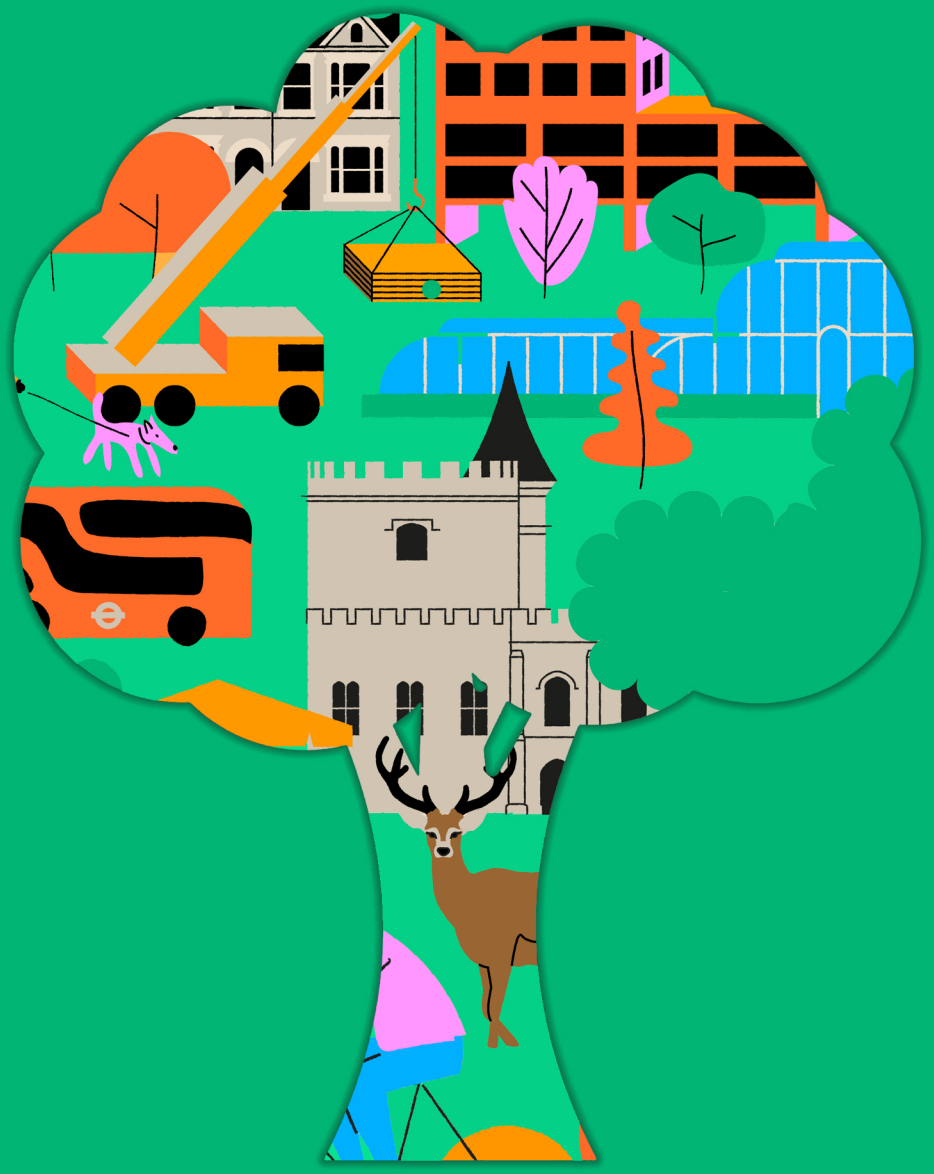
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Plan

Trees and Development

Supplementary Planning Document

Draft for Consultation February 2026



LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

Draft Richmond Trees and Development SPD

1 Introduction

Purpose of the SPD

1.1 The Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the Council's expectations for how development proposals should take account of existing trees and new planting. It applies to all scales of development – from individual household extensions to major schemes – where trees may be affected or new trees proposed.

1.2 The SPD supports the implementation of the policies of Richmond upon Thames' Local Plan (2025), being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Its purpose is to expand and provide guidance on Local Plan Policy 42 Trees, Woodland and Landscape.

1.3 The SPD seeks to assist applicants of developments of all sizes to understand the role of trees within the wider environment. It outlines the impacts of development on trees to ensure that development proposals are designed and undertaken in a manner which avoids harm to trees, including to their roots. It guides applicants through the planning process, including the Council's expectations for new planting required as part of proposed developments.

Who should use this SPD?

1.4 The SPD is for anyone preparing development proposals that may affect trees or include new planting. It will be most relevant to:

- Developers and planning agents
- Homeowners and householders planning extensions and alterations to their property, including garden works and vehicular crossovers
- Architects, engineers and landscape architects
- Arboriculturists and environmental consultants

The advice is relevant to developments of all scales, including householder applications. For smaller or simpler schemes, a proportionate approach may be taken with regards to the level of arboricultural detail required, as indicated where a 🏠 symbol is shown.

Why are trees important?

1.5 Richmond upon Thames is one of London's greenest boroughs, boasting many parks, open spaces, commons, and tree-lined streets. Trees are a vital component of the built environment, and are a great asset to the Borough's unique environment and ecological and green infrastructure network. Trees, as well as other significant vegetation and landscape, deliver a multitude of benefits. They provide significant multi-functional benefits by contributing to biodiversity, addressing climate change and improving health and wellbeing. The Council places great importance on the protection and maximisation of the benefits that trees provide, favouring the retention of existing trees, resisting the loss of or harm to trees, and setting standards for new tree planting.

1.6 Trees for Richmond sets out the Council's strategy for tree planting in Richmond with the ambition of increasing the benefits provided by trees.

Legal Context

1.7 The Council has a duty to ensure that trees are protected and provided for as part of development. Table 1 below provides a summary of the legal framework relating to trees during the planning application process. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 sets out the duty of local authorities to provide and protect trees. The other legislation sets out how applicants should protect and manage trees during the development process.

Legislation	Summary
Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990	
Duty to secure appropriate tree provision in planning permissions (*Section 197 of TCPA*)	Local planning authorities have a duty to ensure that adequate provision is made for the preservation and planting of trees when granting planning permission.
Tree protection: tree preservation orders (TPOs) (*Section 298-210 of TCPA*)	Local planning authorities have the power to issue TPOs to protect individual trees, groups of trees or woodland of amenity value.

	Please see Section 6 Trees in Specific Development Situations for more guidance on TPOs.
Tree protection: conservation areas (*Section 211 of TCPA*)	Trees found in conservation areas are subject to similar controls to those applied to trees protected by a TPO, subject to some minor exemptions.
Hedgerow Regulation 1997	
Tree protection: hedgerows	Protection is afforded to hedgerows of more than 20 metres in length or which join other hedgerows, provided they adjoin agricultural land, forestry, paddocks, common land, village greens, a Site of Special Scientific Interest or a local nature reserve.
Forestry Act 1967	
Tree protection: felling licenses (*Sections 9-17 of Forestry Act*)	Pre-emptive felling, i.e. the practice of clear felling a site for the purpose of turning a land into a potentially buildable site without having previously secured a felling license, is an offence, unless an exemption applies.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	
Tree protection: roosting and nesting of protected wild animals (*Sections 1 and 9 of Wildlife and Countryside Act*)	Causing injury to or destroying a wild bird active nest or the nesting or roosting sites of other protected wild animals such as bats, is an offense, unless an exemption applies.
Environment Act 2021	
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (*Part 6, Clause 102 of the Environment Act*)	Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land. It makes sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development.
Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006	
The Biodiversity Duty (Section 40) Habitats and Species of Principal Importance (Section 41)	Protects vegetation and trees that are important habitats for species, including ancient woodland and veteran trees, as a material consideration in planning matters.

Table 1: Legal context

Policy Context

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1.8 The NPPF (2024) section 12 paragraph 136 acknowledges the importance of trees in contributing to the character and quality of urban environments. It states that planning policies and decisions should ensure new streets are tree-lined and that opportunities to incorporate trees in development areas are taken. Newly-planted trees should be the right trees planted in the right places, and existing trees should be retained where possible. Paragraphs 187 and 193 also relate to trees.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

1.9 The PPG provides further guidance to support the NPPF and its implementation. The Natural Environment guidance includes sections on Trees and Woodlands that sets out the considerations when planning for trees in development and guidance around ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees. There is also further guidance on TPOs and trees in conservation areas which explains the legislation governing these trees.

Regional Policy

London Plan

1.10 The London Plan (2021) Policy G7 Trees and Woodlands seeks to protect, maintain and enhance London's urban forest (area of London under the canopy of trees). It sets out the Mayor's ambition to increase tree canopy in London by 10% by 2050. It promotes the use of the CAVAT system in instances where tree removal may take place, ensuring adequate replacement.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

1.11 The Greater London Authority (GLA) is responsible for producing the LNRS for London as required under law by the Environment Act 2021. The LNRS and accompanying spatial habitat map is currently being produced in collaboration with all 33 London Boroughs to ensure London's ecological network is more joined up.

