be removed to accomplish the needed grading. Please keep in mind that I am not necessarily recommending removal of any tree, but simply providing a plan to implement what the engineers/owners have suggested.

The owners have asked me to clarify my statement regarding the 3 Tulip Poplars at the front/right front of the building. The root collars (where the trunk meets the ground and becomes roots) are buried by fill from many years ago. This creates an environment conducive to decay and prevented me from fully inspecting the base. This condition combined w/ the large topping cuts that have been made and several visible decay spots along the trunk make these trees less safe and attractive as shade trees. Removal and replanting following grading certainly is a good option in my opinion.

The required tree protection procedures are broken up into 3 categories, pre-construction, during construction, and post-construction and can be found in the following pages. Bartlett would be happy to provide prices to provide care for these trees as necessary.

Sincerely,

Michael Abbott
Bartlett Tree Experts - Arborist and Local Manager
ISA Board Certified Master Arborist
MS in Forestry

THE F.A. BARTLETT TREE EXPERT COMPANY
SCIENTIFIC TREE CARE SINCE 1907



Tree Conservation Plan

Preston Court Apartments

Tree Protection Procedures

Pre-construction

- A composite soil sample shall be taken from the site for analysis of soil pH, organic content, nutrient levels of nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus, iron, magnesium, and manganese, and to establish cation exchange capacities for both the American Beech and Pecan
- The following trees/shrubs shall be removed without damage to surrounding trees
 - 3 large Tulip Poplars at front/right front of building
 - White Ash at the front of building
 - Potentially several of the Southern Magnolias at the right and left rear and back of building
- A tree protection zone shall be established to minimize soil compaction, and root, stem and branch damage during construction. The zone will be defined as an area that extends under the entire canopy or drip line of the tree to be protected.
- A 4 foot high, orange, UV-resistant, high-tensile strength, barricade fabric fence shall be installed to define the Tree Protection Zone and limit access.

During Construction

- The Tree Protection Zone will be inspected and maintained on a daily basis.
- Trees shall be inspected on a regular basis by a certified Arborist to evaluate for construction trauma, as well as for secondary pest and disease concerns, and irrigation needs.
- No construction equipment, supplies or debris will be allowed in the Tree Protection Zone.



- Trenching or excavation within the Tree Protection Zone will not be allowed without consultation with certified Arborist and will require specialized equipment to perform proper root pruning.
- Root pruning will be performed under the supervision of a certified Arborist and will be performed in such a manner, and with equipment designed to cut through roots cleanly, so as not to tear roots. If roots greater than 2 inches in diameter are encountered during root pruning, they shall be traced back towards the tree using an air-spade and pruned by hand at a point specified by the Arborist.
- Grade changes around trees shall be avoided. Excess soil and debris must be removed from site.

Post-construction

- Tree protection fencing shall be removed.
- The following trees shall be fertilized based on specific needs as determined by soil analysis. Fertilization should include Mycorrhizae inoculation for mature trees, and should be applied using the sub-surface soil injection method.
American Beech and Pecan
- Trees that have been affected by construction shall be pruned to remove any dead or damaged limbs. Any bark wounds shall be traced to promote wound closure.
- Trees shall be inspected during the growing season following construction by a certified Arborist to evaluate for construction trauma, as well as for secondary pest and disease concerns, and irrigation needs. The inspection period will extend for up to 18 months following completion of construction.



BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS

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9/17/12

Preston Court Apartments
1600 Grady Avenue
Apt. 11
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Gentlemen,

This letter is in reference to the existing trees at Preston Court Apartments, 1600 Grady Ave. I have been made aware of the moisture issues with the basement apartments and the options (or lack thereof) to repair these issues. My understanding of the engineers report is that removal of the trees and re-grading the topsoil to facilitate surface drainage is the best engineering option. I am not qualified to comment on this or other engineering solution, but will address the trees in question below.

There are 3 large tulip poplars at the right front of the building. Not only do these trees contribute to the water issue, but they have been severely topped in the recent past. This type of "pruning" is harmful to the tree and contributes to decay and future structural defects. This in addition to the decay present in the trees would lead me to recommend removal of the trees that would allow for re-grading in this area. At the left front of the building there is a healthy white ash and American beech. Both of these trees are in good condition and are valuable shade trees. If one of the trees must be removed to repair the drainage issue, I would remove the ash and grade to preserve the beech as it is a disease free native tree to our area.

On the left side of the building there is a slowly declining Southern magnolia that could be removed to improve the grade/drainage in that area. This tree is not dying quickly, but is unlikely that it would survive in the long term. There is a healthy Southern magnolia at both the left and right rear of the building. Due to the grade surrounding the property in these areas re-grading to simply allow gravity to carry the water away from the building will not be sufficient. Hopefully a solution involving only root pruning of these trees can be found to help solve the moisture issue in this area. Finally there is a large Pecan on the right side of the building that is not a significant moisture concern. The basement rooms in this area are dedicated to mechanical services for the building and excess moisture in this area can be tolerated at this time. Should you have further questions or concerns, I am willing to meet on site to discuss the trees and options as needed.

Sincerely,

Michael Abbott
Bartlett Tree Experts – Arborist and Local Manager
ISA Board Certified Master Arborist
MS in Forestry

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