

Trees and development sites

Guidance for new developments

Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted April 2021



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1. Key points

- | This document is produced in order to emphasise the importance of trees with reference to addressing Climate Change. It recognises the **Climate Emergency** declaration and reinforces to developers the vital and fundamental role that trees play in mitigating the effects of Climate Change.
- | The purpose of the document is to provide practical guidance and advice on how trees can be incorporated into new development, conserving and enhancing the existing trees, hedgerows, groups and woodlands within a scheme.
- | The SPD is primarily for use by planning applicants, developers and landowners, as well as decision makers such as planning officers.
- | The SPD will help to set out and support South Gloucestershire's objective to double canopy cover over the next 10 years. This will help in addressing the climate emergency and nature recovery. Tree management and enhancement of the tree resource will be carried out according to best practice in line with the principles within the SGC Tree Asset Management Plan (TAMP), the West of England Tree & Woodland Strategy & Forest of Avon Plan and the strategic ecosystem priorities within the West of England GI Strategy.
- | The objective of net gain in tree canopy cover will be promoted through the Tree Replacement Policy and the use of the CAVAT system where appropriate.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03071375.2018.1454077>
- | This document aims to support adopted development plan policies PSPs 1, 2 and 3 by providing guidance on tree retention and protection requirements set out in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – recommendations, including:
 - | The identification of trees, groups, hedgerows and woodlands to be retained on a site;
 - | Use of the above information to **drive** the improved design of development on the site to retain and utilise more green infrastructure;
 - | Appropriate and effective tree protection measures that will safeguard the tree components of a site throughout all stages of development;
 - | A system to monitor the efficacy of tree protection measures such as Arboricultural watching briefs for any works within Root Protection Areas.
- | Emphasising site design to accommodate space for landscaping schemes that represent net gain in canopy cover. Design will consider appropriate species selection for current and future impact on the built environment and vice versa.
- | Advice on the use of proprietary systems such as the Stockholm planting solutions will be utilised where appropriate to maximise potential rooting area for new plantings, whilst minimising the negative impacts associated with tree root systems on the urban setting.
<https://stockholmtreepits.co.uk>

- | works generated by the survey will be undertaken. A management plan for the 5 year period following the scheme's completion will be submitted for such woodlands.
- | Advises on how landscaping plans should aim to include details of required post-planting maintenance for a minimum of 3 years to ensure successful establishment.
- | Hedgerows will be recognised as important landscape and wildlife features and will be given due consideration for inclusion within development designs. Future management and maintenance of hedgerows will be formally laid out in a specific schedule.
- | Woodlands associated with a scheme will be surveyed and appropriate and proportionate
- | Communication between the developer's representative and the SGC Tree Team is actively encouraged in order to avoid situations that may lead to tree damage.

2. Introduction

South Gloucestershire currently has in the region of 11% tree canopy cover. In recognising the climate emergency, and as one of the measures to address it, the Council has stated that it has a target of doubling tree canopy cover across the district by 2030. This represents establishing a further 5900 hectares of tree canopy cover.

The intention of this document is to ensure an integrated and collaborative approach to the planning for trees, hedgerows and woodlands in new developments across South Gloucestershire by working in line with planning and industry good practice; thereby contributing to the council's commitment to achieving sustainable communities and quality of life for all.

The principal objectives of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) are to provide advice and guidance to:

- I Make developers aware of the council's policies on trees, hedgerows and woodlands within the SGC Tree Asset Management Plan and how they must be incorporated to enhance the quality of the overall environment within a site.
- I Embed consideration of and support for tree retention and protection at the earliest stage of the planning process. Application of the mitigation hierarchy to underpin design and decision making, with removals and replacement planting as an absolute last resort.

Ensure that net gain in canopy cover is achieved either on site, through the retention of existing trees and the provision of mitigation planting, or by the provision of a financial contribution towards a commensurate level of tree planting elsewhere in South Gloucestershire.

