



Elmbridge
Borough Council

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Esher Common South: Shelter belt development plan

Following the forestry works on Esher Common during the winter of 2015/16, the 30m strip adjacent to the south side of the A3 has been cleared to allow the area to regenerate into a screening shelter belt (see figure 1). The 30m zone has been cleared of vegetation with and the lop and top moved into a bund along the boundary with the A3.

Fig 1.



The intention is to create a shelter belt similar to the one which exists on the North side of the A3 (figure2). This will be managed in lines with Elmbridge Borough Council's English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) management plan. This EWGS management plan is a 25 year programme in line with Forestry Commission best practice. As part of this plan thinning works were also

carried out on Esher Common over the winter which ensured the whole project was cost neutral once the reinstatement works were completed.

Fig 2.



Prior to the clearance for the shelter belt and as part of the Esher Commons SSSI Restoration and Management Plan, a line of holly was planted to allow for the establishment of their root system. It is anticipated that development of the shelter belt will be through natural regeneration utilising the existing seed bank. The development of the shelter belt will depend on a number of factors:

- How easily new trees will establish in cleared area.
- Survival of existing plantings root systems – holly ,existing small trees shrubs within the shelter belt.
- Natural grazing by deer, rabbits etc.
- Forthcoming weather conditions during 2016.
- Mix of trees and shrubs (species types) that grow within the designated area.

Based on growth rates on the north side of the A3 which was established around 2001/02, see figure 2, we have seen growth rate for:

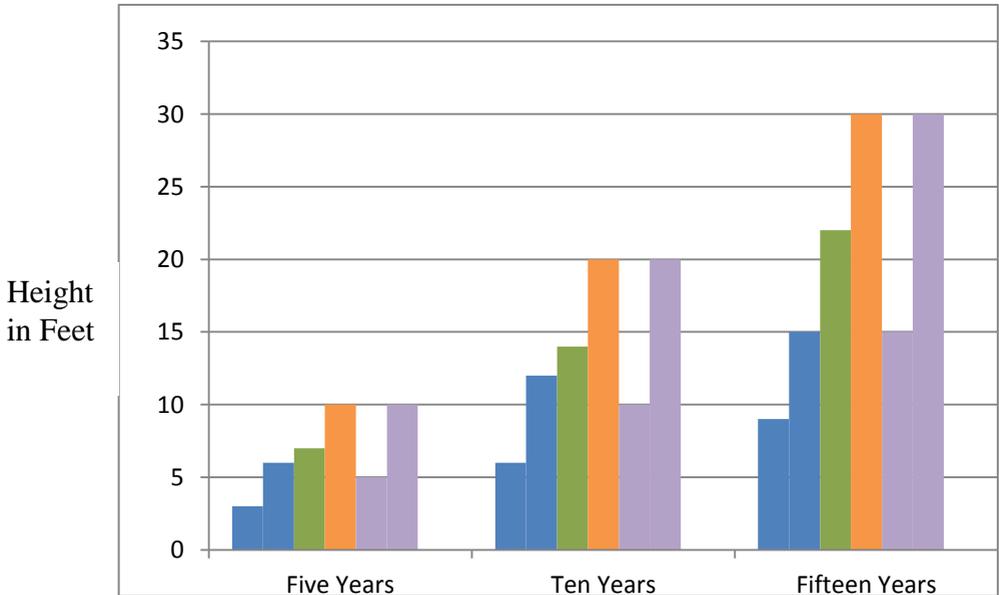
Holly 3-6 ft at 5years, 6-12 ft at 10 years and 9 to 15 ft at 15 years

Cherry 7ft at 5 years, 14 ft at 10 years and 22 ft at 15 years

Birch 10ft at 5 years, 20 ft at 10 years and 30 ft at 15 years

Scots pine has an average growth rate of 1 to 2 ft per year depending on the conditions.

Trees average growth rates



Key

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|--------|---|-------|---|-----------|
|  | Holly |  | Cherry |  | Birch |  | Scot Pine |
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As per the conditions laid out by the Forestry Commission felling licence, we are required to restock the shelter belt by natural regeneration to a minimum of 1600 trees per hectare composed of Scots Pine 40%, Birch 45% and Other Tree species 15 % by the winter of 2019/20.

The felled area along the A3 is approximately 4.5ha and so this means there needs to be a minimum of 7200 trees across the whole of the cleared area over a five year period. This will be monitored and evaluated by the Forestry Commission to ensure Elmbridge Borough Council comply with the licence granted.

Based on the data collected in the course of the 2001/2 works carried out along the A3 and given the width of the area, we anticipate the plants/trees to grow to the following average heights: between 3 to 10 feet after 5 years
between 6 to 20 feet after 10 years
between 9 to 30 feet after 15 years

These will be dependent on all the factors listed above and the type of trees that regenerate.

An assessment will be undertaken on the autumn of 2016 to establish the natural restocking levels, and if these fall below our obligations to the Forestry Commission additional planting will be undertaken.

For more information, please contact the Countryside Team on 01372 474 568.