Local Policy

Richmond upon Thames Local Plan (2024-2039)

1.12 The Local Plan sets out the framework for future development in the Borough and includes several policies that aim to preserve and enhance biodiversity. Local Plan Policy 42 Trees, Woodland and Landscape covers the key policy requirements for considering trees in development proposals and seeks to ensure development protects, respects, contributes to and enhances trees and landscapes. Local Plan Policy 54 Basements and Subterranean Developments also seeks to protect trees in relation to basement development.

Other Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

1.13 The Biodiversity SPD provides further information on how to promote biodiversity and consider trees in planning applications. The Planning Obligations SPD provides information on the use of planning obligations to secure compensation (in line with the CAVAT methodology see Tree Removal and Planning Obligations for more information) in circumstances where the on-site replacement of a felled tree is accepted as not practical.

Council Guidance and Strategies

1.14 The Council's Tree Policy (2023) aims to protect trees for future generations via guidance on managing trees. The document commits to replacing every Council-owned tree that is removed, and actively increasing overall tree numbers across the Borough. It confirms that healthy trees are generally retained unless justified for a good reason, such as a qualified arboriculturist confirming a risk to public safety or structural damage, with no viable alternative except removal. For new trees, there is an emphasis on species diversity, climate-appropriate trees and sourcing stock from reputable, bio-secure nurseries. The document recognises and places importance on the benefits of trees and considers the Council's ability to protect trees through the planning process.

1.15 Richmond's Biodiversity Action Plan (2025), produced by the Richmond Biodiversity Partnership, provides an active framework for conserving and enhancing local biodiversity. Veteran and Ancient Trees are highlighted as priority habitats, because of their ecological value, and street and garden trees are recognised for their role in connectivity – providing stepping stones for biodiversity across the urban landscape. The Plan emphasises the importance of protecting and managing existing mature trees, planting diverse, climate-resilient species, and encouraging replacement planting in parks, gardens, and along streets.

1.16 The Council's Climate and Nature Strategy (2025-2030)outlines how Richmond will accelerate towards its 2043 net zero goal, with a five-year strategic approach focussing on decarbonisation, biodiversity, resilience and inclusion. Commitments include: tree-planting across the Borough (linked to the Tree Planting Strategy, below); ensuring trees are planted to maximise shade, cooling, and flood resilience; using diverse, disease-resistant species to future-proof the urban canopy; and protecting existing canopy cover. The Council's associated Climate Action Plan provides operational actions linked to the strategy, and is updated annually.

1.17 The Tree Planting Strategy 'Trees for Richmond' was adopted in June 2025. This acknowledges that increasing tree canopy cover is a key method to improve climate resilience, and sets priorities, targets and focus areas for planting. It was informed by the Tree Planting Strategy Survey, which was undertaken by the Council in winter 2024/25. The Survey sought public input on where tree planting should occur, what benefits trees provide, and how tree works integrate into the urban environment. It highlights challenges with vehicular crossovers, sight-lines and opportunities for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) integration.

1.18 The Adaption and Resilience Strategy (2025-2035)focuses on managing climate risks, such as heat, flooding, and biodiversity shifts, through nature-based solutions, resilience planning, and adaption frameworks. This directly supports the principle of integrating trees into climate adaption planning.

1.19 The Council's Parks & Open Spaces Strategic Principles (May 2024)emphasise biodiversity, climate resilience, and embedding nature into urban spaces.

1.20 The Air Quality Action Plan (2025-2030) sets out measures to cut pollution and protect health by improving monitoring, reducing vehicle and combustion emissions, including opportunities to use trees and hedges to improve dispersal and screening of air pollutants.

1.21 The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2023) sets out a plan of action for managing flood risk within the Borough, highlighting the importance of promoting sustainable, multi-beneficial solutions to mitigate flood risk. Planting trees is a key solution identified as a way residents and developers can reduce flood risk and help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

1.22 These strategies are updated independently of this SPD and the Council will refer applicants to the most up-to-date strategies at the time of pre-application or application.

Best Practice and Guidance

1.23 The British Standards (BS) and the Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) have produced key guidance and best practice for retaining and delivering new trees during development. The Council and developers in the Borough should be guided by the best practice led by BS and TDAG.

British Standards (BS)

1.24 The key documents to consider are:

- **BS 5837:2012 –** Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction (includes an accepted framework to assess and protect trees in development)
- **BS 3998:2010 –** Tree Work (provides recommendations for managing and protecting trees during tree work)

1.25 British Standards have produced several more relevant guides that can be obtained from the BSI www.bsigroup.com/Shop

1.26 Please note that at the time of writing, these British Standards are under review. Applicants are advised to ensure they use the most recent version at the time of scheme development.

Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG)

1.27 TDAG works to ensure that the role of urban trees is supported through collaboration with the public and private sector and produce good practice guidance. The key documents to consider are: Trees, Planning and Development (2023); First Steps in Trees and New Developments (2022); and Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide For Delivery (2014).

How can trees be damaged?

1.28 Trees can be damaged both directly and indirectly during all phases of development. Trees should be surveyed prior to development to ensure that any damage to the tree above or below the surface of the soil is prevented. Arboriculture surveys should cover the whole site, including areas that are not considered for use during construction. For example, materials may be stored on areas of the site that were not originally planned or areas of the site used for parking for workers.

1.29 Failure to consider the impacts of development on trees could result in a loss of tree cover in the Borough. Examples of tree damage include:

- **Direct damage to tree roots**: caused by machinery, excavations or site clearance. Tree surveying ensures that any damage below the soil to root systems is minimised.
- **Damage of the rooting environment:** soil compaction caused by use of heavy plant and materials on unprotected ground, soil contamination through leaching of cement and toxic materials, changes in aeration that prevent the natural exchange of gasses.
- **Soil level changes**: caused by movement of soil during construction
- **Removal of crown**: caused by intentional removal to accommodate design or during construction
- **Bark or limb damage**: caused by machinery
- **Heat damage**: caused by exhaust vents or chimneys
- **Pathogens and tissue decay**: wounds to trees can create entry points for organisms including fungi and bacteria, that can further decay the tree
- **Structural decay**: caused by excessive pruning and other wounding

2 Considering Trees Early

2.1 Trees are an integral part of good design. They provide shade, habitat, identity, natural cooling and contribute to drainage, biodiversity and climate resilience. Considering trees from the outset avoids redesigns, saves time and costs, and ensures high-quality and sustainable development that fits its surrounding. When considering new development, it is vital to consider the potential impact on existing trees alongside consideration of opportunities to establish new and sustainable planting at the early stages of design. The Council strongly favours tree retention over tree removal and replacement. Where existing trees are removed, they should be replaced as part of the development.

2.2 Early understanding of a site's opportunities and constraints – particularly those created by existing trees – should inform all design work. This applies to **every scale of development**, from major schemes to small householder extensions.

For householders: Identifying trees early helps avoid delays once a planning application is submitted, and can prevent costly changes later.

2.3 A survey of trees on and around the site should be one of the first steps in any development project. A scheme's design must allow for space for existing trees – and new planting – to thrive and mature without future conflict with buildings and surroundings.

2.4 Figure 1 below summarises the key stages when trees should be considered during the planning and development process – from initial design to submitting a planning application, to completion and aftercare. The level of detail required at each stage should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the proposal.

Pre-Planning and Design Stage

- Consider early advice from an arboriculturist
- Identify and survey existing and nearby trees
- Map Root Protection Areas (RPAs) and design around them
- The Council's starting point is the retention of all existing trees - design layouts must respect existing trees
- Prepare a Tree Constraints Plan to inform design layout
- Anticipate construction methods, access and working space to ensure tree protection can be achieved in practice
- Identify opportunities for new planting

Pre-Application Stage

- Review layout and construction approach against tree-retention objectives and potential conflicts
- Engage with the Council's pre-application service
- Submit a draft Tree Survey (supported by a topographical base), Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and proposed layout of the development with your pre-application submission
- Council officers will: review proposed development layouts against tree retention objectives and identify any conflicts or re-design needs
- Receive advice on tree retention, protection measures and the level of information required at planning application stage

Planning Application Stage

- Finalise and submit: AIA, to include a Tree Survey (supported by a Topographical\Land Survey, RPAs and Tree Constraints Plan/Statement) and tree planting details (where relevant)
- Where trees will be impacted by development, the AIA should also include a draft Tree Protection Plan (TPPV) and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)
- Demonstrate how construction methods and sequencing will protect retained trees via draft Construction Method Statement (informed by the TPP/AMS)
- Application should demonstrate how the layout maximises tree retention and canopy cover, and aligned with landscaping and biodiversity requirements
- Tree protection and construction method details will be secured via condition
- Tree protecting and maintenance plan secured by condition where required

Construction Stage

- Implement approved construction methods and tree-protection methods in full
- Where final construction/protect details have been secured via a pre-commencement condition, submit these details for approval before development begins (including demolition)
- Erect fencing and ground protection before works start (as per approved details)
- Follow the TPP and AMS throughout the works with arboricultural supervision where required
- Keep storage, mixing and machinery outside of RPAs (as per approved details)
- Monitor the tree protection measures and submit details of monitoring (when required)

Post-Completion Stage

- Inspection of trees and surrounding environment
- Aftercare and maintenance of new trees and planting to be implemented in line with any approved plans' conditions
- Remove fencing only after completion and sign-off

Figure 1: Tree considerations in development

3 The Pre-Application Stage

Purpose

3.1 Engagement with planning in the early stages of design helps identify potential issues, agree on realistic design parameters and avoids unnecessary delays later in the planning process. Early discussion ensures that proposals reflect planning policy, technical standards, and local expectations for protecting and enhancing trees.

