

# Sight-lines of St Paul's and London from Waterlow Park

This document is the latest in a years-long debate about how to deal with maintaining a view of St Paul's from Waterlow Park which is threatened by the increasing height of the tree canopy. Refer particularly to 'The View of St Paul's from Waterlow Park' from the 30th March 2021 and 'AIA The View of St Paul's from Waterlow Park' from 16th June 2021

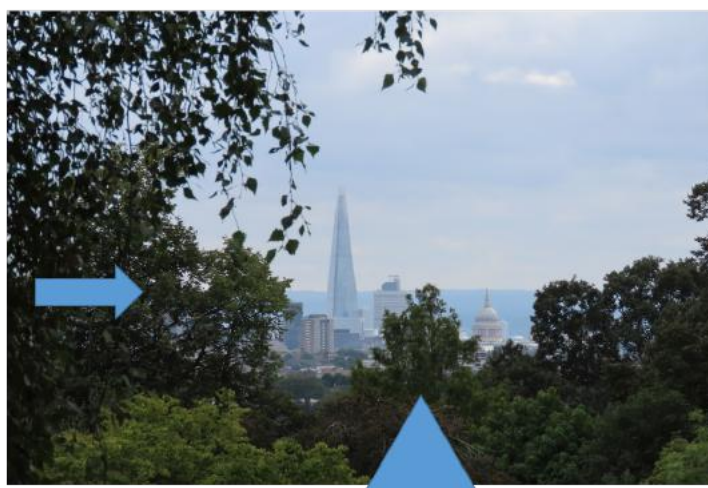
## Summary

The growth of a Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia*) by the lower pond ( 686 ) is such that in about 8 to 10 years it is anticipated any view of St Paul's from Waterlow Park will be lost. A proposal was therefore made to height reduce this tree along with a lime ( 568 ) to extend the skyline view. The AIA (Arboricultural Impact Assessment) examined what this might involve and pointed out the disadvantages of undertaking work to the Dawn Redwood.

A serious disadvantage to height reducing the Dawn Redwood is that the tree would be noticeably 'misshapen' and is in a prominent location. The Trees and Views group has re-considered the whole approach, had two further meetings (on the 13th July on Zoom and the 23rd September in person in the Park). This document proposes an alternative approach to preserving a view of St Paul's which involves significantly less tree work and has no impact on the Dawn Redwood. It is hoped that the existing AIA and the present proposal can be used as the basis for an agreement with the Trust and Camden Tree department for works to proceed.

## Current view of St Paul's

Lime → and *Metasequoia* ▲



Sept. 2021 view from path near statue

## Proposal

It is proposed to open a new viewpoint approx 11 meters further east along the path by the sculpture of Sir Sydney Waterlow when compared to the existing viewpoint of St Paul's



Sight-line of proposed new view (About 11 paces from current viewpoint)

St Paul's would be visible in the ringed area if the proposal is implemented. Standing at position 1. In the photo above it is still just possible to see St Paul's. At position 2. There is currently no view, but height reduction of the lime would see St Paul's revealed.

## Lime, left and *Metasequoia* right



From location 1. in previous slide

(From location 2 on the proposed sight-line the dome of St Paul's is behind the lime)



Back on the path at the position indicated in the map above it is obvious that it is not just the lime ( 568 ) obscuring St Paul's, but also the lower branches of a birch ( 100 ). Lifting the canopy by removing the lower branches would reveal the view. The lowest branches on the other side would also need to be removed for the tree to remain balanced. It is felt that such works would not have an especially noticeable impact on the tree and would not negatively affect it.

## Birch, remove lowest branches growing across the view of St Paul's



As well as minimising the intervention required to open this new viewpoint, a great further advantage is that it would significantly open the skyline view of London for people walking along the path. The photo below gives a good idea of this. The lime it is proposed to reduce is the tall tree near the centre of this photograph to the left of the Shard.

Crown reduction on the lime will need to be revisited approximately every three years to keep its height in check in future. The initial work and ongoing arboricultural interventions have not been costed, but will be a burden on a tight budget. It is hoped that the ongoing work will be minimal enough to be largely subsumed into the regular tree work in the park rather than a special visit. The initial work may be different in this regard. It is proposed to request a cost estimate from Camden and then to consult with TAG and the Friends to see if there is a way the cost might be accommodated. It must be recognised that if additional funds are not found, carrying out the work will reduce what is available to spend elsewhere.



*Winter view of skyline from the top path taken in 2018*

It is proposed that the lime be reduced to the level of lower trees, so a bit beneath the horizon as seen from the viewpoint we have identified. The hornbeam ( 63 on the opendata tree map ) in front of the lime is apparently 12 meters high. The lime might roughly match this. ( The lime is currently double that height at 24 meters according to Camden opendata ). If the lime were only reduced to the level of the horizon it would very quickly obscure St Paul's again, probably within the first year of work.

The Head Gardener and the committee of the Friends of Waterlow Park and others have been consulted about this proposal and it has met with universal approval. The Friends know from surveys that views are important to Park visitors and are especially keen that the view of St Paul's is not lost. It is worth noting too that Waterlow Park is in the fortunate position of enjoying a remarkable view of Christopher Wren's cathedral without there being a tall building behind. From Kenwood and Parliament Hill the angle of the view is such that the Shard and Guy's Hospital loom much larger above the dome. On a misty day it is in fact not possible to make out St Paul's from these locations, whilst it is still visible from Waterlow Park.