

What will happen to the beautiful mature trees in Cofferridge Close?



At present there are 82 mature trees in the Close, and 21 species are represented:

- some, like the orchard trees (22) have historic and cultural value
- others, like the yew trees (5) can live for centuries
- the Indian Bean Trees (2) and the Sycamore (4) are particularly resilient and adaptable
- the False Acacia (1) and London Plane (1) can absorb a lot of pollutants
- and the Holly trees (3) provide good winter habitat for birds.

Of these 82 trees, only 10 are retained in the redevelopment proposal. In total, 77 of the 82 trees in the Close are under the control of the present owner. In their planning application for a large supermarket the developer states that 44 trees will be cut down in the redevelopment but the real number is 51. The discrepancy in the number of trees lost arises because they group the 7 orchard trees on the green space and counts them as 1 tree (group TG4 in the Tree Survey submitted by the applicant) and in the same way the 3 espaliered pears on the office wall (TG3) are counted as 1 tree.

In the proposed redevelopment 66% of the trees in Cofferridge Close controlled by the owner will be removed to fulfil the car parking requirement for a supermarket of the size planned, to allow for the manoeuvring of large delivery vehicles and to accommodate the new building.

The rationale for removing 7 trees growing against the perimeter wall by the pedestrian exit to Market Square and 8 along the line of the existing residential garages can only be because space for the development is so limited. They need to squeeze every square foot out of the site. The loss of such a large number of established mature trees in a Conservation Area severely diminishes town centre amenity and should be wholly unacceptable.

The applicant states in a letter concerning amended plans that 44 new trees will be planted as part of the redevelopment. However the Amended Proposed Landscape Layout submitted by the developer shows only 34 new trees. The planting of new trees in lines to fit car parking areas, whatever the number, does not compensate the local community for the loss of existing urban tree cover. Milton Keynes Council Landscape Services Manager – Trees comments in his response to the application said: *“The new trees will take a decade or two to make up for the majority of the volume loss of tree cover”*

The community’s comment on the loss of 51 large mature trees: ***‘Totally shocking and disgusting...’***