

ACD

Ecology
Arboriculture
Landscape Architecture

NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2008

ACD continues to grow and develop, with a range of services based on our experience of clients' needs. The development world is evolving and planning requirements are becoming ever more complex. We can therefore no longer simply carry out simple landscape design to support applications, we have to provide extensive background environmental information and justify our development proposals. This Newsletter details the range of services we now have to offer and hope will provide the additional solutions to issues such as:

- The Visual Impact of a development.
- Trees as constraints and the complexities of BS 5837:2005 Trees in Relation to Construction.
- Ecology - the principles of 'Absence' or 'Presence' and Phase 1 & 2 Surveys.
- Seasonal constraints that ecology imposes.

ACD is developing on the principles I have always held dear - immediacy and commercial awareness. We are developing regionally to provide a local and responsive service, backed up by the head office in Wiltshire that remains our main design office. I firmly believe that the environmentally linked issues of ecology, arboriculture and landscape design produce a better landscape for our Clients.



Stephen Dale
Managing Director

ACD Arboriculture

ACD Arboriculture was established in 2007 in response to increasing requirements from Local Planning Authorities, for comprehensive Arboricultural Reports with all planning applications. These demands have been driven by requirements of BS5837:2005 'Trees In Relation To Construction - Recommendations', which has prompted many LPAs to request the retention of an Arboricultural Consultant throughout the construction process. As a result, all planning applications are now expected to provide details of trees on and adjacent to the site along with an assessment and mitigation of the impact of the proposed scheme.

ACD Arboriculture provides a comprehensive service in the UK, specialising in development and planning: this includes producing workable tree protection schemes, Method Statements, arboricultural site supervision, monitoring, and acting as an Expert Witness.

In addition to development schemes, we offer advice and consultancy on Tree Preservation Orders, risk of harm assessments, detailed tree inspections, tree inventories, and tree and woodland management plans.

We seek to protect Clients from inappropriate site activity and subsequent prosecution by involvement in pre-commencement meetings and induction of site staff unfamiliar with modern construction techniques. Our experience suggests that monitoring and on-site advice protects against costly site-closure and prosecution.

Please contact Mark Welby on 01483 425714 to discuss your requirements.



Mark Welby

ACD Southampton

ACD's southern office has been established for 18 months, with its' operational area covering the southern region of England and the Isle of Wight. It offers the full suite of ACD services including Landscape Architecture, Ecology and Arboriculture.

Due to the office's location, ACD's Hampshire staff are able to visit sites and attend meetings at short notice, reducing project time scales and cost, therefore ensuring that Clients in the south receive the most efficient service possible. Drawing upon the expertise and capacity of the ACD network of companies, ACD Southampton is able to provide our Clients with the level of service appropriate to their project needs in a location that suits them.

Please contact Annette Wells on 02380 251715 to discuss your requirements.

NEW NORTHERN OFFICE



ACD Northern

ACD Northern

Following the success of the Southampton office, ACD will be providing a similar facility for our Clients based in the North, Midlands and North Wales. The new office will be based in Congleton, Cheshire; close to the M6. The office location has been carefully chosen in an area of intense current and future development activity enabling ACD's Cheshire based staff to react quickly to Clients' requirements in visiting sites or attending meetings across these regions.

The office opened on 3rd March 2008.

Please contact Aaron Booth on 01260 296541 to discuss your requirements.

Ecology services

ACD provides a full suite of ecological services to support its clients through the planning and development process. The preliminary ecological input typically comprises an extended Phase 1 habitat survey of the proposed development site alongside a desk study. This ecological assessment work allows us to inform our clients of any (actual and / or potential) legal and / or planning policy constraints in relation to ecology and their proposed development(s).

Ecological constraints, such as the presence of protected / notable species, e.g. roosting bats, great crested newt, dormouse, reptiles and badger etc, are material considerations in the planning process and may require further survey work and / or mitigation.

Other constraints which would be identified comprise the presence of invasive species, specifically invasive weed species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed. Section 14(2) of this Act makes it an offence to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow' in the wild any species listed on Schedule 9. This could include spreading parts of the plant around a development site during site clearance or whilst undertaking construction works. In addition, Japanese Knotweed is regarded as controlled waste and has to be disposed of at licensed sites or by burning on site. Establishing the presence of such species enables us to inform our clients of any likely mitigation requirements.

ACD's primary piece of advice to its clients is therefore to commence the ecological assessment work at the earliest opportunity, preferably at the pre-application stage.

Benefits of Early Ecological Input / Advanced Planning

The benefits to our clients of carrying out the preliminary ecological assessment at the earliest stage possible are that any (actual and / or potential) ecological constraints are flagged up at an early stage which permits advance planning, specifically allowing our clients to programme into the planning / development time-frame, and make financial provisions for any survey and mitigation work. This approach helps our clients avoid project delays and unexpected expenditure.

