

14. GUIDELINES FOR TREE WORKS

Dulwich has a vast array of wonderful ancient trees. They create an almost rural environment in an otherwise built up area of South London. Maintaining and planting new trees encourages biodiversity, enhances local wildlife habitats, and helps reduce the levels of carbon dioxide in the air (carbon sequestration).

Paragraph 6.(b) of the Scheme of Management provides that without the prior written consent of the Managers no trees of any kind (other than fruit trees, shrubs and seedlings) at any time growing on property shall be lopped, cut down, destroyed or removed. In this connection, 'fruit trees' excludes ornamental species such as cherry trees. You are urged to contact the Scheme of Management office if there is any doubt as to whether or not permission is necessary.

Our policy is to maintain healthy trees, especially mature specimens. It is therefore necessary to get prior approval before pruning or carrying out any works.

The services of the Scheme's tree consultant are free and he can be contacted through the office on 0208 299 1000. The tree consultant is able to suggest suitable species, where trees need to be replaced or newly planted.

In granting permission for works to trees under the Scheme of Management, neither the Managers, their employees nor the Tree Consultant give any opinion, either explicit or implied, as to the current state of health of a tree.



Copper Beech and Oak trees in College Road



Crimson Horse Chestnut at College Gardens

How to apply for tree works

1. Make an appointment with the tree consultant through the Scheme of Management office, to inspect the tree(s) which are subject to the proposed works.
2. In most cases, the tree consultant will also wish to meet the applicant to discuss the proposals. The tree consultant can generally approve applications for minor works and grant a permit for these.
3. Proposals to remove a tree in a prominent position on the Estate or major tree works are generally referred to the Scheme of Management Committee who will make a site visit, usually accompanied by a member of The Dulwich Society's tree committee.
4. If works are approved, a licence will be issued.
5. Under the terms of the licence, all works must be completed within 52 weeks.
6. In addition to obtaining written consent under the Scheme of Management, applications in respect of trees located in a Conservation Area and those subject to a Tree Preservation Order also require the consent of the local Council. You can check if you are in a conservation area on the relevant local authority website.

14. GUIDELINES FOR TREE WORKS CONT.

Care of established trees

Trees should be retained in their natural shape and form wherever possible. In order to avoid damaging the tree or adjacent property or causing injury, large trees should only be pruned by experienced professionals. Following the managers' approval for tree works, a permit is issued. A list of tree surgeons is available from the Scheme of Management Office. The Arboricultural Association can supply a list of approved contractors and some local authorities have a list of contractors they recommend.

Large trees may need thinning by an experienced professional to avoid excessive shade. A healthy tree may easily be ruined or killed by drastic lopping and unskilled pruning can produce areas which are affected by fungus and decay, as well as making the tree structurally unsound. However, with expert attention it is possible to reduce the density of a tree whilst still retaining its height and natural form.

Trees close to buildings can cause problems and the removal of a tree can result in ground heave. In Dulwich, the sub soil is composed of heavy shrinkable clay and severe structural problems, aggravated by root activity, can arise during excessive dry periods. Nearby trees are often blamed for exacerbating the situation and owners should take the advice of a chartered surveyor or structural engineer if such problems arise, as well as informing their insurance company, who should forward their report to us.

Paragraph 6. (d) of the Scheme of Management states that nothing shall be done upon any property which may be or grow to be a nuisance, annoyance or damage to any neighbouring owners or which the Managers shall reasonably consider to be detrimental to the neighbourhood. You may be contacted about a tree or trees that are reported as causing a nuisance to neighbours, usually by causing excessive shadowing. In such cases you will be required to take steps to reduce the nuisance as guided by the tree consultant.

Choosing a new tree

Most species of tree will grow in a wide range of soils. However, please give careful thought to the eventual size of a new or replacement tree and its root system. The Scheme's tree consultant is available to give help and advice about suitable species.

Please avoid the following, especially where space is at a premium:

- Forest type trees such as oak, beech, lime, ash, horse chestnut, plane, or Norway maple or cypress, unless there is full scope for ultimate development of the branch and root system.
- Large inappropriate species, such as willow or poplar trees, in small gardens or close to buildings or underground services. Such trees have extensive root systems which could damage nearby buildings, especially in areas where the sub soil is highly shrinkable clay.
- Fast-growing, dense crowned trees, such as cypress, close to boundaries in restricted situations. Such trees will require regular maintenance in order to prevent them affecting adjoining properties through lateral growth and shading.

Reducing water consumption in the garden

Trees and plants need water to survive and as our climate gets drier, we should consider how we can reduce our mains water consumption in the garden. Increased shade and dense planting can create a micro-climate and actually reduce the need for watering. Improving your soil condition can also increase its ability to retain water. A water butt or a grey water recycling system are alternative water sources. Choosing drought resistant species would also help to plan for a drier future. Further information on sustainable gardening can be found here.