

Our Local Plan



Trees and soft landscaping Supplementary Planning Document

November 2017



Tandridge
District Council

Trees and Soft Landscaping SPD

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1. Introduction and Purpose

1.01 This Tandridge District Council (TDC) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been developed to set out the Council's approach to the integration of new and existing trees and soft landscaping into new development.

1.02 The SPD seeks to ensure that trees are adequately considered throughout the development process and provides additional details on how relevant planning policies will be applied.

1.03 Trees are a valuable component of any development. Therefore, the overriding principle of this SPD is that trees and soft landscaping will not be peripheral to development, but must be fully incorporated into the design at the earliest opportunity within the development planning process.

1.1 How to use this document

1.1.1 The Council expects that prior to initiating the design stage of a development proposal, the prospective developer/applicant will first familiarise themselves with the content of this SPD. Particular attention should be given to the green 'KEY CONSIDERATION' boxes that highlight the importance of specific considerations and actions detailed within the body of the SPD, and which are considered as key to achieving sustainable development in accordance with the relevant planning policies and guidance documents.

1.2 The importance of trees to the Tandridge District

1.2.1 Tandridge is a largely rural district with scattered urban conurbations. This means that the district benefits considerably from the amenity provided by open countryside and woodland, including 'wooded hillsides' and many areas of ancient woodland, but also that the space available for new development is limited. As a consequence, where space is available for new development, the importance of successfully retaining and establishing trees, hedges and other soft landscaping elements is amplified.

1.2.2 The provision and maintenance of green infrastructure is essential, but trees, hedges and woodlands in particular are vitally important components of the built and natural environment. They provide multiple benefits to residents, businesses and the environment, which extend far beyond their intrinsic visual beauty.

A summary of the many benefits of trees, particularly in urban areas, is given below:

Environmental benefits of trees

- Trees provide shade, making streets and buildings cooler during the summer.
- The 'urban heat island effect' is reduced.
- They remove dust and polluting particulates from the air.
- Traffic noise is reduced by the absorption and deflection of sound where belts of trees are planted.

- Wind speed is reduced.
- Trees provide habitat, food and shelter for wildlife, helping to maintain and increase biodiversity.
- The effects of flash flooding are reduced via rain interception and increases to soil filtration.

Social benefits of trees

- Trees positively influence people's physical and mental health.
- They help create a sense of place and local identity.
- They benefit communities by increasing pride in the local area.
- Trees create focal points and landmarks.
- Where trees are present there is a positive effect on crime reduction.

Economic benefits of trees

- Trees can make an area more attractive to new residents and businesses and increase the appeal of a property to prospective buyers.
- Trees can improve the environmental performance of buildings by reducing heating and cooling costs.
- Trees create a positive perception of a place for potential homebuyers.
- Urban trees improve the health of local populations, thereby reducing healthcare costs.

1.3 The importance of high quality landscaping within new development

1.3.1 High quality, well designed landscaping is fundamental to ensuring that development in Tandridge both integrates with, and enhances, the surroundings; supporting and enhancing green infrastructure. It is therefore essential that the design of the spaces around buildings is given the same level of consideration from the outset as the design of the buildings themselves. A well thought out and expertly designed landscape is integral to the long term success of developments of all types, whether individual dwellings, large residential schemes or commercial sites. Planning trees, hedges, woodlands and other soft landscaping elements into design at the earliest stages helps to maximise the benefits.

1.3.2 Green spaces and landscapes that are poorly designed may have no clear use and be planted with species that are inappropriate to their environmental conditions, or the character of the local area. These areas can become a maintenance and financial burden, as opposed to an asset, and offer no real benefit to residents, the environment, or landscape character of Tandridge district.

1.3.3 Where high quality landscaping has been designed it contributes positively to, and enhances, the character of Tandridge district. It creates a pleasant, safe and attractive environment where people want to live, work and visit. The planting of trees and other plants also has a softening effect on the appearance of built form, helps to integrate new buildings into the landscape and reinforces local distinctiveness. In addition the careful selection of tree and plant species provides important habitats for wildlife and helps to mitigate the effects of climate change.

2. The Council's Legal Duties

2.0.1 This SPD takes account of the current national and local planning policy, guidance and legislation that relates to trees, soft landscaping and associated considerations:

2.0.2 **The Town and Country Planning Act 1990** (TCPA) recognises the importance of trees to the environment, public amenity and the planning process.

