

Jonathan Rowe Assistant Director of Neighbourhood & Leisure Services

Reverend A. Wild
Ss Peter and Paul Church
Salters Hall
Salters Lane
Newport
TF10 7LB

Leisure, Culture & Libraries
Darby House
Lawn Central
Telford
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Contact Name: G. Onions
Your Ref: TPO 129

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Date: 2nd Of December

Dear Reverend Wild,

In answering your objection letter, I would like to make the following points;

1. The large size of the tree;

The Robinia tree which is subject to the order, is one of the largest trees of its species within the borough of Telford and Wrekin.

It has a diameter at breast height of 114cm, over the years it has grown to fill the available space and has reached maturity. It is growing in the front grounds of Salters Hall and towers over all of the other trees within the grounds. Its position within the landscape is around 10 metres away from the walls and around 19 metres away from the listed building.

Root Damage;

The path to which you refer appears to no longer be in use as there is now just grass beneath the tree. The brick paved path which forms the entrance to the Church has 11 + trees in closer proximity than the Robinia which is subject to the order. There is a Robinia within 12 inches of the path at the green door entrance from Salters Lane. Unless there are root mitigation products in place, I would predict that this problem would reoccur.

Structural Damage;

The majority of the trees within the front grounds of the Hall are within 2 metres of the walls. These are Sycamores, Ash, Conifers and Yew trees therefore it is impossible to attribute the alleged structural damage to this tree given its distance from the wall and the proximity of the others.

I cannot fully comment on the damaged water pipe however, if it has been repaired by a competent person to today's standards then I would presume that the pipe has now been lined and as such would not expect this problem to reoccur.

With regard to the leaves and blocked gutters, there are over a hundred trees in the locale of the Church. Therefore, to attribute the blocked gutters to this one single Robinia tree is unsubstantiated. The clearance of fallen leaves is general building maintenance. However, there are products on the market such as gutter guards or gutter hogs which seek to abate this issue.

2. Health and Safety concerns in the Church grounds, Hazards to People and Financial Cost;

As stated by yourself 'the tree is located in public space' therefore with regard to the Owners and Occupiers Liability Act (1957 and 1984). I am obliged to inform you of your 'Duty of Care' to ensure that your property is reasonably safe. In respect of the trees within Salters Hall if you do not have a Tree Safety Survey then I would recommend that you commission a Consulting Arborist to undertake one. Presently if a tree from the Hall were to fail and cause injury you would be liable.

The Robinia tree is a fine example of the species and could be retained in the landscape following a crown clean to remove the dead wood from the canopy. This could be combined with a climbing inspection to observe the structural integrity of the branch unions.

This would be far cheaper option than felling the tree and would also tick the 'duty of care' box. As you would of had a competent person inspect the canopy and remove any obvious hazards.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Onions
Tree & Woodland Officer