

Planning & Arboriculture: A Guide to Developing Land with Trees



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Planning & Arboriculture: A Guide to Developing Land with Trees

Developing land can be a profitable venture. However, there are many factors to consider including the physical condition of the land as well as arboricultural and ecological factors that may pose a constraint to development.

In order to submit a successful planning application, existing trees must be carefully considered throughout the development process including at the initial design phase and throughout the duration of construction. Both small and large-scale developments need to mitigate against damage or loss of trees within, and in proximity to the curtilage of a development site.

If planning applications are submitted without taking into consideration the trees on the site, applications may be put on hold until the relevant arboricultural issues are addressed or, in some instances, applications can be refused due to inadequately formed submissions. 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.

Initial Arboricultural Report & Tree Constraints Plan

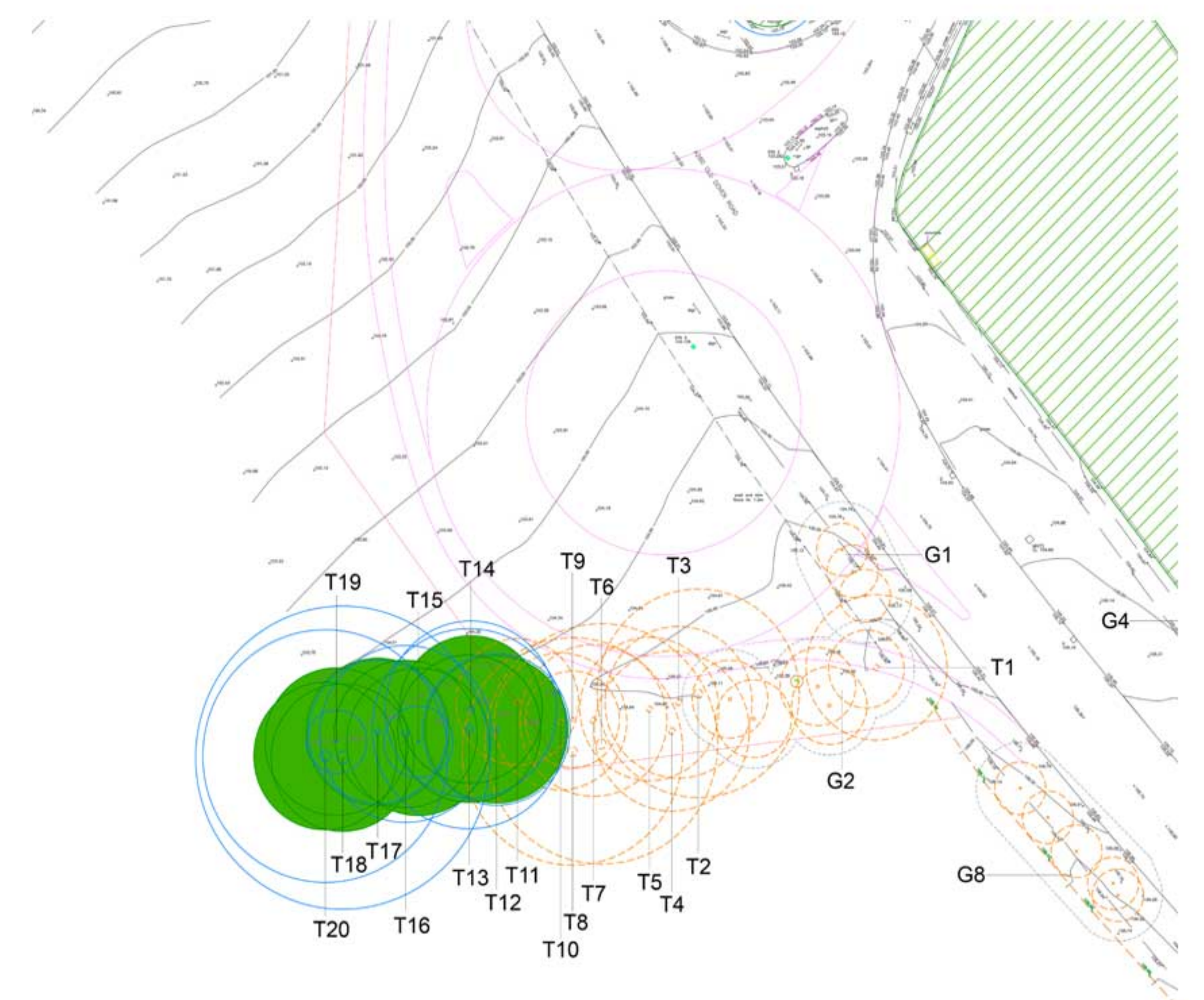
The initial arboricultural report should be carried out as the primary phase of development, prior to any detailed designs being produced. The initial report will include detailed information regarding trees at a given site without taking future development into consideration, therefore providing an unbiased view of the trees existing condition, arboricultural value and value within the local landscape. The initial report will include a full survey inventory and a tree constraints plan.