- I Identify industry best practices - and the use of the most forward-thinking innovations in terms of managing and introducing trees sustainably into the built environment - so that they are appropriately utilised.
- I Make developers aware that Tree Preservation Orders will be used - as prescribed by Central Government - as a tool for tree protection and retention.

The Trees and Development SPD forms one part of a suite of SPD's developed to highlight the objectives set out in our Climate Change Emergency Action Plan, where they are relevant to development and land use. The Trees and Development SPD should be read together with:

- the SGC Climate Change Emergency Action Plan
- the SGC Highway Specification Document
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) SPD
- Green Infrastructure (GI) SPD

Net gain in canopy cover is essential on all developments.

3. Planning policy

Links to these documents are available on page 8. The quoted information is in green and italics.

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy* (adopted Dec 2013) policy CS1 – High Quality Design states:

'Development will only be permitted where the highest possible standards of design and site planning are achieved. Information submitted with an application should be proportionate to the scale, significance and impact of the proposal.'

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that [they]:

'Section 3, safeguard and enhance landscape features and Section 6, contribute to net tree cover.'

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy* (adopted Dec 2013) policy CS2 – Green Infrastructure states:

'The Council and its partners will ensure that existing and new Green Infrastructure (GI) is planned, delivered and managed as an integral part of creating sustainable communities and enhancing quality of life, considering the following GI objectives:

*Section 1, mitigation for climate change,
Section 4, protecting and enhancing habitats and
Section 5, conserve and enhance landscape character and natural features.'*

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy* (adopted Dec 2013) policy CS9 – Managing the Environment and Heritage states:

'The natural and historic environment is a finite and irreplaceable resource. In order to protect and manage South Gloucestershire's environment and its resources in a sustainable way, new development will be expected to:

*Section 1, ensure that heritage assets are conserved, respected and enhanced,
Section 2, conserve and enhance the natural environment and
Section 3, conserve and enhance the character, quality, distinctiveness and amenity of the landscape.'*

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy* (adopted Dec 2013) policy PSP 1 – Local Distinctiveness states:

'Development proposal(s) will be acceptable where the proposals demonstrate an understanding of, and respond constructively to the buildings and characteristics that make a particularly positive contribution to the distinctiveness of the area / locality.'

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy* (adopted Dec 2013) policy PSP 2 – Landscape and enhancement states:

'Development proposals will be acceptable where they conserve and where appropriate enhance the quality, amenity, distinctiveness and special character of the landscape (defined by the Landscape Character Assessment). This includes, but is not limited to:

landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows, woodlands, views, banks, walls, ponds and waterways;

Amenity space, hard and soft landscape works and open space provision will be required to be of a high standard of design, appropriate to the use and character of the development and its location; and designed as an integral part of the development, incorporating existing landscape features where appropriate, for the benefit of the development proposal.

Landscape features which contribute to landscape character, quality, amenity or local distinctiveness are to be retained and protected, and along with new landscape features, managed in a manner which ensures their long term health and viability.

Where landscape character has been degraded or eroded, development will be expected to contribute to the restoration of landscape character and distinctiveness.'

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy* (adopted Dec 2013) policy PSP3 – Trees and Woodland states:

'Development proposals should minimise the loss of existing vegetation on a site that is of importance in terms of ecological, recreational, historical or landscape value. Development proposals which would result in the loss of, or damage (directly or indirectly) to, existing mature or ancient woodland, veteran trees, ancient or species-rich hedgerows will only be acceptable where the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss or damage.

Development proposals should, where appropriate, include:

- | the protection of trees; and*
- | replacement trees, of an appropriate size and species, where tree loss or damage is essential to allow for development; and*
- | additional tree planting, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS1 and the Landscape Character Assessment SPD's, including, but not limited to, planting along arterial roads, in car parks and in the public realm; and*
- | new planting schemes that retain and integrate healthy, mature trees and hedgerows, and include native species.*

Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), great weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and scenic beauty of the landscape whilst taking account of the biodiversity interest and the historic and cultural heritage. Where development is proposed in a location which would affect the setting of the AONB, it must be demonstrated that it would not adversely impact upon the natural beauty of the AONB.

