

1690 Parker Piece – Tree Planting Proposal

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Summary

We are proposing to plant 33 trees on Parker's Piece this winter. The trees will be planted along the boundaries with Parkside (14 trees), Regent's Terrace (16 trees) and the University Arms (3 trees). An A3 plan of the proposed planting location can be found at the end of this report (Figure 9).

By planting new trees on the Piece, we are aiming to achieve:

1. The creation of more diverse microclimates (sun, half-shade, shade) through planting a diversity of tree species (Figure 1).
2. A succession to the 27 Parkside limes (planted in 1863) in anticipation of their decline.
3. An increase in tree canopy cover and potential for long-term ecosystem service delivery.



Figure 1

Background

Trees deliver various benefits to people, including cooling, UV protection, pollution amelioration and stormwater attenuation. In addition, research supports the health and well-being benefits of trees. Council policy is to increase tree cover to protect and enhance the continued delivery of these ecosystem services and consider tree cover a nature-based solution to many of the adverse impacts of a changing climate. The policy also dictates that we plant large, long-lived tree species where it is appropriate to do so. These trees deliver exponentially far greater ecosystem services in proportion to their size than do smaller trees. As asset managers, we have a duty to ensure the continuation of treescapes. This is especially important where heritage trees such as the row of limes along Parkside are involved. Parker's Piece is situated in Market ward has a lower-than-average canopy cover at 14.8%¹. The average is 17.1%, ranging from 12.8% to 22.6%, and ranks 10th out of 14 wards.

The desire to plant more trees on Parker's Piece was raised in 2019 by a group of concerned residents who surveyed local opinion in January 2020. Of the 437 respondents, 93% were in favour of seeing more trees planted.

This proposal is the culmination of these two community and strategic drivers.

Consultation and decision-making framework

Consultation procedures for tree works and the decision-making protocols are set out in *Part 2, Section 3.2.3 (Communicating Our Tree Work Schedules and Consultation Procedures) of the Citywide Tree Strategy 2016-2026*. There are three levels to how we communicate our tree works to the public:

¹ <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/tree-data>

1. **Notification** – for all matters relating to health and safety where prompt action is required. Comment is invited, but the decision is delegated at an officer level.
2. **Public scrutiny** – for all matters having a significant impact on the environment, where there is no other practicable alternative being offered. Scrutiny of the Officers' decision-making process is offered. The relevant Executive Councillor makes any final decision.
3. **Open consultation** – for all matters where there are, there are realistic alternatives to the recommended proposal. The relevant Executive Councillor makes any final decision.

The proposal involves new planting locations that will significantly impact the landscape and avenue management implications. There are options to do all, or part(s), or none of the proposal. Therefore, it falls under the 'open consultation' protocols:

1. Ward Councillors will have an opportunity to comment for 10 working days before the proposal being made public.
2. After that, the public will be consulted for at least 10 working days.
3. If any objections received cannot be resolved by Officers, the relevant Executive Councillor would make the final decision. In reaching a final decision, the following factors will be considered by the Executive Councillor:
 - a. The amenity value of the tree(s) and the likely impact of the proposal on the area's amenity.
 - b. Whether or not the proposal is justified, regarding the reasons put forward in support/against it.

Project timelines

- Internal officer final consultation: Monday 21st June – Friday 2nd July.
- Ward councillor consultation Monday 5th July – Friday 16th July.
- Public consultation Monday 19th July – Sunday 8th August.
- The final decision by Friday 13th August.
- [Tree pits works September/ October.]
- [Tree planting December to March.]

The existing treescape

There are 88 trees currently growing along the boundaries of the Piece. They are inspected proactively on a 3-year cycle and reactively when needed. Management is one of minimal tree work, except where necessary for safety reasons. Removal of basal growth, deadwood, low hanging branches, along with clearing buildings, are our standard interventions.

The Parkside boundary

There are 27 fine examples of the common lime tree (shown in red in Figure 2). They were planted in 1863, making them 158 years old and thought to be the cultivar 'Pallida'², giving them their distinctive upright shape. All are at their mature dimensions and in good condition. During the recent dry summers, the trees have exhibited significant drought stress. Severe drought stress can significantly harm mature trees and shorten their lives. There is a great deal of uncertainty around the safe, useful life expectancy, but there is a high probability that specimens will be lost and reduced in size over the next 30 years.

