

## Submission re Sidewalk Exemptions - Friars Way and Doncaster Streets

I understand that you strive to balance the interests of all community members in your review of sidewalk exemption requests. It is my submission that, on balance, an exemption should be granted for Friar's Way, Doncaster Place and Doncaster Avenue for the following reasons:

We are fortunate in London to have many distinct and beloved neighbourhoods. Be it the Woodfield Historical District with its cherished old architecture, or the Wortley Village with its small town atmosphere, Old North, Old South or Old East to name just a few - they all have a unique charm that is particularly treasured by their residents. That is true, as well, for my neighbourhood, Sherwood Forest. As the name would imply, our community's most valued and unique attribute is our mature trees and the adjacent Medway Valley ESA.

The Sherwood Forest neighbourhood was physically formed around the Valley, following the contours and elevations of the ESA and adjoining ravine. The streets were designed to meander and flow around this natural landmark. They are not direct, or high traffic, vehicle routes. They are not streets you would take unless you were visiting the neighbourhood. There are other roads in the area, with existing sidewalks, that provide straight, direct and faster vehicle transit.

Friars Way and the Doncaster streets were never imagined with sidewalks. They have never had, or needed, sidewalks. No one bought their homes on these streets with any expectation of sidewalks. As such, extensive boulevard trees were planted some 50 years ago and our neighbourhood is what LEDC describes in its promotional materials as the classic "tree-lined streets that London offers to newcomers".

We have a history on Doncaster and Friar's Way of successfully sharing the road - people know to expect pedestrians, bikes, strollers and mobility assisted devices. The streets are wide enough to accommodate all users safely. One of our neighbours, Clare, is a fixture in Sherwood. She is in her 80's and has lived on Friar's Way for decades. With her walker, she safely navigates a route around Sherwood almost daily. She is among the hundreds who have signed petitions and submitted requests to you that sidewalks NOT be added. The point is that there is certainly no existing barrier to accessibility, and we are happy with what we have.

In the over 30 years that I have lived in Sherwood, I have never heard of anyone who has encountered any safety concerns on these streets, and with the recent closure of our Sherwood Forest Public School we have arguably even less need of new sidewalks now.

Touching briefly on the 3 subject streets, you will note that Doncaster Place is a NO EXIT, circle of 11 houses, mature tree lined boulevards and a hilly terrain. The Report to CWC did not even list the potential tree losses - which would be massive - because the report itself notes that: "this is not the type of street where sidewalks are typically added." It would be unnecessary, unwarranted, and indeed unexpected to add a sidewalk on this tiny, dead end, street.

Next, Doncaster Avenue - this sidewalk is only being considered as a connection from Doncaster Place to Friars Way, and would only apply IF the Doncaster Place sidewalk is added. It is equally unwarranted, and you are again not given the tree loss information. Also, if Council is asked in the future to continue such a sidewalk along the balance of Doncaster Ave, you will have a significant safety challenge. Doncaster Avenue follows the Medway Valley cliff elevation and creates a road so steep at the approach to Wychwood that cars often cannot use it in the winter until the plow and sander have arrived. A sidewalk on this winding, steep, road would become a treacherous bobsled run in the winter. There is just no way the City could safely and consistently maintain it. And many of the boulevards along Doncaster Ave. are very pitched, so you are likely looking at retaining walls and considerably more property damage and expense just to put in a dangerous sidewalk that will only pose a future liability risk for the City. As someone who practiced law in London for over 30 years, I am telling you that an accident on such a sidewalk is not only foreseeable, but highly probable.

Finally, as to Friar's Way in the Sherwood Forest - As the name suggests, it is a curvy, tree lined, forest of a street. It is short, and the loss of 30 mature trees along it would render it unrecognizable. That is over one per boulevard, and these are not saplings - they are healthy, and many rare, old, trees. Leveling one side of the tree canopy on this street will literally gut the residents, and look ridiculously one sided. You are talking about the destruction of virtually every boulevard on one side of the street. How in the world can we brand ourselves the "Forest City" and be willing to devastate a neighbourhood so ?

The City policies aimed at protecting our environment and our tree canopies have to be considered in the balance. The City literally just finished augmenting the plantings in this very area. Any taxpayer would have a hard time understanding why you would destroy your own recent plantings to spend money on sidewalks that the community is begging you not to add.

Walkers, strollers and wheelchairs have safely coexisted on these streets for 50 years. All these users are represented among the many residents now imploring you to exempt these streets. You could instead consider posting a sign as you did in the Corley Dr. area which simply reads: "No Sidewalks - Watch for Pedestrians".

You have the authority to exempt these streets, as you did for our neighbour Runnymede. There is no law that is broken and no legal penalty attached to allowing the Sherwood Forest neighbourhood to keep its coveted trees.

London wouldn't level the historically significant buildings of Woodfield, or allow the construction of an industrial complex in the middle of the Wortley Village - We are simply asking the same protection for the Sherwood Forest - Please do not let your legacy be the massive destruction of the mature treescape that defines Sherwood.

In closing, we have all struggled this last year with the pandemic. Our neighbourhoods have been our salvation. Walking these streets with neighbours has been our antidote. It really, really, matters to the mental health of Sherwood Forest residents that we not lose our trees so drastically. The kids have had enough to deal with this past year - let's not compound everyone's agony by destroying their front yards. You will see a significant Youth Petition filed to "Save Sherwood Forest Trees" - it's important that we listen. We are the Sherwood Forest - until we are not. And that is now up to you. As Joanie Mitchell would say - let's not pave paradise !

Thank you for your time and your thoughtful deliberation in this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,

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