A tree constraints plan is an accurate scale plan drawn in accordance with a topographical survey, showing constraints posed by trees. The plan shows tree positions, root protection areas and crown spreads, to identify above and belowground constraints the trees possess. It also defines tree quality categories, which indicates which trees are of high to low quality allowing for an informed design. The tree constraints plan will provide the basis for development design with buildings designed around existing trees.

Arboricultural Implication Assessment & Tree Retention Plan

This report is required by the local authority for a planning application to be accepted with regards to a development site containing, or in proximity to trees. The report, which is written in accordance with the proposed site plan, outlines potential impacts the development may have to trees, as well as discussing what impacts retained trees may have on the development. 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. A well-presented arboricultural impact 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.

The impact assessment may also include a tree retention plan. A tree retention plan will clearly highlight which trees will require removal as a direct result of the development, and which trees are to be retained throughout the development process. The retention plan can be color coordinated by tree category and works requirement to provide an easy to read visual aid to be read in conjunction with the report.



Tree Shadow Plan & Tree Planting Plan



A tree shadow plan is sometimes necessary to highlight the total shade cast by retained trees throughout any given day. This is becoming vital when large mature trees are retained within close proximity to proposed properties and associated gardens. A tree shadow plan can be used to prove that tree shade should not be considered a constraint to development.

Tree planting plans should be included when existing trees require removal in order to facilitate development and their loss requires mitigation. Mitigation planting is important to prove that the development can be completed without a future net loss of trees across the site.



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 arboriculturist to ensure trees are adequately protected and remain unharmed for the duration of the construction process.

Pre-construction Feasibility Studies

When purchasing land or property intended for development, it is important to 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.



