

# 3

## VICTORIA PARK TREE WALK

### Avenue Perimeter Walk

#### *Opening times*

The park is open every day except Christmas Day 7.00 am to dusk. Please be aware that closing times fluctuate with the seasons. The specific closing time for the day of your visit is listed on the park notice boards located at each entrance.

Toilets are opened daily, from 10.00 am until one hour before the park is closed.

#### *Getting to the park*

Bus: 277 Grove Road, D6 Grove Road,  
8 Old Ford Road

Tube: Mile End, Bow Road, Bethnal Green

DLR: Bow Church

Rail: Hackney Wick (BR North London Line)



Victoria Park was London's first public 'park for the people'. Designed in 1841 by James Pennethorne, it covers 88 hectares and contains over 4,500 trees.

Trees are the largest living things on the planet and Victoria Park has a variety of interesting specimens, many of which are as old as the park itself. Whatever the season, as you stroll around take time to enjoy their splendour, whether it's the regimental design of the formal tree-lined avenues, the exotic trees from around the world or, indeed the evidence of the destruction caused by the great storm of 1987 that reminds us of the awesome power of nature.

The Avenue Perimeter Walk is one of three Victoria Park tree walks devised by Tower Hamlets Council. We hope you enjoy your visit, if you have any comments or questions about trees please contact the Arboricultural department on 020 7364 7104.

For general parks enquiries please contact 020 7364 5000 or email: [parks@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:parks@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## Avenue Perimeter Walk

Approximate time required: 65–75 minutes

Distance: approximately 2.9 miles

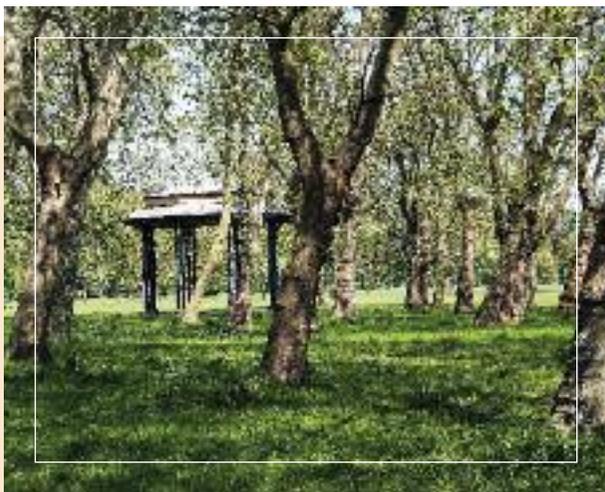
This is the longest walk in the park. It concentrates more on the history and design concepts of planting, rather than individual trees. There are no labels on this walk, please follow the map.

### Accessibility

Most of this route is accessible for users of wheelchairs and motorised scooters. The bandstand clump (9) is located within grassland but an even pathway to Royal Gates can be used as an alternative.

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>1</b> The Holly Clump    | <b>7</b> Northern Drive 1              |
| <b>2</b> Southern Drive 1   | <b>8</b> Northern Drive 2              |
| <b>3</b> Southern Drive 2   | <b>9</b> Bandstand Clump               |
| <b>4</b> Southern Drive 3   | <b>10</b> Northern Drive (Shore Place) |
| <b>5</b> Pinetum            | <b>11</b> Southern Drive West          |
| <b>6</b> Victoria Park Road |  |





### 1 *The Holly Clump*

#### **Holly** (*Ilex species*)

This area was first planted as a clump in 1857 and was later added to. It is thought that Holly was originally used as an understory shrubbery planting which was common in Victorian schemes.

### 2 *Southern Drive 1*

#### *Terrace Gate to Gunmaker's Gate*

#### **London Plane** (*Platanus x hispanica*)

Planted prior to 1920 this majestic plane tree avenue has reached maturity. Notice the regimental spacing used in the avenue plantings, common in Victorian times. A noticeable gap exists between avenues 2 and 3. This area, known as Gunmaker's Gate, suffered extensively in the great storms of 1987 and 1990. Replacement trees were replanted along historical lines in 1993. You can appreciate the designer's concept and vision when you compare the existing plantings with the flat terrain now visible on both sides of the avenue. See how the use of these large scale trees helps to soften the surrounding landscape.

