

## Is the tree or development site already protected?

It is important to check if a tree is already protected.

Individual trees, groups of trees or woodlands with amenity value (eg visual, historic or nature conservation) may already be protected through Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). Most trees in conservation areas are also protected.

Elsewhere a licence may be required from the Forestry Commission to fell growing trees.

Trees may be within Sites/Areas of Special Scientific Interest, locally designated sites, the registers or inventories for gardens, historic parks, demesnes and designed landscapes and ancient woodland.

In some parts of the UK, planning authorities have a duty to make provision for the preservation of trees and to conserve biodiversity when deciding on planning applications. There may also be a planning policy specifically requiring planning authorities to avoid the loss of ancient and veteran trees and to conserve them as part of development proposals.

If it is likely that a protected species is present, you may need a licence before any tree work is started and your planning authorities will require evidence that a suitable survey and evaluation has been done as part of a planning application.

### Case study I

#### Shinfield Park, Wokingham

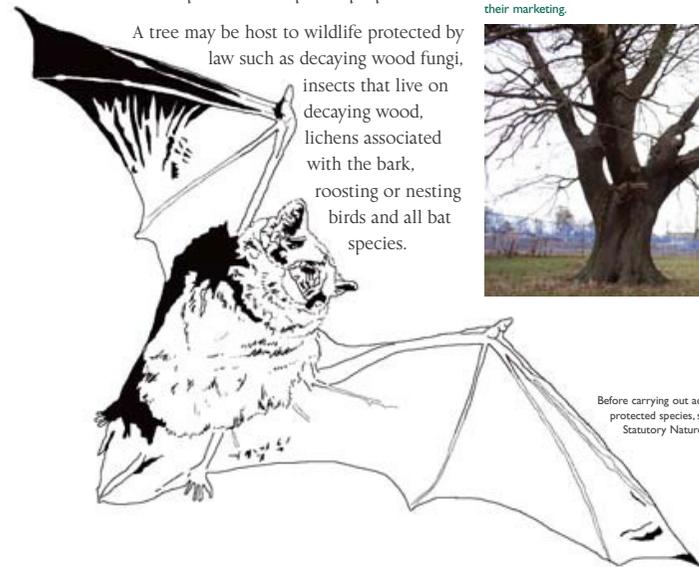
The developers have made full use of the parkland ancient and veteran trees to enhance their major development.



They have used the trees to promote their scheme on billboards and in their marketing.



Before carrying out activities which might harm or disturb protected species, such as bats, consult the appropriate Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation.



A tree may be host to wildlife protected by law such as decaying wood fungi, insects that live on decaying wood, lichens associated with the bark, roosting or nesting birds and all bat species.

## Good practice on development sites



Substantial fencing has been used according to BS 5837 Trees in relation to construction, to protect the roots of this old pollard estimated to be 500 years old.

To protect a tree during construction local planning authorities are guided by the recommendations in British Standard 5837: 2005 'Trees in relation to construction'.

BS 5837 requires that the values of trees should be assessed initially independently of any layout and design for the development. Trees which have significant cultural, historical, commemorative or conservation values should be retained provided those values will endure for a substantial period. This includes many declining, or even dead, ancient or veteran trees.

Important trees which significantly influence both the design and layout of the development, should be carefully protected during the construction phase. The design should also take account of the long term setting for important trees and how they will relate to the use of the area in the future.

For most trees, there is a method to calculate the minimum area which should be left undisturbed during the construction phase called the Root Protection Area (RPA). The RPA is calculated as a circle with a radius of 12 times the trunk diameter of

the tree, measured at 1.5m from ground level. This area is capped at a maximum of 707m<sup>2</sup> or a circle with a radius of 15m. The overall area is a minimum but it is possible for the shape to vary, provided it gives adequate protection for the root system.

In the case of ancient and other important trees this RPA may be insufficient to ensure their roots and the rooting environment are properly protected. A minimum root protection area of 15 times the trunk diameter or two metres beyond the canopy of the tree, whichever is the greater, was set out as a standard in the handbook 'Veteran Trees: A guide to good management' published by English Nature (now Natural England.) A greater RPA will reduce the possibility of damage or disturbance to these very special trees, so they have the best chance to provide a lasting contribution to the development.

The handbook also contains detailed advice on care of and recommendations for tree work appropriate to veteran and ancient trees. These recommendations should be followed in preference to BS 3998: 1989 'Recommendations for tree work' which deals with general tree work and is widely acknowledged to be out of date in a number of important respects.