We particularly remind our clients that providing incomplete ecological information with a planning application may result in delays in the processing of the application as local authorities may be minded to refuse such applications. We therefore advise our clients that they should provide full ecological information (i.e. Phase 1 and Phase 2 survey reports and any required mitigation strategy or strategies) alongside the planning application, to avoid such delays.



Sleeping Dormouse in day nest - Fleur Oliver



Ecological Survey Seasonality

Many ecological surveys are seasonally constrained. This again emphasizes the importance of undertaking the preliminary ecological assessment as early as possible, which would allow any necessary further ecological survey work to be programmed in ahead of the planning submission date. The seasonality of ecological surveys is demonstrated by the following examples:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Botanical surveys | April to September |
| Great crested newt | mid-March to mid-June |
| Reptiles | April to June and / or late August to late September |
| Bats | May to September, optimal - mid-May to August |
| Water Voles | April to October |

You will note that there is only a very narrow window of opportunity in which great crested newt surveys can be undertaken. Should a developer be required to undertake great crested newt surveys and miss this 3-month window, the development's time-frame may be conceivably set back in the order of at least several months, i.e. until such time as the great crested newt survey can be undertaken the following spring.

We also, however, caution our clients that if surveys are undertaken outside the recommended survey windows then the survey findings may be refuted as unreliable and may need to be repeated within the appropriate season.



Pond in Hertfordshire supporting amphibians - Fleur Oliver

Code for Sustainable Homes / Eco-Homes

ACD also provides ecological input into Code for Sustainable Homes and EcoHomes Assessments on behalf of its clients, having suitably qualified in-house ecological staff to undertake the Ecology Eco 1 - Eco 4 Assessments.

Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) / EcoHomes (EH) is one of a suite of environmental assessment tools which have been developed and is regulated by the Buildings Research Establishment (BRE). The CSH (introduced in 2007) and EH (now replaced by CSH) schemes enable developers and Housing Associations to measure and improve the environmental design and specification of their schemes in relation to a nationally recognised rating.

Land Use and Ecology is one of the eight categories which are assessed under this scheme. The input of a suitably qualified ecologist is required to complete sections Eco 1 - Eco 4 of the Land Use and Ecology category, with Eco 1 - Eco 4 pertaining to:

- Eco 1 Ecological Value of Site
- Eco 2 Ecological Enhancement
- Eco 3 Protection of Ecological Features
- Eco 4 Change in Ecological Value of Site

In order to complete Eco 1 - Eco 4 and, in particular, to maximize the number of credits which our clients can gain, it is fundamental that an ecological survey of the site (termed an extended Phase 1 habitat survey) is undertaken pre-clearance. Strictly speaking credit cannot be gained unless an ecological site survey has been carried out and during the appropriate time of year.

This again highlights the importance of carrying out an ecological survey at the earliest stage possible and within the suitable survey window: the optimal window for undertaking extended Phase 1 habitat surveys is March/April to September, though this is somewhat weather dependent.

2008 Ecology Survey Season

In light of the complexity of the various ecological survey seasons, ACD would welcome the opportunity to discuss with its clients the programming of any ecological assessment work for the 2008 season.

Please contact Stephen Dale or John Constable on 01666 825646 to discuss your requirements.

Landscape Audit

Landscape installation – the results are dismal... We strongly recommend our Landscape Audit service – ensure the specified planting is installed, the ground conditions are acceptable and the scheme will succeed. Attendance at a pre-start meeting and a follow-up at Practical Completion are all that are required, at a fixed cost of £450, including summary Report.



Don't Forget Japanese Knotweed!

This persistent and highly invasive weed lies dormant over the winter months, with new emergent stems and leaves appearing in spring. Displacing native plants, it is the most invasive plant in Britain. Its' spread is primarily the result of human activities which aid dispersal along linear corridors such as railway tracks, rivers and road verges. As soon as the weed emerges from its winter dormancy a suitable management regime should be implemented, consistent application with a suitable systemic herbicide, to be applied routinely throughout the growing season to ensure the total destruction of the weed. For more details please contact either ACD for a copy of our Japanese Knotweed information sheet or The Environment Agency.

Climate Change

The climate is a-changing and so is our design – current Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change offers the following recommendation: *Urban Cooling: Moderating high summer temperatures, through for example the layout of urban open space and shading from trees. Climate change will exacerbate the temperature gradient that rises from the rural fringe and peaks in city centres. This is described as 'the urban heat island' because the warmer urban air lies in a 'sea' of cooler rural air.*

Trees are no longer the shade monsters to be banished from private amenity space!

Competition

And for those of you still reading, here's a competition to finish up with...next to my lovely pond with its lovely Great Crested Newts (who moved in within a season of it being built), I have some *Salix viminalis* (Common Osier), which is coppiced every year. This is a Willow traditionally used for basket making and woven fencing panels and grows at a fantastic rate. So...for a bottle of Mumm champagne delivered to your door, guess the measured growth of one stem achieved in one growing season, to the nearest millimetre, and email me your entry on s.dale@acdlandscape.co.uk

