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F.A.O MR G ORTON

The Birmingham Civic Society
9 Margaret Street
Birmingham
B3 3BS

Dear Mr Orton

Thank you for your letter concerning the proposed removal of the London Plane Tree on Broad Street. I can confirm the City is not only committed to preserving trees where ever possible but to increase the numbers year on year.

The original proposal to remove the tree on Broad Street was taken a number of years ago by Centro, who thought it was essential to ensure the health and safety of road and tram users. It was also felt the works would damage the tree. The Centenary Square design was therefore developed on the basis that the tree would be removed.

Birmingham City Council recently asked both projects to review the possibility of retaining the tree if possible and report back their findings. Centro confirmed that their design could accommodate the tree with some amendments; however the Centenary Square Project could not.

The Centenary Square design, which was the result of an international design competition, complied with the brief, and produced a design that not only accommodated events but also Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) to protect the square. The Centenary Square Design Team has confirmed the edge of the water feature to be installed in Centenary Square is the HVM, designed as a counter-terrorism measure and will require deep foundations. These foundations would cut through the roots and in their view kill the tree. Other implications were also identified as two lighting columns would be within the canopy of the tree and there was a potential clash with the big wheel.

We have looked to date at options to retain the tree, including moving the edge of the water feature further away from the road, but we need the space in the square for the big wheel and ice rink, as well as the Remembrance Day parade.

We are now exploring a final possibility, engaging a specialist team to confirm the actual root locations and explore any design solutions to retain the tree within the existing design.

The Design does have planning approval, and Cabinet approved the project only on the basis that the above events could be accommodated.

You will probably be aware that the Centenary Square scheme with four groups of trees will provide a net increase of some 35 trees.

I am sorry I cannot confirm the tree can be retained, but please be assured Birmingham City Council will review all options before agreeing to its removal.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Ian Ward
Deputy Leader of Birmingham City Council