Other Supplementary Planning Guidance

Development should be designed with due consideration of other related Supplementary Planning Documents. These will include Green Infrastructure, SuDs and Biodiversity and Planning.

British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations

This is the primary document that lays out the procedure for the assessment of trees on a potential site, the safeguards for their retention and the methodology of working in the vicinity of trees.

SGC Tree Asset Management Plan – Adopted 2018

This document was developed as a tool to describe the policies and strategies used by the Council in making management decisions on their tree resource.

The SPD provides additional explanatory guidance to developers to assist them in making successful planning applications. It supplements and expands on the respective National Planning Policy Framework and Core Strategy policy paragraphs set out above. The guidance within it will form a material consideration of planning applications.

National House Building Council

<https://nhbc-standards.co.uk/4-foundations/4-2-building-near-trees/>

Links to supporting planning policy

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cleanversionforinterimpubliation2.pdf>

National Planning Policy Framework

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

The South Gloucestershire Infrastructure Delivery Plan

www.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-local-plans/local-development-framework/infrastructure-delivery-plan

South Gloucestershire Tree Asset Management Plan (TAMP)

www.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/conservation/trees-and-hedges/tree-asset-management-plan/

The Hedgerow Regulations

www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-hedgerows-regulation-and-management

Tree Preservation Order legislation

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#tree-preservation-orders--general>

Stockholm Tree Pits

<https://www.stockholmtreepits.co.uk/>

Status of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains that SPDs are:

‘Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.’

Appropriate weight should therefore be given to the advice set out in this SPD which supports the interpretation and delivery of the council’s adopted Local Plan policy.

4. Site Design, Development and the Development Control process requirements for each stage

At the planning and design stages, and during construction the Council will expect applicants to demonstrate how significant trees, generally BS5837:2012 category A and B specimens, hedgerows and other vegetation will be incorporated into development proposals. To help achieve this and ensure trees stay healthy and become an asset to new development the following steps should be taken:

Stage 1: Tree/site assessment – constraints and opportunities of the site. A tree survey in accordance with BS5837:2012 including an arboricultural impact assessment and tree constraints plan will be undertaken. Applicants will need to demonstrate they have assessed all trees on and adjacent to the site and that this information drives the scheme design to ensure that the significant trees can be retained within their proposals. **Even if trees are not present within the site, off site trees and areas for planting trees, where potentially affected, should be identified and plotted on the Tree Constraints Plan and protected from damage or compaction.**

The tree survey should include the following information:

- A plan showing the location of each individual tree or group, including trees overhanging from adjacent sites. (tree tags can be used to number individual trees on site);
- Species;
- Trunk diameter, height and canopy spread;
- Health, vigour and condition;
- Age class and life expectancy;
- Categorization U or A to C grading;
- Recommendations for tree surgery;
- Root Protection Area
- Other Tree constraints (e.g. unreasonable shading to the proposed development)

Tree Categorisation

- **Category U** – Trees in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10years.
- **Category A** – Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years.
- **Category B** – Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years.
- **Category C** – Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150mm.

Early arboricultural advice in some cases will highlight that a scheme is not viable. For example, a site that is densely covered in high quality trees may not be appropriate for development.

In line with Government guidance a Tree Preservation Order will normally be made at this stage. The Secretary of State makes it clear that TPOs should be the mechanism for the long term protection of trees.

Stage 2: Mitigation assessment - The Capital Asset Value of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) system and the Tree Replacement Policy (TRP) will be used to calculate the replacement planting required to mitigate for proposed tree losses as a result of the development.

