

**WARD:** Stoke Bishop

**SITE ADDRESS:** Stoke Lodge Sports Ground Shirehampton Road Sea Mills Bristol

**APPLICATION NO:** 20/03288/VP      Tree Preservation Order

**DETERMINATION** 16 October 2020

**DEADLINE:**

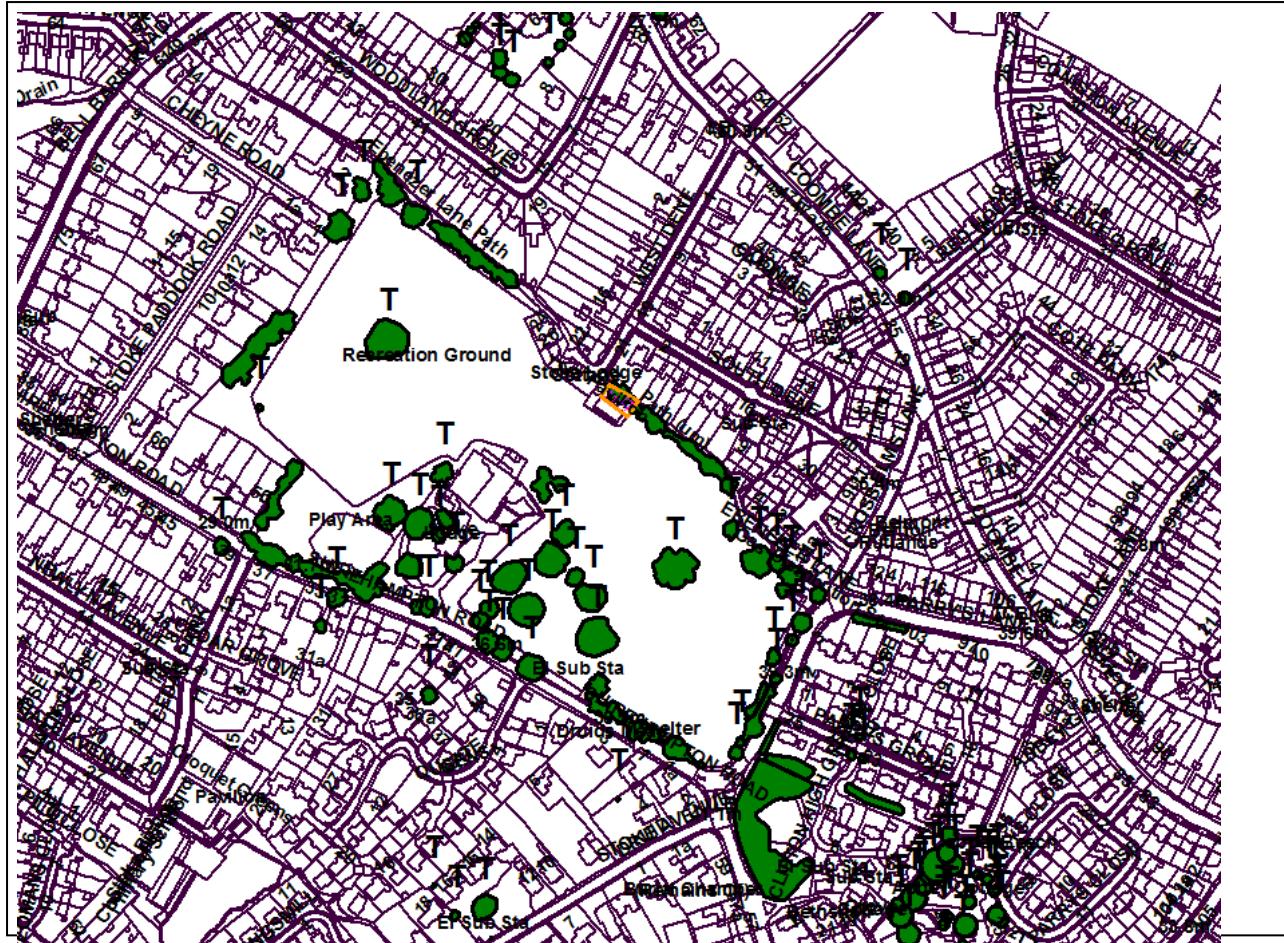
**Ash (T8 on plan, part of G7 on TPO 1192) Crown lift to 8m on the Pavilion side . Remove the basal shoot and any hanging branches or deadwood in the crown. Remove the three lowest limbs that overhang the footpath outside of the playing fields.**

**RECOMMENDATION:** GRANTED

**APPLICANT:** Cotham School  
Cotham Lawn Road  
Bristol  
BS6 6DT

***The following plan is for illustrative purposes only, and cannot be guaranteed to be up to date.***

**LOCATION PLAN:**



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- a. Due to the wide local interest, local ward member Councillor John Goulandris has referred this application to the Planning Committee.
- b. The application seeks to prune several branches of a mature ash tree away from a nearby built structure to avoid damage to building and tree – see Appendix A for images of encroachment and damaged branch. Additional pruning has been specified to ensure the tree remains balanced.
- c. From a professional arboricultural perspective, this pruning work is considered **necessary, reasonable** and will enhance the **health and balance** of the tree.
- d. Considering this, I recommend the application is approved.