2.0.3 Specifically s197 of the TCPA provides that planning permission is to include appropriate provision for the preservation and planting of trees and that:

it shall be the DUTY of the local authority –

a) *to ensure, whenever it is appropriate, that in granting planning permission for any development adequate provision is made, by the imposition of conditions, for the preservation or planting of trees; and*

b) *to make such orders [TPOs] under section 198¹ as appear to the authority to be necessary in connection with the grant of such permission, whether for giving effect to such conditions or otherwise.*

2.0.4 **The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006** (NERCA) places a duty on the Council to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity whilst exercising its functions. For the purposes of the NERCA 'conserving biodiversity' refers to a living organism or a type of habitat; restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.

¹ s198 Power to make tree preservation orders: If it appears to a local planning authority that it is expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area, they may for that purpose make an order with respect to such trees, groups of trees or woodlands as may be specified in the order.

3. The Policy Context

3.1 The policy and guidance framework

3.1.1 Current policies relevant to this SPD are detailed within Appendix A and summarised below. Additionally, given at Table 1 is best practice guidance relevant to the planning, protection and management of trees and soft landscape. The Council expects developers, architects and allied professionals to follow this guidance in order to meet policy requirements.

3.2 Summary of current policies relevant to trees and landscaping

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** Paragraphs 7, 9, 17, 58, 99, 109, 118.
- **Tandridge District Core Strategy Policy (CSP):** CSP 17 Biodiversity; CSP 18 Character and Design; CSP 20 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); CSP 21 Landscape and Countryside.
- **Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies:** DP7 General Policy for New Development (12) - Landscaping & DP7 (13) – Trees; DP19 Biodiversity, Geological Conservation & Green Infrastructure.

3.3 Tandridge District Council Local Plan

3.3.1 At the time of preparing this SPD, Tandridge District Council is preparing a Local Plan in accordance with national planning requirements² and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Once adopted, the Local Plan will replace the current adopted Core Strategy (2008) and include policies to direct the development and delivery of homes and businesses and seek to ensure that green spaces are sufficiently provided, enhanced and protected as appropriate.

3.3.2 High quality landscapes and the natural environment are central to the predominantly rural character of the District and policies of the Local Plan will continue to support design which is in keeping with this. As such, it is envisaged that the adoption of the Local Plan will not render this SPD out of date, but instead continue to promote an ethos of good design as supported by national policies. Should the Council feel it is necessary; however, it will update this SPD as required.

² Town and Country Planning (England) Regulations 2012

Table 1 - Best practice guidance relevant to the planning, protection and management of trees and soft landscape.

Good Practice Guidance

The Canopy (TDAG, 2011)

(Available from www.tdag.org.uk)

A concise introduction for designers, developers and planners on potential returns and available technical solutions to incorporate trees into dense built environment. The guide also features range of case studies showcasing good practice from around Greater London.

Trees in the Townscape – A Guide for Decision Makers (TDAG, 2012)

(Available from www.tdag.org.uk)

Principles of best practice for all those involved in local decision making to ensure that our 21st century towns and cities are underpinned by a 21st century approach to urban trees, for maximum economic, social and environmental returns.

Principle 4 – Make Tree-Friendly Places

Actions:

- *Presumption in favour of large trees*
- *Conduct a survey of existing trees early*
- *Push for the use of shared ducts for utilities*
- *Select adequate building foundations to the local soil conditions*
- *Ensure foreseeable risks during the development process are addressed in a tree protection plan*

Principle 5 – Pick the Right Trees

Actions:

- *Consider the full range of factors for long-term success*
- *Build ecological value and resilience*
- *Do not let trees go un-mentioned in development briefs*

Principle 6 – Seek Multiple Benefits

Actions:

- *Take a holistic view*

Consider – and if relevant, design for the contribution trees can make to:

- *Quality of place*
- *Economic potential*
- *Health and well-being*
- *Nature conservation and habitat connectivity*
- *Local food and community links*
- *Traffic calming*
- *Storm water management*
- *Air pollution control*
- *Cooling and sheltering*

- Noise abatement

Principle 8 – Provide Soil, Air and Water

Actions:

- Put money into the tree and into providing adequate soil conditions
- Ensure planting is conducted by adequately trained or supervised individuals, and followed by appropriate post-planting maintenance
- Make the most of new technologies

Trees in Hard Landscapes – A Guide for Delivery (TDAG, 2014)

(Available from www.tdag.org.uk)

A companion document to Trees in the Townscape – A Guide for Decision Makers. This document explores the practical challenges and solutions for integrating trees into 21st Century streets, civic spaces and surface car parks detailing process, design and technical options.