- The justification for requiring new or compensatory tree planting is set out in policy CS1 of the Core Strategy. Tree planting should be accommodated on the site as part of a comprehensive landscape plan for the development, however where this cannot be achieved the Council will require a tree planting contribution for tree planting off site.
- **Trigger for Obligation Replanting**
Obligations in respect of trees will be required where either;
 1. New planting is required on public land to mitigate the impact of development, or
 2. Where trees covered by categories A, B and C of BS 5837:2012 (Trees in relation to design demolition and construction) are felled as part of a development, and replacement planting is required on public land.

SGC Owned Trees

- The number of trees removed to accommodate development is to be calculated prior to site clearance works starting.
- A CAVAT evaluation of SGC – owned trees affected by the development proposals should be undertaken to calculate the replacement tree planting required.

Other trees on Development site

- The Tree Replacement Policy will be used to calculate the appropriate level of mitigation for any non SGC trees removed from the site.

Tree Replacement

- If adequate tree replacements cannot be achieved on site, the outstanding amount(s) derived from the CAVAT evaluation and/or tree replacement policy are to be bonded to SGC to plant elsewhere on Council owned land/or as part of a community project.
- Tree planting will take place in accordance with the following hierarchy:
 1. within open ground or
 2. areas of hard standing such as pavements as close to the development site as possible. The contribution will be higher where trees are to be planted within hard standing as this will require planting within an engineered tree pit. As a guide, where replacement trees cannot be provided due to a lack of available open ground a contribution of 50% of the calculated replacement trees in accordance with the Tree Replacement Policy could be requested as new street tree planting.

All tree planting on public land is to be undertaken by the Council to ensure a consistent approach and level of quality and reduce the likelihood of new tree stock failing to survive.

- **Level of Contributions**

- The contribution covers the cost of providing the tree pit (where appropriate), purchasing, planting, protecting, establishing and initially maintaining the new tree. The council operates two levels of contribution as follows:-

Tree in open ground - £800

Tree in hard standing (tree pit required) - £3300

(These figures will increase in line with inflation)

- The 'open ground' figure will apply in the following circumstances:-
 - Where development results in the loss of Council owned trees in open ground
 - Where development results in the loss of trees on the development site, and is unable to provide replacement tree planting on site.
- In both cases the Council will provide replacement tree planting in the nearest appropriate area of open space.
- The 'hard standing' figure will apply in the following circumstances:-
 - Where development results in the loss of Council owned trees in areas of hard standing
 - Where new tree planting in hard standing is required to mitigate the impact of development (i.e. street trees required as part of highway improvements).
- In the first of these cases the Council will locate replacement tree planting in areas of hard standing as close as reasonably practical to the development site and in the second, the Council will implement tree planting in specific locations identified through the planning approval process.
- The number of trees required to compensate for the loss of existing trees depends upon the size of the trees lost. This is set out in the following table:-

Trunk diameter of tree lost to development (cm measured at 1.5m above ground level)	Number of replacement trees
Less than 15cm	0-1
15-19.9cm	1
20-29.9cm	2
30-39.9cm	3
40-49.9cm	4
50-59.9cm	5
60-69.9cm	6
70-79.9cm	7
80+cm	8

Stage 3: Evaluation of submitted design documents - arboricultural method statements and tree protection plans will be in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations.

- **Layouts and tree planting/landscaping schemes submitted for planning must consider the following:**
- All buildings must be outside of the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of mature trees (to prevent physical damage to trees and reduce problems of leaves blocking gutters and drains). As a guide a developer should consider applying a minimum of 3m clearance.



Species selection and location relative to buildings

- Greater distances will be required if the tree is not yet fully grown and to avoid shading of windows of habitable rooms and gardens, especially on the south side (light loss is a common reason for requesting removal).
- It is generally recommended that large specimen trees such as oak or beech are located in open space or other public areas.
- Take into account the risks presented by changing climate by applying the latest recommendations regarding species choice and planting methods. Consider the need to optimise tree stock resilience by diversifying the species mix, thus the potential for losses through plant pathogens is reduced.
- Optimise the connectivity between woodland and hedgerows to create links to other green infrastructure creating 'bigger, better, more and joined' habitat for wildlife in line with nature recovery priorities and resilience.



