



'GREENING DEVELOPMENT'

**A DISCUSSION DOCUMENT AND PROPOSAL
ON
THE MANAGEMENT OF TREES AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL
FEATURES
ON HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS.**

PREPARED BY:

JEREMY PEIRCE.
JP ASSOCIATES,
LANE END,
KENTISMOOR FARM,
KENTISBEARE,
CULLOMPTON.
EX15 2BT.

TEL; 01884 266518.
FAX; 01884 266161.
E MAIL; jpp@jp-associates.co.uk

DATE; MAY 2000
AMENDED; MARCH 2001

Please Note:

All views and opinions expressed in this proposal are purely those of the author.

The author gratefully acknowledges the help and encouragement of the Technical Dept at Prowting Homes (South West) and numerous other developers and Local Authority Tree Officers both before, during and after the preparation of this document.



JP Associates, Lane End, Kentismoor Farm, Kentisbeare, Cullompton. EX15 2BT.

Background.

This discussion document arises out of a general enquiry made by a developer client to the author.

This enquiry was concerned with how tree survey data could be integrated with land/site surveys in a digital format (CAD), so that accurate information on crown spreads, species, age, retention category, protection fence distances, NHBC requirements, work recommendations and other comments could potentially be available on all drawings. All parties; designers, planners, engineers, consultants, landscape designers, build and site managers, surveyors and site contractors, would then have instant access to relevant tree information. Numbers given to trees, information gathered and work details agreed with the Planners would be available and could then be used right through the acquisition, design, planning, construction and sales processes.

This would improve inter-departmental discussions on any topic where trees are, or should be, a relevant factor.

Further weight is added to this argument by the fact that most, if not all, planning departments will, at some time in the future, be asking developers to (voluntarily) submit plans, drawings and supporting evidence in a digital format. From conversations with several Tree Officers it is apparent that this form of presentation could well extend to trees and other environmental information.

This enquiry represents a sound idea but is really only a beginning.

Ideas on better integration of tree and environmental information have become amalgamated with various other issues that have arisen on numerous sites for different developers over the last few years.

These ideas have become distilled into the following environmental management scheme.

Proposal.

That tree and other environmental information should be presented on a.....

Site Environment Plan.

The level of integration suggested in the original idea should also be extended to include hedges, important natural habitats, land designations and all other environmental information as well as soil information (types and strength) and definitive boundary positions. This should be presented on a Site Environment Plan.

All consultants reporting on environmental/green issues should be instructed to provide pertinent information and recommendations distilled from their reports, in a tabulated digital format so that all important information can be reproduced on the Site Environment Plan.

The Site Environment Plan and other information should be widely distributed to designers, managers and everyone involved in the development including ground workers and site contractors.



Site Environmental Statement.

All pertinent information and recommendations should be discussed at a pre-construction meeting with all departments and relevant consultants/contractors represented. From this discussion a site environment statement would be agreed. This statement should indicate what environmental work will be undertaken and what safeguards and remedial operations will be employed. The statement should be regarded as being site policy that may well have some significant and far-reaching implications.

The statement should be realistic and achievable but must have substance to show genuine intent that implements the developer's environmental Policy, relevant Local Plan Environment/Planning Policy and national policy and guidance.

Environment Management System.

The Site Environment Statement should be an integral part of an auditable Environment Management System that encompasses the Site Environment Plan with the Site Environment Statement. A central element of the management system should be an independently administered monitoring process employed to ensure that all agreed works and safeguards are implemented.

Site Environmental Manager.

A Partner consultant should be retained as the Site Environmental Manager to implement the Environment Management System as detailed in the Site Environment Statement. The Site Environmental Manager's role is, in essence, similar to a quality or client manager where interests are autonomously represented at a management level. The principal roles of the Site Environmental Manager will be:

- To prepare/advise on the Site Environment Plan.
- Lead the pre-construction environment discussions.
- To be instrumental in preparing the Environment Statement.
- To monitor the site during both design and construction.
- He/she should be consulted before any work, that has environmental implications, is undertaken.
- To act as a contact point for Council Officers and all other parties over any environment matter.

The Site Environment Manager should have the authority (or the back up) to insist that all environmental recommendations are followed.

The green issues of development and especially Green Field development are going to become far more important over the next few years. By voluntarily adopting a scheme such as this developers would gain an important political and commercial advantage over competitors if such a scheme were to be imposed by primary legislation.

Over the last few years or so I have been involved in numerous developments for several major (and minor) developers and have identified several recurring problem areas.

Some of the problems that this proposal seeks to rectify:-

- Environmental information needs to be presented in one coherent document.



- There is not enough discussion/circulation of information, which frequently leads to different departments pulling in different directions.
- Work details agreed with the Planning Departments are not always carried out.
- Trees and other environmental factors are still not regarded with sufficient importance.
- Contractors, who are not aware of the various negotiations held with the Council, can often recommend works that contravene the agreed work programme.
- The exact position of legal boundaries is often not known and this can have significant consequences for the management options of hedges and boundary trees.
- Sales staff are often unaware of the protected status of trees and promises to potential purchasers over tree pruning/removal can be difficult, or impossible, to negotiate.

This document is presented in a brief form as one of its the major intentions is to promote discussion. The proposed scheme should be regarded as being a starting point rather than a finished, polished product.

I would suggest that the following points be considered when discussing this idea further.

- Any non-compliance to the Environment Statement should be rectified swiftly.
- The Site Environment Manager should be answerable at technical director level and not to site or build managers or surveyors and commercial managers where build programs and budgets will inevitably be a deciding factor.
- The Site Environment Manager's fees should be paid centrally or out of the office's 'bottom line' rather than from individual development budgets.
- This scheme is largely politically led and is ahead of current requirements and government guidance, but if the development sector doesn't 'Green Up' its act, measures like these could well be imposed in future guidance or legislation.
- Although this scheme may reduce margins in the short term it represents a more sustainable 'Green' image and this, in the long term, will help to ensure returns.
- A system of incentives should be introduced to reward sites with a good environmental record.
- The whole scheme could be used as a sales strategy.
- Once prepared the Site Environment Statement should be published and perhaps submitted to the Council and could also be mounted in the sales office.
- The Statement needs to be a policy document; whether there are penalties for non-compliance is a matter for discussion but we should certainly take the view that "Our word is our bond".

I set up JP Associates in April 2000 as a specialist, independent consultancy to further my specialism into trees and other environmental aspects of development. My broad professional background, management experiences and training would enable me to undertake the role of site environment manager (or one similar).

I would be happy to discuss any aspects of this document further or to explore ways in which the broad principals could be applied to any particular circumstance.

Please feel free to contact me.

