

Response from Waterlow Trees & Views group to AIA July 2021

Discussed in Zoom meeting 13th July at 4pm - IH, EW, AC, LL, PR, JD

The Trust has the responsibility to preserve and enhance the Park for public enjoyment, balancing the interests of all alongside proper concern for flora and fauna. Concern for biodiversity, sustainability and a sensitive approach to the multiple demands on the green space are key 'drivers' in decision making.

View

AIA

Dawn Redwood probably about 20m tall. Camden estimate 22m 2017

Other things

Beech

Planting

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---IH notes

re 3.1 There is currently no proposal to height reduce an oak so it is not really relevant. The oak that was considered for pollarding is in fact not the hollow oak, which is tree 672 in the report, but tree 651, another oak near the southern boundary on the Camden website at <https://opendata.camden.gov.uk/Environment/Trees-In-Camden-Map/p5w8-cdre>

re 9.3 Quoting a 2.4% public response rate re views is unrealistic as this was not a survey question but from spontaneous additional comments by some respondents. In respect of other spontaneous responses about other aspect of the Park not mentioned in the survey the response rate was 40%, but again this is not an especially useful measure.

re 10.3 we probably need to get some idea of cost of doing the initial height reduction as well as budgeting for some period of time subsequently. Ideas about how this might be funded would also be useful given this would be an additional call against annual budgets. The alternative would be to re-allocate funding, in which case some current provision or service would suffer.

re 10.4 It is unclear if Camden are asking for further evidence of public support for maintaining a key view. If so I imagine this would be possible to obtain via the Friends. Questions are however almost inevitably loaded; 'do you want to retain the view of St Paul's?' (likely 'yes'). 'Do you agree to the shape of two notable trees being altered as they are height reduce?' (possibly 'no'). 'Do you approve the reduction in carbon sequestration capacity in Waterlow Park?' (almost certainly 'no').

--PR notes

1. Public response - I agree, quoting the % is not helpful. This was not a scientific survey and as you point out, any questions trying to get to the bottom of it are inherently loaded. There is a 'common sense' angle here which is that the park is well known for its views and

one only has to walk there daily as I do, to see people regularly stopping to look and take pictures of the view over London. The only other thing I see people photographing that regularly are the blossom trees when they are in flower.

2. One cannot argue against the cost of the regular work that might be needed. Again this is a political decision of balancing the budget against the works that are needed to maintain the agreed upon amenity areas of the park to be supported.

3. Touching on the 'carbon impact' of the decision - again it is hard not to agree that the carbon impact would be negative. However it is very small. This could actually be easily off set by new planting in the area around the Redwood. Currently it is churned up by recent works and the area to the west of it has been 'fallow' for years. It contains a monoculture of one or two weed varieties in the summer and is empty in the winter. I would argue it has no amenity and very little biodiversity/carbon capture value. In truth it is a bit of an eyesore. Personally I would cut the Redwood down completely and replant the whole area (including probably 2-3 trees of low final height) in a way that would look attractive and provide a whole lot more carbon capture and biodiversity to the park, and would not incur the recurrent management costs of the tree reduction