Plant to link existing habitat areas

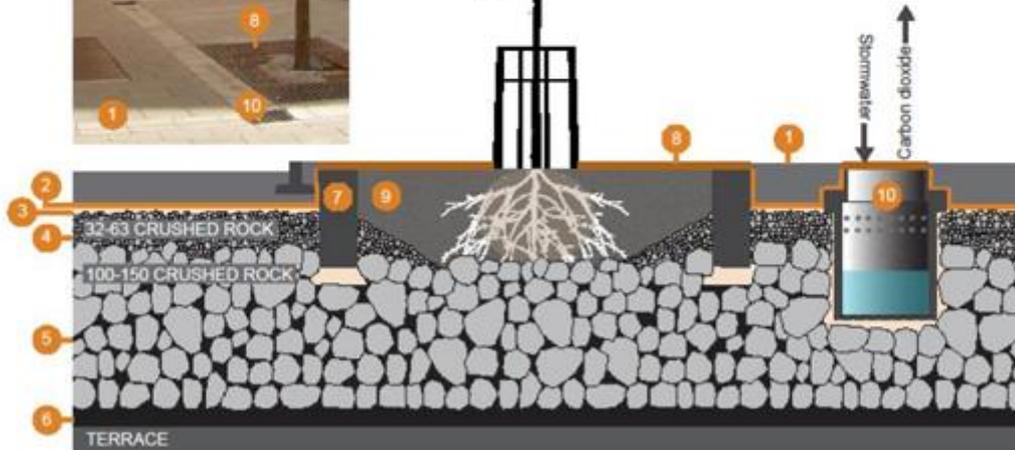
- All trees to be UK sourced and grown to reduce risks of imported disease and pests as well as reducing 'tree miles' and associated transport emissions.
- Tree ownership and responsibility disputes - by placing garden boundaries in such a manner that trees do not fall on the property line.
- Use root barriers and deflectors to minimise the potential for the disturbance of built structures or services.
- Where opportunities exist to optimise or increase the planting area that roots can develop into, the use of **Structural Soils** such as those used in Stockholm Tree Pits should be investigated. See link on page 8.

Structural soil with biochar

A method for building with stability and to create good growing conditions for trees in paved areas with the use of stormwater and the added value of decreasing the risk of roots damaging paving or underground pipes



1. Paved surface with dished stormwater gutters
2. Geotextile
3. Leveling layer (crushed rock 8-16 mm) – also used for concrete bunker and water/air inlet.
4. Aerated bearing layer (crushed rock 32-63 mm)
5. Structural soil (crushed rock 100-150 mm) with fertilized biochar holed into the structural volume
6. Pure biochar on terrace
7. Concrete bunker
8. Surface grid
9. Crushed rock with fertilized biochar
10. Inlet for air and water supply



Stockholm planting solution.

- When building near trees, it is important to consider the size and depth of foundations. These must be designed to take account of the proximity and type of trees, their age and potential for growth, and soil type in accordance with NHBC Guidelines - see link – page 8

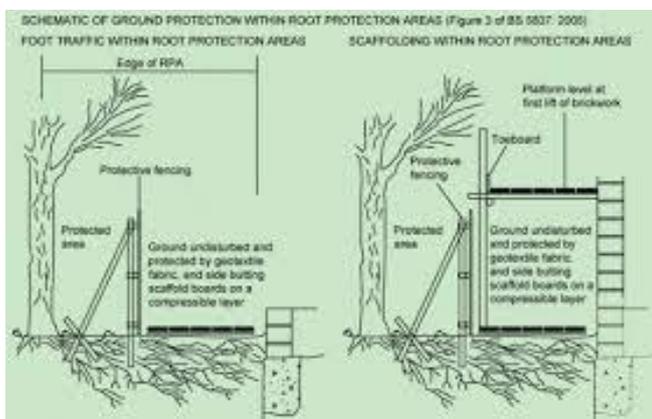
Communication between the developer’s representative and the SGC Tree Team is actively encouraged in order to avoid situations that may lead to tree damage.

