

Practical Guidance

Ancient tree guide 8:

Trees and events

April 2012



WOODLAND
TRUST



A showground for trees

The treescape adds value

Ancient and veteran trees add immeasurably to the setting of events and participant enjoyment especially in historic landscapes. The venue may be chosen because of its trees and the background atmosphere they help to create.

Where special trees are very numerous they may be at the heart of the activity as well as in peripheral facilities such as car parks. Planning an event with the ancient, veteran and notable trees in mind helps ensure that they continue to be an asset to events and the property for decades to come.

Some of our largest and most prestigious events are often held in historic places where there are many valuable trees. The event is an opportunity to showcase best practice tree care and raise awareness of our unparalleled tree heritage to visitors and participants from home and abroad. A small investment in best management of the trees will be repaid by the benefits from them over their long lives.

Trees are living organisms and care of their vulnerable root systems is vital if they are not to be sent into early decline triggering a spiral of pruning to reduce decaying limbs. The more valuable the tree, due to its age, size or condition, the more care will be necessary to avoid acceleration of its aging or untimely collapse and premature death.

Anna Buntine BEDE Ltd



Retaining standing dead trees in historic landscapes is good practice, however locating activities nearby often leads to major tree surgery to reduce the risk.

This guidance is for tree owners, event organisers, specialists designing facilities, heritage and other land management advisors and local planning authorities. It is vital that all stakeholders work together to avoid damage and the impacts of participants, visitors, structures and the construction process.

Protecting the asset

A comprehensive Arboricultural Method Statement for any individual or all significant trees must be at the heart of the planning process especially where there are conflicts of interest between features of value such as archaeological or historic features or priority habitats.

The statement should identify the trees of greatest value and their location in relation to all aspects of the event – from preparation to take down. The aim should be to avoid any damage to important trees especially veteran and ancient trees – the most vulnerable ones. Actions to mitigate damage such as ground preparation, should only be considered for healthy, younger trees. If necessary consider relocating a recently planted tree if retaining it puts pressure on valuable, irreplaceable ancient and veteran trees.

Once prepared, a statement can be reviewed and used time and again as a checklist for different activities and added to contractual documents. It will be essential where events are a regular occurrence or a major event is additional to an already very busy venue and the burden on the trees is cumulative. Where there are valuable collections of ancient trees seek guidance from specialist arboriculturists who have expertise in their care.

Tree roots and soils can be readily damaged

by compaction especially by large numbers of pedestrians in a concentrated area, car parking and construction traffic. Unexpected turns of events or weather conditions may lead to emergencies such as overflow parking or access being managed by people without the background to be aware of potential damage. As damage leads to tree decline a spiral of tree surgery and further irretrievable decline can be triggered. As trees may take several years to decline the impact of events may not be immediately perceived but overtime it can lead to a great loss of trees and the beauty they provide and no amount of new planting can replace. Although it is essential that a proper risk assessment is undertaken, cutting of important trees should not be part of any solution for allowing an event to take place.

Vigilance and attention to detail are required. Implementation of the method statement should involve everyone to avoid confusion and the cutting of corners. However cheap solutions may be possible such as rope or red and white tape strung between bamboo canes put up before on-site construction or clear up. For regular events it may be easier to deter people from walking under the crowns of trees by just allowing the grass to grow a little longer. Where there is insufficient supervision, attractive permanent fencing and interpretation may give more reliable protection and add to the visual character of the site.

The Arboricultural Method Statement

The statement should identify how impacts on trees are to be avoided.

It should plan for the location of the following:

- Activities including preparation or warm up areas
- Access for participants and spectators – foot paths and motorised facilities
- Seating – formal and informal
- Catering
- Toilets
- First aid
- Security
- Towers and public address systems
- Access for construction traffic
- Rubbish and waste management
- Media coverage especially film crews
- Lighting and cabling
- Water and other services
- Camp sites for construction crews or participants

It will specify how the methods and protection will be translated to all staff, both in house and contractors.

It will include contingency plans for bad weather or emergencies.

