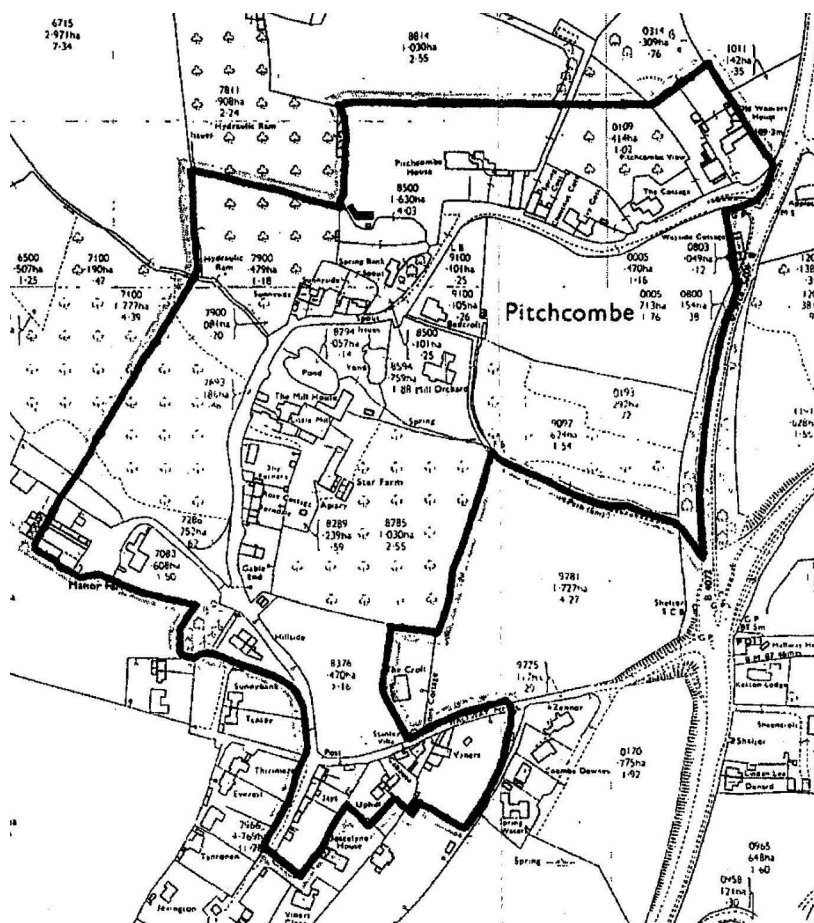


Trees in the Pitchcombe Conservation Area

If your property is in the Pitchcombe Conservation Area (see drawing) you need to be aware that any significant work on trees is likely to require planning permission. This can be rather inconvenient at times, but exists to protect the landscape that we all benefit from.



Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 all trees in a Conservation Area with a trunk diameter of 75mm or more (measured at 1.5m above natural ground level) are protected (subject to some exemptions). It is an offence to prune, fell or otherwise damage a tree without first giving notice to Stroud District Council.

This applies even if a tree is not protected by a formal Tree Preservation Order.

Trees or hedges? A 'tree' is anything which ordinarily anyone would call a tree. Bushes and shrubs are not protected. If a hedge forms part of a garden and has been clearly managed as a hedge, it is not protected. However if it has been left unmanaged for

many years and has grown into a line or row of trees they will be protected. If the hedge is not part of a garden it may be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

Giving notice of tree works. You can apply online using the Planning Portal, select Start a Planning Application and follow the prompts. There is no charge for an application, but you will need to be able to describe what you propose to do (and usually provide a photograph marked to show the work) and a location plan. This can be a do-it-yourself sketch as long as it clearly shows the location of the property and the trees concerned. If you employ a tree surgeon (much to be recommended), they will usually put in an application and get permission for you.

Failing to get permission is an offence. Anyone (including a contractor) who cuts down, uproots, tops, lops, wilfully destroys or wilfully damages a tree in a Conservation Area without first giving notice is guilty of an offence that can result in a seriously large fine (if convicted in a Magistrate's Court, up to £20,000 or in the Crown Court, an unlimited fine).

Exceptions. There are some exceptions, for example if a tree or branch represents an immediate risk of serious harm, in which case SDC must be given notice as soon as practicable after the work becomes necessary.

Pitchcombe Parish Council is normally consulted by SDC when an application is made for tree work in the conservation area, and may comment. It is unusual for applications to become contentious.