

The Landscape Institute and the Trees and Design Action Group



Championing the value of large trees in the urban environment

The environmental, economic and social benefits of trees are well documented. Members of The Landscape Institute routinely work to ensure that trees form an integral part of the urban landscape and public realm. However, the valuable contribution made by large-growing trees in particular is often compromised or precluded by negative perceptions relating to maintenance, nuisance or safety and associated costs.

The Role of the TDAG

The Landscape Institute is a member of the Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) - a multi-disciplinary group of individual professionals and organisations from both the private and public sectors who have come together under The London Tree and Woodland Framework to collaborate in achieving an increased awareness of the role of trees in the built environment. Other members of the TDAG are included in the list at the end of this document and further information is available at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/tdag>.

Whilst the TDAG's primary focus is on London, it is intended that the experience and actions arising from its work will be equally applicable to other cities and urban areas. The experience and research from other cities will likewise contribute to the actions of the TDAG.

The group shares the vision that the presence of trees and the benefits they bring, particularly those of larger-growing species, should be secured for future generations by influencing the planning, design, construction and management of our urban infrastructure and spaces. The TDAG is committed to creating the preconditions necessary for the essential connections and information exchange between all the relevant professionals and organisations.

The group believes that the role of all professionals involved in the planning, design, development and management of infrastructure, buildings and spaces is crucial in ensuring that trees can remain as essential and civilising components of life in towns and cities.

The number of trees planted, including those within new developments, is viewed as secondary to the quality and scale of the trees planted and their long term retention and management. It is the larger growing species of trees that confer the greatest benefit on the landscape of the city. In addition to their inherent aesthetic and biodiversity values, they provide a sense of place and stature that complements the scale of the built environment. Crucially in respect of climate change, large deciduous trees can play a vital role in the tangible physical benefits and comfort that they afford to buildings, streets and spaces. These include shelter, shade, windspeed and turbulence reduction, evapotranspiration cooling and air pollution filtration, thus mitigating the urban heat island effect and ameliorating local micro-climate effects.

Key Issues to be addressed by the TDAG

- Emphasising the environmental, social and economic value of trees, particularly in respect of addressing issues associated with climate change and quality of life capital
- Better collaboration between developers, designers, planners and occupiers on the improved integration of trees in development schemes
- Education to inform the public's perception of the value of trees
- Increasing awareness of the importance of providing for both new and existing trees and their long-term management with highway authorities, open space managers and utility service operators.
- Promoting evidence based research and responses to counter negative perceptions of problems associated with trees
- Disseminating best practice guidance within the construction and development industries, with particular emphasis on avoiding structural damage and subsidence problems.

The Landscape Institute and the TDAG

The Landscape Institute is represented on the TDAG by Ian Phillips CMLI, MRTPI. Ian is a member of Council and serves on the LI Policy Committee. Other members of The LI are also directly involved in the TDAG, including the chair, Martin Kelly FLI, a director of Capita Lovejoy.

The Landscape Institute supports the aims of the TDAG and its work in producing guidance and publicity aimed at fostering greater understanding and co-operation between different interests and organisations on urban tree planting and management issues.

Members of the TDAG include:

Forestry Commission / London Trees & Woodland Framework

Transport for London

Trees for Cities

The Tree Council

CABE Space

The Landscape Institute

London Parks & Green Spaces Forum

Royal Parks

London Tree Officers Association

GLA

City of London

City of Westminster

London Borough of Hackney

Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

Design for London

Urban Design London

+ representatives from developers and land owners; insurance companies; design consultancies; service and utility providers; research institutions and the nursery trade.

Further information is available from the TDAG website at

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/tdag>