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5545 Netherland Ave 3F
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Greek School of Plato, Ltd.
Attn: Mrs. Maria Abazis, President
479 81st Street
Brooklyn New York 11209

Re: 670 92nd Street – Request for Agreement with NYC Parks Approval to Remove Tree

Dear Mrs. Maria Abazis,

In consideration of removal of a London Planetree at 670 92nd Street Brooklyn NY, I am a Certified Arborist writing on behalf of Mr. Spiro Geroulanos and the Greek School of Plato. Mr. Geroulanos informed me that the City of New York Parks and Recreation Department has already approved the removal of the street tree that currently exists in front of the property, with restitution measures, for the purposes of constructing a new school building.

In request of my professional assessment of the situation, on September 22nd 2016, I inspected site current conditions and observed that the London Plane is 21” diameter and in good condition. I also reviewed plans for the proposed new building.

The NYC Parks letter dated April 15th 2016 grants removal of the tree with the condition of either paying a restitution fee of \$57,000, or plant 35 3” caliper trees to make up for the loss of this tree. I have been asked to recommend removal of this tree and gain 35 new trees, or, determine whether efforts to preserve and protect the tree during construction are merited -- with the prospect of instead gaining 35 more trees for the Brooklyn community.

I recommend that this tree is removed and 35 trees are planted as restitution. The reasons outlined below are the basis of this recommendation.

1) **Definite Construction Impacts** The tree is located exactly at the midpoint along the curb in the right-of-way in front of the property. The tree’s root structure is quite extensive and the breadth of its canopy is large. In order for the proposed building to be built, much of the root structure would be truncated by excavation and installation of the foundation at the front property line. Additionally, an inordinate amount of the canopy would have to be pruned back to allow for 1) material hoisting by truck booms and cranes and 2) installation of scaffolding and a sidewalk bridge. The chances that the tree would not survive construction activity are extremely high. With this scenario, the opportunity to plant 35 additional trees would be lost, along with the loss of the tree itself.

2) **PlaNYC** Alternatively, a planned addition of 35 canopy shade trees would significantly increase the amount of tree canopy cover beyond what this one tree provides. [With my assistance, Mr. Geroulanos has identified streets within a 1-mile radius of the Greek School in need of street trees and is in discussion with Parks about them as potential locations for planting the 35 trees. To maximize their impact, he hopes the trees can be planted contiguously along just a few street lengths.](#) This intention to increase canopy cover corresponds to **PlaNYC’s** ‘Green Infrastructure’ initiatives and sustainability measures – namely, ‘urban heat island’ and stormwater pollution reductions.

3) **Street Tree Species Diversity** - Planting 35 new trees that are *not* London Planes will increase street species diversity. Since the 1930’s and the time of Robert Moses, London Planes were overplanted in the city, which is especially evident along 92nd street corridor and along streets in site vicinity. The Parks Dept has in fact issued a general moratorium on planting the London Plane as a street tree.



Without question, Forestry personnel at the Parks Department recognizes all of the above, and as a consequence, issued their Approval for tree removal.

Landscape Architecture / Urban Design Considerations

The proposed Site Plan with two new trees also has these important functional and aesthetic advantages:

- 5) Two new trees would allow the entrance of the new building to be free of obstructions for pick-up and drop-off activities, which would maximize student safety. The existing tree, on the other hand, located directly in front of the entrance to the new school building, complicates movement interactions between students and general pedestrians.
- 6) The two trees would be positioned for equal spacing with the existing tree in front of the neighboring property. The existing tree location restricts planting a second tree in ROW of 670 92nd St.
- 7) Species selections for the proposed 2 new street trees would be thoughtfully considered to be harmonious with 2 small trees to be planted in the front yard landscape of the new school. These front yard trees would be in scale with those in front of the residential buildings across the street. In addition a 5' wide strip of permeable pavers along the curb, instead of concrete, would increase air and water to optimize the health and vigor of the two new street trees, and also make the streetscape more pedestrian friendly.

In light of the above reasons, I trust that NYC Building Department's decision will be consistent with that NYC DPR by granting Approval to remove the tree in question, and permit the planting of new trees to benefit the broader Brooklyn community.

Yours truly,

Michael V. Ruggiero, CA
Certified Arborist – International Society of Arboriculture NY #5409A