



TDAG South-West
C/O Waterman Energy Environment & Design
Merchants House
Wapping Road
Bristol
BS1 4RW

1st May 2015

Dear Sirs,

Re: TDAG Consultation – Trees and the Planning Process

TDAG – Establishment and Objectives

The Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) is an open, collaborative, facilitating cross-sector and multi-disciplinary forum promoting the role of the urban forest throughout the United Kingdom. The group shares the collective vision that the location of trees, and all the benefits they bring, can be secured for future generations by influencing the planning, design, construction and management of our urban infrastructure and spaces. Established in 2007 as a not-for-profit, apolitical forum, TDAG incorporated as a charitable trust in 2013. Its membership, online publications and information are free. This approach enables TDAG to assimilate ideas and knowledge independently of organisational hierarchy, profit or commercial interests.

Trees and the Planning Process

The Planning Process includes resources and collaborative work from a range of stakeholders, cascading down from central government to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), clients, consultees, consultants, contractors and others. Within this process, the protection of existing trees is often a key requirement in the approval of a development that might otherwise be regarded as unacceptable, in planning terms. TDAG has identified that compliance with Planning Conditions 'on the ground' as an ongoing area weakness which greatly devalues the preceding work undertaken by stakeholders earlier in the process. This is further compounded by the limited resources available to manage or enforce planning agreements and ensure the approved development is delivered, as planned.

Trees and Current Challenges

The difficulties 'on the ground' in ensuring the delivery of the approved protection arrangements for the retained trees means that the long term value of the intended tree cover is unlikely to be realised. This greatly devalues the time, work and expectations of those involved in the preceding stages of the process. TDAG members feel there are considerable opportunities to address these weaknesses by refining the content of the associated planning conditions. We hope to achieve this by drawing upon a number of excellent precedents where the planning system has worked well and where examples of good practice have delivered some exceptional results.

Consultation

TDAG is now asking fellow professionals to help to investigate this essential area of work. We would like to hear of your experiences in the delivery and management of effective tree protection, as part of the Planning process.

We would welcome examples of both successful and weaker planning conditions and feedback on why these did or didn't succeed, (all information will be treated in confidence and will be treated as client privileged). In addition to looking at planning conditions we would also like to explore some specific project examples that have worked particularly well so that they can be used as case studies to demonstrate 'best practice'. In these cases we will need to understand;

- How was this achieved?
- What resources were necessary to successfully deliver this element of the project?
- Who was involved?
- By what benchmarks have you measured the success of the scheme?

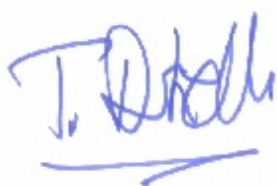
Please include as much detail as possible including site name/address, date(s), client name, Local Authority and a brief description of the development etc. (Please note, permission from the respondent will be sought prior to the use of any 'best practice' examples.

Tools for Change

Upon completion of the consultation, TDAG will collate and review the broad spectrum of experiences, suggestions and other responses with a view to producing best practice advice as to how the weaknesses in the current system can best be addressed. This can then be used as a tool within the planning and development system to ensure the tree protection agreed in the Planning process are indeed those implemented on the ground. This is expected to include guidance on the wording, content and enforcement of Planning Conditions relating to existing trees on development sites.

The deadline for submissions is **Friday 5th June 2015**. All correspondence should be marked '**TDAG(SW) - For the Attention of Tim Arkell**' and returned to the above postal address or by e-mail to tim.arkell@watermangroup.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



For the Trees Design & Action Group

CC:	Royal Institute of British Architects	(RIBA)
	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors	(RICS)
	Landscape Institute	(LI)
	Arboricultural Association	(AA)
	Institute of Chartered Foresters	(ICF)
	London Tree Officers Association	(LTOA)
	National Association for Planning Enforcement	(NAPE)
	Planning Inspectorate	(PI)
	Design Review Panel	(DRP)