

**The Chairman and Members of  
North West Area Committee.**

**Meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

**Item No: 6**

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**Health & Safety Issue – Arboricultural Works, St Canice’s Graveyard, Finglas**

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Introduction and Existing Conditions

As part of a Conservation Management Plan, a Tree Survey was commissioned for St Canice’s historic Graveyard. The report records 33 no. living trees (12 Trees of high quality; 5 Trees of moderate quality; 14 Trees of low quality, 2 trees of poor quality or dead). The most significant trees on this site are the yew trees which are mostly of high quality.

Proposal

Pertinent to this report, the survey finds that one of the trees is dead (952), one tree (949) is very poor condition; these two trees will have to be removed. These trees are summarised in the table below and illustrated in the accompanying plan diagram. These identified trees could become a health and safety issue and also damage head stones and/or the boundary wall if they fall or if limbs fall. Therefore as part of normal tree maintenance, we recommend that we remove these two trees as soon as it is possible, during the 2022 Quarter 1 winter/dormant season, to avoid any potential disturbance during the next nesting season. Also recommended by the arborists, pruning, ivy removal and dead wood removal will be carried out on a limited amount of trees.

<b>Extract of Relevant Information from the Arboricultural Assessment (Tree survey) by Charles McCorkell, September 2021</b>	
<b>Tree No.</b>	<b>Tree Species – Common Name (&amp; Latin Name)</b>
949	<b>Plum tree</b> ( <i>Prunus domestica</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural condition Poor. Physiological condition Fair. Deadwood.</li> <li>• <b>Recommendation: Fell</b> - Ground level.</li> </ul>
952	<b>False cypress</b> ( <i>Chamaecyparis</i> sp.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dead</li> <li>• <b>Recommendation: Fell</b> - Ground level.</li> </ul>
950	<b>Ash Tree</b> ( <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> )

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> Reduce the canopy of the tree by 2m in width and 4m in height and monitor on a biannual basis. If retaining for the long term, further reductions in the future will be required due to the decay present.</li> </ul>
948	<p><b>Cherry Laurel:</b> (<i>Laurocerasus officinalis</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> Reduce canopy by 1.5- 2m all over, ensuring a greater reduction is carried out on heavily weighted laterals</li> </ul>
957	<p><b>Irish Yew</b> (<i>Taxus baccata 'Fastigiata'</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> Remove ivy.</li> </ul>
933	<p><b>European Larch</b> (<i>Larix decidua</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> Remove deadwood</li> </ul>

Another series of works will be carried in the same period. While not specified in the arborist report, these works are normal maintenance work which consist in the cutting back of ivy growing on the graveyard walls, the cutting back of a large buddleia growing and the removal of probably self-seeded plum trees.

The cutting back of the ivy will alleviate weight and will also allow an assessment of the wall conditions. It is not good practice to remove ivy, without first checking the wall condition, as ivy removal can weaken the structure. For the same reason, the buddleia will only be cut back initially, its root system will have to be removed at a later stage. The very young plum trees have been growing at the foot of graves and if allowed to grow, they will eventually damage them.

<b>Vegetation/Small trees not part of Tree survey (as outside scope)</b>	
<b>Vegetation</b>	<b>Location(s)</b>
<b>Ivy</b>	Significant ivy growth on the (eastern, southern and northern) boundary walls
<b>Buddleia</b>	On southern church elevation
<b>Young Tree - No Number</b>	(too small for inclusion in tree survey), located adjacent to grave No. 109
<b>Young Tree - No Number</b>	(too small for inclusion in tree survey) located adjacent to grave No. 115
<b>Young Tree - No Number</b>	(too small for inclusion in tree survey), located adjacent to grave No. 136

