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Appendix 7

Mr David Ashbridge and Mrs Natasha Ashbridge
The Coach House
Sunnyside Lane
Lancaster
LA1 5ED

Regeneration & Planning Service
Development Management
PO Box 4
Town Hall
Lancaster
LA1 1QR

Date: 4th September 2017

Dear Mr & Mrs Ashbridge,

Re: Objection to Tree Preservation Order no.607 (2017) – The Coach House, Sunnyside Lane, Lancaster

Further to your letter of objection with regard to the above tree preservation order, dated 07th June 2017.

Firstly, please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you.

However, I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the issues raised in your letter with respect to TPO no.607 (2017).

There are three main elements to your letter.

- i) Concerns that two branches have failed from one or more of the trees subject of the above tree preservation order and that you fear additional branches may fail unexpectedly in the future with the potential to affect your property and the wider public domain, including roadway and footpath. You consider the trees to be too big for their locality.
- ii) Neighbours consider the trees to be a nuisance for reasons associated with encroachment of branches.
- iii) You would intend to replace the trees with new planting, and have suggested native birch trees, you would however consider other species as required.

I will respond to each element raised in numerical order.

- i) Trees are dynamic living organisms. Branches can fail in even average climatic conditions and seemingly without warning. However, the potential for failure can be significantly reduced, if trees are regularly inspected by an individual suitably trained and experienced to undertake such inspections and make appropriate recommendations for maintenance work. It is prudent for anyone to have trees inspected that under their control on a regular cyclical basis, for example, 3 yearly or as advised by a suitably qualified arborist. This is essential to identify maintenance requirements and to limit the potential for unexpected branch or tree failure. A tree preservation order does not prevent appropriate maintenance work from being undertaken, in compliance to current standards of best practice – BS 3998 (2010) Tree Work – Recommendations.

You did not provide any supporting arboriculture information, report or recommendation supporting the removal of the trees when you submitted your trees works notification (17/0050/TCA).

The two mature trees in question, have attained large proportions and as such have an immediate and significant visual impact upon the wider public domain and importantly the local conservation area. The Council does not accept reasons such as overhanging branches or encroachment of branches across boundary lines with the public or neighbouring private properties to be justification for the removal of high value amenity trees.

We recommend that the two trees in question are regularly inspected, by a suitably trained and experienced arborist. The responsibility for arranging and paying for any such inspections and subsequent recommendations for tree work lies with the tree owner. If a requirement for tree works is identified a tree works application must be submitted in writing to the Council and written authorisation obtained, prior to undertaking the works, except for the removal of dead branches which do not require prior authorisation. Further information, application forms and a list of local tree surgeons (arborist) are available online at www.lancaster.gov.uk

- ii) It is not always appropriate or possible to prune trees to prevent encroachment over neighbouring boundary lines, particularly in heavily built environments. It is however, important that branches do not make direct contact with the fabric of adjacent structures, to prevent damage to the neighbouring structures and the trees. Regular inspections by a suitably trained and experienced individual can be useful in the identification and prevention of such issues. Encroachment of branches is not in itself justification for the removal of important landscape trees, whose loss would otherwise have the potential for an adverse impact upon public amenity and the character and appearance of the local conservation area.
- iii) Trees of the age and size in question cannot be replaced by new tree planting. Their loss would be immediate and the impact upon the wider landscape permanent. Without sufficient justification and supporting information the loss of these two trees would be unacceptable. Lancaster City Council has not at this time received any supporting information for the removal of these two important landscape trees. The Council would of course review any submitted information

accordingly. Any recommendations for tree work must be in compliance to current standards of best practice, BS 3998:2010.

If after consideration of the above, I would be grateful if you would confirm whether you wish to maintain your objection, or indeed wish to withdraw your objection within 14 days of the date of this letter.

If you maintain your objection, a TPO Appeal Hearing will be arranged in due course. The committee will consider the appeal and determine whether the order should be confirmed or not. You would be informed of a hearing date accordingly.

If you should wish to withdraw your objection the order would be confirmed without modification and the trees would continue to be subject of TPO no.607 (2017).

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Maxine Knagg

**Maxine Knagg BSc (Hons) Arboriculture
Tree Protection Officer**

**Regeneration Service
Development Management
Lancaster City Council**