

The view of St Paul's Cathedral and the London skyline from Waterlow Park.

Trees framing the views of London towards St Paul's have been a feature of Waterlow Park since it was donated to the people of London in 1889, but you may have found it increasingly difficult to spot the familiar cathedral dome as the years have gone by. Trees in the Park have grown into the view of the London skyline. With the passage of time the views of St Paul's Cathedral are now 'glimpsed' through the tree canopy of the park and may disappear in the future.

This developing situation was recognised more than a decade ago by the Friends of Waterlow Park who formed a 'Trees and Views' Group, with representatives from a number of local stakeholders. The Group consults with Camden Green Space Service, who manage the Park on behalf of the Waterlow Park Trust. Planting is reviewed by the Group with particular care taken to avoid new trees obscuring key views in the future. Views change over time as trees grow.

Trees are managed under the Council's Tree Policy, which does not support the pruning or removal of trees for the obstruction of views, and is based on arboricultural best practice. Trees help to keep our air clean, cool our neighbourhoods, provide habitat for wildlife and help to tackle the climate emergency. They also contribute to the landscape character of the park.

Balancing the value of trees against the value of the long views across the city is a challenge. The Trees and Views Group has considered various approaches to preserving and enhancing views whilst keeping work on trees to a minimum. The present proposal has been developed after many years of careful consideration of alternative approaches, and of monitoring the impact of tree growth on views.

As ever, different schemes have trade-offs, so your responses to this public engagement will be key in determining the approach to adopt.

(See map below for viewpoint locations in the Park, there will also be a notice in the park, by the path near the Sir Sydney Waterlow statue).

PROPOSAL A - Significant height reduction of one lime tree



From proposed new viewpoint



From current sightline by the statue of Sir Sydney

Advantages:

- Opens a new viewpoint of St Paul's from the path near the statue of Sir Sydney Waterlow.
- Preserves and enhances status of Waterlow Park as a unique vantage point above London.
- Significantly enhances views of the London skyline walking along the path.
- Responds to public feedback on the importance of views.

Disadvantages:

- Significant work to a mature tree for an aesthetic reason is not good arboricultural practice.
- Reduction in the tree's ability to capture carbon and air pollution impact. [Link to carbon capture impact of proposed work as new web page]
- Loss of tree canopy and some wildlife habitat.
- Will need regular maintenance to control grow-back in order to retain the view

Risks:

- Some risk the lime tree may not recover from the work and die.

PROPOSAL B - Not to undertake a significant reduction to the lime

Advantages:

- Maintains maximum canopy and the associated carbon capture and wildlife value.
- No immediate or long terms costs.

Disadvantages:

- St Paul's will no longer be visible from the park in a few years' time (without unexpected loss of mature trees and assuming continued growth).
- No re-opened skyline views from the path. leading to a sense of increasing enclosure within the Park over time.

Risks:

- Potential for visitor disappointment / lower numbers if Waterlow Park does not retain a reputation as a prime location for appreciating views of St Paul's and the London skyline.

Sightlines of St Paul's – Map

