



Tree Management Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the Estate's approach to managing trees on Dulwich Estate-owned communal garden spaces throughout the Estate. It is for leasehold and freehold residents subject to service charges.

Our goal is to maintain and increase a healthy and safe urban tree canopy while respecting the enjoyment of communal grounds by residents.

Formal consultation with residents is not part of the tree management process, though we strive to incorporate views if possible.

Scope

This policy applies to all trees located within The Dulwich Estate boundary, owned and managed by The Dulwich Estate on behalf of residents, including shared communal areas.

Double protection of trees in Dulwich and working with the local authority

The vast majority of the trees on The Dulwich Estate are within designated Conservation Areas and/or subject Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). A TPO is a legal mechanism used by local planning authorities in the UK to protect specific trees, groups of trees, or woodlands. It denotes their importance to the local area and the wider environment.

If The Dulwich Estate, through its survey work, deems removal or pruning of a tree to be essential, the Estate must first apply to the local authority for a licence for works, providing robust scientific evidence.

This provides an extra layer of protection. The tree is assessed by the Estate's in-house arboriculturist and then again by the local authority.

The local authority will consult separately with nearby residents on the proposed works for removal of a TPO tree, usually via post.

Neither the Estate nor the Council removes trees unless absolutely necessary and then only when supported by professional surveys and data.

Responsibilities of The Dulwich Estate - A Cyclical Approach

The Estate's 3–5-year cyclical tree management program ensures trees are regularly inspected, maintained, replaced when necessary and preserved. This approach balances safety, aesthetics, biodiversity, and long-term resilience of the tree canopy.

The Estate's programme includes the following:

A. Tree Inventory and Mapping

- All Estate trees are recorded on Tree Plotter, a digital inventory. Species, age, size, condition, location and recommended works are logged and so the Estate records an overview of the whole area.
- This inventory is continually updated after reactive inspections and proactive inspection cycles.

B. Routine Inspections

- Trees are inspected on a rolling 3–5-year cycle, depending on species, location, and risk profile. Where tree work is needed, it will be assigned priority 1, 2 or 3 depending on the urgency. Additional inspections may occur after storms or upon request from residents (link to request process).

C. Maintenance and Pruning

- Scheduled pruning, aligned with the inspection cycle, is carried out to:
 - Remove dead or diseased branches
 - Maintain structural integrity
 - Prevent interference with buildings, pathways, and utilities
 - Mitigate against damage to property in areas susceptible to subsidence

D. Risk Management

- Trees posing immediate safety risks (e.g., unstable limbs, disease, obstruction) are prioritised for urgent action.
- Residents are encouraged to report concerns via the [residents' portal](#) or in emergencies by calling the Estate Office. Tel: 0208 299 1000

E. Planting and Replacement

- Where trees are removed based on scientific and expert surveys due to disease or damage to property, the Estate will replace them with suitable native or climate-resilient species.

- Replacement planting takes place annually between October-March which is the best time for trees to establish.
- If possible, replacement planting will be in the same location of historic trees.
- Careful consideration is given to replacement species based on estimated ultimate size.
- Planting beneath existing mature trees (underplanting) is an accepted method of succession planting.
- Issues such as subsidence will be addressed through careful species selection, engineering solutions, if cost effective, and regular management.
- How tree shade-casting affects the light of homes is considered only in exceptional circumstances.

F. Delivering Resilience in Tree Stock

- We promote tree diversity to support local wildlife and reduce vulnerability to pests, disease and climate change.
- Mulching, soil care, and water management are part of the Estate's tree establishment and maintenance practices. This work is carried out by Estate contractors, who have been appointed through competitive tender

Costs, Communication and Engagement

We are committed to transparency and communication on tree maintenance and associated costs for residents.

Residents will be notified of upcoming planned tree works via work orders posted on the residents' portal. There will be no consultation on tree species which is decided by the Estate's arboriculturist using a range of criteria and his expertise.

The Estate cares for all amenity trees and grounds and costs are recharged where appropriate to residents as part of the quarterly service charge.

The Estate obtains three estimates for standard non-typical tree works (i.e. those not included within British Standard 3998:2010 like advance decay detection and oak processionary moth treatment). Where service charges are required in advance, estimated charges will be set out in the annual budget. Where they are charged in arrears, the cost will appear on the next service charge bill.

If a tree needs to be removed urgently because it is deemed to pose a Health and Safety risk a notification will be added to the resident's portal and a 5-day notice will be affixed to the tree.

Residents' Responsibilities

- Requests for inspections or to carry out works to trees on amenity land should be raised via [the portal](#).
- The Estate is responsible for the care and maintenance of trees on amenity land and therefore residents must not carry out any tree works without documented/adopted pre-agreement with the Estate's tree and landscape manager.
- Items such as decorative lights, security cameras, rope swings, or any other structures may only be attached to Estate trees where a suitable methodology has been submitted to and received written approval by the Estate's tree and landscape Manager.
- The Estate is under no obligation to accept requests to attach items to its trees and will not take responsibility for any unauthorised attachments.
- Where unauthorised attachments are identified and the identity of the owner is known, the owner will be given a period of 10 working days to arrange removal, after such time The Estate reserve the right to arrange removal of the attachment(s) and seek recompense for costs and/or damages.
- Where attachments are identified and the owner is unknown, The Estate will affix a notice to the attachment notifying of its intention to remove the item within 10 working days.

Additional guidance

Separate [guidelines](#) for freeholders subject to the Scheme of Management and trees in private gardens are available.

Resident Communications and Tree Works

Priority ratings are given to the work carried out on trees as follows:

Emergency: Work needs to be carried out within 5 days

Immediate action is required due to fallen or dangerously unstable trees threatening life or property. The Estate will take action to remove the tree within 5 days.

Communication

The Estate will update the portal as quickly as possible with a date for removal or stabilisation has been provided by our contractor, but this may not always be possible.

High priority: Work needs to be carried out in less than 1 month

This will typically consist of investigative advance decay detection works, tree removal or veteranisation which is the intentional, artificial damaging of young to semi-mature trees to accelerate the creation of habitats—such as cavities, decay, and broken limbs—typically found only in ancient trees. This conservation technique, used to boost biodiversity, mimics natural decay processes to support rare fungi, invertebrates, birds, and bats.

Communication

A notification of works will be posted on the portal, and notice will be affixed to the subject tree, but the work may be carried out without further engagement with residents.

Medium priority: Work will be carried out within 3 months

This will typically consist of general pruning including the removal deadwood and statutory nuisance abatement, such as crown lifting and lateral reductions away from property.

Communication

A notification of works will be posted on the portal.

Low Priority: Work will be carried out within 6 months

This will typically consist of ivy severance and basal clearance.

Communication

A notification of works will be posted on the portal.