

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE

LONDON PALLING

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Source: *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (MAR 2012), p. 24

Published by: American Society of Landscape Architects

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44795190>

Accessed: 11-08-2021 08:54 UTC

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➤ Yet, the trees are now almost 40 years older, and some people say there is justification for taking them down. Richard Guy Wilson, the chair of UVA's Department of Architectural History, says that the magnolias' placement near the Rotunda runs counter to Jefferson's "stand up and stand out" philosophy for buildings. Jefferson preferred that a building be positioned above all other surrounding elements, with the sky prominent behind it. Wilson believes that even though Jefferson admired trees and wanted them to be part of the landscape, the current magnolias are too burdensome. "I don't think he would have liked trees so close to the building and overpowering it," he says.

The magnolias are also in poor physical shape. Believed to have been planted around 1920, several of the trees have steel cables holding them together at the crown, says K. Thomas Lawson, a local certified arborist who inspected the magnolias for LAM in early January. Lawson says that three of the trees should have been removed 10 or 15 years ago. Other issues, including deadwood throughout the trees and dieback near the tops of them, also warrant removal, he says. "They've basically outgrown their area, and they're too close to the building. They're too close to the walkway, and they're kind of dangerous."

At the time of this writing, Michael Strine, UVA's executive vice president and chief operating officer, said that discussions with contractors about the roof renovation and magnolias were still going on, and the university leadership would make sure that all stakeholders were kept informed about the next steps. But the \$4.69 million project to replace the Rotunda's roof, part of a \$50.6 million renovation plan for UVA's campus, is expected to forge ahead regardless of the protest. ●



LONDON PALLING

MAYOR BORIS JOHNSON WANTS TO SPRAY AWAY POLLUTION.

BY WILLIAM UNDERHILL

Walking alongside the streets of central London brings unseen dangers. Official figures suggest that the capital's poor air quality may be responsible for more than 4,000 premature deaths a year. One major source of concern is tiny particles, known as PM₁₀s, in the exhaust fumes produced by the city's diesel-powered taxicabs and buses, which are blamed for increasing the risk of strokes and heart problems.

That's why the city's mayor, Boris Johnson, is backing a maverick remedy: "sticking" the toxic pollutants to the roadway. As part of continuing trials, major pollution hot spots in the capital are sprayed several times a week in the early morning with calcium magnesium acetate, a combination of dolomitic lime and acetic acid in water, which helps keep the sooty particles at ground level and away from the lungs of pedestrians. The mix, sprayed from specially adapted gritting trucks, is biodegradable, and only tiny amounts are needed.

London, which will host the Olympic Games this summer, is already feeling the benefit, according to the city authorities. Early trials of the system—also tested in some other European cities—have shown that it can reduce pollution by up to 15 per-

cent. "We have scoured the globe to find new ways to tackle pollution and found this wonderful contraption that tackles air quality head-on, sticking particles to the road surface and preventing their dastardly escape back into the air we breathe," says Johnson.

Many environmentalists are far less impressed. One of the neighborhoods targeted is used to collect pollution data for the European Union, and some claim that the mayor is just trying to avoid fines for failing to meet air quality standards. The spraying has a very limited effect, says Simon Birkett of the Campaign for Clean Air in London, and the \$1.4 million cost of the initiative would be better spent on fitting more of London's buses with filters that trap the PM₁₀s. "This is worse than greenwashing," Birkett says. "Anything that offsets pollution once it is already in the atmosphere is unsound. You have to put your money into tackling the pollution at [its] source." ●

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