The Gonville Place boundary

22 trees, of which 19 are Caucasian lime³ planted in the 1980s to replace elm trees removed due to Dutch Elm Disease⁴. Caucasian lime (shown in green in Figure 2) is a slow-growing but long-lived tree. Trees have attained approximately half their mature height of that will around 18m. All appear in good condition. Mature specimens can be seen along Mowbray Road⁵ and Queens Road⁶.

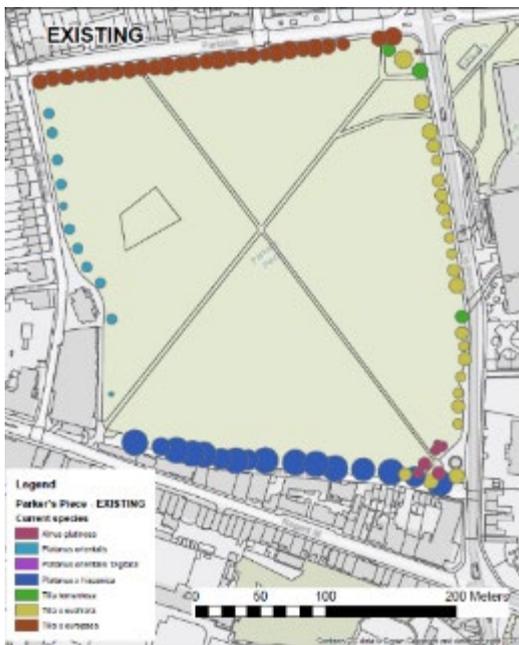


Figure 2

Regents Terrace boundary

18 trees, mainly consisting of London plane⁷ (shown in dark blue in Figure 2) in early maturity. As with the Caucasian limes they were planted to replace elms in the 1980s. They are considerably larger in size than the limes and are currently around 2/3rds of their mature size (~25m). This tree line is characterised by variation in canopy form, leaf shape, bark texture,

² Species profile [Tilia x europaea 'Pallida'](https://www.vdberk.co.uk/species-profiles/tilia-x-europaea-pallida/) | Tilia x europaea 'Pallida' - Van den Berk Nurseries (vdberk.co.uk)

³ Species profile [Tilia x europaea 'Euchlora'](https://www.vdberk.co.uk/species-profiles/tilia-x-europaea-euchlora/) | Crimean linden, Caucasian linden - Van den Berk Nurseries (vdberk.co.uk)

⁴ [Dutch Elm Disease \(Ophiostoma novo-ulmi\)](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/dutch-elm-disease/) - Woodland Trust

⁵ [76 Mowbray Road](https://www.google.com/maps/place/76+Mowbray+Road) - Google Maps

⁶ [VR World](https://www.google.com/maps/place/VR+World) - Google Maps

⁷ Species profile [Platanus x acerifolia](https://www.aranya.co.uk/species-profiles/platanus-x-acerifolia/) (aranya.co.uk)

and irregular planting distances between each tree, giving the line a more informal feel than the other three rows of trees on the Piece.

Park Street boundary

10 trees, consisting of oriental plane (c.v. Digitata)⁸ (shown in light blue in Figure 2). These trees are all clonal in form and planted around 2009. They are currently about one-third of their mature size, which can grow to 25m in height.

Details of the proposal.

The Parkside boundary



Figure 3

14 elm trees (light green in Figure 3) to be planted 11m in front of alternate mature limes and in line with an existing semi-mature lime (blue star in Figure 3).



Figure 4

The planting design is formal. Trees will be equally spaced (at ~18m) and planted in a straight line. The new plantings will succeed the lime trees providing a visual presence as the limes decline. The wider spacing has several advantages over replicating the original planting density. It allows flexibility in the future management of the lime trees and an avenue to be created. As these limes go into decline and specimens

are removed, an option can be made to remove alternate trees (Figure 4 – red starred) and develop an even-aged row of trees that would form a staggered avenue with the elms. The lower planting density increases views into and out of the park, creating a more open feel that addresses safety concerns.

⁸ Species profile [Platanus orientalis 'Digitata' | Platanus orientalis 'Digitata' - Van den Berk Nurseries \(vdberk.co.uk\)](http://vdberk.co.uk)

The elm cultivar of choice is 'New Horizon'⁹. It is a robust, fast-growing tree that will reach over 20m in height at maturity, thereby adding to the city's population of large, long-lived trees with a secure future. It is resistant to Dutch Elm Disease and has been chosen to reintroduce this species back onto the Piece after its demise in the 1980s due to this disease. It will also add diversity to an already lime and plane dominated tree mix adding additional resilience to this treescape from any future adverse climatic or biotic pressures.

