



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Landscape Advice Note: Tree Management Policy for English Heritage Properties



www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/parks-and-gardens/

Next to buildings, trees are usually the largest and most prominent feature in any landscape - rural or urban. This document sets out the policy for tree management on English Heritage properties.

INTRODUCTION

The care and conservation of trees within a wide range of historic environments from ancient monuments, castles or stately homes to designed and cultural landscapes is an important responsibility. Tree management is not an exact science, trees are living organisms which exhibit both predictable and unpredictable behaviours and are subject to the same fluctuations in health as any other living thing.

ENGLISH HERITAGE'S TREES

English Heritage is responsible for the management of over 38,000 specimen trees and approximately 160 hectares of woodland. The distribution of these trees over the four territories is shown in the table below.

Territory	Number of trees
South	11,600
West	5,400
East (Including London)	16,000
North	5,300

Reasons for their occurrence and location on these sites is as diverse as their distribution, ranging from individual or groups of trees on ancient monuments to designed historic landscapes with over 5000 trees.

Some have survived for hundreds of years, some possibly over a thousand years and can be considered living monuments, important in their own right. Other individuals are of botanical importance or are magnificent champions in height and girth.

Trees also make a substantial and valuable contribution to the character of an area and sense of place. They are enjoyed by local communities, sometimes help screen intrusions and provide a valuable habitat for wildlife.

TREE MANAGEMENT

Management of trees is the responsibility of the Landscape Manager in each territory. The Landscape Manager manages the Health and Safety Inspection System and the regional tree surgery contracts.

The Landscape Manager is the contact point for all enquiries regarding trees.

Management falls into four categories;

- Health and safety
- Emergency works
- Planned Management
- Replanting

HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTION SYSTEM

As a responsible landowner, English Heritage has a common duty of care to the visitors we invite or allow onto our property, and staff working on properties.

In order to fulfil this duty of care regular visual inspections of all trees on all sites are undertaken by a qualified and experienced arboricultural consultant. The consultant provides an expert opinion on the health and safety of the trees and makes recommendations for any work necessary to ensure public safety which may, in some cases, be removal of the tree.

The consultant is expected to report on health and safety issues only and is not required to take landscape, cultural or ecological factors into consideration.

The inspection system is managed separately from the procurement of recommended works. Consultants who undertake tree surgery work or tree surgery contractors who are closely associated with a consultant are not permitted to tender for works arising from inspections.

Within the term of the inspection system contract, inspections are undertaken at approximately 15 monthly intervals. This ensures that trees are inspected at different times of year to enable the consultant to build up a picture of trees and identify potential problems which may only be apparent in certain seasons.

Recommendations from the consultant must be carried out but the Landscape Manager is expected to also consider the wider implications of landscape, cultural and ecological factors. In principle there is a general presumption to retain trees especially veteran trees and there are a number of possibilities which might be considered – in consultation with the consultant – to reduce or mitigate the risk and avoid felling important trees. These include:

01



02



FRONT COVER

At historic sites such as Hailes Abbey, ancient monuments and ancient trees can complement one another © Alan Cathersides

IMAGE 01

Carefully selection of nursery stock for replanting and appropriate aftercare can prevent wasteful losses such as the collapse of this split leader © Alan Cathersides

IMAGE 02

The appearance of bracket fungi is not necessarily cause for concern. This *Ganoderma applanatum* is a species of heart-rot fungi common on old broadleaved trees, especially oaks © Alan Cathersides

- Crown Reduction
- Crown Thinning
- Pollarding
- Making the tree inaccessible
- Cable Bracing
- Propping

All or none of these options might be appropriate in different cases and it is sometimes impossible to avoid having to remove trees.

A record of inspections and the actions taken should be maintained by the Landscape Manager in conjunction with the Territory Health and Safety Coordinator.

It must be remembered that trees are living organisms and no expert can guarantee that a tree is 100 per cent safe. Trees can be quite seriously decayed with no visible signs and perfectly healthy trees can be lost in severe weather conditions. It is even possible that perfectly healthy trees can suddenly shed branches in windless conditions in a well documented (but poorly understood) phenomenon known as ‘Summer Branch Drop’.

Regular visual inspections by an independent, qualified consultant is a reasonable and responsible way to address health and safety concerns about trees. It enables detectable health and safety issues to be identified and dealt with. This system is reinforced by trained and experienced Landscape Managers regularly visiting sites, who will be able to identify some potential problems at different stages of the year. Additionally, on staffed sites, visitor operations staff can alert Landscape Managers to obvious problems such as broken or fallen branches or the appearance of fungal fruiting bodies.

EMERGENCY WORKS

Emergency works are unforeseen works which need to be carried out at short notice. This may be due to unforeseeable events such as those mentioned above or because of severe weather especially gales or lightning. Landscape Managers will carry out initial inspections for emergency works and site staff should notify them immediately if they have concerns.

Site staff should also notify Landscape Managers of any local storms or gales. Landscape Managers will then carry out initial damage assessments of sites and arrange for necessary works to be undertaken. They will also arrange for extra inspections by the expert consultant should these be considered necessary.

The regular inspection and work programmes have reduced the need for emergency works to a minimum.

PLANNED MANAGEMENT WORK

Planned management work is organised by the Landscape Manager in consultation with visitor operations staff and includes works which are not based on the health and safety reports but which are necessary for the smooth running of the site.