- Access
 - I Access ways under trees require very careful design. Kerbs have haunchings that can sever roots. Where it can be demonstrated that trees will not be harmed, it may be acceptable for paths and trafficked surfaces (e.g. domestic driveways) to encroach under the canopy of retained trees. Any such surface must be of a no-dig (cellular confinement) type design using permeable materials and without kerbs. There must be no reduction in levels.



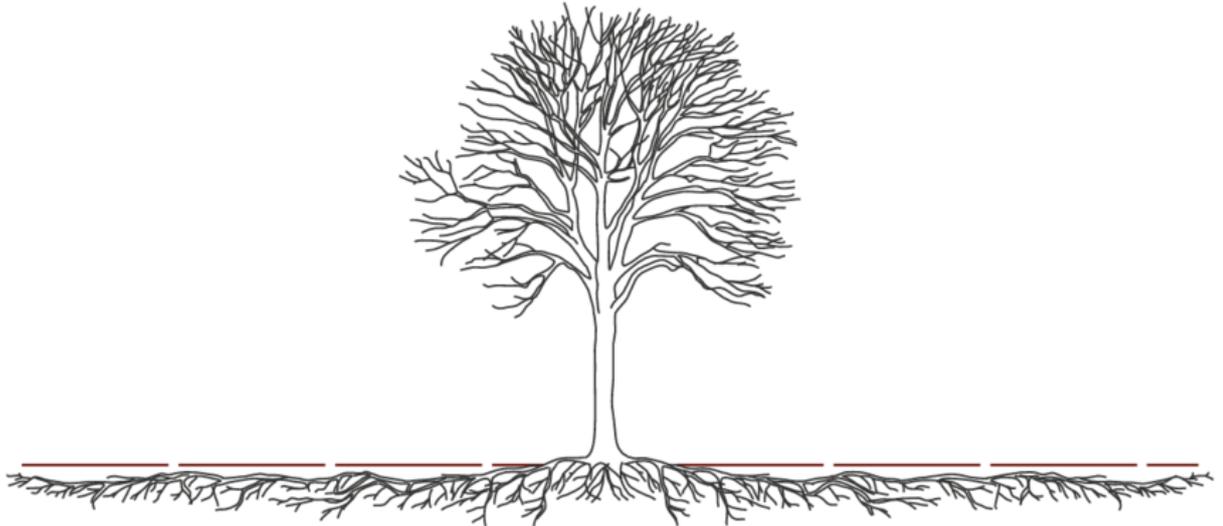
Example of no-dig construction next to a mature tree.

- Make gardens useable - consider the need for crown lifting to allow adequate headroom for homeowners.
- Ensure that your plans include provision for the heavy machinery during construction and that site procedures are managed to avoid risk of damage to trees or encroachment under their canopies. **Ground Protection as prescribed in BS5837 may be necessary and must be incorporated into the Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement.**



Extract from BS5837:2012 to show ground protection to protect roots.

- In addition to the obvious parts of the tree (canopy, branches and stem), the hidden roots can also be damaged during construction. In general terms tree roots are found in the upper 600mm of soil, although root distribution can be deeper dependant on site conditions and tree species. They consist of structural roots which anchor the tree and a network of smaller roots that uptake water and nutrients.



Tree root systems are shallow and can extend to 2 to 3 times the height of the tree.

Services

- Where possible, keep all services runs together, and avoid surrounding a tree with trenches. Trenches must be outside the Root Protection Area.
- If a service run under the canopy is unavoidable, it must be thrust bored, or excavated by use of air spade, leaving all roots greater than 25mm intact and bridging the trench.



Use of air spade to expose roots without damaging them.

