

APPENDIX F

GOV. UK

Guidance

Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions

How to assess a planning application when there are ancient woodland, ancient trees or veteran trees on or near a proposed development site.

From:

[Natural England](#) and [Forestry Commission](#)

Published

14 January 2022

Extract:

Ancient and veteran trees can be individual trees or groups of trees within wood pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, parks or other areas. They are often found outside ancient woodlands. They are also irreplaceable habitats.

Ancient trees

An ancient tree is exceptionally valuable. Attributes can include its:

- great age
- size
- condition
- biodiversity value as a result of significant wood decay and the habitat created from the ageing process
- cultural and heritage value

Very few trees of any species become ancient.

Veteran trees

A veteran tree may not be very old, but it has significant decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its exceptional biodiversity, cultural and heritage value.

All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient. The age at which a tree becomes ancient or veteran will vary by species because each species ages at a different rate.

Making decisions

When making planning decisions, you should consider:

- conserving and enhancing biodiversity
- avoiding and reducing the level of impact of the proposed development on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees

You should refuse planning permission if development will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees unless both of the following applies:

- there are wholly exceptional reasons
- there's a suitable compensation strategy in place (this must not be a part of considerations of wholly exceptional reasons) - see paragraphs 33 and 34 of the [planning practice guidance](#) on compensation guidance

You should make decisions in line with paragraph 180 (c) of the NPPF.

Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees are irreplaceable. Therefore, you should not consider proposed compensation measures as part of your assessment of the merits of the development proposal.

Assess the effects of development

When making decisions on planning applications, you should assess the direct and indirect effects of development on:

- ancient woodland
- ancient trees and veteran trees

You should consider both the construction and operational effects of the proposed development.