Application for Tree Works

Guidance Notes

- **Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997**
- **Application For Tree Works: Works To Trees Subject To A Tree Preservation Order and/or Notification Of Proposed Works To Trees In Conservation Areas.**

Introduction

1. The Application for Tree Works Form allows you to apply for consent to carry out works to trees in a conservation area or subject to a tree preservation order. This form is to be submitted as part of your proposal.

2. **It is an offence to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area or trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order without either notifying your planning authority or obtaining their consent.**

3. These guidance notes provide clarification and further information to help you complete each section of the form and will assist in the completion of your application by either paper form or electronic submission.

When To Use This Form

4. You should use this form if you are proposing to undertake works to trees in a conservation area or works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order. If you are applying for and are granted full planning permission, you will not need to obtain separate consent for tree works required to implement the planning permission.

This form can be used both for notification of works and for obtaining permission. You may also use this form if you are seeking to carry out works to trees protected by other provisions (e.g. a planning condition). This form should not be used for the removal or varying of a planning condition. **Please use this form to notify the planning authority of any works to trees which you think may be protected.**
Works to Trees in a Conservation Area

5. You must give the planning authority at least six weeks’ notice before carrying out work to trees which are in a Conservation Area but are not covered by a Tree Preservation Order. This gives the planning authority an opportunity to consider whether an order should be made to protect the trees.

Seeking consent under a Tree Preservation Order

6. The consent of the planning authority is required before any work is carried out to trees which are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Only in exceptional circumstances is there no need to get the planning authority’s consent. For example, if immediate removal is required for reasons of safety.

Plans And Information Required

7. Your plan needs to show clearly and accurately the precise location of the tree(s) in relation to nearby property/roads/boundaries. It should, therefore, include the following:

- The main features of the site where the tree(s) stands and its surroundings. In particular, you should:
  - Mark and name surrounding roads;
  - Show the position of the nearest building(s) and approximate distance to the tree(s);
  - Add house numbers or names.

- Mark the position of the tree(s) that you want to carry out works to.

- Identify the tree(s) by the number shown in the Tree Preservation Order, where possible. If you use a different number, please make sure the planning authority can match this with your description of the tree(s).

- If there are many trees on the site, make clear which tree(s) are included in this application by:
  - Marking all trees on the plan but only numbering those you want to carry out works to;
  - Showing the approximate distance between the tree(s) and buildings;
  - Show other relevant features on the site, e.g. greenhouse, paths.

- If it is impossible to identify the individual tree(s) accurately on the plan (e.g. because they are part of a woodland or group of trees), please identify their approximate location on the plan and provide details of how the tree(s) are marked on site (e.g. high visibility tape, tree tags, paint etc). Trees must not be marked by scarring or cutting into the bark.
8. One of the following, or a combination, will usually be suitable to describe most pruning proposals.

| **Crown Thinning** | This reduces the density of the tree’s crown without changing the shape and form of the tree. Thinning reduces the amount of foliage and allows more light through the canopy or crown. The amount is usually specified as a percentage (%) of the crown.  
- Useful for admitting more light to gardens and windows  
- Allows crossing and rubbing branches to be cleared |

| **Crown Lifting** | This essentially means removing lower limbs close to the trunk, or pruning lower secondary branches to give more clear space below the crown.  
- Useful for allowing more light into gardens  
- Prevents low branches obstructing paths, drives etc. |

| **Crown Reduction** | The tree crown is reduced by shortening branches, usually carried out all round the crown or canopy to maintain a balanced shape.  
- Partial reduction may be useful for preventing branches contacting buildings, roofs and guttering |

**Tree Surgery**

9. All tree work should be carried out to BS 5839: Recommendations for Tree Work. A qualified tree surgeon will normally be required. Any work that would endanger the health of a tree or greatly reduce its amenity value to the local environment is unlikely to be allowed.
Wildlife Issues

10. Please note that protected species may be affected by tree works. For instance bat roosts may be present on a tree or trees. If this is the case, a survey may be required to support your proposals. Consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) may also be necessary. If you think this may be the case, you should contact your planning authority before submitting your application.

Before You Apply

11. The planning authority encourages you to discuss your proposals informally before you submit a formal application/notification. Early discussion gives the chance to:

- explore whether the work is exempt from the need to apply or notify;
- advise on how best to present your proposals; and
- guide you generally through the process and the planning authority’s tree protection policies.

12. The advice and guidance given to you during these discussions is given in good faith. However, the planning authority will be unable to give you a definite answer as to whether your proposed works will be allowed.

13. The planning authority is likely to have guidance relating to trees and you should consult its website for more information. More detailed guidance, intended primarily for planning authorities, is in “Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice”. Although this applies only to authorities in England and Wales it remains a useful reference document in Scotland. Other useful reference documents are:

- British Standard BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations;
- British Standard BS 3998:2010 Tree Work - Recommendations;
- National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) publication no10 from national House Builders’ Council (NHBC) chapter 4 Trees.

14. Further advice on TPOs may be available from your planning authority. For details please look at your planning authority’s website.

Electronic Submission Of Application

15. As you have used this form to submit your notification/application, it will be assumed that you are agreeable to using electronic communications for processing the application. If you wish to change this, please notify the planning authority in writing. They will need 7 days’ notice to change over.