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A. Hoad, Esq., OBE,
105, St. Mary's Road,
Hayling Island,
PO11 9DD

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12th October 2008
REF: 2833

Dear Mr Hoad,

Proposed North Room to St. Mary the Virgin, Hayling Island

Further to our meeting on the 1st October, I write to confirm my assessment of the yew tree which is affected by this proposal.

The tree is a yew (*Taxus baccata*) and is surrounded by a number of graves. It is a female tree and is located just to the north of the nave. She is approximately 7—8m in height with a bole diameter of 0.7m (at ground level just above root buttressing it is circa 1m). The crown has a radius of spread of 6.5m and a height clearance above ground level of 2m. British Standard BS 5837:2005 *Trees in relation to development – recommendations* requires an estimate of age and satisfactory future longevity. For most trees, at perhaps 150—200 years old she would be mature, but in the context of the yew on the south side of the church, I think this makes her a mere teenager! Hence, for a formal assessment under BS 5837 I would record her as young, with a lifespan of 40++ years. The question of which category code to apply is also interesting. I do not see her as justifying category A – she is neither big enough, nor prominent enough to justify this rating – there are a score of other yew trees with much higher prominence – as shown in the enclosed photograph 1. Equally, although only a "teenager" with a score of comparable trees, category C would be too low. So I will assess her as Category B. Although not quite the wording used in the BS 5837, trees in category B should not be lost as part of development unless it is unavoidable but can be lost if it is unavoidable.

The above is the formal appraisal under BS 5837. I will not try and assess the situation, both professionally and as a former member of Portsmouth Diocesan Synod (and as a current member of Exeter Diocesan Synod).

The thirteenth century church has evolved over the centuries, with each age adding its own features as relevant at the time. The church building is not a museum but an on-going centre of worship, and as such needs to be alive to current requirements.

I am of the opinion, following our meeting, that the proposed siting of the room is the only sensible location and that this requires that the tree and the graves will need to be moved.

My opinion is that it would not be an utter disaster if the tree were felled – there are a score of similar yew trees in the churchyard. The enclosed photographs show it in its setting, with the most important photograph being number 1, looking east across the new churchyard burial area. In this perspective, the subject yew can only just be seen in a gap between a closer yew and the north side of the church.

However, the tree does represent more than a century of growth and thus has some historic value.

Yew is often used as a hedging plants as, unlike most conifers, it will regrow from clipping and can be coppiced. Most often the important aspect of big trees is the bole – the venerable tree on the south side of the church is not as big as one or two in photograph 1 in terms of crown! The crown will regrow within a short space of years, whereas getting a bole of this size does take a little bit longer!

My opinion is that it would be practical to move the tree rather than simply fell it.

To move it, the tree would need to be substantially reduced to little more than the main bole. This would remove nearly all the foliage with its immediate water demand. Consequently, the tree could be moved with less rootball than would be needed if the foliage remained. Even with this I would expect that the crane used would need to be able to handle five tons, 1—2 for the bole and circa 3 for the rootball and roots. Care would be needed to protect the tree and water it during the first season after moving.

My opinion is that there should be a very high chance of being able to move the tree satisfactorily, but I have to note a small possibility of it failing. However, I consider this risk is appropriate given the need for the development.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate from contacting me.

[redacted]

Keith Rushforth

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1. Collage looking towards the church from the new graveyard extension, and thus looking at the West end of the church. Part of the crown of the yew is visible to the left of the church.