British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations (and any subsequent revision)

(Available from <http://shop.bsigroup.com>)

The principal reference document when considering new and existing trees on proposed development sites.

This British Standard provides recommendations and guidance for arboriculturists, architects, builders, engineers, and landscape architects. It is also expected to be of interest to land managers, contractors, planners, statutory undertakers, surveyors, and all others interested in harmony between trees and development in its broadest sense.

British Standard 8545: 2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations (and any subsequent revision)

(Available from <http://shop.bsigroup.com>)

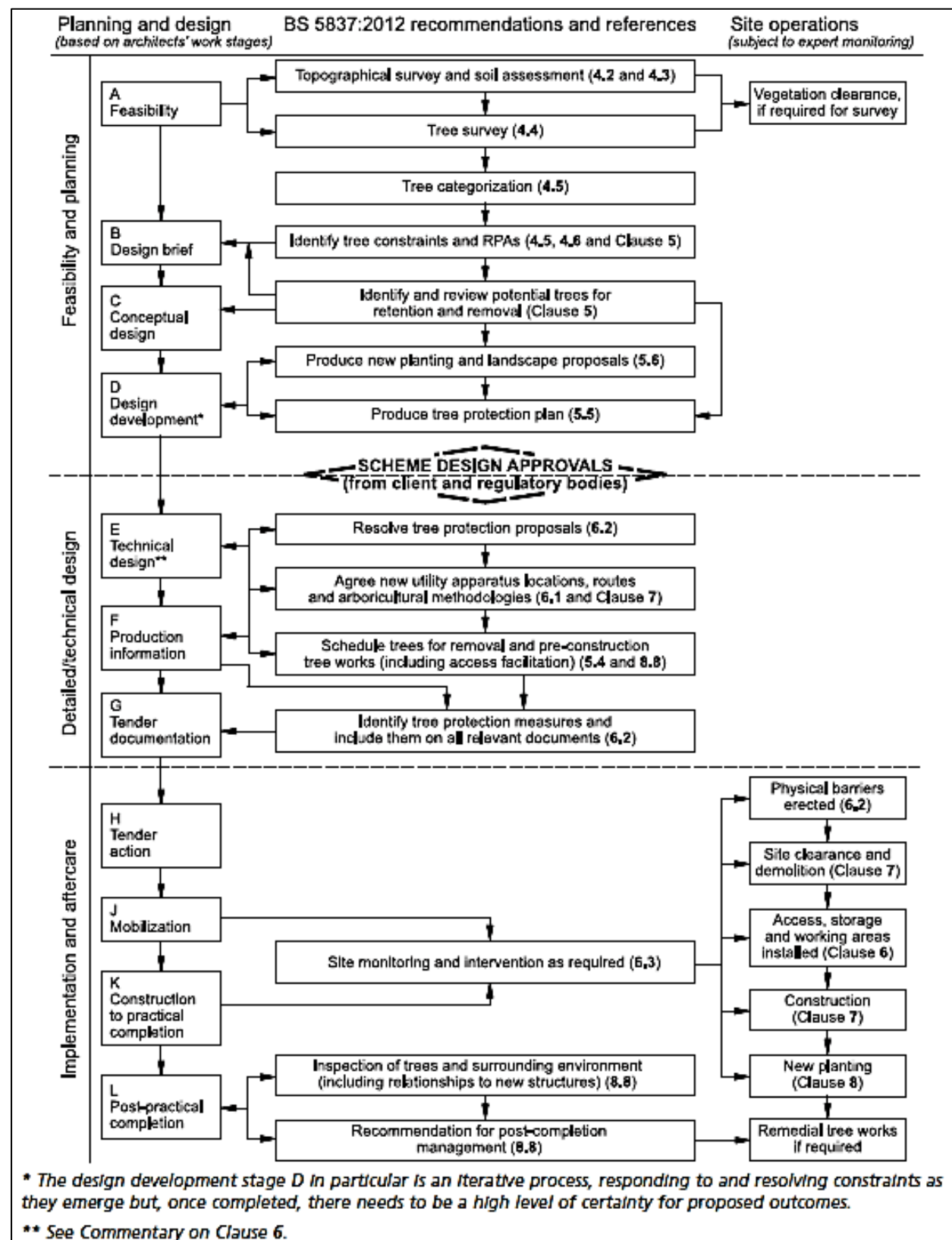
A British Standard to assist people involved in planning, designing, resourcing, producing, planting and managing new trees in the landscape. It describes a process for planting young trees that will result in them achieving ‘independence in the landscape’. This means that they are healthy and have every chance of survival.

