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8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Greenscape chapter aims to guide the management of design related elements in the green open space in the Borough. It includes a section on trees which provides guidance on tree planting and related matters.

Public open space in the form of parks and other green space covers a third of the Borough. The green open spaces (rural, local and urban), islands and rivers are of great importance as wildlife habitats, and provide a range of both active and passive recreational activities. They also contribute in a major way to the character of the Borough, making it one of the most attractive in London. The intention of this chapter is to provide guidance on improving and reinforcing the existing character of spaces, and guide the creation of an appropriate and identifiable character where this is lacking. Consider recommendations in the DTLR Green Spaces Taskforce (May 2002) when improving open spaces.

The scope of this guide covers all open spaces managed by the local authority, but not the open spaces owned and managed by other organisations and agencies, including the Royal Parks Agency, for which management plans have been produced.

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8.2 CHARACTER AREAS AND OPEN SPACES

The Borough's open spaces can be loosely separated into 3 distinct character types, namely rural, suburban (local) and urban. These categorisations are a guide to the character of the open space or area. They are meant to assist with design related matters and should not be the only criteria for the choices made.

Others sections in this document that should be consulted include the sections on furniture, signage, lighting, detailing and the broader area based character assessments.

The Tree Strategy (1999), Appendix I, also expands on the strategic character area principles for residential, shopping centres, the river and open spaces and is a helpful guide to the character areas in the Borough.

The 3 distinct characters, namely rural, suburban (local) and urban, can be defined further into three 'types' of open space:

- Informal open space
- Parks
- Commons and Greens.

The section below suggests the most appropriate elements to be used in the various types of space (within the character areas) to reinforce existing character or to establish a new character where none exists or the current one is inappropriate.



Ham Lands



Old Deer Park

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RURAL

This character area typically contains low density residential development, with a semi-rural/village type quality. The elements that best define the rural character of the open space in the Borough include:

- White posts and railings
- Timber benches – Kensington or flat benches
- Timber bollards (natural finish)
- Timber signage bollards
- Finger and general signage – black text on a white background
- Footpath surface – Breedon gravel
- Vehicular traffic surface – Heritage sealed gravel.

The following open spaces in the Borough are regarded to have a rural character:

Informal open space (nature area) eg.

- Barn Elms, Barnes
- Leg of Mutton Reservoir, Barnes
- Ham Lands, Ham
- Petersham Meadows, Petersham.

Parks eg.

- Old Deer Park, Richmond
- Crane Park, Whitton.

Common/Greens eg.

- Barnes Common, Barnes
- Ham Common, Ham
- Ham Village Green, Ham
- Petersham Common, Petersham
- Pesthouse Common, Richmond
- Palewell Common, Sheen
- Sheen Common, Sheen.



Leg of Mutton Reservoir

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Barnes Green

SUBURBAN (LOCAL)

This character area contains low to medium density residential development, with some areas tending to be 'landscape' dominated with good quality tree stock, and other areas more semi-urban in character.

The elements that best define the local character of this type of open space in the Borough include:

- Timber benches – Kensington (rural/local) or timber and steel (local/urban)
- Dark green post (lighting etc.)
- Dark green fencing/railings (except on Greens and some riverside locations where the colour is to be white)
- Cast iron bollard (dark green/white)
- Cast iron signage bollard (dark green)
- Finger and general signage – reduced size with white text on a black background
- Footpath surface – Natratex/asphalt.

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Kneller Gardens



Twickenham Green

The following open spaces fall within the suburban character area:

Informal open space (nature area) eg.

- Beveree Wildlife site, Hampton
- Oak Avenue (cemetery), Twickenham.

Parks eg.

- Vine Road Rec, Barnes
- Carlisle Park, Hampton
- Hatherop Park, Hampton
- North Sheen Rec, North Sheen
- Raleigh Road, North Sheen
- Broom Road Rec, Teddington
- Grove Gardens, Teddington
- Udney Hall Gardens, Teddington
- Wades Lane, Teddington
- Cambridge Gardens, Twickenham
- Craneford Way, Twickenham
- Kneller Gardens, Twickenham
- Moormead Park, Twickenham
- Radnor Gardens, Twickenham

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- Moormead Park, Twickenham
- Heathfield Rec, Whitton
- Murray Park, Whitton.

Commons/Greens eg.

