6.0 Retaining the Right Trees

6.3 TREE RETENTION

A collection of mixed species of maturing trees exists within the site, many of which contribute to the local setting and visual amenity. Wherever it is desirable and feasible, the Heygate Masterplan aims to protect the trees for retention.

Identifying the 'right' trees to retain has involved a qualitative assessment of the future growth of the trees and all the potential constraints.

The data used for assisting in the selection of retained trees has been based on a detailed arboricultural survey (Crown Consultants Stage 1 Arboricultural Report 25th February 2011) which was carried out in accordance with the principles of BS 5837:2005. This guidance has helped to identify the important individual mature trees and key tree groups/ belts on site, and the potential role they may have within the new landscape and its character areas.

In particular, the survey provides a detailed understanding of the health, vigour and potential longevity of individual specimens and accordingly their suitability for long term retention. The survey also provides a record of the potential constraints that existing trees pose upon the site. More detailed assessments of the retained selection of trees have undergone further testing for the extent of RPA's by arboricultural consultants and the extents of these areas are identified on drawing EC-TPP-AM-1.0 (refer to Figure 39 on page 44).

6.4 EXISTING TREE CONSTRAINTS

The Heygate Masterplan has been devised to retain suitable trees to contribute to the final Development outcome whilst creating a safe, permeable, vibrant and sustainable mixed use community with an increased density of new homes, shops and businesses in the important zone 1 central London location.

The methodology for assessing whether trees should be retained or removed has been based on several key criteria:

- A technical and professional appraisal of the tree (Arboricultural Report).
- An aesthetic appraisal of the tree that also considers the long term regeneration proposals and objectives for the site and the influence the tree has and is likely to have on these proposals if retained.
- A Site appraisal undertaken by the arboriculturalist and design team to assess any potential impact that the new development may have on the existing trees, in particular the tree root zone and any implications or constraints this may have on finished ground levels, building plots, infrastructure, etc.
- Where trees are determined to be unhealthy, or a risk to public safety, or die, replacement planting will be undertaken in accordance with the tree replacement strategy.
- Community and key stakeholder consultation.

More detailed testing of trees identified for retention shown on ECM336-TR-1-011 (see Figure 25 on page 25) and EC-TPP-AM-1.0 (Figure 39 on page 44) will take place as part of the Reserved Matters process and the detailed design of individual elements of the development.

The RPA, generated in accordance with BS5837: 2005, normally provides a sufficient precautionary zone where rooting conditions are more-or-less open, unobstructed and level. However for many trees on the site root conditions are such that it is not possible to confidently accept the RPA as providing a more-or-less accurate illustration of the location of roots due to the nature of the surrounding growing conditions i.e. kerbs, hard surfaces, structures, walls etc, all of which present challenges to root growth. All trees in such condition will require further investigation at Reserved Matters stage to assess whether they require specific management and/or replacement. Figure 24 illustrates the extent of RPA's for existing trees that are to be retained.

The process for this further testing is defined in a flow diagram (Design Process in Relation to Arboricultural Constraints, refer to Figure 20) and comprises the following stages:

- Does the design (including excavation or build-up of ground required to achieve the construction) breach the RPA of the tree (both generated RPA and adjusted RPA) and/or breach the canopy area of the tree?
- If yes, then investigations are required to assess the location of the roots.
- If roots and/or canopy are found to be present in the affected area, the following decisions will be made:

1. Look at changing the design where practical and/or appropriate.
2. Employ special engineering / tree management measures to ensure that the trees health and longevity is maintained.
3. Fell tree and implement tree replacement strategy.