**2.0 Site description**

- a. The site consists of a Grade II listed building, set within surrounding sports ground with a historic parkland character, and which is currently leased by Bristol City Council to Cotham School.
- b. The site consists of notable mature trees around the perimeter of the site, with several excellent, mature parkland trees within open grass. Numerous trees are covered by Tree Preservation Order on site. The tree which is the subject of this application is part of a group TPO (1192).
- c. This application location is on the northern boundary, between the footpath at Ebenezer Lane and the derelict sports pavilion.

**3.0 Description of the Tree**

- a. The mature ash is situated in a line of trees forming the north boundary of the sports grounds. It is approximately 4m north of the Pavilion and south east of Ebenezer Lane by approximately 11m (Image 1).
- b. The mature ash is approximately 18m in height with a stem diameter of 75cm. It is approximately 70-100 years old. The tree has a fine form with no structural defects evident. Physiologically the tree appears to be healthy, with no evidence of canopy dieback, pests or disease.
- c. The upper canopy is well formed and has out-grown the neighbouring hedgerow vegetation, enhancing the individual landscape value of this tree (App A - Image 4).

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- d. As the lower canopy has grown it has become intertwined with the adjacent vegetation. A large section of the southern lower canopy has grown around the Pavilion building (App A - Image 2), and one major branch now touches the corner of the building (App A- Image 3).
- e. As the tree has grown and been blown in the wind, the branch has rubbed against the corner of the building; causing an actionable nuisance (Town and Country Planning Act 1990, section 198, (6), (b)) & (Town & Country (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012, Exceptions, section 14, (1),(a),(ii)).
- f. Several other branches from the southern lower canopy have grown around this corner of the pavilion building; these branches appear overweighed and have the potential to droop and interact with the building and are likely to cause a future actionable nuisance.

**4.0 Application Background**

- a. Stoke Lodge site has wide local interest and this application has prompted the chair of the Bristol Tree Forum and other interested local residents to submit objections.
- b. Following public consultation, 99 objections and 6 letters of support have been received. The majority of the objections reference the key Bristol Tree Forum objections. The comments received can be summarised as follows:

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Councils response</b>
Damage to amenity value of the ash	The pruning works will enhance the amenity value of the tree. See Image 4.
Loss of wildlife habitat	The branches chosen for removal do not have features appropriate for bat ingress.
Pruning is excessive	Pruning several branches back to the building (rather than the trunk) ensure the tree develops new growth which will immediately become damaged by the building – a poor outcome for the tree and building. The pruning specification states only branches directed towards the pavilion and minor branches with a northern aspect will be pruned.
CCTV Installation	No information has been provided about a CCTV camera. These pruning works are not designed to facilitate CCTV installation, but to clear branching from the pavilion brick structure.
Branches are encroaching the pavilion and causing risk to nearby residents	The proposed pruning will abate these issues.

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<b>App. No</b>	<b>Date Closed</b>	<b>Specification</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<b>20/02228/VP</b>	<b>24.07.2020</b>	Norway Maple "Crimson King" (NW1) Norway Maple (NW2) -light crown-lift and reduction (2m maximum) of the NE lower face of crown. TPO 1192.	Consent	Reasonable works
<b>19/02046/VD</b>	01.05.2019	White Poplar - fell -TPO 1192.	Consent	Dead tree
<b>18/06369/VP</b>	05.02.2019	T1 - <i>Acer platanoides</i> , T2 - <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> , T3 - <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> and T4 - <i>Acer platanoides</i> : reduce in length the lower branches by 3m (for all four trees up to a height of 8m) or to a suitable pruning point remaining within property boundary. Trees all subject of TPO 1192.	Refused	Pruning considered excessive

**6.0 Tree Officers assessment**

- a. The proposed pruning specification is to crown lift the canopy to 8m, by pruning several lower branches back to the main trunk of the tree. The approximate canopy proposed for pruning is illustrated in App A- Image 4. The hatched area shows the approximate extent of branches on the southern façade that will be pruned back to trunk.
- b. T8 has localised prominence in the vicinity of the sport pavilion, and is only partially visible from West Dene and the wider Stoke Lodge site. The amenity value of tree T8, and the landscape value of the wider TPO 1192 group will not be adversely impacted by the minor pruning works proposed to the lower canopy.
- c. Pruning of the damaged branch (App A - Image 3) is important. The interaction of the branch with the pavilion structure is an actionable nuisance which should be abated.
- d. If this branch is not pruned it will continue to act as an open wound on this tree, providing an entry point for decay and pathogens to propagate within the tree. This risks decay and failure of the branch with potential to reduce the long term health and longevity of the tree. As the branch overhangs a public footpath, there is a future risk of harm to person and property.
- e. The crown lifting works will essentially remove branches from the lower canopy which are interacting, or have the potential to in the near term, with the pavilion structure. A small number of branches will be pruned on the north side of the canopy to ensure the tree remains

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in balance. The pruning works will remove the whole branch, back to the branch collar at the main trunk.