4.0 The Planning and Development Process

4.0.1 Good development is best achieved when the necessary attention to detail is embedded throughout the process, beginning before the submission of an application, all the way through to the end of construction. The planning and development process will follow a logical sequence of events and this SPD explains how trees, hedges and other soft landscaping elements should be integrated into this sequence for the benefit of good design. The flow diagram given at Figure 1 is taken from British Standards 5837: 2012 Trees, in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (BS 5837). It summarises how matters specifically relating to trees and landscaping should be incorporated into the development process.

4.0.2 It should be noted that the full sequence of events within figure 1 might not be applicable for all situations; for example, a planning application for a small extension or a conservatory might not require the same level of detail that will be required to accompany an application for the development of a site for a new dwelling or multiple dwellings.

Figure 1 - The design and construction process and tree care (extract from BS5837:2012)



4.1 The pre-application stage

4.1.1 Pre-application discussion is encouraged by the Council as it considers that such discussions are of benefit to the prospective applicant by identifying the planning issues relevant to the site. The Council charges a fee for pre-application advice with Planning Officers³, but where the retention of trees is a consideration within the design process the Council's Tree Officers can offer a site meeting free of charge in order to discuss the potential impact on trees. An indication of the nature of the development is useful to assess the possible impact on trees at this stage, but the proposals for the site should not be fully developed at this stage and some flexibility of the layout design is expected.

KEY CONSIDERATION	1
At the pre-application stage it will be beneficial for the applicant to have completed a Land Survey, Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan. It will also be useful to have ecological information available. This will enable the Council's officers to provide more accurate advice and guidance regarding development constraints and soft landscape opportunities.	

4.2 Arboricultural and landscape advice

4.2.1 Good planning and design is essential in order to achieve a high quality sustainable development that fully considers all arboricultural and landscape requirements. The appointment of both a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant⁴ and landscape designer on the design team and throughout the development process will help to ensure that:

- a) trees categorised as being of suitable quality and value are retained in accordance with BS 5837 or any subsequent revision;
- b) trees categorised as low quality and value in accordance with BS 5837 do not present a significant constraint on the design process, provided sufficient mitigation planting can be provided;
- c) the relationship between retained trees and proposed buildings or hard surfaces does not result in conflict;
- d) a sufficient level of detail is submitted with a planning application;
- e) retained trees are adequately protected throughout the development process (from demolition to construction and landscaping), and that
- f) trees, hedges, shrubs of suitable species and other soft landscaping elements are included within the landscaping scheme.

³ Further information regarding pre-application advice is available from the Council's website: <http://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Planning/planningapplications/preapplicationdiscussions.htm>

⁴ A list of Arboricultural Consultants registered by the Arboricultural Association are available from: <http://www.trees.org.uk/Registered-Consultant-Directory>

4.3 Incorporating trees into development

4.3.1 In order for relevant policies to be met careful consideration must be given to trees that are present on the development site.

4.3.2 Development layouts must be designed to ensure that retained and new trees are able to grow and mature in the space provided, both above and below ground. For new trees the amount of soil volume required for the trees to successfully establish and mature should be calculated and provided for. This will ensure that future problems with the spatial and structural relationship between trees and buildings are avoided, and that the full benefits of the trees are accrued over their lifetime.

4.3.3 Where buildings are positioned too near to trees, or trees are planted too near to buildings, problems can occur as the tree grows, thereby increasing the likelihood that heavy pruning will be required, or that the tree will need to be removed; both of which outcomes can result in a detrimental impact on landscape character and the environment. Even where trees are not directly affected by the layout design, development is unlikely to be acceptable if the amenity of future residents is likely to be negatively affected, or if post development pressure on important trees⁵ is expected to be so significant that removal or heavy reduction of the trees will be necessary to improve resident's amenity.

KEY CONSIDERATION

2

Both retained trees and new tree planting and landscaping must be considered at the earliest design stage as integral to any development and must also have regard to biodiversity and climate change policy requirements. New planting must be specifically designed to complement the development and the character of the locality as a whole, with particular attention given to the requirements of applicable Neighbourhood Plans, Design Guides or Design Statements, and Conservation Area guidance documents if and where they exist.

When submitting a planning application for development, the Council will expect to see evidence that tree retention, planting, landscaping and the design of green infrastructure has been clearly considered as part of the design process. The appointment of a suitably qualified Arboricultural Consultant is considered to be vital in assisting this process.