3.2 A survey of trees on and adjacent to the site should be one of the first steps in the design process. The findings will shape the design of the development, ensuring adequate space for trees to mature and flourish without risking future conflict with their surroundings. Early protection planning also helps ensure that trees survive construction and continue to contribute to local character.

3.3 A typical sequence to follow during the early design stage of a proposal is:

1. **Site survey and analysis**– identify trees, constraints and opportunities
2. **Concept design** – plan around trees; avoid encroaching on root protection areas (RPAs)
3. **Pre-application submission** – include survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and draft protection proposals (see below for further details on recommended information)
4. **Feedback and revision** – adjust layout or construction details, as advised.

3.4 Please also refer to the flow diagram above which summarises the key stages for consideration of trees during the planning and development process.

Engaging with the Council

3.5 Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the Council's pre-application service before submitting a planning application. Early engagement enables:

- Upfront advice on relevant policies, guidance, and what tree-related information will be required at submission stage;
- An agreed approach to tree retention, planting and maintenance.

🏠 *For householders:* Even if your project is small – such as an extension, outbuilding or garden works – early discussion helps avoid delays later in the process, especially where there are trees on or close to your site (including neighbouring gardens, and street trees which may be impacted by construction).

3.6 More information on pre-application advice can be found on the Council's website.

Information to prepare

3.7 Before seeking advice, applicants should prepare basic information on existing trees so that the Council can give proportionate advice. Typical information includes:

- A **Topographical or Land Survey** which shows the accurate plotting of buildings, boundaries, site levels, utilities and location of all existing trees on or near the development site;
- A **Tree Survey and Constraints Plan** prepared by a qualified arboriculturist (where trees are likely to be impacted by development)
- An **Arboricultural Impact Assessment** explaining how tree constraints have influenced the design of the development proposal; and
- A draft **Tree Protection Plan and Statement** outlining suggested protection measures for trees.

🏠 *For householders:* The level of detail provided at pre-application stage can be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed works. If only one or two trees are impacted, showing these on a Block Plan together with paragraphs and short notes on how roots and branches will be protected, can sometimes be sufficient. In some cases, your project might be sufficiently small or straightforward so pre-application advice from the Council may not be necessary. However, where trees are involved, you should always ensure that you seek advice from a suitably qualified expert before you make your planning application.

3.8 Submitting as much information as possible with a pre-application enquiry allows officers to comment meaningfully on design, layout, protection measures and new planting.

British Standards and good practice

3.9 All surveys and assessments should follow BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations' . Figure 2

below summarises the British Standards recommended design and construction process. This is a useful guidance document when seeking to successfully incorporate existing trees within a new development.

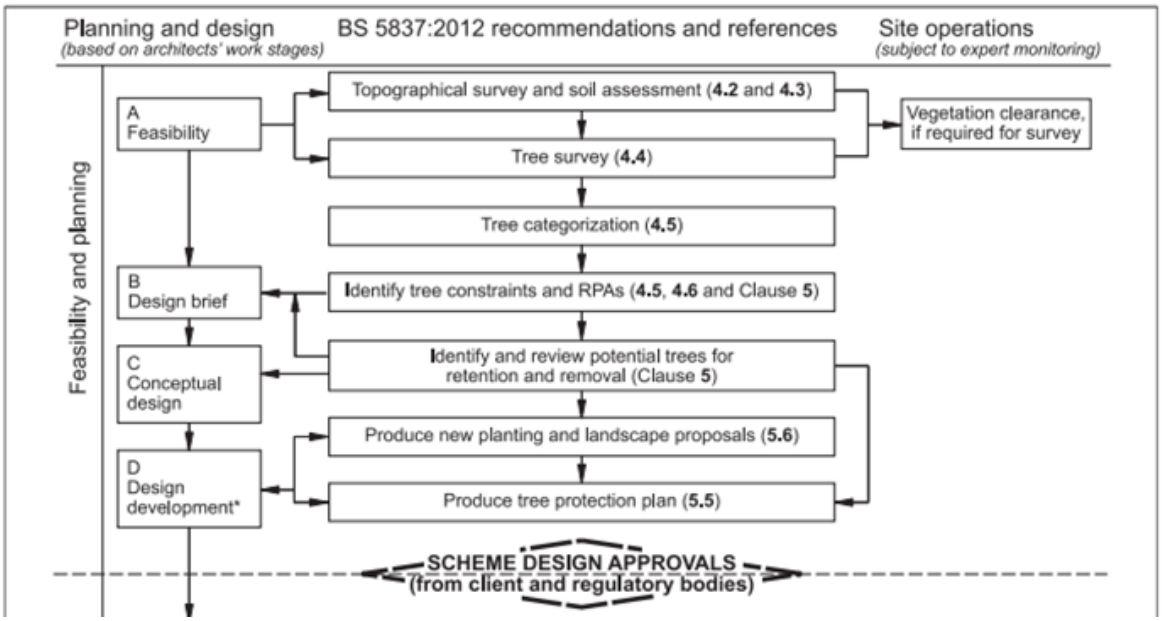


Figure 2: The design and construction process and tree care

3.10 The flow diagram in Section 2 shows in more detail how trees should be considered during the entire design and planning process. These steps apply to all development types, though the level of detail required will vary depending on the scale and nature of the proposal.

🏠For smaller projects, proportionate information should be provided – typically: identifying trees on and near the site, showing how they will be protected, and including replacement planting where necessary.

3.11 Please see Section 5 Technical Guidance on Key Documents for a more detailed description of arboricultural documents and information submitted with a pre-application and full planning application.

Arboricultural expertise

3.12 Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage an arboriculturist early in the process. A qualified arboriculturist can:

- Survey trees and advise which should be retained (noting that the starting point should be the retention of all trees, as per Local Plan Policy 42);
- Identify potential conflicts with proposed works;
- Prepare the required tree documents.

4 The Planning Application Stage

4.1 At application stage, the planning authority must be satisfied that trees have been properly considered, existing trees will be protected during and after development, and appropriate opportunities for new planting have been identified (where relevant). A planning application should be supported with evidence which demonstrates:

- How existing trees have influenced design and layout;
- How conflicts between tree roots and buildings, structures, access and other identified constraints will be avoided;
- What new planting will be provided to enhance local character and biodiversity.

4.2 Providing clear, proportionate tree information at submission stage reduces the risk of validation delays and requests for further details later in the process.

Submission Requirements

4.3 Where trees are present on or near a site, a planning application should normally include:

- Land Survey / Topographical Survey
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)
- Tree Survey
- Root Protection Areas (RPAs)
- Tree Constraints Plan/Statement (where trees will be impacted by development)
- Draft Tree Protection Plan / Draft Arboricultural Method Statement (where trees will be impacted by development)
- Tree planting and landscaping proposals (where required)

4.4 For large or complex schemes, these should normally be individual reports.

 For smaller proposals, it is usually acceptable to combine the information in one document.

4.5 Where trees are shown on site or adjacent to it, but no other information has been provided, one of the first things the Council's Arboricultural Officer reviewing the application will ask for is an AIA. It is therefore important to include this with your submission, to avoid incurring delays to the assessment of your scheme.

4.6 The diagram below outlines the basic scenarios for when the above information is likely to be required. This serves as a guide only. It is strongly recommended that applicants seek pre-application advice before submitting a planning application, so that the Council can provide accurate advice on what information will be required for your individual development. See Section 3 The Pre-Application Stage above and on the Council's website.