Regents Terrace end

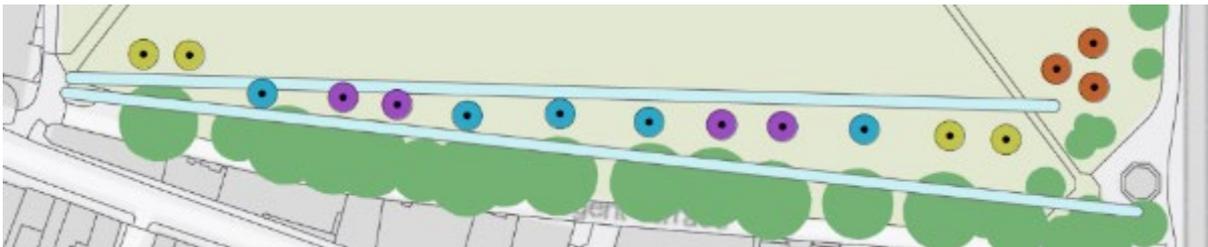


Figure 5

16 trees are to be planted. There is a mixture of 5 different species, which will increase the resilience of the treescape. They include a mixture of small, medium and large species of trees. Species include:

⁹ Species profile [Ulmus 'New Horizon' | Ulmus 'New Horizon' - Van den Berk Nurseries \(vdberk.co.uk\)](https://www.vdberk.co.uk/ulmus-new-horizon/)

- 4 Foxglove trees (light green in Figure 5)¹⁰
- 5 Weeping silver limes (cv Brabant) (light blue in Figure 5)¹¹
- 4 Hackberry trees (purple in Figure 5)¹²
- 3 Yoshino cherry trees (red in Figure 5)¹³

While the individual species in the mixture are primarily grouped together, they will not be planted at regular spacing or in a straight line. This will add to the already informal feel created by the existing plane trees. The trees will be planted between 15 to 20m from the Regents Terrace boundary and at least 2m away from the Hobson Conduit and Granta cable utility line (light blue in Figure 5) to ensure access for maintenance.



Figure 6

The aim is to increase shade provision at this end of the Piece, allowing more people to enjoy this space in hot sunny conditions (as illustrated in Figure 6). However, the prominent flowers of both the cherry and foxglove will add the Piece's visual amenity too.

New meadow areas under the existing plane tree canopies to enhance amenity and biodiversity. The shade from these trees means they will be managed as spring meadows and be mown from early summer.

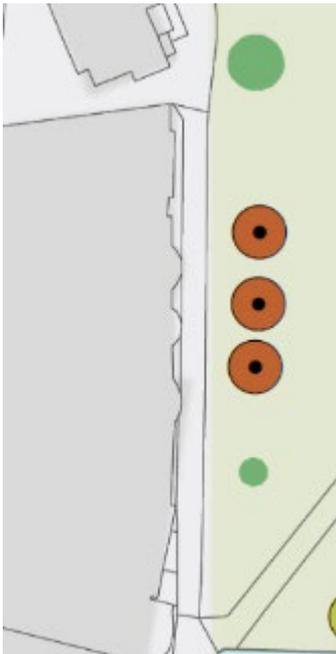
¹⁰ Species profile [Paulownia tomentosa | Paulownia, Foxglove tree - Van den Berk Nurseries \(vdberk.co.uk\)](https://www.vdberk.co.uk/species-profile/paulownia-tomentosa)

¹¹ Species profile [Tilia tomentosa 'Brabant' | Tilia tomentosa 'Brabant' - Van den Berk Nurseries \(vdberk.co.uk\)](https://www.vdberk.co.uk/species-profile/tilia-tomentosa-brabant)

¹² Species profile [Celtis australis | Hackberry, Southern nettle tree - Van den Berk Nurseries \(vdberk.co.uk\)](https://www.vdberk.co.uk/species-profile/celtis-australis)

¹³ Species profile [Prunus x yedoensis 'Shidare-yoshino' | Prunus x yedoensis 'Shidare-yoshino' - Van den Berk Nurseries \(vdberk.co.uk\)](https://www.vdberk.co.uk/species-profile/prunus-x-yedoensis-shidare-yoshino)

University Arms



3 ornamental Yoshino cherries (shown red in Figure 7) to be planted between and in front of the hotel on either side of the bay windows (orange stars in Figure 8) of the University hotel. These ornamental cherries are small in stature at maturity (<8m) but broad spreading with a stunning flower display in spring. These plantings are proposed to increase the visual amenity of the Piece.