How you can help

Trees first

- Caring for trees is inexpensive and they will repay their value time and again.
- Incorporate images and interpretation of the trees in publicity and programmes.
- Ensure all trees and root protection areas are marked clearly on plans.
- Clearly differentiate the most valuable trees.
- Identify trees most at risk and zone activity with them in mind.
- Be prepared for high vehicles or plan routes to accommodate them.
- Consider tying back branches rather than pruning to avoid long term change.
- Put up temporary physical barriers around important trees to protect crowns and roots.
- Plan access routes to avoid trees.
- All-weather access routes to avoid last minute diversions.
- Prepare for the worst weather conditions, especially at peak times, that could add to the stress or damage to trees.
- Rigorously supervise every single contractor.
- Put damage clauses into contract documents and make sure contractors understand what is required to avoid loss of income or payment for reparation.
- Provide shade and shelter for visitors in other ways.
- Build on past experience and plan for contingencies.
- Establish replacement trees to enhance future events.



Rope off trees in advance to protect root zones.

Please avoid

- Pruning of ancient and veteran trees as an alternative to good planning.
- Compaction – it is cumulative and even a single annual event is serious. Soil condition can take ages to return.
- Cutting corners, especially contractors if schedules go awry.
- Crown damage or branch breakage by large vehicles.
- Heightening risk which leads to tree surgery to reduce it.
- Crown lifting or pruning to improve access or visibility eg for filming.
- Car parking or picnicking under important trees tempting as it is when hot and sunny.
- Untested and expensive mitigation measures that may not be effective.
- Negative or misleading signage such as ‘dangerous tree’.
- Ground treatments that might damage tree roots and mycorrhizae such as adding fertiliser.
- Too many events and activities happening at the same time.



Do not allow vehicles to compact soils and damage roots.



Trees provide a special setting for major events however even footfall can cause compaction and seriously affect tree roots.



Plan refreshment and other hot spots away from important trees as it increases risk which too often results in tree surgery.

A methodical approach

A professionally prepared method statement should form the basis of good event planning and an essential document for event organisers – clarifying the significance of the trees for all in-house staff or setting down the essential requirements for external companies, contractors and specialist event designers. It should set out the sequence in which the site should be prepared and cleared away. In particular it should specify how trees of different value are to be protected before any other activity takes place. It should address last minute complications and allow for contingencies such as where people may be tempted to take shortcuts. In worst case situations it may be necessary as a tool to enforce work or for negotiating compensation payments.

Ideally temporary fencing around trees will be the first step when the event is being set up and the last to be taken down, even if it is removed or replaced by something more attractive during the event itself.

The roots of trees may extend out well beyond the crown. As a precautionary minimum, in the case of special ancient or veteran trees, it is recommended that nothing takes place within an area that has a radius 15 times the diameter of the tree at breast

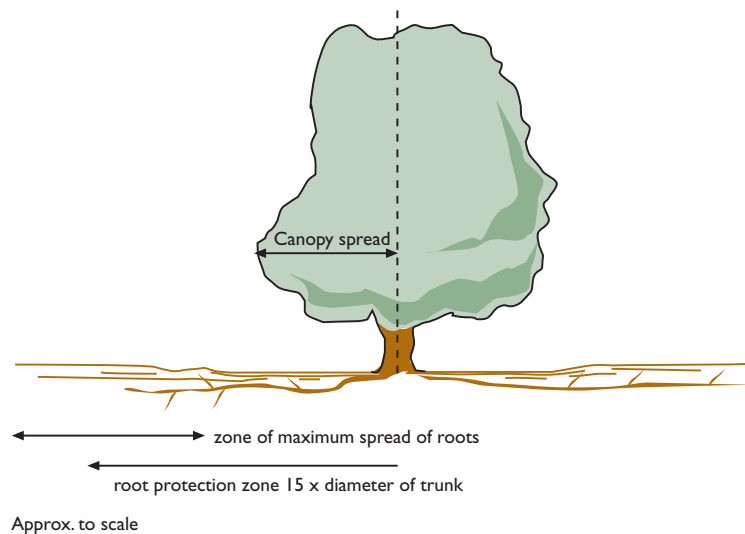


Diagram comparing the average root spread with the minimum root protection area of a tree with a 1m diameter stem.

height or 5m beyond the crown whichever is the greater.

