

HIGHLAND AVE.

Pickets Protest City Plan to Cut 31 Palm Trees

More than 100 pickets demonstrated today on a Highland Ave. median strip near Oakwood Ave. against what they said was a city decision to cut down palm trees on Highland Ave. to make room for left-turn lanes.

A group called the Committee to Save Palm Trees, made up of Hancock Park residents, said they opposed the addition of left-turn lanes because this would turn Highland Ave. into a "dangerous racetrack."

Spokeswoman, Mrs. Rita Ashen, 33, of 348 N. Highland Ave., said residents were incensed because they had not been consulted before the decision to widen the street.

She said residents were also opposed because cutting 31 of the avenue's 71 trees—many of which have reportedly stood there for 50 to 60 years—would destroy the esthetic beauty of the thoroughfare.

She also said the palm trees were paid for by residents although they stood on city property.

Mrs. Ashen said: "Without warning they told us they want street improvement. And this is what they mean by improvement—increasing traffic flow, taking away what is a park to us and removing our greenery."

Later, after meeting with a delegation of Hancock Park residents Councilman John Ferraro said the city Public Works Department had agreed to his request to delay the tree-cutting project.

Ferraro said he had also asked that public hearings be held before the beginning of any work, although a contract had already been let



FIGHT FOR TREES - Hancock Park residents stage protest on Highland Ave., near Oakwood

Ave., against plans to cut down trees on Highland Ave. as part of left-turn lane construction.
Times photo by Bruce Cox