

# 1. GUIDELINES FOR BOUNDARY CHANGES WALLS, HEDGES, FENCES, RAILINGS AND GATES

Replacement walls and fences do not require approval if they match the existing design and materials. Paragraph 4 of the Scheme of Management, requires an owner to keep structures on the property clean and in good repair, including boundary walls and fences.

If you propose to make an application to alter the design ie the height, position or materials, then the following information should be taken into consideration:

## **Walls**

Low brick walls at the front of properties should be constructed from facing bricks with brick copings. Brick walls should not be painted and in most cases, London stock bricks should be used with flush brushed pointing. Walls and their foundations should be constructed to withstand any ground movement, swelling or shrinkage caused by nearby trees. An appointment should be made with the tree consultant if there is a possibility of foundations impacting on tree roots. The suitable height of the wall depends on the location, and neighbouring properties may provide a reference for an in keeping design.

## **Hedges**

Hedges provide a green, softening element to front boundaries when planted behind a low fence or wall, unifying individual roads and whole areas. Planting or carrying out work to a hedge does not require approval, but please do not allow them to become a nuisance or cause damage to neighbouring property. Generally accepted hedge heights are 1 metre (3ft) for front gardens and 2 metres (6ft) for rear gardens. Common varieties of hedges can be bought at these heights rather than waiting for them to become established.

## **Suitable species**

Species such as Portuguese laurel, privet, elaeagnus and euonymus, or tree species such as holly, yew or photinia red robin are recommended evergreens which have moderate or low water demand. Pollinating varieties such as hawthorn or berberis, and deciduous beech and hornbeam for example can provide diverse wildlife habitats. Further information on suitable drought resistant species can be found at the Royal Horticultural Society plant finder.

## **Unsuitable species**

Leyland cypress are not suitable species due to their density and fast-growing nature. They can reach more than 35 metres (100 ft) in height and keeping them at a reasonable size is very labour intensive as they can grow up to 10cm per week at certain times. Leyland cypress is classed by the Building Research Establishment as having a high-water demand and should not be planted close to buildings. For further advice, please book an appointment with the tree consultant via the Scheme of Management Office.

A permit is not required for planting and well considered landscaping to front and rear gardens is a feature of The Dulwich Estate.

When considering what to plant, be mindful of the long-term impact on your neighbours as trees and large shrubs can cause a loss of light and amenity. In such cases the reduction or removal may be necessary. Information regarding unsuitable species to plant near buildings can be found on the Royal Horticultural Society website.

## **Fences**

Particular types of front garden fences, painted or unpainted, open picket fences or close-boarded timber, are often specific to groups of houses on the Estate. The original type of fence should be retained when repairs are carried out and original details, such as decorated fence posts, should be preserved. Vertical close-boarded fences often define the boundaries between properties in rear gardens. Raising the height of fences may have a negative impact on your neighbours and privacy between properties can usually be achieved with careful planting.

We advise that you discuss proposed changes to the fence with your neighbour, to establish if there will be any increased shadowing of their garden that would concern them. Applications for changes to fences on the shared boundary will be considered with input from the affected neighbour. Include detailed dimensions and local ground levels on both sides of the fence, with your application submissions. A detailed drawing will be required on which you should clearly annotate materials, finishes, heights and ground levels. Many houses built after 1950 feature minimal fencing with

## 1. GUIDELINES FOR BOUNDARY CHANGES WALLS, HEDGES, FENCES, RAILINGS AND GATES CONT.



Good quality fencing, including Dulwich posts



Good example of simple understated railing



Open picket fence

low posts and rails marking the boundaries. Higher fencing would change the character of these developments, so instead, planting should be used to improve privacy between properties at the rear. Secondary fencing is not permitted.

Timber fences and gates or planted boundaries are more beneficial environmentally than metal and they can be low maintenance. Timber palisade fences are a historic feature of the Estate, and vertical close boarded fences with trellises are common in back gardens. Look for high quality durable timber from FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) sources. Conventional wood stains often contain harmful chemicals that can be detrimental to the environment and health, so consider using natural finishes and eco-friendly biodegradable wood stains.

We encourage you to follow the history of the placement of the arris rails.

### Railings and Gates

Metal railings are often used to define the boundaries of schools and institutional buildings in Dulwich. They are unlikely to be approved as enclosures to residential boundaries as they may change the unique 'rural' character. Exceptions may be made where the design preserves the open character, but detailed dimensioned drawings, visuals and samples will be required to demonstrate this. Avoid ornate metal railings and gates and keep designs simple and understated.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR APPLICATION

- Drawings illustrating proposed construction heights and a description of materials, coping and pier details.
- Photographs of local references can also be provided in support of the application.
- Detailed dimensions and local ground levels on both sides of the fence when altering the height of a fence.