Maintaining soil structure

- An ideal soil for root growth and development contains about 50 percent pore space for water and air movement. Heavy construction equipment and/or repeated pedestrian movements can compact topsoil and subsoil dramatically reducing pore space. Compaction inhibits root growth, limits water penetration, and decreases oxygen needed for root survival.

Maintaining a healthy root structure

- Digging, grading, and trenching associated with construction and underground utility installation can be very damaging to roots. A tree's root system can extend horizontally a distance one to three times greater than the height of a tree. Excavation in a tree's root

protection area can reduce tree vitality leading to premature death of the tree(s). Cutting roots close to the trunk can severely damage a tree and cause it to fail in high winds.

Maintaining original soil levels

- The majority of fine water and mineral-absorbing roots are in the upper 15 to 30 cm of soil where oxygen and moisture levels tend to be best suited for growth. Even a few centimetres of soil piled over the root system to change the grade can smother fine roots and eventually lead to larger root death and the loss of trees.
- Changes in levels close to the canopy may need retaining walls.

Avoiding root / soil contamination

- Spillages of fuels, construction chemicals or uncontrolled cement run off can change soil pH or poison tree roots. Ensure the cleanings from cement mixers are not disposed of onto tree roots.

Avoiding physical impact

- Construction equipment can injure the above-ground portion of a tree by breaking branches, tearing the bark, and wounding the trunk. These injuries are permanent and, if extensive, can be fatal.

Avoiding exposure

- Trees in a group grow as a community, protecting each other from the elements. Trees can grow tall with long, straight trunks and high canopies; removing neighbouring trees during construction exposes the remaining trees to increased sunlight and wind which may lead to sunscald or breakage of limbs and stems and potentially windthrow of remaining trees.

Stage 4: Construction – THERE WILL BE NO ACTIVITY ON SITE UNTIL TREE PROTECTION MEASURES HAVE BEEN AGREED AND IMPLEMENTED.



- An initial site meeting will be held between the site manager, the project arboriculturist and the SGC Arboricultural Officer to agree the proper implementation of all activities relating to site clearance, tree protection, hedgerow translocation etc.

- A subsequent pre-commencement meeting will be held to confirm that the tree protection measures have been installed to the agreed specification and in the correct positions.

Stage 5: Monitoring, management and enforcement – site checks by the project arboriculturist will be carried out on a frequency agreed with the SGC Arboricultural Officer to ensure tree protection, fencing and ground protection measures are maintained as fit for purpose. Written reports on these visits will be forwarded to the SGC Arboricultural Officer.

- Breaches of any elements of the approved drawings and method statements will be investigated by the Planning Enforcement and Tree Teams.
- Post development checks on establishment of landscape planting and enforcement of amelioration and reparation measures.
- Conditions will not be signed off for discharge if the relevant requirements are not fully adhered to.

5. Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees within South Gloucestershire

- **Ancient woodland and veteran trees** are a finite resource within South Gloucestershire. Government policy is increasingly supportive of absolute protection of ancient woodland and ancient trees. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), planning permission will be refused for developments resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland (Para 118).
- The Government’s policy document ‘Keepers of Time – A statement of Policy for England’s Ancient & Native Woodland’ (Defra/Forestry Commission, 2005, p.10) states: “The existing area of ancient woodland should be maintained and there should be a net increase in the area of native woodland”.
- **Protection of Ancient woodland**
- Every ancient wood is a unique habitat that has evolved over centuries, with a complex interdependency of geology, soils, hydrology, flora and fauna. This requires absolute protection in accordance with national policy as set out below.
- Ancient woodland, together with ancient/veteran trees, represents an irreplaceable semi-natural habitat that still does not benefit from full

statutory protection: for instance 86% of ancient woodland in the South West has no statutory protection.