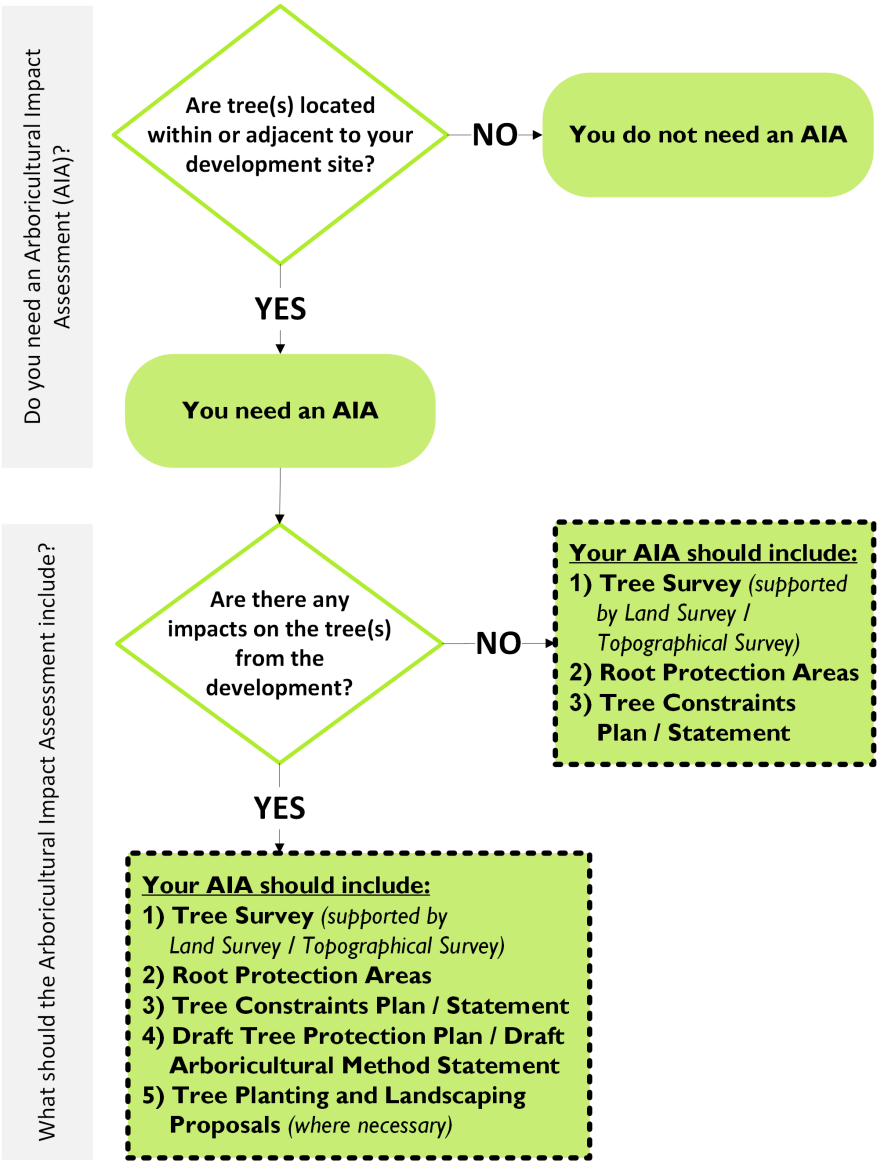


Figure 3: Information to submit with your planning application

Arboricultural expertise

4.7 Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with a qualified arboriculturist early in the process. This is regardless of whether an applicant has chosen to engage in the Council's recommended pre-application service. Early expert input reduces risk, ensures submission documents are compliant with technical standards and best practice, and helps ensure a policy-compliant scheme.

Integration with other submission documents

4.8 Tree considerations should align with other technical information (where required), in particular:

- **Construction Management Plans**, showing access and storage area outside tree-protection zones
- **Drainage strategies and SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems)**, designed to avoid conflict with root systems
- **Design and Access Statements**, explaining how trees informed the design
- **Ecological Reports**, where trees contribute to habitat
- **Heritage Statements**, where trees contribute to historical settings, or where new tree planting may impact archaeological heritage

5 Technical Guidance on Key Documents

5.1 The following section explains what each of the main arboricultural reports mentioned in the SPD do, and how they should be used. As a general rule, the level of detail can be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development.

Land Survey / Topographical Survey

5.2 This maps the site accurately, showing boundaries, levels, buildings, utilities, and all trees within or close to the site. It forms the basis of all later arboricultural drawings.

5.3 Surveys should be precise and show all relevant site features, including identification of all trees. Drawings should be to-scale, preferably 1:100 or 1:200.

5.4 The survey should include:

- Location of trees within or adjacent to the site where their canopy and/or Root Protection Area encroaches into the red line boundary of the application site
- Canopy spread of trees
- Existing structures and features plotted accurately
- Spot heights of ground level throughout the site
- Utilities, both overground and underground.

5.5 Surveys should be prepared in accordance with BS 5837:2012 and undertaken by a qualified arboriculturist.

Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)

5.6 Where a planning application shows that there are trees on or near the site, one of the first pieces of information the Council will request is an AIA. This assesses how proposed development and construction works will affect trees, and identifies mitigation such as fencing or no-dig surfacing. Not including this with your planning application at the outset can cause delays. It is therefore important that an AIA is provided with an application whenever there are trees on or near a development site, including trees on neighbours' land.

5.7 An AIA should include, or be supported by, the following:

- Land Survey / Topographical Survey
- Tree Survey
- Root Protection Areas (RPAs)
- Tree Constraints Plan/Statement

5.8 Where trees identified in the information above are shown to be impacted by the proposed development, the AIA should also include/be accompanied by:

- Draft Tree Protection Plan (TPP) / Draft Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)
- Tree planting and landscaping proposals (where required)

5.9 Figure 3 above summarises the process and requirements.

 For smaller developments, it is usually acceptable for the AIA, TPP and AMS to be included in one concise document.

5.10 For larger or more complex developments, the Council will require as much detail as possible upfront in the TPP/AMS with the AIA at submission stage. The Council may request that final details are submitted at a later stage in an amended/final version TPP/AMS and/or secured via a pre-commencement condition.

5.11 Detailed guidance on what should be included in the above-listed information and documents is provided below.

5.12 Any AIA should be prepared by a qualified arboriculturalist and be in accordance with BS 5837:2012.

Tree Survey

5.13 An integral part of an AIA is a Tree Survey. It records each tree's species, size, condition and value. The Tree Survey should be drawn up in conjunction with the Land/Topographical Survey and should:

- Include a plan which shows the location of trees and their Root Protection Area (RPAs)
- Number all trees on a plan which will provide the detail for the Tree Constraints Plan and Tree Protection Plan
- Survey each tree and assign a category based on quality and value; this includes species, size, age, condition, life expectancy, and ecological and historical importance
- Identify which trees are being retained and which, if any, are proposed for removal. This

approach should take into account the requirements of Local Plan Policy 42, which states that the Council will resist the loss of trees, unless the tree is dead, dying or dangerous, causing significant damage to adjacent structures, of little or no amenity value and it is not possible to retain the tree as part of the development, or other reasons of good arboricultural practice

- Record any ancient, notable and veteran trees
- Show proposed planting of new trees to replace those being proposed for removal
- Be accompanied by a Tree Survey schedule which includes all of the information contained within the relevant Section of BS 5837:2012.

5.14 Where there are woodlands or blocks of trees which will not be impacted by the proposed development, it is acceptable to 'group' them.

5.15 The report should be carried out by a qualified arboriculturist and be in accordance with BS 5837:2012.

5.16 The result of the Tree Survey, including material constraints arising from existing trees, should be used to inform feasibility studies and design options. For this reason, the Tree Survey should be undertaken prior to and independently of any specific design proposals for the development.

Root Protection Areas (RPAs)

5.17 The RPA is the area around a tree that contains the majority of its roots system and the soil needed for its stability, health and long-term growth. Disturbance within this area – such as from excavation, soil compaction, or level changes – can permanently damage the tree. The protection of this area is therefore vital to avoid damage to the roots and rooting environment of retained trees.

5.18 When preparing an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), applicants must identify and plot the RPA for each retained tree. The calculation of RPAs should be in accordance with BS 5837:2012. It is therefore important that this is carried out by a qualified arboriculturist.

5.19 The RPA is normally shown as a circle on a plan, but in reality, root growth may not be symmetrical. RPAs often need to be significantly altered to take account of pre-existing site conditions that indicate that rooting has occurred asymmetrically, in which case a polygon or equivalent area should be produced. Modifications to the shape of the RPA should reflect a competently produced arboricultural assessment of likely root distribution.

5.20 The AIA should demonstrate that the design and construction of a development:

- Avoids new structures, services or excavation within RPAs wherever possible;
- Allows adequate working space between buildings and RPAs;
- Uses specialist 'no-dig' or trenchless techniques where access or surfacing is deemed unavoidable; and
- Protects soil levels and drainage patterns within RPAs during construction.

5.21 When considering RPAs, it should not be assumed that building and/or excavation works may take place up to the edge of the RPA. Adequate working space will be required between proposed buildings and the RPA, and it is essential that this is considered as part of the design.