As an absolute minimum British Standard 5837: Trees in relation to construction should be followed. This specifies an area equivalent to a circle with a radius 12 times the diameter of the trunk at breast height, capped to an area of 707m² ie a circle with a radius of 15 metres.



Mulching not only helps to prevent compaction but also helps restore soil condition.

The trees are assets



A single annual event can lead to long term compaction and a spiral of tree decline.

Ancient trees are a remarkable legacy, adding to the uniqueness of the British landscape and give us great insight into our cultural history, as well as host to exceptional biodiversity that is not found on younger trees.

For the tree owner they provide many benefits, as they:

- Create sense of place.
- Enhance the setting and distinctiveness of historic buildings and estates.
- Are fundamental to beautiful landscapes.
- Boost property values.
- Increase well being.
- Improve soil structure and quality and provide shelter for stock.

Ancient and veteran trees of all species including exotic specimens are very valuable for wildlife, especially species associated with decaying wood and aging wood or bark.

Take opportunities for children and families to experience and appreciate trees.

It is important that we venerate and secure this living heritage and maintain and enhance it for future generations.

“What is more beautiful? than an old tree with a hollow trunk? or with a dead arm, a drooping bough, or a decaying branch?”

William Sawrey Gilpin, a famous landscape designer, in “Practical Hints for Landscape Gardening” in 1832.



More information:

This leaflet is the eighth in a series about ancient trees:

- No 1: Trees and Farming
- No2: Trees in Historic Parks and Landscape Gardens
- No3: Trees and Development
- No4: What are Ancient, Veteran and other Trees of Special Interest?
- No5: Trees and Climate Change
- No6: The Special Wildlife of Trees
- No7: Trees for the Future
- No8: Trees and events

They are available from the Woodland Trust or can be downloaded (as a pdf file) in English and Welsh from www.ancient-tree-forum.org.uk

Mae'r daf len hon ar gael yn Gymraeg fel pdf o wefan.

Further reading:

Veteran trees: A guide to good management (2000) ed H. Read. Available as a pdf from their website at www.naturalengland.org.uk

Temporary Structures in Historic Places (2010) *English Heritage* A guidance note which sets out the elements of best practice in planning temporary structures and explains the various statutory planning controls that may apply. Available as a pdf: www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/guidance-on-temporary-structures-for-events

Pre-existing trees and woods in Country-House Parks. Landscapes 2, 1-16 (2004) Oliver Rackham

The value of different tree and shrub species to wildlife. (2006) Alexander, K., Butler, J. and Green, T. *British Wildlife* 18:18-28

Felling the ancient oaks (2012) Robinson, JM. The Heritage Trust. theheritagetrust.wordpress.com

Advice and information about ancient and veteran trees: www.ancient-tree-forum.org.uk

Record an ancient, veteran or other tree of special interest: AncientTreeHunt.org.uk

Tell us about a wood or tree under threat and get lots more information about fighting a threat: woodsunderthreat.org.uk



The Woodland Trust (registered office)

Kempton Way,
Grantham,
Lincolnshire NG31 6LL

Tel 01476 581111

The Woodland Trust Scotland

South Inch Business Centre,
Shore Road,
Perth PH2 8BW

Tel 01738 635829



The Woodland Trust Wales (Coed Cadw)

3 Cooper's Yard,
Curran Road,
Cardiff CF10 5NB

Tel 0845 293 5860

The Woodland Trust in Northern Ireland

1 Dufferin Court,
Dufferin Avenue, Bangor,
County Down BT20 3BX

Tel 028 9127 5787

Website: woodlandtrust.org.uk Email: enquiries@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Ancient Tree Forum c/o The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.

The Woodland Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales no. 294344 and in Scotland no. SC038885. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 1982873. The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark. The Ancient Tree Forum is a registered charity no. 1071012.

All images except where marked: Jill Butler. Printed on recycled paper ♻ 4585 04/12