- f. Objections have been raised to the principle of whole branches being removed. This work is necessary. If the branches were pruned to simply clear the pavilion, the branches can be expected to regrow into the pavilion structure, causing more damage and stress to the tree. However, the removal of a branch back to the 'branch collar' and branch bark ridge will encourage the trees natural defence mechanisms by promoting a decay compartmentalisation process helping the tree to recover (CODIT model, Modern Arboriculture; A.Shigo, 1991).

## 7.0 Conclusion

- a. It is important to note that whilst this specific application has received strong local objection, arboricultural pruning work of this type, in Bristol or elsewhere, is neither unusual nor controversial. It is important that trees are professionally assessed and managed through good arboricultural practice; to abate nuisance where necessary, to establish good tree forms, and to ensure their long term health.
- b. In my professional opinion the proposed pruning is both **necessary** and **reasonable**, and will improve the **health** and **balance** of the tree in its location.
- c. **Necessary:** A major branch is rubbing against the pavilion structure (see image 2) causing an actionable nuisance. Removal of the nuisance is an exemption under section 14 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, section 198, (6), (b)) & (Town & Country (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012, Exceptions, section 14, (1),(a),(II)). Furthermore, In accordance with established best practice BS3998:2012, the branch should be managed and reduced back to the main trunk.
- d. **Reasonable:** the removal of the lower branches growing towards the pavilion is considered reasonable to abate the actionable nuisance being caused. Trees near built structures need management pruning to avoid damage to either feature. The proposed pruning only removes lower branches growing towards the pavilion. Note that this pruning specification will only remove over-weighted branches from the lower canopy, which considering the large size of the whole canopy, will constitute less than 15% of the tree's canopy. The crown lift will also enhance the visual amenity of the tree, but encouraging the upper canopy to develop up, away from the pavilion.
- e. **Health and Balance:** Branches rubbing on building façade creates an open wound on the branch, which is continuously re-opened as the branch rubs in the wind. This prevents the branch from closing (sealing) the wound and recovering, which provides an ingress point for pests and disease to propagate within the tree. It is important all branches growing towards the pavilion are reduced back to source (main trunk), as this will give maximum clearance between the building and avoid future open wounds through rubbing branches.

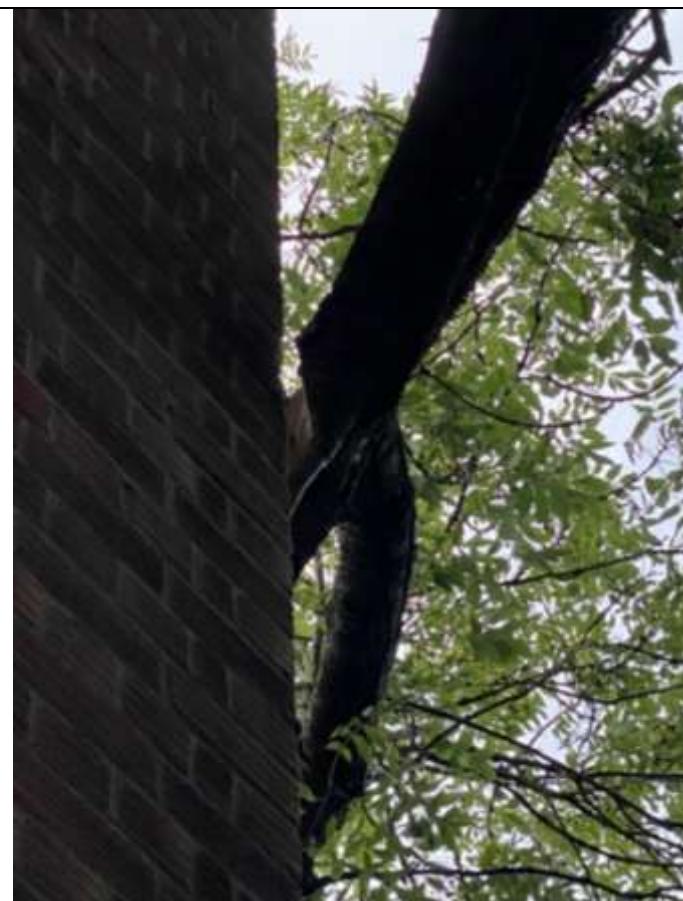
## Appendix A:

**Image 1: Tree Location Plan**



**Image 2: A 2016 aerial image with the built structures highlighted in red, including a standalone brick structure. The canopy of T8 is outlined in green.**



<b>Image 3:</b> Showing a branch rubbing against the corner of the standalone brick structure. Sapwood is visible in the image and shows the tree is not recovering from persistent damage.		
<b>Image 4:</b> Photo looking north from southern boundary of the playing fields. The hatched area indicates the approximate branches to be cleared away from the Pavilion.		