

Planning with Arboriculture

A guide to purchasing land with trees



Planning with Arboriculture

A guide to purchasing land with trees



Purchasing land for development can be a profitable venture, as long as the buyer is aware of the state of the site, including from an ecological and arboricultural perspective, and the requirements of the Local Planning Authority.

In order to submit a successful planning application, significant weight is now given to arboricultural issues relating to a site. Both small and large-scale developments need to mitigate against damage or loss of trees on and around a development site.

Planting trees remains one of the cheapest, most cost effective means of drawing excess CO2 from the atmosphere.

If planning applications are submitted without taking into account the trees on the site, in most instances the application will be put on hold until the relevant arboricultural issues are addressed. Therefore, it makes sense to undertake research beforehand.

Listed are those services that should be considered to facilitate a successful planning application. All are outlined in BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations, the industry standard.

Preconstruction Feasibility Studies

When purchasing land or property intended for development, it is important to know and understand the existing constraints and opportunities. Planning permission will often be refused if trees possessing high arboricultural, landscape or cultural value will be harmed. Knowing the restrictions posed on a site by trees will allow the architect to create a plan which will take into account site aesthetics and light whilst providing the maximum space for development.



Commissioning a preconstruction feasibility survey will allow developers to make an informed decision with regards to the value of a site. The study can also save developers money in the long term by identifying site constraints from the outset, which will allow a more suitable site plan to be created, increasing the chance of a planning application being accepted first time.

It is essential to consider the conditions of soil, climate and water availability that trees face in towns and cities.

Initial Tree Survey

An initial tree survey involves recording the locations of existing trees and measuring their dimensions including the root protection areas (RPAs). An RPA is the predicted area of root growth calculated using the diameter at breast height (DBH) of the stem. The study will also involve categorising the value of the trees in accordance with the Cascade Chart found in BS5837: 2012. Trees will be categorised as either A, B, C or U where A is the most valuable tree and U is a dead or dying tree recommended for removal. Category A and B trees are normally recommended for retention whereas category C trees are removed if they pose a constraint to development. Removal of numbers of category C or B trees will not always mean refusal of planning permission provided adequate post construction planting plans are included in the application, and the benefit of the development outweighs the loss of the trees. The tree survey will also aid the production of the documents listed.





Tree Constraints Plans

A tree constraints plan is an accurate scale plan drawn in accordance with the topographical survey, showing constraints posed by individual trees. The plan shows tree positions, root protection areas and crown spreads to identify the above and below ground constraints the trees possess. It also shows tree value categories allowing for a more informed design to be created. The tree constraints plan will provide the basis for development with buildings designed around existing trees.

Tree Protection Plan

Tree planting represents an investment that benefits not only individual property owners, but society at large.

This is a plan that shows the position of all retained trees and accurately demonstrates the locations of all necessary protection measures to be implemented during construction. A well-presented plan will increase the chance of a successful a planning application.

Arboricultural Implication Assessment



This is a report that will be required by the local authority for a planning application to be accepted with regards to a site containing or near to trees. The report, which is written in accordance with the proposed site plan, outlines the potential impact of the development on the trees. This report will also contain recommendations on mitigation measures that will minimise impact to the trees. Mitigation measures may include recommendations on building alterations, foundation and construction techniques and tree protection recommendations. The report may also contain specific recommendations for a tree planting plan should any existing trees require removal. A well-presented arboricultural assessment will better the chances of a successful planning application for both small and large scale sites. This can include sensitive sites where planning applications have previously been refused.



Arboricultural Method Statements

This document contains details of all tree related operations to be performed as part of the construction process, along with protection measures to be followed. Compliance with the method statement will often be a condition of an accepted planning application. A copy of the method statement should be made available to and signed by all contractors on the construction site. This will reassure the local authority tree officer that protection measures are being followed.



Development Site Monitoring

With larger sites or on sites containing trees of notable value, a system of onsite monitoring may be conditioned as part of the planning decision. This involves a scheduled number of site visits by a suitably qualified arboriculturalist to ensure trees are adequately protected and remain unharmed for the duration of the construction process.

Policy makers are prepared to prioritise investment in our urban forests in spite of an uncertain economic climate.



Free Quotes and Advice

PJC Consultancy offers free quotes on all survey types as well as advice on tree related matters.

The services are not exhaustive, if you have any other tree or woodland related queries please do not hesitate to contact us.



PJC CONSULTANCY

PJC Consultancy is an independent arboricultural and ecological specialist that works throughout the UK providing robust surveys that are recognised by LPAs as authoritative and following best practice. Our consultants are both academically and professionally qualified (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and Arboricultural Association) and combine experience and expertise in ecological assessment, land management, arboriculture and project management.

The consultancy works alongside Chaffin Works and PJ Chaffin Tree Surgery, established in 1984, and, together, we carry out a range of arboriculture surveys to provide our clients with positive and practical solutions.

When you are next considering a land development plan, contact us for a free quotation on all of the surveys outlined here, or for advice on any arboriculture, tree, woodland or ecology related matter.

LIST OF SERVICES

Arboriculture Services

- Tree Surveys to BS5837:2012
- Pre-Purchase Feasibility Studies
- Tree Constraints Plans
- Arboricultural Impact Assessments
- Tree Protection Plans
- Arboricultural Method Statements
- Soil Testing
- Building Subsidence Reports
- Airspade Services
- GIS Mapping

Ecology Services

- Protected Species Surveys
- Impact Assessments
- CfSH & BREEAM Assessments
- Environmental Planning
- Ecological Appraisals
- Vegetation Classification Surveys
- NE & Protected Species Licensing
- River Corridor Surveys
- Ecological Risk Assessments
- Habitat Management & Plans
- Habitat Creation
- Ecological & Mitigation Fencing

Landscape Design

- Conceptual Landscape Design
- Contextual Analysis
- Planning Consent Consultancy
- BREEAM Requirements
- Moodboard Creation
- Landscape Masterplans
- Graphical Representation
- Hardworks Detailing
- Softworks Planting Scheme
- Civil Engineer Liaison
- Maintenance & Management Programmes



t: 01323 768155
f: 01323 768244
e: info@pjconsultancy.com
www.pjconsultancy.com

Chapter House
Priesthawes Farm
Hailsham Road
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6QU

Unit 3, Park Grange
Evegate Business Park
Smeeth
Nr Ashford
Kent
TN25 6SX