

Transparency regarding the tree removal at St. Matthews Church on Glebe Avenue

As chair of the Glebe Community Association Environment Committee, I recently met with Ian Glen, a member of the congregation at St. Matthews Anglican Church, and Bill Nuttle, a member of both the environment committee and St. Matthews. Ian had reached out to discuss the reasons behind the church's decision to apply for a tree removal permit for a black walnut growing along the west wall of the church.

During the on-site meeting, Ian explained that they received a tree removal permit and provided documentation from the Forestry Inspector as well as the architect's letter outlining the rationale for the tree removal. To preserve the building, exterior excavation, patching of concrete, and extensive waterproofing are a few of the repairs required to address damage to the foundation. Sadly, given the close location of the tree to the church's foundation, this work will remove too much of the critical root zone for the tree to survive.

The permit requires St. Matthews to plant 1 replacement tree. Ian and Bill would like to see a few trees planted on their land to replace this majestic tree that like all neighbourhood trees improve our air quality, absorb excess water during storms, provide shade in extreme heat as well as habitat for wildlife. Over the past few years, the congregation has been actively planting new trees along the right of way on Glebe and First Avenues under the City of Ottawa's Trees in Trust program. Glebe churches and residents can all play a role in maintaining the tree canopy of our neighbourhood by requesting a city tree for planting in their front yard or by buying a tree to plant in their back yard.