- Barnes Common and Green, Barnes
- Kew Green, Kew
- Mortlake Green, Mortlake
- Tangier Green, North Sheen
- Twickenham Green, Twickenham.

URBAN

This character area contains medium to high density mixed use (residential and retail) development, with areas of high value architecture and quality street scene.

The elements that best define the urban character of the open space in the Borough include:

- Timber benches – Kensington (rural/urban) or timber and steel (urban)
- Black post (may also be dark green according to area)
- Black fencing/railings (except on Greens and some riverside locations, where the colour is to be white)
- Cast iron bollard (black/grey/dark blue/white according to area)
- Cast iron signage bollard (black/grey/dark blue according to area)
- Finger and general signage – Reduced size with white text on a black background
- Footpath surface – York stone/granite sett.



St Mary Magdalene's Church



Champions Wharf

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The following open spaces can be regarded to have an urban character:

Informal open space/Churchyard eg.

- St Mary Magdalene's Church, Paradise Road, Richmond
- Vineyard Passage graveyard, Richmond.

Parks eg.

- Buccleugh Gardens, Richmond
- Richmond riverside (Three Pigeons to A316) including pocket parks, Richmond
- Terrace Gardens, Richmond
- Elmfield Gardens, Teddington
- Champions Wharf, Twickenham
- Garfield Road, Twickenham
- Holly Road Garden of Rest, Twickenham
- Twickenham Embankment/riverside, Twickenham
- York House Gardens, Twickenham.

Common/Greens (where rural elements exist they should be maintained) eg.

- Little Green, Richmond
- Richmond Green, Richmond.



Richmond Green

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Breedon gravel tree surround



Twickenham tree grille and guard

8.3 THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND THAMES STRATEGY

The Thames Landscape Strategy covers the River Thames and its setting from Hampton Court to Kew. The Thames Strategy covers the stretch from Kew to Chelsea. Each strategy has been agreed by the boroughs for use as Supplementary Planning Guidance. See the Riverscape section for more detailed guidance.

8.4 TREES

Planting

Ideally all trees should be planted between November and February. In any event planting work should take place no later than March. Adequate watering and maintenance should always be included in the planting specification.

Staking – Where there is a high risk of vandalism, a double high stake method should be used. In other areas shorter stakes should be sufficient. Underground guying is preferred for key sites.

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Twickenham grille



Royal grille

Details

Tree grilles (Shopping centre locations) – Twickenham grille (in Twickenham) and the Royal grille in other centre locations in the Borough. Grilles and guards should be removed if and when the tree outgrows them.

Guards – these can be used if bolted to a grille. The trunk of the tree needs to be clear of the guard. Where tree guards are used there should be a 150mm space at the bottom to allow for removal of litter:

Surrounds – Breendon gravel works well as a tree surround in less urban settings and more sensitive locations. Where tree roots are disturbing existing paving the paving of the surrounding area in Natratex sealed gravel has worked well. Localised build out of the footway has also on occasions been used to accommodate tree roots.

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TREES IN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

The Borough is notable for its major open spaces and the overall level of tree stock is high (Tree Strategy: 1999, para 2.2.0). The open spaces are often linked and make up well over half of the Borough. They are well treed and form an important element in strategic and local views and vistas. They include the landscape setting of the River Thames, the Royal Parks, common land and playing fields. Within the built-up area there are also many smaller open spaces, mostly treed or with potential for tree planting, such as parks, cemeteries, and the grounds of schools and colleges. It should be recognised that it is not always a good idea to plant trees wherever possible. There are sites where trees block views, or where a contrast with an adjoining heavily treed area may provide a better balanced townscape.

General principles

- Choose native species where possible
- Character – consider the character of the area when selecting tree species
- Interest – select trees that can bring year round interest, i.e. trees with attractive bark, blossoms, flowers or berries, and the use of evergreen species in appropriate locations
- Size – carefully consider the appropriate size of tree at maturity for the area
- Select new varieties of tree species that avoid some of the problems associated with these species in the past (i.e. dripping nectar, affected by pollution, drier conditions, pests or diseases, dropping limbs).