4.3.4 Where no other option is available for the provision of sufficient green space, and trees must therefore be planted within areas of hard standing, technical solutions should be explored to ensure that adequate soil volume is provided and that environmental conditions; such as water infiltration, drainage and aeration is sufficient for trees to establish and mature. These solutions must also prevent soil compaction, and provide a load bearing capacity sufficient for the task for which the surface is intended⁶. This is particularly

⁵ For the purposes of TDC planning policy an 'important tree' can be defined as:

A tree that is important by virtue of its significance within the local landscape. Its significance may be as a result of its size, form and maturity, or because it is rare or unusual. Younger trees that have the potential to add significant value to a landscape may also be considered as an 'important tree'.

⁶ Further detailed information can be found within the TDAG publication *Trees in Hard Landscapes – A Guide for Delivery* - available from: www.tdag.org.uk

important on sites where there are few retained trees in order to satisfy relevant landscape and design policies which seek to enhance the appearance, landscape character and amenity of the development site.

4.4 Intelligent tree and plant selection

4.4.1 The overriding principle that must be followed, in order to achieve successful planting and establishment within high quality landscape design, is to seek to ensure that any new or retained trees, hedges or other soft landscaping elements have the opportunity to reach full maturity and can be enjoyed by generations to come, without producing significant negative effects to those who occupy the landscape. The main factors to consider are:

Function – what are the desired benefits of the trees or plants in the circumstances of the site (e.g. amenity, biodiversity, shading, screening, rainwater management, health and wellbeing, traffic calming)?

Character – consider the historic and landscape character of the site including AONB, nearby Ancient Woodland, and other landscape designations.

Diversity – the make-up and characteristics of the wider tree and plant population within the area.

Design – the scale, landscape balance, impact, texture and colour expected from the trees and plants.

Site constraints – soil conditions, available sunlight, building scale, available space above and below ground (including utility apparatus, sightlines, risk of future damage to structures), potential for nuisance (shading, berries, aphid deposits, pollens).

KEY CONSIDERATION	3
Landscaping proposals that demonstrate high levels of attention to plant and tree selection, thereby achieving an environmentally and aesthetically sustainable scheme, are considered to be one of the key components of sustainable development.	
Design and Access Statements must set out in detail how these objectives are being achieved and should link directly with the specifications given within the submitted landscaping scheme.	

4.5 Retaining and planting large species trees within development sites

4.5.1 The many identified benefits that trees bring, particularly to urban areas, but also in our rural areas, is proportionate to their canopy size and leaf area. In general the larger mature trees are more effective at providing these benefits than small or ornamental trees. Large trees provide more shade and shelter and they intercept more rainwater within their canopies. In a visual sense large trees add structure and maturity to development, and dependent on the species, serve as host to greater amounts of wildlife than their smaller counterparts. Large species trees should therefore be retained and planted where there is potential to do so

4.6 Trees for climate change resilience

4.6.1 Climate change is identified as an issue affecting the district within the Council's Local Plan. The effects of climate change, and ways to increase resilience to its effects, are considered to be of substantial importance to the future of the district.

4.6.2 As the warming effect of climate change has become better understood, it has become clear that one of the most effective ways of increasing resilience and reducing the effect on our living environment – thereby keeping Tandridge district a pleasant place to live, work and visit - is to increase the number and size of trees within urban areas.

4.6.3 Within the district, climate change is likely to mean that higher average temperatures are experienced and incidents of heavy rain will increase – overwhelming drainage systems and watercourses and causing flooding. Tandridge has a number of areas that have historically experienced highly damaging flood events and any ways to prevent or reduce the severity of flooding is an important consideration within the development process.

4.6.4 Trees can help with mitigating the effects of both warming and flooding. When urban areas are heated to uncomfortable levels, the presence of trees provides shade for buildings and streets and allows water to evaporate through their leaves - which in combination reduces the local environmental temperature. When it rains the leafy canopies of trees slows the rate at which water reaches the ground. This prevents large amounts of water entering the drainage system at the same time and enables drains to cope with the volume of water over an extended period. Consequently this interception of water can be a very effective component of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)⁷⁸ when incorporated into new development.

⁷ http://www.ciria.org/Memberships/The_SuDs_Manual_C753_Chapters.aspx

⁸ <http://www.tdag.org.uk/trees-in-hard-landscapes.html>

KEY CONSIDERATION**4**

Developers must seek to plant and retain large species trees within their schemes where there is potential to do so. Sufficient space should be designed into the layout for the trees to mature both above and below ground, in order to prevent future conflict with people, structures, or utilities. Layouts and structures must be designed at the outset to accommodate the growth of these trees to maturity.

