

Published May 2014

The aim of this guide is to set out for everyone involved in the development process the standards and level of information that the National Park Authority expects in relation to trees on sites proposed for development.

The Importance of Trees on Development Sites

Trees bring considerable benefits to a finished development. Even one or two mature trees can greatly enhance the character and interest of a finished development. Trees also reduce noise and air pollution, provide a variety of wildlife habitats and help reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Site and Tree Surveys

Prior to submitting a planning application for development that is in close proximity to trees, or on sites where there are trees, land (topographical) and tree surveys should be undertaken.

A **land survey** should include information on the location of all trees, shrub masses, hedges and other relevant features such as streams, buildings and other structures, overhead wires, roads, paths, boundary features, trenching scars and any other indicators of excavation. It should include spot heights of ground level throughout the site, as a basis for avoiding changes in soil levels near trees.

A **tree survey** should be undertaken by a qualified arborist. The desirability of retaining each tree, or group of trees, should be investigated as set out in BS5837:2010, so that each tree is categorised as either U (unsuitable for retention), A (high quality), B (moderate quality) or C (low quality).

The tree survey should include the following information for each tree or group of trees:

- Reference Number
- TPO reference number if applicable

- Species
- Height in meters
- Stem diameter in mm at 1.5m above ground level
- Crown spread
- Height in meters of crown clearance above ground level
- Age class
- An assessment of health and condition of crown, trunk and roots
- Preliminary management recommendations, including further investigation of defects and potential for wildlife habitat, particularly for bats
- Estimated useful life expectancy
- Category grading (U, A, B, C)

Tree Constraints Plan and Root Protection

The information from the surveys should be used to produce a Tree Constraints Plan (TCP). This plan should be used to guide the first design and early planning stages of the development. The TCP is a design tool which would show the root protection area (RPA) which is a function of the tree's diameter as measured in tree survey as well as show new planting proposals.

Tree protection plan and Arboricultural method statements

These would be required when the proposal would negatively affect any trees on the site. They should be submitted with the planning application and should show how the trees would be protected on site during construction and included the following:

- Schedule of tree surgery works
- Root Protection Area

- Specifications and location for protective fencing, ground protection etc
- Trenching, including details of hand digging when within RPA
- Specifications for surfacing near trees including no dig methods when appropriate
- Finished ground levels
- Locations for storage of materials, spoil, fuel, chemicals, bonfires etc
- Contingency plans (such as in the event of chemical spillage)
- Post construction planting and maintenance

Tree Preservation Orders

The Park Authority has the power to serve Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to protect a tree or a group of trees that are important to the amenity of the area. You must obtain the written consent from the Park Authority before undertaking any works to trees protected by a TPO. Failure to do so is an offence for which you may receive a fine. Permission to remove protected trees is normally given where there are good reasons to remove the tree and on the condition of replanting.

Trees in Conservation Areas

Trees make an important contribution to the character and appearance of towns and villages. Trees in designated conservation areas, with certain exceptions, are afforded special protection.

If you intend to undertake works to a tree in a conservation area you must give the Park Authority six weeks notice of your intention to do so to allow for a response. Failure to notify the planning authority in this way is an offence.

Applying for Consent for Tree Works

If you want to carry out works to a tree that is protected whether by a TPO, or by being within a conservation area, or by a planning condition, you should submit a **Tree Works Application**. Online applications can be made through the [Scottish Government ePlanning website](http://www.scottish.gov.uk/ePlanning). You will need to register an account, complete the forms and upload any relevant further information. Alternatively, you can print off the form and post the completed form and details to us (or call us for a copy of the form).

Planning Conditions

The Park Authority, as local planning authority, may impose conditions on planning permissions to protect existing trees on a development site. You may need to consult the Park Authority before undertaking any works to trees covered by the condition.

Felling Licences

Anyone intending to fell more than five cubic metres of timber from a group of trees or woodland within a three-month period has to first obtain a felling licence from Forestry Commission Scotland unless this felling has been approved as part of a planning application.

Checklist

Where trees are affected by your proposal then you need to submit the following with your planning application:

A tree survey and tree protection plan

A arboricultural method statement

Tree planting proposals

Further Advice

The assessment of trees requires considerable knowledge and experience and should be carried out by suitably qualified persons. The Park Authority employs trained staff who can comment and advise on matters relating to trees.

For further advice on which trees are legally protected in the National Park contact the National Park Authority Trees and Woodland Officer on Tel: 01389 722600.

Further reading on the subjects covered in this leaflet can be found on:

British Standard 5837: Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction 2012

British Standard 3998: Recommendations for Tree Work 2010

<http://www.bsi-global.com/en/Contact-Us/>

Arboricultural Association guidance notes and leaflets

<http://www.trees.org.uk>