Tree Constraints Plan / Statement

5.22 This translates the findings of the Tree Survey into a clear visual guide for designers of a development scheme.

5.23 A Tree Constraints Plan plots:

- The location, size, canopy spread and RPA of each surveyed tree;
- Categorises trees indicating quality and value; and
- Key design constraints such as shading, root zones, and opportunities for new planting.

5.24 The Council requires that site design and layout ensure a harmonious relationship between trees and their surroundings, including their root systems. The juxtaposition of trees and existing or proposed buildings is an important consideration of any development design, and the Council will resist schemes which are likely to result in pressure to remove or significantly prune trees, both existing and new. This is a particular consideration where buildings are close to trees on neighbouring land. The relationship between trees and windows and balconies – and the potential for the restriction of daylight and sunlight into the building – will need to be taken into account. Where roofs are located under trees, special consideration will need to be

had of gutter and roof designs, to ensure that they can cope with leaf fall. In all these cases, regard will need to be had for tree growth and maturity.

5.25 It is also important to consider trees when allowing for sufficient working space and access needed for a proposed development, for example, whether construction access, scaffolding or storage might harm trees.

5.26 The Tree Constraints Plan should be prepared early in the design process so that layouts, access routes and building footprints respond to the constraints identified. It forms the basis of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and later for the Tree Protection Plan.

🏠 A short **Tree Constraints Statement** may be provided instead of a full plan for smaller or less complex schemes. This should explain which trees are being retained or removed, what space has been allowed for roots and canopies, and how the design has been adapted to accommodate them. Sometimes a single annotated Site Plan and paragraph describing how the layout respects existing trees will suffice.

5.27 The Tree Constraints Plan is informed by the Land/Topographical Survey and Tree Survey. Correct interpretation of the information from these surveys is essential in the identification of trees which are suitable or retention, and to identify any constraints that these trees place on the proposed development.

Tree Protection Plan (TPP)

5.28 The Land/Topographical Survey, Tree survey and Tree Constraints Plan should together inform the production of a Tree Protection Plan (TPP). This is a drawing that shows where protective fencing and ground-protection measures will be placed to prevent damage to trees (as well as their roots and stems) during site works, including demolition, excavation, construction and material storage. The TPP should be submitted as a detailed drawing or set of plans, and show how trees will be protected during the demolition and construction phases of development.

5.29 It can often be useful, and sometimes necessary, for the TPP to be produced before the design stage. This is particularly the case on congested sites, where tree protection measures can impact on the space available for construction, site access and storage of materials.

5.30 A TPP should:

- Be superimposed on a layout plan, based on the Land/Topographical Survey, and show all hard surfacing and other existing structures within the RPAs of retained trees.
- Clearly indicate the precise location of protective barriers which are to be erected to form a construction exclusion zone around retained trees; show extent and type of ground protection, and any additional physical protection measures, such as tree trunk or stem protection boxes, that will need to be implemented to safeguard vulnerable sections of trees and their RPAs, as well as how and when fencing will be installed; this should also apply to adjacent trees outside of the application site, such as trees on neighbours' boundaries and street trees directly adjacent to a construction site.
- Clearly indicate the proposed locations of site huts, temporary toilet facilities, and storage of building materials.

5.31 The TPP is a key document which is referenced in all other relevant tree-related documents supporting a planning application, including the Arboricultural Method Statement and Construction Management Plan.

Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)

5.32 An AMS is a detailed written document explaining how protection measures will be implemented, supervised and maintained. It outlines how construction and development works, including demolition, will be carried out near trees in a way that protects them from harm, especially their roots, stems and canopies. It sets out how conflicts will be resolved and what happens if accidental damage occurs. The AMS supports the Tree Protection Plan (TPP) by translating the constraints shown on the drawing into practical procedures for builders, site managers and arboriculturists.

5.33 This is not an exhaustive list, though common potential detrimental effects to identify and address in an AMS include:

- Piling within, or close to, RPAs
- Location of service and drainage runs
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- Ground level changes for hard landscaping within RPAs
- New permanent hard surfaces within RPAs

- Working and access space needed for construction
- Tree pruning and removal
- Building material storage areas, including bunded areas for storing toxic materials which may seep into the soil within RPAs
- Location of site huts and worker access.

5.34 A British Standards compliant AMS should typically include:

- **Site overview and tree constraints**– A summary of the AIA, Tree Survey and constraints
- **Information on tree protection measures**– This covers fencing, ground protection, and other methods to prevent damage to trees during construction. Details of the fencing should include how and when it will be installed, and how it will be maintained. Ground protection works could include, for example, the use of temporary tracks or scaffold boards over RPAs. Note that tree protective fencing which can easily be moved, such as Heras panels mounted on rubber/concrete feet, will not be considered acceptable by the Council. Please refer to BS 5837:2012 for details of acceptable fencing specifications.
- **Details of permitted works within RPAs**– This could include, where appropriate, no-dig surfacing, hand digging or use of air spade, or trenchless installation, for example, moling or directional drilling for services.
- **Schedules of tree work** – This details any planned pruning or felling of trees, outlining how these works will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant British Standards.
- **Construction management** – This sets out how trees will be protected during site works, to include site access and compound location, storage of minerals, machinery, fuel and chemicals, and drainage, servicing and scaffolding precautions.
- **Details on dealing with conflicts**– This addresses how potential conflicts between demolition/construction and tree protection will be resolved.
- **Supervision and monitoring** – The AMS should specify who will be responsible for supervising tree protection measures and monitoring their effectiveness during demolition and construction. Details should include when and how an arboriculturist will attend the site, what inspections will be recorded (with log sheets), and procedures to follow if protection measures are breached.
- **Contingency measures** – Steps to take in the event of accidental damage to trees or protective structures.

5.35 The AMS should comply with BS 5837:2012.

Other considerations

5.36 The Council requires tree protection details to be submitted and approved before certain construction activities commence, particularly those involving groundworks within RPAs of retained trees. As much detail as possible should be provided upfront at the time of submission, though final details may be submitted and approved as part of a pre-commencement planning condition.

5.37 Where a detailed AMS is required, the Council may also require a pre-commencement meeting to discuss the AMS with one of the Council's Arboricultural officers.

5.38 The TPP/AMS should be developed in conjunction with the Construction Method Plan (or any equivalent document/information).

5.39 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment may recommend replacement planting to compensate for any necessary removal of trees. Please note, however, that as set out in Local Plan Policy 42, the starting position should be the retention of all trees. The Council will resist the removal of trees for development, unless their removal is fully justifiable for arboricultural reasons and/or they are of little or no amenity value.

5.40 The Council also has a Tree Policy document, which guides the protection and maintenance of trees in the Borough, and can be a helpful guide for developers.

Construction Management Plan (CMP)

5.41 A CMP is a comprehensive document that outlines how a construction project (including demolition), will be carried out and managed to ensure that the development is completed safely, efficiently and with the least possible disruption to the surrounding environment and local community. It describes logistics such as deliveries, access, storage

and environmental controls. A CMP can also refer to a Construction Management Statement (CMS) or Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

5.42 The CMP must support the tree protection details in the Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS). Agreed protection measures in the TPP and AMD must be referenced in the CMP or included as an appendix.

🏠 For some schemes, (e.g. smaller, less complex or where few trees are impacted), the draft CMP submitted at planning stage may be adequate. Adherence to the methods set out in the CMP would be secured via condition when planning permission is granted.

5.43 For larger, more complex schemes, the Council may accept the general principles set out in the draft CMP but require further details as part of a final CMP secured as a pre-commencement condition.

5.44 Council- or TfL-owned street trees which may be impacted during construction stage will also need to be taken account of within the CMP.

Post-construction and Maintenance

5.45 Protecting and caring for trees does not end when construction is complete. The period after works is critical for ensuring that both retained and newly planted trees recover and establish successfully. The Council strongly advises applicants and developers to plan for this stage from the outset, so that appropriate resources, supervision and maintenance responsibilities are clearly identified.

5.46 Retained and new trees should be maintained in line with approved plans. Please see Section 7 Implementation of Planning Controls.

5.47 As soon as the protective fencing is removed, all retained trees should be inspected by a qualified arboriculturist to identify any damage, soil compaction or changes to ground levels that may have occurred during works. Where harm has occurred, remedial measures such as de-compaction, mulching, irrigation or crown management must be implemented promptly. For larger schemes and/or where required by condition, a completion report confirming the condition of trees and implementation of agreed protection measures should be submitted to the Council.

5.48 Please also see Section 8 New Tree Planting.

6 Trees in Specific Development Situations

6.1 Certain types of development or site circumstances require particular consideration of tree protection. These include technically complex works, such as basement construction, and common scenarios like trees protected by TPOs or alterations to front gardens and new vehicular crossovers.

6.2 This section highlights the main considerations that arise in these situations and explains how they should be addressed as part of a planning application. Applicants are encouraged to consider these matters early and seek advice from a qualified arboriculturist.