Developers should seek to design landscaping and tree planting schemes that are designed to help mitigate the potential effects of climate change.

4.7 Maintaining and increasing species diversity for tree population resilience

4.7.1 It is widely acknowledged that climate change and recent increases in pest and disease importation present a severe threat to the maintenance of UK tree populations. In order to reduce the negative impact of these threats it is important that tree species diversity, provenance, and age range is widened, building in resilience and ensuring that canopy cover is maintained, and increased where possible, particularly in urban areas. The planting of a diverse range of both native and non-native trees should therefore be a priority when designing soft landscaping schemes.

KEY CONSIDERATION**5**

Developers should seek to plant a diverse range of carefully selected native and non-native tree species, within their schemes in order to ensure resilience to threats from pests and diseases.

Developers should seek to design landscaping and tree planting schemes that are resilient to the potential effects of climate change.

4.8 Pre-emptive felling

4.8.1 Where existing trees are felled prior to permission for development being sought, the Council will require an effective replacement planting scheme of trees of similar species as part of any permission granted in order to maintain and enhance the character of the area. Early dialogue with the Planning and Tree Officers through the pre-application advice process is recommended, prior to existing trees being removed. This dialogue can help to ensure that important trees of mixed age class are retained within a well-designed layout, and that trees of lesser quality and value do not present a significant constraint to development where sufficient mitigation planting can be provided - thereby resolving potential conflicts between trees and development at the earliest design stage.

Developers are encouraged to seek pre-application dialogue with the tree officers in order to avoid conflict between existing trees and development proposals, thereby helping to achieve a high standard of sustainable development. Where trees are removed prior to permission for development being sought, the Council will require robust replacement planting as part of any permission, unless the Council considers there is an overriding justification not to do so. Evidence of any overriding justification must be submitted within application details before any deviation from the requirement to replant will be considered.

4.9 Planning conditions

4.9.1 Planning conditions can enhance the quality of development and enable development proposals to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects of the development.

4.9.2 Where only a broad landscape strategy has been submitted at the application stage it will frequently be necessary for a condition to be imposed that requires the exact detail of the landscaping proposals to be submitted; including site preparation, planting specifications and post development maintenance of the planting – in order to ensure successful establishment.

4.9.3 If tree protection measures have not already been submitted it may also be necessary for a condition to be imposed requiring that a Tree Protection Plan is produced in accordance with BS5837. Additionally, where specific arboricultural issues have been identified within the Arboricultural Implications Assessment, an Arboricultural Method Statement may be required to demonstrate the exact methodology to be used in order to ensure that retained trees are fully protected (e.g. method of construction for a permeable above ground road/hard surface; or foundations engineered to avoid roots). It may also be necessary to impose a condition that requires a pre-commencement meeting, or supervision of works around particularly important trees, and the reporting of progress to the Council. The pre-commencement meeting and any necessary supervision of works is undertaken by an arboriculturist appointed by the Applicant.

5.0 Local Validation Requirements

5.1.1 The Local Validation Requirements list (LVR) is produced in accordance with the requirements of the Development Management Policy Annex: Information requirements and validation requirements for planning applications (CLG 2010).

5.1.2 The requirements given in Table 4 relate solely to matters pertaining to trees and landscaping to be submitted for successful validation of a planning application.

If it becomes apparent during the application process that the validation requirements have not been met, then the application may be invalidated.

Table 2 - Local validation requirements relating to trees and landscaping

Information required	Policy Drivers	Types of application that require this information	What information is required	Where to look for further information
Tree survey, arboricultural implications and tree protection	NPPF paragraphs 7, 9, 17, 58, 99, 109 & 118. CSP 17, 18, 20 & 21. DP7 (12), (13) & DP19 Relevant up to date local design and landscaping policies ⁹ ,	All types of major and minor applications (full or outline) for planning permission, and change of use (if formation of hardstanding is proposed), where there are trees on, or where roots or branches are potentially encroaching the site, and/or where a potential impact on trees has been identified on the application form.	Details must include: Tree survey schedule, Tree Protection Plan (TPP), Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) & Arboricultural Method Statements (AMS) - where need is identified within the AIA.	British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations (or any subsequent revision) Available from: http://shop.bsigroup.com
Landscaping details	NPPF paragraphs 7, 9, 17, 58, 59, 96, 99, 109 & 118. CSP 15,17 &18 DP7 (12), (13) & DP19 Relevant up to date ¹⁰ local design and landscaping policies Relevant Design Guidance	All types of major application for full planning permission. All major outline applications for planning permission where landscaping is to be considered. All types of minor application for planning permission Applications under S73 of the Act (including minor material amendments) where the subject of the application affects landscaping proposals or potential.	As a minimum an indicative landscaping strategy must be submitted. The strategy should set out the principles of the scheme in terms of landscape, spatial integration and post development pressure. This must also include details of areas of proposed hard and soft landscaping. Soft landscaping areas should identify the general type of planting to be shown including proposed trees. Where there are trees or vegetation	The British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) http://www.bali.org.uk The Canopy (TDAG, 2011) Available from: www.tdag.org.uk Trees in Hard Landscapes – A Guide for Delivery (TDAG, 2014) Available from: www.tdag.org.uk