Staking

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Location

- Where trees could provide visual enhancement (shade, texture, colour), an entrance, landmark, local distinctiveness and create or open up views
- Where they could be useful to screen poor buildings, to soften the impact of traffic and parking, including forecourt parking and to shade open areas or car parks
- Where 'green links' need reinforcement or creation
- Where there are opportunities to create small areas of open woodland on open spaces. These are extremely valuable for wildlife
- Areas in the Borough where 'premium' trees could be used to reinforce the distinctive character and make an impact as a feature
- Areas where new development is proposed, and tree planting can enhance the ecological value, townscape value or distinctiveness of the site.

Choice of species

Care is needed over the choice of species. The Council will encourage the use of a distinctive range of species to reinforce or establish local character. Guidelines include:

- A wide palette of suitable native trees, preferably from British grown 'local' stock, taking account of adaptability to climate change
- Berry, fruit and nut bearing species to encourage wildlife
- Rare specimen trees in appropriate areas.



Reinforcing green links



Reinforcing distinctive character

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Well located street trees



Landmark tree

STREET TREES

The many green spaces, parks and gardens are a recognised asset, and an essential element in defining the character of the Borough. Street trees can also greatly assist in the greening of areas and provide both shade and visual interest.

General principles

- Choose native where possible
- Character – consider the character of the area when selecting tree species (i.e. is an avenue planting or a single tree specie appropriate)
- Size – consider the appropriate size of tree for the area. Large forest species are often unpopular with residents for reasons of shade or leaf-fall, but it is often forest trees which contribute most to the character of the townscape, and opportunities should be taken to plant such trees in suitable location
- Tree surround/guard – Breedon gravel is the preferred option for a tree surround. Cast iron tree surrounds should only be used in urban areas with narrow/constrained footways (see the section on Details above). Tree guards are generally not required unless in urban areas where young trees need extra protection.

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Enhance and preserve views

Location

Trees like any other item in the street have the potential to cause an obstruction, especially on narrow pavements, and can obscure sight lines if placed too near road junctions. Care must also be taken to ensure they do not obscure important buildings, views or street lamps.

Choice of species

It is generally accepted that the wider the road or space the larger the tree should be. However in the past trees have been planted that are unsuited to the location, because they are too large, resulting in heavy pruning and pollarding. London Planes have been used extensively in the Borough and where space permits, will reinforce the urban character of an area. The presumption will be for the largest tree appropriate for the location to be planted. In selecting trees consideration should also be given to planting native species, and enhancing the local ecology.

Where there is an established identity, and a specific tree species exists, every effort should be made to retain this identity and continue the established theme by planting with the same species.

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However the range is not wide enough for all locations. In some areas non-native is preferable, for example to emphasise the contrast between rural and urban, or as part of an historic landscape. For more in-depth advice and a comprehensive list of recommended tree species refer to the Tree Strategy (1999: para 2.2.5, 2.2.6 and Appendix A)

Christmas trees

Permanent traditional Christmas trees are not normally encouraged as they can look out of place during the rest of the year. Two alternative approaches that have been used successfully are:

- Lighting existing or new trees, planted for the purpose which relate to the townscape and landscape, rather than a traditional Christmas tree
- Seasonal Christmas trees mounted in a pit under the paving, which contains an electricity supply, or in a container removed after the holiday period.

Shrub planting

Shrub planting is expensive to maintain and may not look right in an urban street, and should generally be confined to open or formal spaces. Instant 'landscaping' and free standing planters will often only clutter up a street and attract litter. A well-designed street with co-ordinated surfaces, street furniture and appropriate tree planting should rarely require additional shrub planting. However, hanging baskets or window boxes can greatly add to the visual vitality of a street, provided the containers are suitably designed and sensitively located.



Shrub planting in an urban setting

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8.5 ISSUES

Raised planters and shrub planting in public places

Trees or shrubs in raised planters and shrub planting will not be encouraged generally. This is mainly due to long term maintenance issues. Raised planters and shrub planting in public spaces will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Issues relating to tree planting (See the Tree Strategy for more detail)

- Size – Avoid using trees with an inappropriate crown shape and size (i.e. a small, 'thin' tree in a large space can appear out of place, select larger 'forest' type species wherever appropriate)
- Avoid poor siting of trees (i.e. blocking or detracting from vistas, views or landmarks)
- Avoid selecting trees that do not contribute to the character of the area, or detract from the townscape or landscape
- Avoid some particular species/varieties of tree species with a history of problems (i.e. dripping nectar; affected by pollution, drier conditions, pests or diseases).



Raised planter problems