- With South Gloucestershire showing a below average proportion (as a % of land area) of ancient woodland at 1.9% compared to a Great Britain average of 2.40%, it is vital that this valuable natural resource is absolutely protected in planning design.
- The Council consider that all ancient and veteran trees should be recognised as historical, cultural and wildlife monuments. SGC intend to schedule such trees under TPO legislation as part of the ongoing TPO review work. These trees should be highlighted in plans so they are properly valued in planning decision-making, as promoted by The Ancient Tree Forum (ATF) and the Woodland Trust.

The Council will promote:

- good management of ancient trees;
- new tree planting within open space which can accommodate mature trees, providing an opportunity for trees to achieve ancient or veteran status;
- new wood pasture creation; and
- raise awareness and understanding of the value and importance of ancient trees.

The Ancient Tree Hunt (<http://www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk/>) is designed specifically for this purpose and has already identified ancient trees in South Gloucestershire, such as the ancient White Willow near Little Sodbury (grid ref: ST 751 830).

6. Hedgerows

Legislation

The Hedgerow Regulations (1997) provide some protection for those hedges deemed to be 'ancient and or species rich hedges' i.e. those that contain five or more woody species in a 30 metre length or support a Priority Species. The regulations exclude those hedgerows forming a domestic curtilage.

Survey

For all applications it is vital to evaluate:

- the condition and significance of the hedgerow in accordance with landscape, historic environment and nature conservation policy,
- whether the layout appropriately accommodates significant hedgerows and allows for their future maintenance and management,
- whether the hedge is in good condition on completion, protected during construction and managed into the future.



Design

Incorporate existing hedgerows within the open space network on a site where possible. Adequate space along both sides for maintenance (minimum 3m) should be provided. Planned properly, the hedgerows can become a real asset to pathways, cycle route, development frontage and open amenity spaces.

Future management considerations

The application needs to show the hedgerow will be left in a suitable condition, which may include:

- proposals for additional planting to fill gaps,
- laying the hedge to form a secure boundary, and/or
- flailing to trim to shape.

Proposals must also be secured to ensure the long term viability and value of the hedge through required commuted sums via e.g. section 106 agreements.

Avoid hedges forming the boundary between open space and private landowners, or between private landowners to prevent future ownership/responsibility disputes.

New and supplementary hedgerow planting should accord with the common hedgerow species within South Glos. Predominant species are: Blackthorn, Hawthorn and Hazel. Common species are: (Ash), Crab-apple, Dogwood, Elder, English Oak, Field maple, Guelder Rose, Holly, Spindle, Wayfaring tree, Wild privet, Willow species and Witch elm.

Where there are existing mature trees within the hedgerow these should be retained. Where young trees with the potential to develop within the hedge are identified provision for their retention and maintenance should be included within the management proposals for the hedgerow.

Ongoing management should be either:

- cutting (trimming in an A shape, above 1.5m),
- laying (aesthetically pleasing and will improve an overgrown hedge and encourage dense, bushy new growth), or
- coppicing if needed to regenerate an overgrown hedge (this looks drastic, but plants normally grow back strong and dense and allows new hedging, used to gap up, to establish).

Communication between the developer's representative and the SGC Tree Team is actively encouraged in order to avoid situations that may lead to tree damage.

7. Checklist for the tree elements of your application

Does your scheme.....

- Include a tree survey?
- Take the findings of the Tree Survey into account when designing development?
- Show existing and proposed ground levels?
- Include a specification and show the position of protective fencing on the landscape plan?
- Show the locations of existing and proposed over and underground service runs?
- Avoid any temporary or permanent construction or activities which might injure trees?
- Include method statements for all work proposed near trees?
- Show a full layout of all buildings, paving, structures, services etc and trees and their canopies on the same plan?
- Show potential crown spreads of trees in the proposed landscaping?
- Include a strategy for the future management (3 to 5 years) of existing and new trees on the proposed development site? It is recommended that such information is incorporated in point of sale literature available to prospective purchasers.

8. Other information

We are happy to provide pre-planning advice about trees, hedgerows and woodlands and their management and protection. If you require advice or clarification about the information in this document, please contact us.

9. Contact details

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