⁹ Including those set out in adopted Neighbourhood Plans and those at an advanced stage of preparation.

			to be retained these must be clearly identified on the plans. Detailed hard and soft landscaping proposals will be required at condition stage specifying plant types (including size), locations and an establishment/maintenance plan. Where there are trees or vegetation to be retained these must be clearly identified on the plans.	Harestone Design Guidance. Woldingham Design Guidance & Village Design Statement for Woldingham Village Design Statement for Lingfield Surrey Hills Design Guide
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Key

All types of major and minor applications (full or outline) for planning permission and change of use (if formation of hardstanding is proposed) are defined as follows:

Major developments:

- provision of more than ten dwellings or the provision of residential on a site of 0.5 hectares or more;
- provision of commercial floor space in excess of 1000m²;
- any development involving a combination of both of the above categories.

Minor developments:

- any new build residential schemes involving one to nine new dwellings;
- changes of use;
- flat conversions (where the number of flats proposed is nine or less);
- any new build commercial involving less than 1000 m² of floor space;
- extensions to non-residential buildings.

6.0 The Development Implementation Stage

6.1 The Importance of effective tree protection

6.1.1 Trees will be vulnerable to a number of potentially harmful factors during their lifetime; including physical disturbance and injury, pests and diseases, and environmental changes. Construction activities and the subsequent environmental changes to the development site can exert pressure on trees and cause them to suffer long term damage, and potentially their early death.

6.1.2 A tree that has taken decades or even centuries to reach full maturity can be damaged irreparably in a short space of time by actions, whether unwitting, negligent or deliberate; such as the single pass of heavy machinery over an unprotected root system, thereby causing soil compaction and subsequent root death. The early provision of robust physical protection of trees during the development process is therefore critical to ensuring their successful retention such as fencing or ground protection measures. This protection should be in accordance with BS5837 recommendations¹¹. Where considered expedient to do so, the Council will make Tree Preservation Orders to give retained trees a level of statutory protection during the development process and beyond.

KEY CONSIDERATION

7

Where agreed tree protection measures have not been installed as specified within a planning consent and development activities have started, then the Council may use its powers under the Town and Country Planning Act to serve Enforcement Notices including Temporary Stop Notices or Injunctions in order to halt development and prevent damage being caused to retained trees. It is therefore vital that any agreed tree protection is installed prior to site clearance, site preparation or to development activities commencing, in order to prevent harm to trees and to ensure that the development can proceed without undue delay. This is particularly important where trees protected by Tree Preservation Order or Conservation Area controls are growing on site as wilful damage to such trees is a criminal offence.

6.2 Pre-commencement meetings

6.2.1 In order to ensure good arboricultural practice and compliance with the approved scheme a pre-commencement meeting between the appointed arboriculturist and the Council Tree Officer will be held, but only when the approved arboricultural Implications Assessment or Arboricultural Method Statement has specified a pre-commencement meeting as being necessary, or where planning conditions requiring such a meeting have been imposed. This meeting will normally include an inspection of the tree protection

¹¹ Available from: <http://shop.bsigroup.com>

measures that have been installed, or discussion of measures to be installed. It will also highlight any potential or required deviation from the plans that may require prior agreement, or formal variation of conditions.

6.3 Arboricultural supervision, monitoring and reporting

6.3.1 In circumstances where the approved Tree Protection Plan or Arboricultural Method Statement specifies a need, or where specific planning conditions have been imposed, an auditable system of site monitoring and/or supervision of works within root protection areas must be undertaken by the appointed arboriculturist. Such monitoring and supervision can ensure that tree protection measures are fully installed, any methods of construction adhered to, and that any occurrences that have the potential to cause harm to trees if they go unchecked, can be remediated.