Basement Developments

Excavation

6.3 The British Standard BS 5837:2012 advises that where subterranean structures are proposed, for example a basement extension, and where these would be within an RPA of a retained tree, it is essential to avoid excavating down through rootable soil. In some cases, it may be technically possible to form the excavation by undermining the soil beneath the RPA. Basements can sometimes be constructed within the RPA of a tree if they are excavated by digging from outside the RPA and then under.

 In the case of a single house basement, this could involve constructing the basement from within the existing basement.

Basement footprints

6.4 Local Plan Policy 54 Basements and Subterranean Developments Part B.1 states that proposals for subterranean and basement developments will be required to extend to no more than 50% of the existing garden land or more than half of any other undeveloped garden area (this excludes the footprint of the original building). This policy will need to be considered in conjunction with the RPAs of any retained trees at the design stage of any development.

Soil depth and new trees

6.5 Where development includes basements, podiums or other structures beneath landscaped areas, such as car parks, it is essential that adequate soil depth and quality are provided to sustain the healthy establishment and long-term growth of trees and other vegetation.

6.6 Trees require sufficient rooting volume, aeration, moisture and nutrients. The design of the basement roof slab and associated landscape build-up must therefore be planned in an integrated way to accommodate viable soil profiles for proposed planting.

6.7 As a general guide, the following minimum soil depths should be achieved for new tree planting above basement or podium structures, though the advice of a qualified arboriculturist should always be sought, as different tree species may require different conditions:

Tree Size / Type	Minimum Soil Depth	Indicative Rooting Volume
Small ornamental or multi-stem tree	1.0m	6-12sqm
Medium-sized tree	1.2-1.5m	15-30sqm
Large canopy tree	1.5-2.0m+	30-60sqm

Table 2: Minimum Soil Depths

6.8 Designers should take account of BS 5837:2012 and BS 5845:2014 , and guidance from the Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) on trees in hard landscapes.

6.9 Inadequate soil provision will result in poor tree health, restricted growth, increased maintenance demands and potential landscape failure with risk of trees dying. Planning applications must therefore demonstrate, through section drawings, soil build-up details and arboriculturist input, that proposed tree planting above basement or podium structures provides a realistic and sustainable rooting environment.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

6.10 Local Plan Policy 54 Part B.4 states that basement development will be required to include a minimum of one metre naturally draining permeable soil above any part of the basement beneath the garden

area, together with a minimum 200mm drainage layer, and provide a satisfactory landscaping scheme.

6.11 The one metre of soil can be used to meet the requirements of SuDS; however, if SuDS are provided using a different method, the meter of soil is still required to enable new landscaping and tree planting above the basement. If an attenuation tank or crate is proposed, it should be positioned outside of the RPA of any trees to be retained. As per Local Plan Policy 8 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage, SuDS features should be implemented preferentially according to the London Plan Policy SI 13 hierarchy of drainage. This prioritises green infrastructure, such as trees, urban hedgerows, tree pits and raingardens (as well as an increase of permeable or porous surfaces), over engineered options, such as attenuation tanks or oversized pipelines. A development must implement green infrastructure within the drainage strategy wherever possible in order to gain planning approval.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and trees in Conservation Areas

6.12 Some trees are subject to TPOs, which are used to protect good quality trees of high amenity value, by giving them legal protection from being cut down, topped, lopped, uprooted, wilfully damaged or wilfully destroyed. It is a criminal offence to carry out works to any part of a tree which is the subject of a TPO, including pruning, felling, topping, cutting the roots, uprooting or any other form of damage, without first obtaining consent from the Council. It is also an offence to allow another person to harm a protected tree.

6.13 Trees in Conservations Areas are automatically protected, regardless of whether they are subject to a TPO. Anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work to a tree in a Conservation Area is required to give the Council six weeks' prior notice. As with trees subject to TPOs, it is an offence to prune, fell, top or damage a tree in a Conservation Area, including cutting the roots, uprooting or any other form of damage, without giving notice.

If works to protected trees form part of an approved planning application, for example, an application for a rear extension to a house also includes pruning of a protected tree as part of that application, then you do not need separate consent from the Council for the works to the trees.

6.14 Details of TPOs in force are available at the Civic Centre, or by contacting our Customer Services Team by telephone on 0208 891 1411. Further information on protected trees can be found on the Council's website.

Crossovers, driveways and front gardens

6.15 Alterations to front gardens, such as the installation of a dropped kerb or vehicular crossover outside your property, can have implications for trees which need to be considered from the outset.

6.16 Many dropped kerb applications are refused on the grounds that constructing the crossover would be detrimental to the environment, particularly where a tree will require felling or be damaged in the view of the Arboricultural officer. The amount of hard, impermeable surface used for parking and the width of the vehicle entrance should always attempt to avoid disturbance to existing trees and established plants or hedges. Trees can suffer if the roots are cut, which may lead to damage and loss of the structural integrity of the tree, as well as adversely affecting the environment if it is removed. If roots greater than 25mm in diameter or clusters of smaller roots are encountered when constructing the crossover, then the Council's Arboricultural Officer may order the work to stop and the footpath to be replaced. Cutting of roots greater than 25mm and clusters of smaller roots can lead to the premature death of a tree. A further consideration is that the continued growing of roots can cause damage to the crossover, leading to a hazard for users of the pavement. It is therefore vital that implications for trees are considered early on when thinking about installing a dropped kerb or crossover.

6.17 This applies to trees in the applicant's garden, adjacent trees in neighbours' property, and street trees. Where there are street trees, applications for a dropped kerb/crossover must provide a plan of the crossover location, and demonstrate that the position of the crossover (including 0.5m taper) will not be harmful to the tree.

6.18 The Council will not remove street trees in reasonable health unless there is an extremely good reason. Pavement vehicle access is usually not a

good enough reason. In cases where the removal of a street tree has been agreed, the applicant will need to fund the planting of a replacement tree.

6.19 In some cases, alterations to front gardens fall within 'permitted development', in which case planning approval is not required. However, in **all** cases you will need to apply for Highways Approval, and the impact on trees will still be a consideration. Applicants are reminded that trees subject to TPOs or in Conservation Areas will need to be protected, and any pruning would require notice to be given and permission from the Council. The advice of the Council's Arboricultural officer must be sought prior to the commencement of any works, regardless of whether planning permission is required for the dropped kerb/crossover. Please refer to the Council's Transport SPD and the latest version of the Council's highways authority guidance for further guidance, including whether planning permission would likely be required and how to apply.

 If alterations are being made to drop a kerb and the driveway / front garden, you may need to consider the implications for trees and you will need to apply for Highways Approval.

7 Implementation of Planning Controls

Planning Conditions

7.1 Planning conditions are a way for local planning authorities to mitigate against the adverse effects of development. Section 70(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act enables local planning authorities in granting permission to impose conditions they see fit. The Council has the statutory duty to protect trees that should be retained through imposing planning conditions. This will be determined through a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessments, tree retention/removal plans and soft landscaping designs during pre-application or full planning applications. Trees may also be protected by planning conditions attached to a previous planning permission on the site.

7.2 Many planning permissions will contain conditions which protect trees and hedges. Applicants must support their design and application with appropriate professional advice to ensure all trees on site are identified and considered. This may include a condition that requires adequate supervision on site by a qualified arboriculturist during demolition or construction. Section 5 Technical Guidance on Key Documents provides further information on tree surveys.

7.3 If planning permission is granted it will usually include conditions relating to the protection of trees (and their roots) and other vegetation on the site. This is likely to include an exclusion zone whereby trees must be marked and be protected by fencing during development. No work can be carried out within the protected zone and ground levels should not be raised or lowered.

7.4 If development will be carried out on a tree which is protected by planning conditions you will need to apply for a variation of condition through a planning application. For more information on this please visit the Council's planning application forms webpage.

Removal of Tree Protection

7.5 Tree protection measures, including exclusion zones, should remain until construction operations on site are complete. Failure to retain approved protection measures will result in enforcement action.

Site Works

7.6 Work on site must be managed by the site manager who is responsible for implementing the Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement. A copy of both must be available on the site at all times. The Tree Protection Plan should indicate the location of protective barriers around retained trees. It should be confirmed by the project arboriculturist that the barriers and ground protection have been correctly set out on site, prior to the commencement of any other operations. There should be an auditable system of arboricultural site monitoring for identified trees with the tree protection plan. The enforcement of site activity is the responsibility of the local planning authority.

Failure to Comply with Planning Conditions

7.7 Any failure to comply with planning conditions relating to tree protection will result in planning enforcement action. The Council will investigate suspected breaches of planning conditions or unauthorised works to protected trees. For further information please see the Council's Local Enforcement Plan, and to report suspected breaches please use the form on the planning enforcement webpage.