This includes work such as;

- Crown lifting and/or reduction to clear pathways, roads, buildings or similar
- Tree or scrub removal for landscape reasons
- Stump removal
- Coppicing
- Thinning

REPLANTING

The majority of the tree stock is mature with little planting being carried out over the last couple of decades. This has led to a large gap in the age class distribution which will, in the medium term, have major implications for the treescape of English Heritage properties.

Whilst this will bring opportunities in opening up lost views of the landscape beyond or re-instating the dominance of a site, it will equally reveal eyesores, intrusions and lead in some cases to a loss of character.

Management plans for sites must consider the importance of trees, shelterbelts and woodlands to the character of the site. Wherever possible arrangements for succession planting should be established to ensure continuity of tree cover for the future.

Provision must be made for adequate maintenance of newly planted trees to ensure successful establishment. This should be detailed for at least the first three years.

Where it is not considered desirable to perpetuate trees or woodlands on a site or part of a site, consideration should be given to establishing replacement planting on less sensitive areas. A long term policy should then be adopted of allowing existing mature trees to naturally expire before removal.



IMAGE 03

Split branches such as this are often caused by the growth pattern of a tree and can often be prevented by timely and appropriate action © Alan Cathersides

IMAGE 04

Modern equipment such as tomographs, which use sound waves, is much less invasive than traditional methods to measure the decay within a tree trunk © Alan Cathersides

English Heritage aims to maintain and continue its tree resource for the future, and values the landscape, cultural, ecological and amenity importance of trees, as well as ensuring conservation of built and buried heritage.

Tree planting on Scheduled Monuments requires Class 6 Consent.

CONSULTATION

Felling of trees and in some cases maintenance itself can be an emotive issue with local communities and visitors.

If works are potentially controversial, Landscape Managers should consult with visitor operations staff about the need to prepare information for display on site prior to works commencing. Significant works, such as the removal of mature specimens or clearance of large sections of earthworks should be notified to the Communications team and may require more extensive explanation or publicity.

Internal measures are also in place to monitor tree felling on historic properties. Consultation with the site team should be carried out and where necessary Class 6 Consent should be sought prior to felling.

A line of communication should be established with the local authority particularly where notification is required within a Conservation Area or on a tree with a Tree Preservation Order.

Notwithstanding the above advice, if the expert consultant has advised or the Landscape Manager believes that a tree is an immediate source of danger which cannot be mitigated, felling should be carried out without delay and the appropriate people notified afterwards.

NEW SITES AND DEVELOPMENT

All sites brought into guardianship or ownership require an initial tree survey to be carried out as soon as possible. This allows the trees to be brought under the annual Health and Safety Inspection programme thus as far as possible ensuring the safety of staff and contractors working on the site and the visiting public. A tree survey will also aid in site development proposals and/or planning applications.

As good practice, the tree survey should be carried out at an early stage in the design process following receipt of a topographical survey. This ensures that trees to be retained will not have to be subsequently removed due to concerns over safety and all important or specimen trees are identified.

Equally, provision should be made for adequate protection during development, building works, laying of services and so forth from plant or machinery.

WOODLANDS

Woodlands, shelterbelts and coppices often become neglected through lack of long-term management objectives and resources for this type of work.

It is important that these are considered an integral part of site management and must be considered as a feature in the management planning process.

Woodland management needs to be considered in the long term – 20 years is a minimum.

VETERAN TREES

The British Isles are of European importance in terms of the number of extremely old trees that survive.

Where veteran trees are sited on monuments, careful consideration must be given to their management. Whilst it is likely that disturbance by the trees root structure recedes as the tree enters its retrenchment phase, physical damage to the monument through collapse of the upper structure or instability resulting in lifting of the root plate (and underlying archaeology) would continue to be a potential threat. Equally however, it is likely that at this stage of its life cycle, the cultural, historical and nature conservation value is most significant.

In these cases it is important to limit the possible damage that may occur to the monument as the tree continues to senesce whilst retaining its importance, through regular inspection and where possible reduction of height/weight or encouragement of growth lower down (if the tree is of suitable shape).

CONSERVATION

English Heritage recognises its responsibility to ensure that in managing its properties care is taken to safeguard wildlife wherever possible.

FURTHER INFORMATION

British Standard 3998:2010 *Tree Work. Recommendations.*

British Standard 5837:2012 *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations.*

NJUG 10: *Guidelines for the planning, installation and maintenance of utility services in proximity to trees.*
www.njug.org.uk/publications/

Veteran Trees: A Guide to Good Management
publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/75035

Veteran Trees: A Guide to Risk and Responsibility
publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/75036

Lonsdale, D 2013 *Ancient and Other Veteran Trees: Further Guidance on Management.* London: The Tree Council

National Tree Safety Group, 2011 *Common Sense Risk Management of Trees.* Forestry Commission
www.forestry.gov.uk/safetreemanagement



IMAGE 05

Shelter belt planting can give protection from wind, can deaden the noise from busy roads and designed to hide intrusive features
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English Heritage is the Government's adviser on the historic environment with responsibility for all aspects of protecting and promoting the historic environment in England.

The role of English Heritage's Curatorial Department is to help everyone to be inspired and engaged by the Story of England through sites, artefacts and archives.

This guidance has been written and compiled by Alan Cathersides and Emily Parker.

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