

Few towns in Britain compare with Cheltenham with its trees. Privately-owned trees within Cheltenham contribute greatly to the ambience of the town and help to soften the impact of the ever increasing urban environment. The Council, therefore, has a policy to avoid the unnecessary felling of trees (Policy GE 5) and, would like to work with developers to ensure the long-term retention of trees on, and adjacent to, development sites.

The British Standard BS5837: 2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations), sets out guidance for dealing with tree issues on development sites from the inception of a project through to completion. The aim of this leaflet is to set out the procedures the Council expects developers to follow with respect to tree issues on development sites (including both privately and publicly owned trees).

The British Standard recommends that an arboriculturist is employed to address any tree issues on a site throughout the life cycle of a construction project. Details of registered arboricultural consultants are available from the Arboricultural Association at www.trees.org.uk or alternatively phone 01242 522 152.

Pre-planning permission stage

A tree condition survey must be undertaken by an arboriculturist of all the trees on, or adjacent to the site, prior to a design being drawn up include any vegetation which may have an influence on the design. In all cases where there are trees on, or adjacent to a site, the council expects compliance with this British Standard.

Trees on the site should be categorised to determine which trees are suitable for retention. It is expected that trees of “high” and “moderate” quality (categories A+B) will be retained, (as per BS 5837). It may be necessary to have a site meeting with council trees officers at the design stage where a possible controversial decision is required.

During the design and planning stages the following factors should be taken into account:-

- The fact that trees on the site may be protected by a Tree Preservation Order or located within a Conservation Area.
- The impact the proposed development may have on the health, condition and future management of trees, both on and near the site.
- Any above and below constraints.
- Whether the proposed design can be amended to ensure the retention of trees that would otherwise be lost.
- Infrastructure requirements, for example, service runs, highway safety and visibility splays, substations, refuse stores, lighting, signage and CCTV requirements.
- The end use of the space.
- Whether it is possible to balance proposed tree removals with new tree planting.
- The potential impact of the trees on the proposed building and development, to

include shading and dominance, future pressure, etc.

- The potential impact of climate change on existing or proposed tree species.

Planning application stage

With the planning application, the following documentation must be supplied. Failure to supply the requested information may result in the planning application being invalidated or sent back.

1. Details of the tree condition survey, including a site plan showing the location of all affected trees, and all relevant topographical site features, such as spot heights above ground level. The trees on the plan should be colour coded according to the desirability of retention (see BS5837:2012).
2. Plans showing the footprint of the proposed building(s) with tree locations marked on, in addition to, details of service runs, any proposed changes in ground levels, the proposed location of site huts, storage compounds for materials and machinery, details of tree protection zones.
3. Details of pre-construction tree work including any access facilitation pruning.
4. An arboricultural method statement indicating proposals for installing and maintaining protective barriers around retained trees, ground protection, any special engineering requirements and proposals for working around retained trees.

Once the Council is in receipt of all the requested documentation an on-site meeting will be arranged to view and discuss the proposals with the developer.

Post-approval stage

On occasion detail of landscaping proposals as conditioned in any planning permission, as well as any other details may be submitted to the council and approved prior to any on-site work being undertaken.

All protective fencing must be installed prior to commencement of construction or demolition works. The developer must contact his/her arboricultural consultant who will be obliged (as part of the planning condition) to report back any breaches in the protection methodology and to confirm that the protective fencing around the retained trees has been correctly installed.

Relevant National Legislation and Local Policies

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Town and Country (Trees) Regulations 2012
- British Standards 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations
- Planning Policy Statement GE 3- Development within extensive grounds.
- Planning Policy GE 5-Protection and replacement of trees
- Planning Policy GE 6-Trees and Development

For further information/advice please contact a Tree Officer on 01242 264262.



Trees on development sites



Built Environment Division