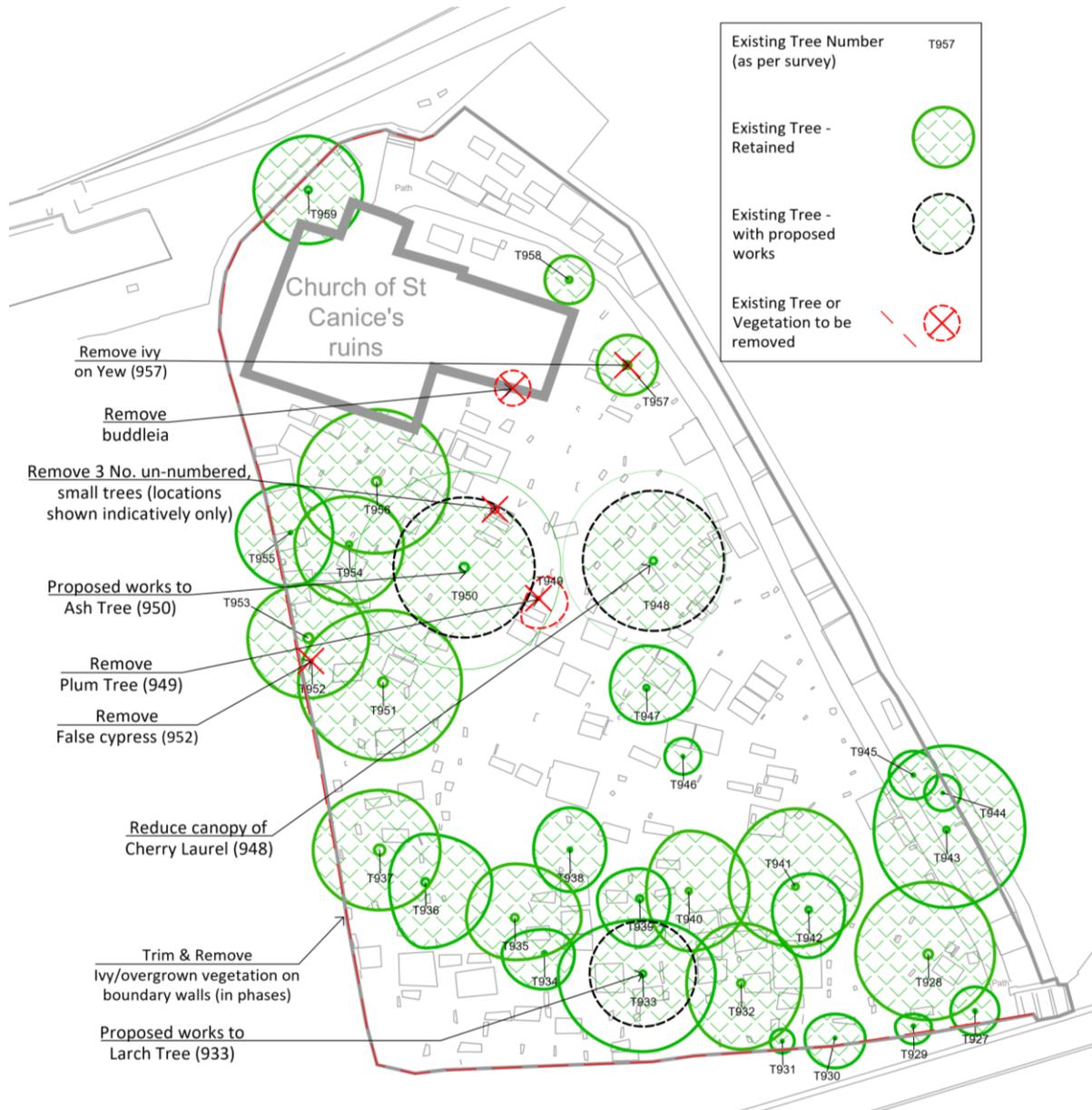
Please note that the proposed contractor carried out similar trees work in a historic graveyard, in Donnybrook this year and has a robust methodology to carry out works sensitively, without impacting the site's heritage.

#### Long-term Proposal

The survey has shown that the tree population is in generally fair to good condition and is dominated by yew trees, with planting span going from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the survey several significant trees were identified by the arborist; the panting of three Irish Yew trees (*Taxus baccata*) have been tentatively dated from 1840/1850s, while another one might date from 1787. A specific management plan will be proposed for these trees which will entail regular monitoring and some specialist work.

All retained trees will have necessary remedial tree surgery to ensure there are no hazard branches, deadwood and weak limbs. All retained trees will be subject to regular inspections.

The ivy and buddleia trimming will be part of a longer phased process, comprising the insertion of 'ecoplugs' to deter growth and phased vegetation removal, with surveillance by a conservation specialist, to ascertain condition of wall structure under vegetation.



## Plan Diagram

**Christina Todd**

**Landscape Architect**