6.4 Soft landscaping implementation

6.4.1 The Council expects that all ground preparation works, planting methods and establishment procedures are adhered to as specified within the approved soft landscaping plan and maintenance schedule. No deviation from the approved plans can be made without the written agreement of the Council; including changes to the species planted, their locations, or the size of the trees or plants at the time of planting. Depending on the scale of the changes, formal amendment of the permission either through a non-material amendment or minor material amendment (under S73) may be required.

6.4.2 It is expected that the highest standards of practice will be adhered to throughout the landscaping process and the Council's standard planning conditions will normally require any damaged, diseased or dying trees or plants to be replaced immediately – if it occurs within a period of five years from the completion of the development.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1.1 As detailed within the introduction to this document, the objective of this SPD has been to ensure that, in order to comply with relevant planning policies and guidance, trees and soft landscaping are adequately considered throughout the development process; from the initial design stage and throughout the planning application and subsequent development process.

7.1.2 Developers following the advice and guidance either contained or signposted within this SPD will be assisted in achieving a sustainable development that will be an asset to the Tandridge District for many years, with a landscape containing trees both retained and planted that not only provide immediate amenity to the occupants of the new development but will also provide a legacy that is handed down for future generations of residents to enjoy.

APPENDIX A

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 7

One of the three stated dimensions to sustainable development is the environmental role, which is described as:

Contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change...

Paragraph 9

Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including:

Moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature; replacing poor design with better design; improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure.

Paragraph 17 – Core planning principles

Planning should:

- *Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.*
- *Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.*

Paragraph 58

Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments are:

Visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Paragraph 99

Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.

Paragraph 109

The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *Protecting and enhancing values landscapes...*
- *Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services*
- *Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible....*

Paragraph 118

Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh the loss.

Tandridge District Core Strategy Policy (CSP)

CSP 17 Biodiversity:

Development proposals should protect biodiversity and provide for the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and, if possible, expansion of biodiversity, by aiming to restore or create suitable semi natural habitats and ecological networks to sustain wildlife in accordance with the aims of the Surrey Biodiversity Action Plan.

CSP 18 Character and Design:

...Development must have also regard to the topography of the site, important trees or groups of trees and other important features that need to be retained.

The Council will protect the wooded hillsides in the built up areas by ensuring that new development does not adversely affect the character of these areas and that there is no overall loss of tree cover.

CSP 20 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):

The principles to be followed are:

- a) Conserve and enhance the special landscape character, heritage, distinctiveness and sense of place of the locality.*
- c) Protect prominent locations on skylines and slopes and for development to take advantage of existing features and tree screening.*
- f) Apply the highest environmental design standards to development.*

CSP 21 Landscape and Countryside:

The character and distinctiveness of the District's landscapes and countryside will be protected for their own sake; new development will be required to conserve and enhance landscape character.

Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies

DP 7 General Policy for New Development (12) Landscaping:

The proposal ensures that landscaping is an integral element in layout design, making provision for suitable new planting, trees and boundary treatments to enhance the appearance, character and amenity of the site from the outset. The proposal is also expected to retain existing important features such as trees, hedgerows and walls wherever possible. Where a new road is required, a suitably hard and/or soft landscaped gap will be required between any existing properties and the new carriageway.

DP7 (13) Trees:

Where trees are present on a proposed development site, a landscaping scheme should be submitted alongside the planning application which makes provision for the retention of existing trees that are important by virtue of their significance within the local landscape. Their significance may be as a result of their size, form and maturity, or because they are rare or unusual. Younger trees that have the potential to add significant value to the landscape character in the future should also be retained where possible. Their retention should be reflected in the proposed development layout, allowing sufficient space for new and young trees to grow to maturity, both above and below ground. Where existing trees are felled prior to permission for development being sought, the Council may require replacement planting as part of any permission granted.

DP19 Biodiversity, Geological Conservation & Green Infrastructure

A. There will be a presumption in favour of development proposals which seek to:

- 1) Protect, enhance or increase the provision of, and access to the network of multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI);*
- 2) protect nature conservation and management;*
- 3) restore or create Priority Habitats.*

C. Where a proposal is likely to result in direct or indirect harm to an irreplaceable environmental asset of the highest designation, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ancient Woodland or veteran trees, the granting of planning permission will be wholly exceptional.

- 2) In the case of Ancient Woodland and veteran trees exceptions will only be made where the need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss.*
- 3) In all cases, any impacts or harm should not just be mitigated, but overall ecological benefits should be delivered.*