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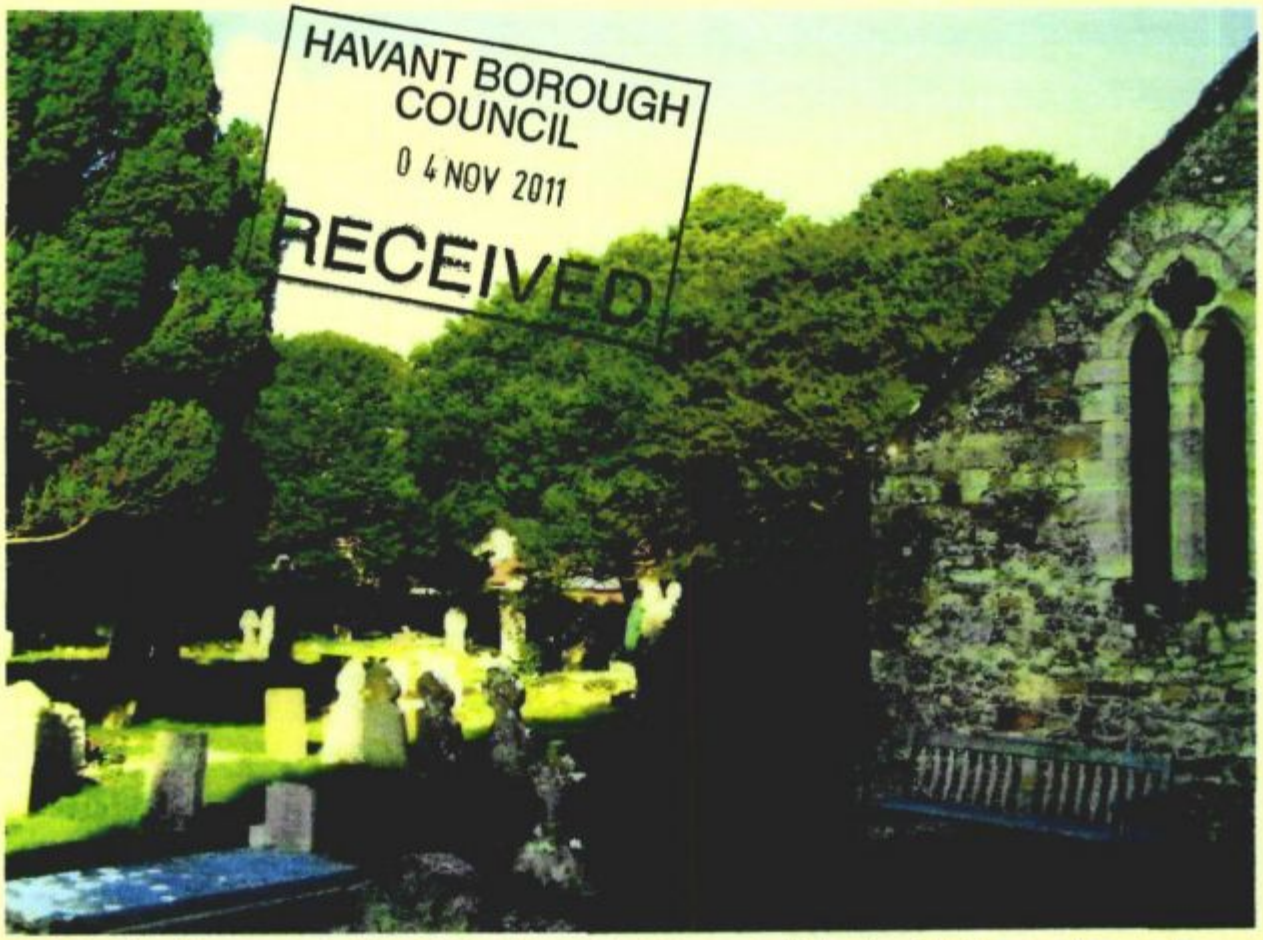
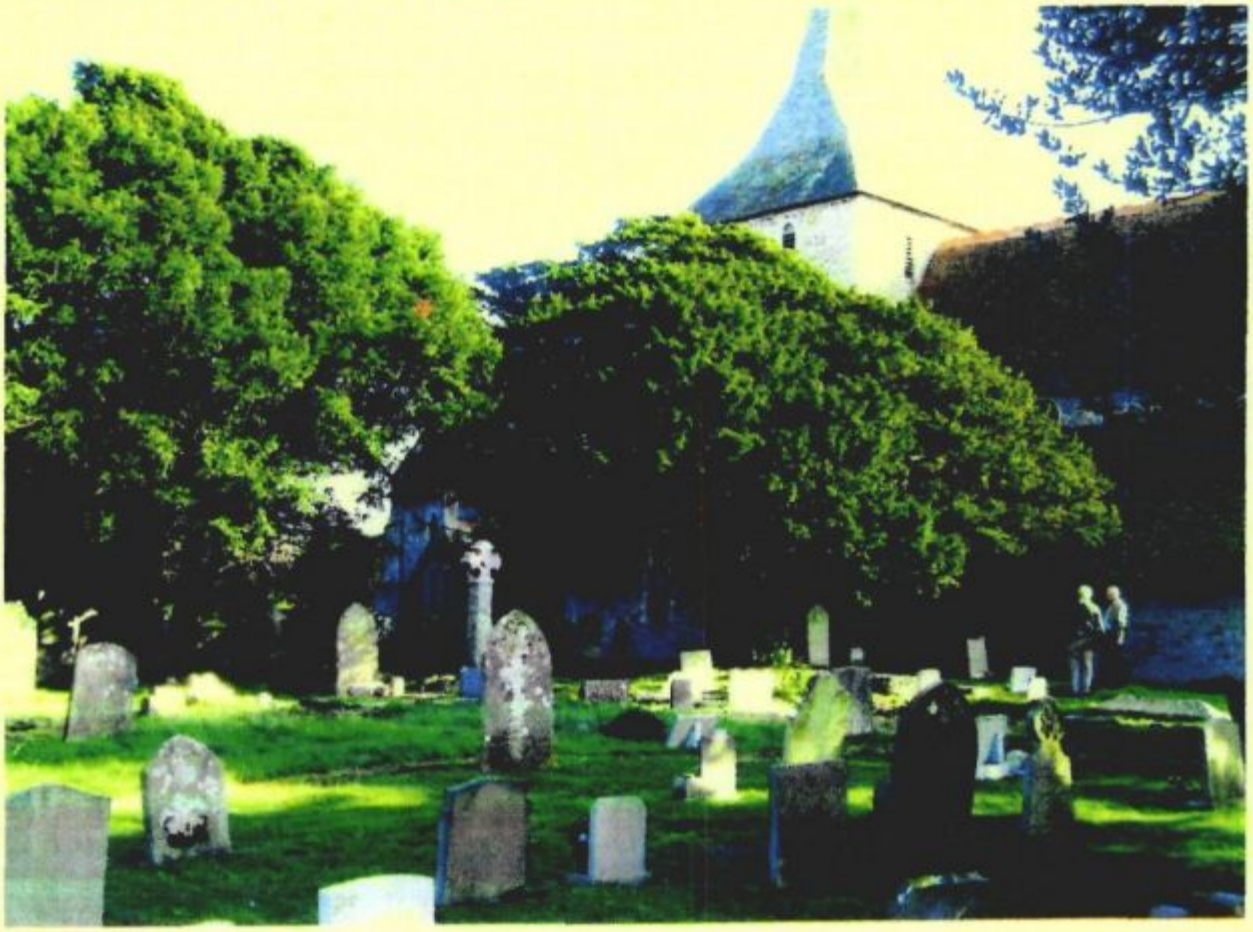
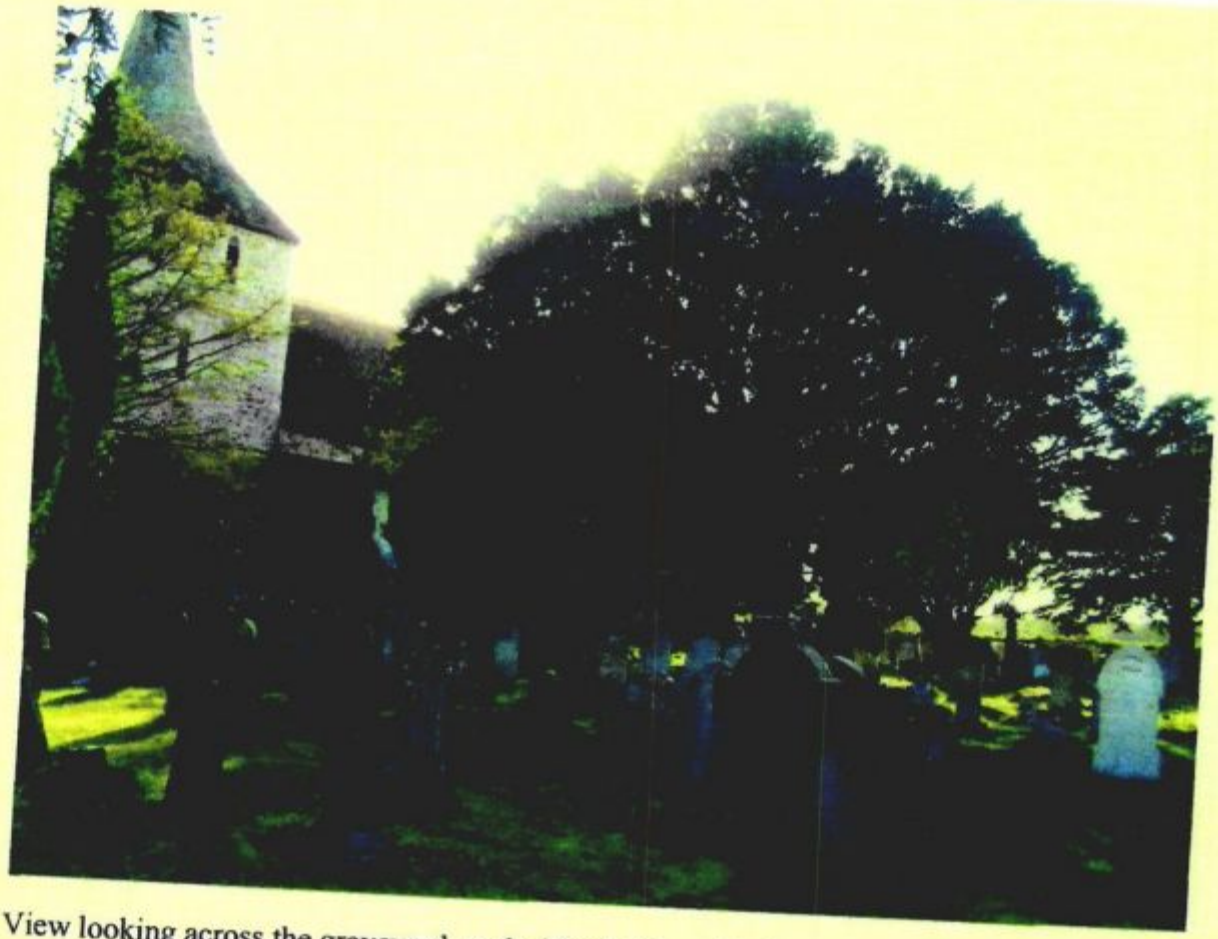


2. View looking towards Church Road from the West end of the church. The yew is one of several on the north side of the church.



3. View looking across the graveyard on the North side of the church, with the yew obscuring the building.



4. View looking across the graveyard on the North side, with the yew largely obscured by another yew.

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