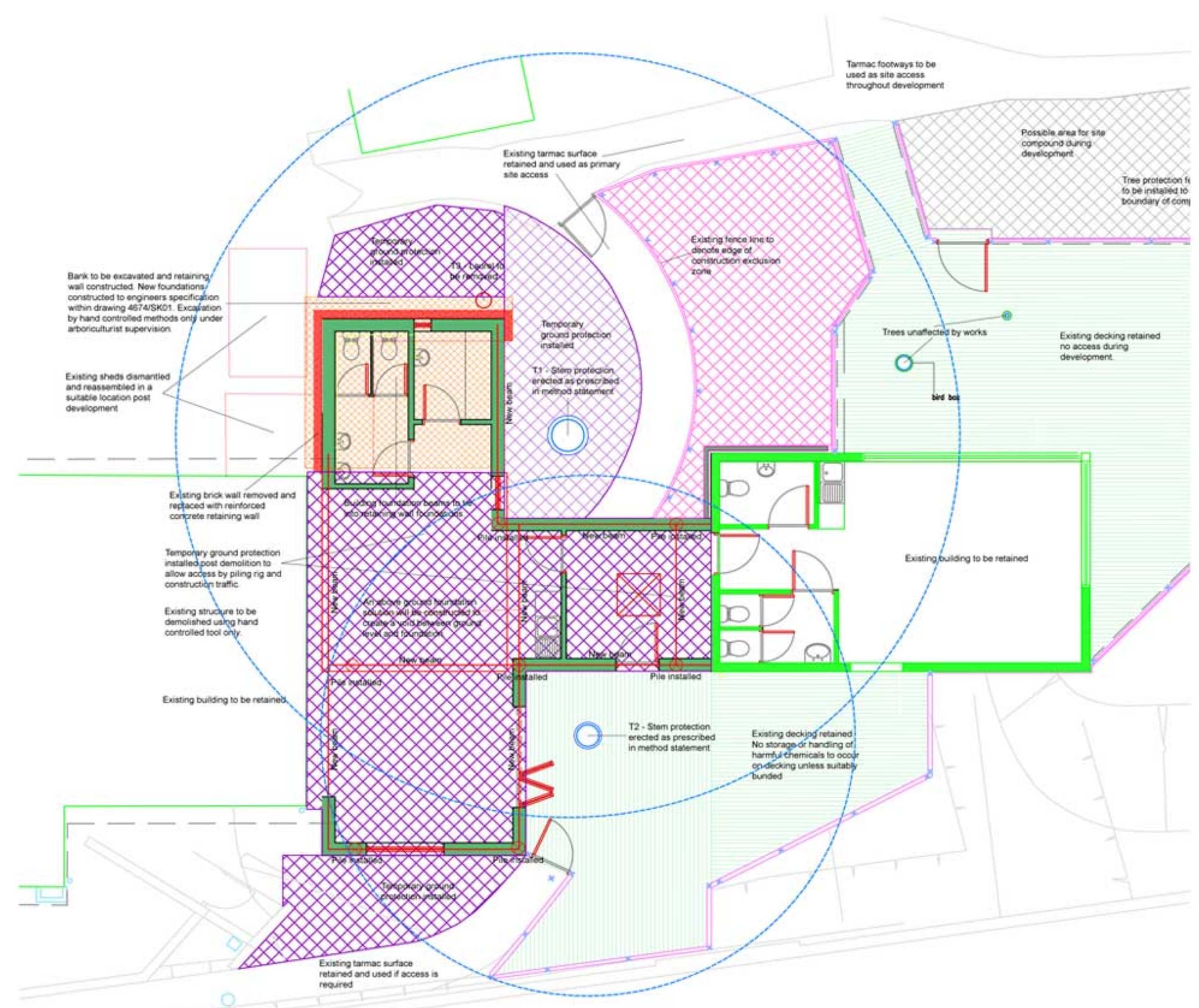
Commissioning a pre-construction feasibility survey will allow developers to make informed decisions with regard to the value of a site. The study can also save developers money in the long term by identifying site constraints from the outset. This can allow a more suitable site plan to be created increasing the chance of a planning application being accepted first time.

Tree Protection Plan & Arboricultural Method Statement

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. The arboricultural method statement will also include a tree protection plan. This is a technical drawing 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 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.





PJC Consultancy

PJC Consultancy is an independent arboricultural, ecological and landscape consultancy specialist that works throughout the UK providing robust surveys that are recognised by Local Planning Authorities as authoritative and following best practice guidelines.

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.

PJC Consultancy work alongside Chaffin Works and PJ Chaffin Tree Surgery. Established in 1984, together we carry out a vast range of arboricultural surveys and landscape contracting services to provide our clients with practical and synergic solutions.

When you are next considering a new development project, contact us for a free quotation on any of the surveys outlined below, or for advice on any arboriculture, tree, woodland or ecological related matter.

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ARBORICULTURE SERVICES

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Pre-Purchase Feasibility Studies
Tree Constraints Plans
Arboricultural Impact Assessments
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Arboricultural Method Statements
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Habitat Creation
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