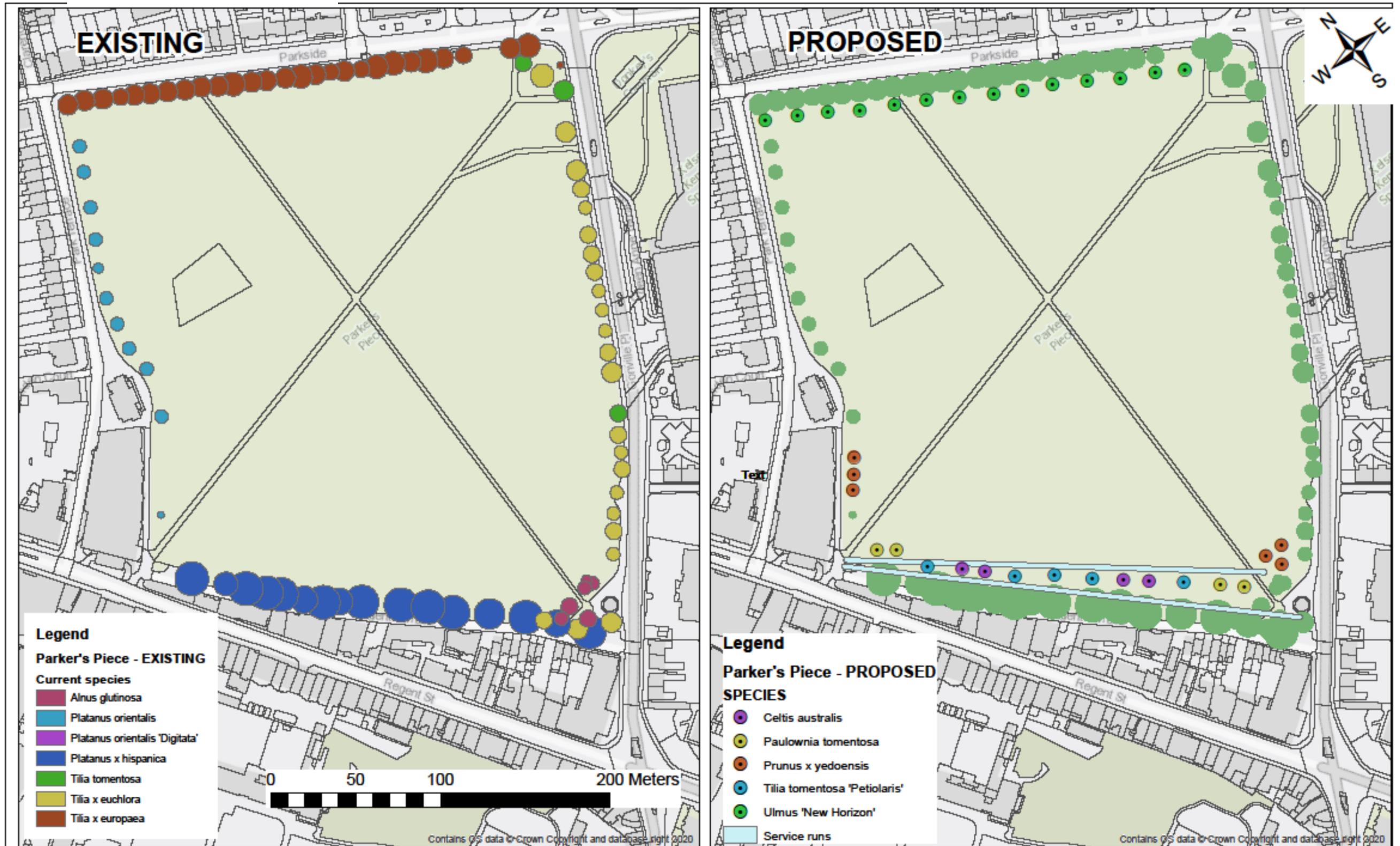
Figure 7



Figure 8¹⁴

¹⁴ Background photo [University Arms Hotel, Cambridge | R G Carter Construction \(rgcarter-construction.co.uk\)](https://www.rgcarter-construction.co.uk)

Figure 9



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PROPOSAL FOR TREE PLANTING AT PARKERS PIECE (ref 1690)

Date:	18 June 2021
Produced by:	TreeTeam
Scale:	1:2,000 @A3

