

Duty to Consult on Street Tree Removal: Decision

30a Burlington Avenue TW9 4DQ

This is a notification that this tree is to be RETAINED.

This decision meets the duty to consult and notify when removing street trees set out in Section 115 of the Environment Act 2021.

Summarised questions and answers to the 'Duty To Consult' street tree removal:

There were (13) responses to the consultation from 8 separate contributors, (6) contributors objected to the tree removal and (2) contributors supported the removal.

Objections:

1. Tree removal will result in the loss of eco-system services which has a negative environmental impact
A: The Council's focus is to safely manage and maintain the trees we have, with one of the Key Targets in our Climate Emergency Strategy being, to plant more trees. Consequently, we are fully committed to increasing the tree population within the borough of Richmond, which are a key element of our eco-services.
2. Tree related damage is not unique to this location, that such removal would set a precedent for many other street trees.
A: Council Arboriculturists and Highways Engineers carefully assess and evaluate every tree on a case-by-case basis, with tree retention always being our first priority. The Council does not approach tree management prescriptively and does not remove trees due to them being considered too large.
3. The presence of street trees provides beauty & nature and improves property values
4. Repairs to the affected wall have been completed meaning that tree loss is unnecessary
A: One of the reasons the Council maintains, and plants street trees is to help soften the urban setting. They provide a green backdrop and public visual amenity, providing a connection with our natural environment.

Our tree policy states.

"The presence of trees can increase the value of properties and make areas more inviting and attractive to prospective property owners".

However, when damage to neighbouring structures is proven, the council must consider these additional factors and act appropriately, subject to public consultation.

5. Alternative management options are available that will allow for tree retention
A: Not all tree species respond to pruning in the same way. Some species such as this Silver Birch do not respond well to extensive pruning in the way that say a London Plane tree would. Pruning Birch trees heavily places them under stress, which can lead to their untimely demise.

6. Root pruning on other trees has been undertaken elsewhere

A: Council Arboriculturists and Highways Engineers carefully assess and evaluate every tree on a case-by-case basis. Each tree, root system, soil and nearby structure is different, and a solution for one tree, would not necessarily be suitable for another.

We are unable to install root barriers in residential streets due to the number of underground pipes and cables that run into properties, as these break the barrier and allow roots to grow through again.

7. Trees benefit air quality and storm water management

A: The Council's Tree Policy 2023 states the following;

"Trees Play a role in reducing localised flooding: canopies intercept rainwater, reducing and interrupting the flow of water to ground level. Tree roots remove water from the soil and therefore act to reduce ground water levels following heavy rainfall."

"Tree canopies can intercept and trap pollution, including dust and particulate matter, helping to improve the quality of the air we breathe."

The Council is committed to planting and maintaining our street trees for these and many other important reasons.

Support:

1. The tree is too large and damaging property & pavement
2. Smaller trees need to be planted in this street

A: The Council does not approach tree management prescriptively and does not remove trees due to them being considered too large. However, with future planting, tree species selection will be informed by the prevailing site and environmental conditions.

In accordance with the Council tree policy 2023. Trees will only be removed where there is a risk to public safety or damage to property identified by a competent specialist arboriculturist, which cannot be remedied by pruning or by a suitable engineering solution.

Summary

The Council has considered all responses, and a decision has been made to RETAIN this tree.

However, should further damage occur, we may have to review this in the future, subject to our legal obligation to the Duty to Consult process, section 115 of the Environment Act 2021. This decision is without prejudice to any existing claims or claims that may arise in the future.

Should you disagree this decision, then you are able to do so through the Council's complaints procedure, details of which can be found here: https://richmond.gov.uk/make_a_complaint. However, the consultation period has closed.

For more information on how we manage and plant our trees, please visit our website:

www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/trees or contact us at: Trees@Richmond.gov.uk.

Tree Section
Parks & Open Spaces
Civic Centre
44 York Street
Twickenham, TW2 7PU

For information on Richmond's Duty to Consult on Street Tree removal, please scan this QR code or use the link below.

<https://haveyoursay.citizenspace.com/richmondec/s/richmondst-25/>

