

Committee: Planning

Agenda Item

Date: 31st August 2022

Title: UTT/22/2192/TCA: Notification of intent to carryout tree works within a conservation area at Saffron Walden Castle.

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Item for decision

Summary

1. This item seeks the Committee's consideration of the proposed felling of 4 sycamore trees within a conservation area in the grounds of Saffron Walden Castle. The trees are in the ownership of UDC.

Recommendations

2. No objection be raised to the proposed tree works.

Financial Implications

3. The cost of undertaking the proposed tree work would be drawn from existing budget provisions.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

UTT/22/2192/TCA.

Impact

- 5.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Communication/Consultation | Details of the decision to be entered on to the public register of TCA notifications. |
| Community Safety | none |
| Equalities | none |
| Health and Safety | none |
| Human Rights/Legal Implications | none |
| Sustainability | none |

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Ward-specific impacts | none |
| Workforce/Workplace | none |

Situation

6. Notification of intent to carry out the proposed tree works has been submitted on behalf of UDC's Assistant Director ICT & Facilities. This followed concerns raised over the poor condition of 4 sycamore trees in the castle grounds. The trees are in the ownership of UDC.
7. Two of the sycamore trees (T1 and T2) are situated near to the southern boundary with Church Street, and the other two trees (T3 and T4) are situated to the north of the castle ruins (Appendix 1: Location plan).
8. T1 is in terminal decline suffering significant dieback in its crown. There is a large cavity in the main trunk. The tree is considered to be a risk of collapse (Appendix 2: Photographs). The tree is in close proximity to the public highway, Church Street, and a neighbouring residential property. Emergency surgery has recently been carried out to removed large limbs which were at risk of imminent failure.
9. T2 is located adjacent to T1 and is found to be in decline with significant dieback and is considered to be at risk of collapse (Appendix 2: Photographs).
10. T3 is situated near to the northern boundary of the site. This sycamore has a cavity and decay at the base of its main stem and displays a significant lean (Appendix 2: Photographs). This tree is in close proximity to residential properties. Recently, falling branches caused damage to a neighbouring property. A claim received for damages has been settled.
11. T4 is situated adjacent to the northern wall of the castle. This tree is displaying signs of decline and has numerous cavities. Remedial surgery has previous been carried out to the tree, but its condition is poor.
12. The proposals do not include provision for replacement planting. Any scheme of tree planting would need to be subject to consultation with Historic England as the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Compensatory tree planting may be provided on other UDC land in the town.

Risk Analysis

1.

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigating actions |
|--|--|--|---|
| 3 There is a significant risk of a major failure/collapse of these trees. | 3 The likelihood of a major failure particularly in high winds requires action. | 4 The location of the trees within a public area and adjacent to residential properties makes the impact of a failure/collapse of these trees potentially catastrophic. | The trees should be felled to the ground. |

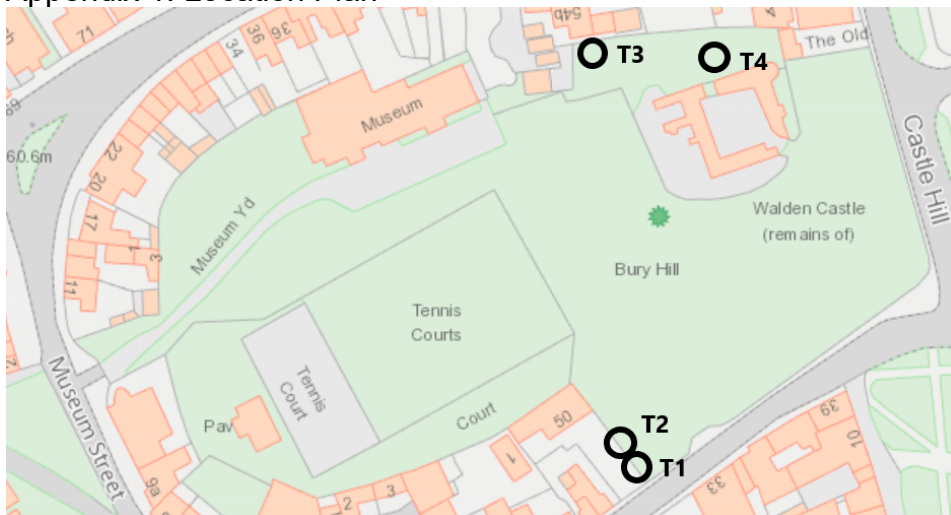
1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix 1: Location Plan



Appendix 2: Photographs



Trees T1 and T2 viewed from Church Street.



Tree T3 showing basal cavity. The tree displays a significant lean.



Tree T4 north of the castle ruins.