

17/L/036

12th June 2017

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Dear Sir / Madam,

**RE: APPLICATION FOR REMOVAL OF TREE WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA
ASH TREE ADJACENT TO THE BOUNDARY WALL WITH YORK STREET
AT THE REAR OF ST. MARY'S CENTRE, CHURCH STREET, CLITHEROE, BB7 2DG**

I refer to the above application which seeks consent for the removal of a single Ash Tree, located to the York Street boundary, at the rear of the St. Mary's Centre in Clitheroe. It has been submitted alongside an OS site Location Plan, Plan indicating the location of the tree and a Structural Appraisal Report by the Francis Bradshaw Partnership (April 2017).

The Ash Tree is located adjacent to a retaining wall between the St. Mary's Centre and the highway, which compensates for a difference in levels of approximately 1.8 metres. Along York Street, beneath the tree, is a public footway, areas designated for on-street car parking and the highway. It is also within close proximity of a number of other buildings in commercial and residential use.

Whilst the site forms part of the Clitheroe Town Centre Conservation Area, the Ash Tree is not considered to be of a significant value. The Conservation Area Appraisal references York Street but provides no specific reference of the tree. It is highly likely that when originally planted, it was not foreseen that the Ash Tree would grow into a mature tree with the potential to cause structural damage or represent a threat to public safety.

The Applicant wishes to draw specific attention to the submitted Structural Appraisal Report which focuses on the retaining walls. Although somewhat hidden by areas of creeping ivy, this identifies the wall adjacent to the Ash Tree is subject to significant cracking up the full height from the pavement level up to the underside of the stone coping detail. This includes cracking across several stone blocks and in mortar joints. The wall face has also been found to lean out at the head approximately 80mm over the height of the wall, adjacent to the crack location.

The Report goes on that the structural defects to this area of the retaining wall is a result of increased localised lateral forces exerted by the roots of the Ash Tree. Its uncontrolled growth and past lack of maintenance is now affecting the stability of the wall and the defect need to be addressed to prevent the collapse of the wall and uncontrolled felling of the Ash Tree. The

threat represents a serious risk to pedestrians and users of the highway, as well as extensive damage to adjacent buildings and vehicles.

Repairs to the retaining wall to address the identified structural defects represent a significant financial investment. As such, it is considered essential that the Ash Tree is removed so that the tree roots do not continue to place strain on the repaired areas – mitigating the potential for future damage as a result of the tree's growth. The evidence presented in support of the application clearly demonstrates that the tree's removal is within the interest of public safety.

Yours faithfully,



Matthew Wyatt MRTPI
Senior Planner