

A GUIDE TO

Trees and development



Enhancing
the qualities that make **Exmoor**
special

Trees and development

It is not just woodland trees that are important to Exmoor. Trees that grow in villages, private gardens and on farms all contribute to the special character of the National Park, as well as providing important habitats for wildlife. It is important to ensure that the trees which contribute to the character of an area are protected during building works and can complement the built development after the works have finished.

This leaflet aims to provide information to people applying for planning permission to help address any issues related to trees and development.

The relationship between trees and buildings should be considered in the design and planning stage and key issues that should be considered are;

- Whether trees on or adjacent to the site may be protected by a Tree Preservation Order or located within a Conservation Area. (A separate application may be required if consent to carry out work to a protected tree is not granted as part of the original planning application)
- The impact the proposed development may have on the health, condition and future management of trees, both on and near the site.
- Whether a design can ensure the retention of trees that would otherwise be lost.
- Infrastructure requirements, for example, service routes - gas, electricity and water.
- The end use of the space.
- Whether it is appropriate to compensate for the loss of any tree with new tree planting and the appropriateness of the chosen replacement species.
- The potential impact of the trees on the proposed building and development, to include shading and dominance, and future pressures when they grow.
- The potential impact of climate change on existing or proposed tree species.

At the application stage you will be asked if there are any trees that may be affected by the proposed development. If there are, a tree survey may be needed with the application. A survey will determine the location of existing trees and evaluate any that should remain as well as what measures should be put in place to protect them during the building works. Tree surveys should be carried out by professional who should follow the format of British Standard 5837 2005: Trees in relation to construction: Recommendations.

Many planning applications on Exmoor are small scale and a tree survey to the British Standard is often not always necessary. Applicants can contact the National Park Tree Officer to discuss any tree related issues they think may arise from their proposed development plans and what level of detail any tree report should go into.

You may think that because a tree is outside of the building area, it is not going to be affected by any works however, in the past building operations have damaged trees and care is need to avoid;

- **Diggers and other vehicles** on site may lead to low hanging branches being ripped off; damage and damage to bark by collision.
- **Raising ground levels** within the root area of a tree even by a few centimetres can be detrimental as compaction can occur and roots suffocated.
- **Lowering ground levels** can sever roots, de-stabilising the tree as well as leaving it open to colonisation by decay organisms. Also, drainage may be modified reducing water availability or causing water logging, both of which places the tree under stress.
- **Soil contamination** can occur through spillages of oil, fuel, chemicals and the mixing of cement and washing from machinery or site plant.
- **Compaction of the soil** can occur with only two or three passes of a vehicle over the same area of soil. Once soil is compacted the soil pores are squashed suffocating the roots and preventing the infiltration of water. Storage of materials under trees leads to compaction of the roots and harm to the tree as well.
- **Fires**; the heat from the flames of a fire will damage a tree's vascular system under the bark even if there is no visible damage. The heat from the base of a fire into the ground can cause damage to the roots of a tree, drying them out leading to their death.

The key to resolving any tree/development issues is to take the time to consider as early as possible what potential conflicts there may be and deal with them appropriately. Issues that may come to light at a later date may be considerably harder and more expensive to deal with than if they had been addressed early on.

The Arboricultural Association website has contact details for approved professionals who are able to carry out tree surveys. It can be found at **www.trees.co.uk**

If you have any questions about how trees might be affected by development then please send details to the National Park Authority, phone 01398 323665 or e-mail **info@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk**.

At Exmoor National Park Authority we are committed to working with applicants, their agents, local residents, Parish/Town Councils and all other bodies to provide assistance through the planning process to achieve the best possible development in the National Park.

If you are a prospective applicant, discussing your proposals with myself or a planning colleague before submitting the application is recommended. Please send your sketch plans and details to the Planning Section by post or email (plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk). This will allow planning staff to research and advise on your proposals. If we need to visit the site to help advise we will happily do so. We can also put you in touch with other consultees who will also look at any application such as the Highways Authority and the Environment Agency.

We also run Planning Surgeries at Lynton and Porlock each week. No appointment is needed. Just drop in to discuss your proposals. If you wish to discuss a planning matter at Exmoor House, Dulverton then please phone to arrange a convenient time when we can ensure that a staff member is available to advise you.

There is no charge to discuss a planning proposal or application with a planning officer.

We will try and respond to planning queries within 10 working days; however, more complex proposals may take longer. All advice is given to the best of our abilities based on the information available.

David Wyborn, Head of Support to the Community



Exmoor House | Dulverton | TA22 9HL | 01398 323665

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