Tree Removal and Planning Obligations

7.8 The Council's starting point is the retention of all trees over loss and replacement. Local Plan Policy 42 resists the loss of trees unless there are sound arboricultural reasons for removal. Part B.5 requires, where practicable, an appropriate replacement for any tree that is felled. This should be an on-site replacement, where practicable. Where this is not possible, a financial contribution to the provision of an off-site tree in line with the monetary value of the existing tree to be felled will be required in line with the 'Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees' (CAVAT). For veteran or ancient trees, a financial contribution can never be considered, and thus CAVAT does not apply.

7.9 The CAVAT methodology is a modern assessment system that ensures trees are replaced with ones of equal quality through managing trees as public assets. It includes a calculation of the monetary value of a single tree to reflect the degree of benefit that it provides for the local population. Where

the removal of a tree of amenity value is unavoidable as part of development, the Council and developer will enter a Section 106 Agreement to secure funding equal to the tree's CAVAT value. For further information see Figure 4 below and the London Tree Officers Association website.

Figure 4: CAVAT guidance note

When should CAVAT calculations be provided?
Where the removal of Category A & B trees is proposed (categories accord with Table 1 of BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations), the Council requires that the 'Full Method' as specified within the published guidance is used to form a valuation: CAVAT Full Method - A Guide for Practitioners (ltoa.org.uk).

When will CAVAT calculations not need to be provided?
Where the removal of individual C and U category trees is proposed. Where multiples of Category C trees be proposed for removal, the Council's Arboriculturists will conduct a CAVAT exercise to determine the collective value of trees that are to be lost from within the site of proposed development.

What replacement planting is considered appropriate?
Where individual Category C trees are proposed for removal, the Council will seek to secure the planting of replacement trees on-site. Where individual and/or groups of Category A, B & C trees is proposed, the Council will seek to secure the planting of replacement trees on site.

When will the Council seek a CAVAT contribution?

- The value of Category A & B trees to be removed will be compared with the market value of replacement on-site planting and the projected cost of aftercare. The value of planting and aftercare will be deducted from the CAVAT amount, producing a monetary value that will be requested.
- The value of multiples of Category C trees to be removed will be used to determine if replacement planting on-site is sufficient, note that an on-site solution will be the default position, however if this cannot be achieved and will result in a demonstrable net loss of on-site trees a CAVAT contribution will be requested.
- The Council will not seek a CAVAT contribution where the remaining value is less than £3,000.
- The Council will not accept projected CAVAT values of new or replacement trees, that is the calculations must be based upon the value of trees at the time of planting and not their hypothesised value at a future date.

How do we demonstrate CAVAT spend?
The Council can produce data to demonstrate where the funding has been applied. CAVAT contributions should be used for additional tree planting within the Borough and to accord with targets and principles as outlined in the Council's Guidance and Strategies (see section 1 of the SPD).

7.10 Further information on the use of planning obligations in relation to Trees can be found in the Planning Obligations SPD.

8 New Tree Planting

8.1 It is the Council's expectation that the starting point for any development proposal is the retention of all existing trees on site. Where tree removal has been justified and agreed, appropriate replacement tree planting must be provided in order to maintain and expand canopy cover within the Borough.

8.2 Local Plan Policy 42 advises that tree planting should be considered from the design stage of a proposal. It requires new trees to be of a suitable species for the location in terms of height and root spread, taking account of space required for trees to mature.

8.3 The Council's commitments include tree-planting across the Borough, linked to the Tree Planting Strategy 'Trees for Richmond', ensuring trees are planted to maximise shade, cooling, and flood resilience; using diverse, disease-resistant species to future-proof the urban canopy; and protecting existing canopy cover.

8.4 Depending on the characteristics of the site, the principle of including trees within landscape schemes needs to be considered alongside the accommodation of trees already on site. New tree planting and landscaping should be considered from the outset within the masterplan as an integral part of any development. Where new landscaping is required, including the provision of new trees, this should have regard to the Climate & Nature Strategy (2025-2030), Tree Planting Strategy 'Trees for Richmond' (2025), Tree Policy (2023), Biodiversity Action Plan (2025), Adaption & Resilience Strategy (2025-2035), or any successor updated documents.

Right Tree, Right Place, for the Right Reasons

8.5 The UK Forestry Standard has created a criteria and guidance for the sustainable management of forests and woodlands following the 'right tree, right place, for the right reasons' principles. Although this guidance is focused on forests and woodlands, these principles can apply to any new tree planting to ensure trees integrate into and enhance our landscape, connect with communities, and consider any existing features, land use and habitats. The key factors to consider with new tree planting are:

- **Historic environment**: ensure the site's historic environment is protected or enhanced with new trees; this should also include consideration of below-ground archaeological sites
- **Climate Emergency**: ensure new trees are diverse in species and age for mitigation and resilience against future climate change, and consider long-term management
- **Landscape**: planting should consider the area's 'landscape character' and how people will experience it
- **Soil**: ensure that soils are protected through a soil assessment to inform new planting
- **People**: consider how new trees may impact the local community
- **Water**: new tree design should consider water quality, flood risk and water availability
- **Biodiversity**: ensure all existing priority habitats, wildlife or species on site are identified and protected.

8.6 With regards to new tree planting near riverbanks, new trees should be sufficiently set back to reduce the risk of bank collapse and erosion. The placement of new trees and associated landscaping should also ensure they provide a suitable offset from any flood defence. This is required for the current and future flood management of the asset, as set out in Local Plan Policy 8 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

British Standards: New planting design

8.7 BS 5837:2012 provides guidance on best practice for incorporating and considering new tree planting on development sites. Trees generally form the dominant elements of the landscape structure of a site, so careful consideration should be given to their height and spread, form, habitat, colour, density, foliage and maintenance implications, and retained landscape features. A qualified landscape architect can provide advice on detailed design and how this can integrate with the proposed development.

Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure: A Guide for Specifiers

8.8 TDAG have produced a guide to improve species selection to deliver sustainable treescapes within town and cities. It includes a tool for selecting appropriate species for a range of planting scenarios including small gardens, SuDS and paved areas. It

provides guidance on selecting the appropriate trees with careful consideration of size and crown formation as the tree matures, and its environmental tolerance. The appropriate tree for each development site will depend on the site characteristics, therefore the tree selector tool and tree profiles within this guide can help determine the appropriate species and considerations for your development site.

Guidance and recommendations for tree planting schemes

8.9 New development should be designed to accommodate existing and new trees. New tree planting is an essential consideration in the layout, design and future use of development sites. Trees form dominant character and landscape features so proposals should carefully consider the type, height and colour of new trees. Careful consideration of new planting during development can provide significant value to the property or site. The following should be considered when planting new trees:

- ✓ Potential shade cover from the tree as it grows to provide Climate Emergency mitigation such as reducing urban heating
- ✓ The integration of the tree with areas of hard paving and drainage
- ✓ Adequate space for the tree to grow and reach maturity without damaging built structures and infrastructure
- ✓ Soil quality and volume within the area for planting (please also see section Basement Developments)
- ✓ The character and landscape of the area
- ✓ Any potential wildlife corridors that could be created as a result of new planting
- ✓ Screening of undesirable views and contribution to privacy

8.10 The first three to five years after planting are critical for a tree's establishment and long-term survival. Applicants should ensure early management of new trees to minimise the risk of structural weaknesses throughout branch frameworks and to reduce future maintenance costs. Aftercare and management should form part of a development's landscaping and maintenance plan in line with any approved conditions. Planning conditions or obligations may be used to secure the replacement / replanting of any new trees that die within a reasonable period of their planting.

The Council may seek the long-term protection of trees through the designation of Tree Protection Orders (TPOs). For more information on post-construction and maintenance please see Section Post-construction and Maintenance.

Native versus non-native species

8.11 The Local Plan encourages the planting of native species; however due to the impacts climate change in London, these species are not always appropriate. In all cases, species that provide the same amenity value (crown size, flowering characteristics, seasonal colour and appearance) are encouraged. Careful attention should be paid to resources that are available in setting out the suitability of species in a future UK climate, for example the information provided within the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew publication 'Planting for the Future: Kew's Landscape Succession Plan' and Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure - Trees and Design Action Group, as these documents will help to inform landscape designs that incorporate trees of suitable size, shape and tolerance to current future environmental conditions. Trees should be appropriately selected for sustained ecological well-being, considering the resilience of ecosystems in selecting species. The Council encourages the incorporation of new trees with the desired effect of maximising the benefits that trees provide, therefore this should be sought with any proposed scheme. It is recommended that applicants engage with any guidance that is provided by the Council which will inform of local conditions and latest information concerning species selection.

8.12 In sourcing tree stock, it is vital that biosecurity is maintained and the risk of importing tree pests and diseases is minimised. The Council encourages the use of UK and Ireland sources and grown tree stock where possible, and the specifying of Plant Health standards and/or appropriate quarantines for any imported planting stock.

