

Trees

Ecology Guidance Note: 2014

Survey Season Calendar

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

■ Optimal
 ■ Sub-optimal
 ■ Inappropriate



Why Survey?

Trees can greatly enhance both urban and rural environments. The incorporation of existing trees within new developments can provide good landscape, structural and ecological value. Trees have many social and environmental benefits, from enhancing physical and mental wellbeing, to providing visual screening. All trees, regardless of their protected status, should be a material consideration in a planning application. This means that where there are trees either on site or within close proximity to the site boundary, a survey should be undertaken. This will provide data on tree condition and root protection areas, aiding the design process and planning application.

SERVICES:

- BS 5837 tree surveys
- Constraints mapping and root protection area (RPA) calculations
- Arboricultural Impact Assessments (AIA)
- Advice on legislation, best practice and Tree Preservation Order (TPO) checks
- Negotiation with statutory and non-statutory bodies
- Method Statements
- Mitigation guidelines and site advice during works
- Site supervision and monitoring

Methodology

The principal assessment method for trees within development sites follows BS 5837 (2005) Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations. This survey should be used to inform the design process, highlighting important trees, their protection areas, and protection during the construction period.

Trees are evaluated for their current arboricultural, landscape and ecological importance. Within any future development, the potential value of any individual tree or group of trees will be highlighted. The objective of the tree survey will be to ascertain if there are any known or potential tree constraints to the proposed development. This will identify any further surveys and mitigation measures which may be required. BS 5837 surveys undertake the form of a ground level site survey, which includes:

- a schedule of all trees located within, or adjacent to, the proposed site
- an assessment of all trees based on BS 5837 (2005) Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations
- advice on the removal, retention and management of trees
- an assessment of the requirement for the protection of trees during maintenance works
- a tree constraints plan identifying Root Protection Areas (RPAs) for all categorised individual trees or groups of trees.



Reporting provides an assessment of all trees (mainly those over 50mm in diameter at 1.5m above ground), either individually or in groups, dependant on size, species, uniformity and position. This will include arboricultural recommendations on above and below ground constraints, management, and mitigation planting where appropriate. For each individual and group, a tree quality assessment and Root Protection Area will be overlaid on a topographic map, creating a Tree Constraints Map.

With the provision of site design plans, sufficient detail can be given for the production of an Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA). The AIA will evaluate potential constraints, mitigating any direct and indirect impacts on existing trees. Within the AIA there will be recommendations for temporary tree protection measures. This will include fencing locations, using Construction Exclusion Zones where appropriate. Arboricultural Method Statements for tree protection and specific design requirements will be provided.

Mitigation

Mitigation is generally based upon replacement of removed trees, and guided by council planting policy. This should include replacement tree planting within and, where possible, adjacent to the site. This must also include any trees that subsequently die or have to be removed due to site damage. Similar species should be used, to maintain existing species diversity. However, specimen townscape trees could be considered, to add structural value. The extent of mitigation planting and species choice will be reliant upon the number of trees to be removed and guidance from the Local Planning Authority.

Veteran Tree Assessments

It is not possible to precisely define the term 'veteran tree', but it encompasses trees classified by three guiding principles as set out in *Veteran Trees: A guide to good management* (English Nature, 1999):

- trees of interest biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of their age
- trees in the ancient stage of their life
- trees that are old, relative to others of the same species.

These trees often require a different approach to their assessment and conservation. This is very much based on a tree-by-tree evaluation. Although veteran trees can be included with standard tree assessments, detailed evaluation of the surrounding environment and site use should be considered, based upon specialist surveys such as the Veteran Trees Initiative.

