

JP Associates' Guide to BS 5837: 2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition & Construction – Recommendations'

British Standard 5837 sets out the arboricultural process to be followed wherever trees or hedges are being considered in relation to development (including design or construction). It gives recommendations on assessing the quality of tree stock and offers guidance on how trees might be safely and harmoniously retained within a scheme by identifying their associated constraints. It also contains guidance on protecting retained trees during development.



The arboricultural process

BS 5837 outlines a four-stage process that should be followed to ensure that trees are properly considered during each stage of the development. The 2012 Standard aims, for the first time, to bring the arboricultural process in line with the Royal Institute of British Architects' (RIBA) building stages.

1 Feasibility (RIBA stage A)

The tree survey is the starting point of the arboricultural process. It is based purely on the trees as they stand, irrespective of any development proposals. It identifies the significant trees that should be retained and that should influence any layout and those that should be removed. Details of the constraints – for example root areas and shading - associated with significant trees should be passed to the design team to inform the layout of any development proposals.

2 Conceptual design (RIBA stages C-D)

The second stage is the design work that leads to the submission of a planning application. BS 5837 states that this stage should be outlined in an arboricultural impact assessment (AIA). The AIA should

show how the tree constraints and the design proposals may affect each other and suggest ways to mitigate or avoid any impact. In large projects the conceptual design process can be lengthy as the layout changes according to different design factors. The AIA should show the various steps in the design process and should culminate in the draft tree protection plan (TPP). The

TPP indicates the trees to be retained and removed and specifies the protection measures needed to ensure that retained trees will continue to thrive. A draft arboricultural method statement (AMS) - based on information available and outlining pertinent issues yet to be covered - will also be required so the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has sufficient information to determine the application.

3 Technical design (RIBA stages E-F)

This is the post-planning design work that includes the detailed engineering and service installations needed to deliver the approved proposals. This stage requires working with the engineers to produce both the final TPP and any detailed method statements covering solutions that require working close to retained trees. Although the recommendation is that the detailed AMS should be produced post-planning, some LPAs may require certain detailed engineering information before issuing consent.

4 Implementation (RIBA stages J-K)

BS 5837 suggests a condition should be attached to the planning consent stipulating that tree protection arrangements are monitored during construction. It is likely that adherence to the AMS will also be conditioned to reduce any impact on retained trees.



JP Associates
Trees & Development · Arboriculture · Land & Habitat