



Basements and trees

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As inner city space runs out, digging downwards is an increasingly viable option for expansion unless there are trees in the way!

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The protected trees adjacent to this excavation are a material planning consideration and dealing with them as part of a basement application rather than an afterthought can make the difference between success and failure.

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This mature plane tree will severely restrict any surface excavations in this rear garden area. However, there may be scope to tunnel beneath it if a sufficient depth of undisturbed soil can be left at the surface.



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This mature lime tree was protected by being in a conservation area and the council used it to restrict basement excavations in the adjacent garden. It may have been possible to extend closer to the tree at a greater depth if the applicant had taken expert advice.

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This protected maturing oak was considered so important that no excavation was allowed within 2m of the surface within its crown spread.



This meant that a large water main could not be installed by conventional open-trench excavation. Instead, shuttered tunneling was constructed 3m below the tree and allowed it to be retained without any adverse impact.

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This technique can be successfully applied to basement construction by extending beneath existing trees, but leaving their main root system intact.