



Planning Advice: Number 11/2015
Trees & Development



Mature trees are a valuable asset in our landscape and enhance our quality of life. Often used as a selling point, these trees help integrate new development into its setting. However, trees on a development site can easily be lost or damaged through lack of consideration.

Damage to Trees

Damage to or loss of trees during development can be caused accidentally by failing to appreciate how vulnerable trees are. Irreparable damage can be caused to the tree's trunk, branches and roots by site clearance, earth moving, excavation, compaction and storage of materials. Although not generally visible, tree roots are a very important part of the tree, providing moisture and nutrients and are the part of the tree most easily damaged. Most tree roots lie just below the ground but stretch some distance from the trunk.

Site Assessment and Tree Survey

When planning a development an accurate site assessment and tree survey should be carried out in accordance with BS 5837 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

Site assessment should include:

- footprint of the proposed development.
- existing and proposed ground levels.
- location of trees on and immediately adjacent to the site.
- other relevant features (e.g. water courses, services).





Tree survey should include:

- species.
- size (height, diameter and canopy spread).
- age, health and condition.
- trees to be removed.
- trees to be retained and detailed measures for their protection.
- proposed new and replacement planting.

Planning Proposals

The information provided by these surveys will aid the design of the development and will allow any potential impacts to be properly assessed. If the proposals are considered acceptable the Planning Authority may impose conditions to ensure trees are protected.

Protection of Trees from Damage

Before any development starts, the trees to be retained must be securely fenced off. The fence should be located beyond the canopy spread at a distance of at least 12 times the diameter of the trunk (measured at 1.5 m above the ground).

The fence should remain intact until the development is fully completed.

Within the fenced off area no excavation, works or storage of material and equipment shall take place and no fires lit.



Contacts and Further Advice

It is always important to have your site surveyed by an expert in arboriculture. They will be able to advise you on which trees should be retained and identify any which will require surgery.

For further information

Email: planning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning