

Soil Depth Telephone Conversations, 26 February and 6 March, 2018

26 February 2018

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Soil depth is a complex topic and 1 metre depth does not appear to be adequate to resolve all the issues especially the drainage ones.

TDAG has been part of a NERC study led by Dr Andy Hirons at Myerscough and Dr Henrik Sjoman in Sweden – and the outcome will be an online species selection guide on the TDAG website in late spring. Dr. Andy Hirons is also a tree root specialist.

Also talk to **Nick Miller** at Capita and the **Patrick Hegarty** at the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces Department and the Open Spaces Committee about the planning application for a basement at 10 Trinity in the City of London.

Nick should have the technical details and, I hope, they will be monitoring the garden. I will write to Patrick and ask about this as it could be a useful test case for this 'roof garden' tree planting which is what basements are creating!

I also consulted Dr **Glyn Percival** at Bartlett (gpercival@bartlettuk.com) He advised on planting depths of 1500-2000mm to also accommodate drainage if we wanted longevity.

Of course, the best thing would be not to have basements...as an architect I can see all kinds of future problems emerging!

26 February

Dr. Andrew D. Hirons, Senior Lecturer in Arboriculture at University Centre Myerscough.

Tree roots are often found beyond a depth of 1 metre. Soil volume is key to achieving a good quality rooting environment and species such as oak can have a water requirement of 100 litres per day, necessitating a soil volume of 10 cubic metres or more and, on average 20 to 30 cubic metres of soil per tree, with an open surface to enable oxygenation of the soil.

26 February

Patrick Hegarty, Technical Manager, City of London Corporation Open Spaces Department
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The City of London were concerned that the basement application at 10 Trinity would cause Seething Lane Gardens to become a "roof garden", unable to provide for trees to survive for a lifespan of 100 years. The City were keen to avoid a cycle in which trees are felled every 40 years or so because they have out-grown the site. Seething Lane Gardens (above

which the basement was to be sited) had historically accommodated large canopy trees and the City were keen to ensure that such trees could be planted in replacement of those felled, and mature to an age of 100 years becoming veterans.

6 March

Nicholas Miller, Senior Associate at Capita Real Estate and Infrastructure
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Nick had been the landscape consultant to the 10 Trinity development.

Seething Lane Garden had accommodated 50 to 60 mature trees. Capita were engaged to ensure that a replacement garden could provide for replacement structural trees to live for 100 years. To enable this, a soil depth of two metres was specified.

A soil depth of one metre is inadequate for large canopy species to survive for this period of time and is sufficient only for shrubs, cherry trees and multi-stemmed species. Trees such as oak require a significant depth of soil. Adequate mitigation measures must be insisted on to retain habitat.

Following the Plan Health Check, Nick (or Martin Kelly, Chair of TDAG and Land Planning Director at Capita) would be happy to look at the BGI Policy and advise on strengthening the policy. Capita also employs planning specialists and it is likely that advice could be provided in a few hours of consultant time. Daily rates range between £600 (eg Nick) and £800 (eg Martin Kelly).

Martin chaired the Landscape and Urban Design workshop for the Farrell Review into Architecture and the Built Environment undertaken at the request of the Government.