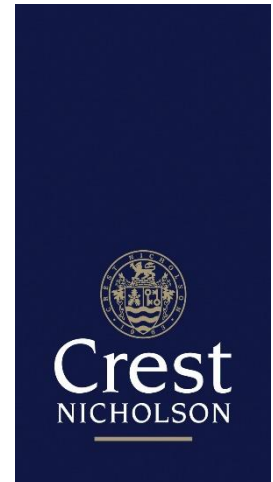


London Chest Hospital

Mulberry Tree FAQs



1. How old is the Mulberry Tree?

Popular opinion has it that the Mulberry Tree dates from 1650 and is the oldest mulberry tree in the East End. However, on 5th October 2017 a ground penetrating radar (GPR) and TROBI aging analysis investigation of the tree was undertaken. The results of this survey provide non-invasive confirmation that the Mulberry Tree is rooting in a shallow upper band of made ground, post-dating the completion of the former London Chest Hospital, placing the planting date at sometime after 1855.

2. Why can't you just build around the tree rather than relocating it?

The site is extremely constrained with the grade II listed main hospital building and perimeter trees dictating the layout and design of the development, preventing leaving the Mulberry Tree in its current location. Furthermore, the historical trauma to the Mulberry Tree, including its bombing in WW2, is well documented. Given this historical trauma and the increasing fragility of the tree and the roots, the proposed relocation of the Mulberry Tree to the heart of the front lawn and away from the main building works will provide a better environment in which the Mulberry Tree can flourish and be accessed and enjoyed by the public.

The Mulberry Tree is currently rooted in shallow ground and surviving on a declining and poor condition root base making it increasingly unstable and unsustainable in its current location.

3. Doesn't the High Court decision mean you can't relocate it?

No.

Permission was granted for works to the Mulberry Tree and the relocation of the Mulberry Tree on 7 April 2017.

In May 2017, the parties to the High Court matter mutually consented to the quashing of that permission for procedural reasons, namely that when granting the permission London Borough of Tower Hamlets had given insufficient reasons as to why it was granting the permission.

The High Court decision was purely procedural and did not determine the age of the Mulberry Tree nor did it give a view on the evidence placed before the court by the party that pursued the challenge.

The High Court decision does not prevent the future relocation of the Mulberry Tree. However, if the Mulberry Tree is to be relocated then we will need to apply for the appropriate permission to do so from London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

4. What will happen to the Mulberry Tree?

We are intending to relocate the Mulberry Tree to the front lawn of the redeveloped site. Crest Nicholson are committed to looking after the tree in its new location and a long term management strategy will be implemented to safeguard its survival.

The soils in the front lawn will provide the Mulberry Tree with much better ground in which to take root and will also put the Mulberry Tree in a much more publicly visible and accessible location, for the enjoyment of the wider local community.

In addition, we have taken cuttings from the Mulberry Tree which are currently being tended to in a tree nursery. We will be replanting these cuttings both on the site and in the local community whilst working with local schools and community groups to secure the most appropriate, sustainable and viable locations.

5. Are all of the trees being removed?

No. There are a significant number of trees on the Chest Hospital site, many of which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders. The vast majority of trees are being retained and more are being planted. It is anticipated that we will be planting 22 additional semi-mature trees and 20 ornamental trees within the site boundary. The proposals also increase the amount of soft ground on site, (previously hardstanding or building footprints) by 37%.