9 Trees and Retrofitting

9.1 To meet borough-wide climate and biodiversity goals, retrofitting existing buildings is a key priority. Trees are an important consideration in retrofitting projects, particularly when upgrading or modifying existing buildings for energy efficiency, climate emergency resilience, and urban greening. This can include adding trees to improve water run-off management, reduce the urban heat island effect, and provide habitats for biodiversity. As well as consideration of planting new trees, retrofitting projects should be designed to co-exist with existing trees, ensuring their survival and the benefits they provide. By incorporating trees (and vegetation) during retrofitting projects, buildings and the surrounding area become not only more sustainable and resilient, but also more enjoyable places to live.

9.2 Trees should be considered in the following ways, when planning and designing a scheme which involves retrofitting existing buildings, as well as all development proposals in general:

- **Green infrastructure** – Retrofitting can incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that utilise vegetation to manage rainwater run-off, reduce flooding, and improve water quality.
- **Urban cooling** – The shade provided by trees through canopy cover can significantly reduce the urban heat island effect, making buildings and the surrounding environment more comfortable and energy efficient.
- **Biodiversity enhancement** – Planting trees can provide habitats for local wildlife and improve biodiversity, which is particularly important in urban areas, where wildlife is under threat.
- **Soil cell systems** – Soil cell systems can be retrofitted to support existing trees, and can be used to create new tree pits in urban sites.

10 Glossary

Ancient or veteran tree - A tree of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value because of its age, size or condition.

Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) - A professional report that evaluates how a proposed development will affect existing trees on and around a site.

Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) - A detailed document that sets out the specific methods and procedures for protecting trees during development, demolition and/or construction works.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - A planning and development approach that requires new development to leave nature in a measurably better state than before

Block Plan/Site Plan – A scaled drawing that shows the proposed development in relation to the surrounding property boundaries, buildings and features.

British Standards (BS) - Official guidelines and specifications issued by the British Standards Institution (BSI) to ensure quality, safety and consistency across products, services and processes in the UK.

Canopy cover – Refers to the percentage of ground area shaded by the tree canopy (leaf and branch cover) when viewed from above.

Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) - A tree valuation system used to estimate the monetary value of individual trees or tree populations in terms of their public amenity and community benefit. For further information see the London Tree Officers Association website at www.ltoa.org.uk/resources/cavat

Carbon capture – Refers to the process of trapping and storing carbon dioxide (CO2) that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere, to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat the climate emergency

Conservation Area (CA) - A designated area of special architectural and/or historic interest, protected by law to ensure that development does not harm their unique qualities.

Construction Exclusion Zone (CEZ) - A designated area on a construction site where no access, activity or construction work is allowed, specifically to protect sensitive features, most commonly trees, root protection areas and/or ecological assets.

Construction Management Plan (CMP) - A detailed document that outlines how a construction project will be managed to minimise its impact on the surrounding environment, infrastructure and community.

Construction Management Statement (CMS) - A written document that outlines how a specific construction plan will be managed. It is similar to a CMP, but usually shorter and less detailed.

Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) - A detailed document that outlines how vehicle movements and logistics will be managed during a construction project to minimise disruption, ensure safety and protect the surrounding environment and community. It is similar to a CMP though typically includes more detail on vehicular impacts and mitigations.

Crossover – A section of the pavement where the kerb has been lowered to allow vehicles to drive over the pavement into a driveway or private property. Also called a dropped kerb, Pavement Vehicle Access or vehicle access.

Crown – The upper part of a tree, made up of its branches, leaves and stems extending from the main trunk.

Design and Access Statement (DAS) - A document that explains the design principles and concepts behind a proposed development.

Development Plan – The statutory framework of planning policies that guides land use and development decisions in the local area. In Richmond upon Thames, the statutory development plan consists of the London Plan, the adopted Richmond upon Thames Local Plan, the West London Waste Plan, and the Ham & Petersham Neighbourhood Plan.

Dropped kerb – A section of the pavement where the kerb has been lowered to allow vehicles to drive over the pavement into a driveway or private property. Also called a crossover, Pavement Vehicle Access or vehicle access.

Greater London Authority (GLA) - The strategic regional government for London, responsible for planning, transport, policing, economic development, environment, housing and other city-wide issues.

Local Plan – A key statutory document produced by a local planning authority that sets out the policies and land use allocations for a local area over a long-term period. It forms part of the Development Plan.

London Plan – The statutory spatial development strategy for Greater London, prepared by the Mayor of London. It forms part of the Development Plan.

Land Survey – A detailed and accurate measurement and mapping of a specific piece of land, typically carried out by a qualified land surveyor, and used to define boundaries, topography, features, and legal descriptions of a site. Also called a Topographical Survey.

Local Planning Authority (LPA) - The public body responsible for managing and deciding planning matters, e.g. Richmond Council.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) - A statutory, spatial biodiversity plan that identifies how to restore, create and better connect habitats within London, as mandated by the Environment Act 2021.

Lopping works – Involve the cutting or removal of branches or limbs from a tree, often to reduce size, remove obstructions or manage shape.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's core principles and policies for land use planning. It is a material planning consideration when determining a planning application.

Pavement Vehicle Access – A section of the pavement where the kerb has been lowered to allow vehicles to drive over the pavement into a driveway or private property. Also called a crossover, dropped kerb or vehicle access.

Permitted Development (PD) - Refers to certain types of building work or changes of use that can be done without needing full planning permission from the local planning authority. These works are allowed under the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015 as amended, which sets out what can be done automatically, subject to specific conditions and limitations.

Piling works – Refers to a type of deep foundation construction in which long, strong columns called piles are driven or bored deep into the ground to support buildings or structures.

Planning condition – A requirement or restriction attached to a planning permission that must be met in order for the development to proceed lawfully. See also pre-commencement condition.

Planning obligation – A legally binding agreement between a developer and a local planning authority, used to make a development acceptable in planning terms. Also known as a Section 106 Agreement.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) - A collection of online guidance documents published by the Government which provides practical, detailed advice for how planning policies set out in the NPPF should be interpreted and applied.

Pre-Application service – A formal process offered by local planning authorities that allows applicants to engage with planning officers and other internal consultees before submitting a planning application.

Pre-commencement condition – A type pf planning condition attached to a planning permission that must be meaningfully discharges (i.e. approved by the local planning authority) before any development work can legally begin on site.

Pruning works – Refers to the selective cutting or trimming of parts of a tree, shrub or plant, typically to improve its health, structure, safety or appearance.

Root Protection Area (RPA) - A designated zone around a tree that is protected during development, demolition and construction works, to prevent damage to its roots.

Section 106 Agreement (S106) – A legally binding agreement between a developer and a local planning authority, used to make a development acceptable in planning terms. Also known as a planning obligation.

Spot height – A precise point on a map or survey that indicates the exact elevation (height above a defined level, usually sea level) at that specific location. It is typically shown as a small dot or mark, accompanied by a numerical vale (e.g. 45.2m).

Surface water run-off – Rainwater or melted snow that flows over the ground surface rather than soaking into the soil or ground.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) – Water management solutions designed to mimic natural drainage processes and help manage surface water in a way that is sustainable, environmentally friendly and reduce flood risk.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - A document produced by a local planning authority that provides additional guidance and detail on policies set out in the Local Plan. SPDs are not part of the statutory development plan, but they are a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Topographical Survey – A detailed and accurate measurement and mapping of a specific piece of land, typically carried out by a qualified land surveyor, and used to define boundaries, topography, features, and legal descriptions of a site. Also called a Topographical Survey.

Topping works – Refer to the removal of the upper part of a tree's crown, usually by cutting back large branches or the main trunk to stubs or lateral branches.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO) – A legal order made by a local planning authority to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands, from being cut down, lopped, topped, uprooted, damaged or destroyed, without the local planning authority's consent.

Transport for London (TfL) - The local government body responsible for managing and overseeing transport services across Greater London. It is accountable to the Mayor of London.

Tree Constraints Plan (TCP) - A technical drawing produced during the early stages of a development project that shows the location, size, condition and protection zones of existing trees on or near a site.

Tree Constraints Statement – A brief written report that identifies the main constraints posed by existing trees on or near a development site.

Tree Protection Plan (TPP) - A scaled drawing that shows how trees will be protected during construction, demolition or development, in accordance with British Standards.

Tree Survey – A formal assessment and record of trees on or near a development site, carried out by a qualified arboriculturist, which gathers detailed information about each tree's location, size, species, condition.

Urban forest – Refers to all the trees and woody vegetation across Greater London, including those in streets, parks, private gardens, schools, railways, cemeteries and woodlands.

Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect – The phenomenon where urban areas become significantly warner than surrounding rural areas, mainly due to human activity and built infrastructure.

Vehicle access – A section of the pavement where the kerb has been lowered to allow vehicles to drive over the pavement into a driveway or private property. Also called a crossover, dropped kerb or Pavement Vehicle Access

Wildlife corridor – A strip of natural habitat that connects two or more larger wildlife areas, allowing animals and plants to move, migrate, forage or disperse between them, helping to reduce habitat fragmentations and support biodiversity and ecosystem health

For more information write to:

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