### 3 *Southern Drive 2*

#### *Gunmaker's Gate to St Mark's Gate*

#### **London Plane** (*Platanus x hispanica*)

This avenue was planted in 1919–1920. As well as being visually pleasing, trees are planted in avenues to provide shelter from wind, rain and the sun. Note the difference in daylight that penetrates the single sided avenue, as opposed to the double sided avenue that follows.

### 4 *Southern Drive 3*

#### *St Mark's Gate to Molesworth Gate*

#### **London Plane** (*Platanus x hispanica*)

As you walk along this double sided avenue, planted before 1870, you can see how the canopies knit together to form a shady tunnel-like effect. The stone shelters were once part of the original London Bridge before it was dismantled and taken to America. Notice how regimental spacing between the trees helps to accentuate the curve of the carriageway.



### 5 *Pinetum*

Although evergreen species were widely used by the Victorians, a pinetum (which is a collection of pine trees) was never incorporated into the park's original design. In 1990 it was decided that this area should be set aside for this purpose. The plantings have since been added to.

### 6 *Victoria Park Road*

#### **London Plane** (*Platanus x hispanica*)

A planted single line avenue marking the boundary to the park. This is the tallest of all the park's avenues and was planted in the late 1800s. Note how the period properties in Victoria Park Road and the park's avenue of trees complement each other visually.

### 7 *Northern Drive 1*

#### **London Plane** (*Platanus x hispanica*)

A double sided avenue planted in the late 1800s. Only a few of the original trees remain with new plantings being prominent. The damage caused by the 1987 storm was extensive and the majority of trees in this section were lost. The misshapen canopies of those that survive are a stark reminder of the powers of nature.

8

### Northern Drive 2

#### London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*)

Planted in the late 1800s this avenue was another addition to the park's original layout. The three rows of trees are an excellent example of close planting, with the spacing between trees almost regimental in design. This was a popular landscape concept used in Victorian times.

9

### Bandstand Clump

#### London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*)

This clump originated in the 1840s and was part of the park's initial design. Clump plantings were common and normally planted with a shrubbery understory. Note the different growth habit adopted by these London Plane trees compared with avenue plantings and free standing specimens of the same species.

10

### Northern Drive (Shore Place)

An avenue of Holly (*Ilex species*) and Indian Bean Trees (*Catalpa bignonioides*). These trees were not part of the original planting design but are a welcome ornamental feature.

11

### Southern Drive West

#### Lime species (*Tilia x europaea/ platyphyllos 'Rubra'*)

An avenue of semi-mature Lime trees first planted in 1985 under the GLC (Greater London Council). The plantings were extended in 1991 along the lake edge to the cafeteria.

### In General

The park is 88 hectares in size and provides a number of active and passive facilities. The tree species that you will encounter on this walk are as follows:

#### Lime (*Tilia x europaea/platyphyllos 'Rubra'*)

A large tree planted for shade and ornament commonly found in England and north western Europe. Fragrant yellow flowers open in early July against a backdrop of green glossy leaves. Limes are also noted for their production of numerous suckers (basal growth) and secretion of honey dew from resident aphid infestations.

#### London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*)

A large tree commonly found in the streets, parks and gardens of central and western Europe. This species is known for its flaking bark and pollution-tolerance. Within Victoria Park there are good examples of where London Plane trees have been planted as individual specimens and in avenues and clumps.

#### Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

A medium sized native evergreen tree/shrub. Commonly used in Victorian planting schemes for ornament, shelter and understory planting. This species is known for its winter berries and use within Christmas festivities. Other characteristics include smooth grey bark, prickly foliage and hard fine grained wood which is used in wood turning.

#### Indian Bean Tree (*Catalpa bignonioides*)

A medium sized ornamental tree, widely planted in Europe but native to North America. Prominent features of the species include large light green leaves, white flowers in June/July and hanging bean type fruits which turn brown in the Autumn.

