

TREES & LANDSCAPING FOR DEVELOPMENT SITES.

A guide for developers

Introduction

In assessing the suitability of development proposals, the District Council will seek to ensure that new development blends into its surroundings. An understanding of the character and appearance of the surroundings of the site is an important first step in considering how the development may be designed to blend in. In order to assist with this, the District Council may ask developers to carefully consider existing and proposed landscaping as part of the design process. This guidance leaflet is aimed at providing simple advice to developers on such landscaping requirements.

Existing trees & landscape features

When designing the layout of new development consideration must be given to any existing trees, hedges, shrub masses and other vegetation on the site. Care should be taken to retain as much as possible and the new layout should be designed around the existing trees, hedgerows and other significant landscape features.

Particular attention should be paid to existing ponds, streams, hedge banks and copses where there is an excellent opportunity to enhance and develop them as ecological features within the development. Care should be taken to ensure that adequate safety measures are incorporated where water is a design feature.

Existing vegetation and trees in the vicinity of new buildings creates a maturity of landscape, positively enhances the development and can add significant value. To achieve a similar value with new planting can be expensive and take decades to attain the same effect. In order to ascertain the extent of the tree and landscaping requirements it will be helpful to discuss the proposed form of development with the Local Planning Authority **before** formally submitting a detailed planning application and in many cases prior to submitting an outline application. This may well save time at a later stage and ensure an acceptable level of detail is provided. Tree and site surveys of existing features are essential details for all parties at any pre-planning discussions.

Where there are existing trees and hedges on the site the following points must be considered:

1. The survey of existing trees, shrubs and hedges must be undertaken in accord with The British Standard "Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) by a person competent in arboriculture and the design informed by the tree constraints plan derived from that survey.
2. Is a baseline ecological assessment required where the site contains significant natural features such as hedge banks, streams, ponds, woodland or large mature trees etc?
3. Check whether any of the trees are the subject of a Preservation Order, within a Conservation Area or are protected by planning condition? Please note that all trees and hedges are considered a 'material consideration' in any planning application whether protected or not.
4. Will trees adjoining the site boundary be affected by the proposed development i.e. those whose crown overhang the site boundary or are close enough to affect the site in terms of root encroachment, shade, or screening?
5. All trees and hedges to be removed and those to be retained must be clearly marked on the plan to scale. A schedule detailing any tree surgery works must be provided.
6. The necessary steps can be taken to avoid potential root damage to buildings, roads and underground services. Foundation depths and design must be informed by the National Housing Building Council (NHBC) Standards, Chapter 4.2 Buildings near trees.
7. The ground level in the vicinity of existing trees should not be changed as this inevitably affects their health and stability.
8. Trees and hedgerows should be clearly marked on ALL site plans so that site operatives are in no doubt as to which ones are to be retained and protected.
9. Outline and detailed applications should be supported by an Arboricultural Implication Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statements and a Tree Protection Plan in accord with BS 5837. Pre application advice should determine the levels of detail required particularly on small sites.
10. Do existing trees or hedges provide screening for the site in the landscape or adjoining properties and if they are to be removed is there adequate provision made for replacement planting?
11. Where trees or hedges are to be removed the council will wish to see adequate replacement planting that is in keeping with locally found species and will provide sustainable long term features that enhance the development..



Requirements of a landscaping scheme

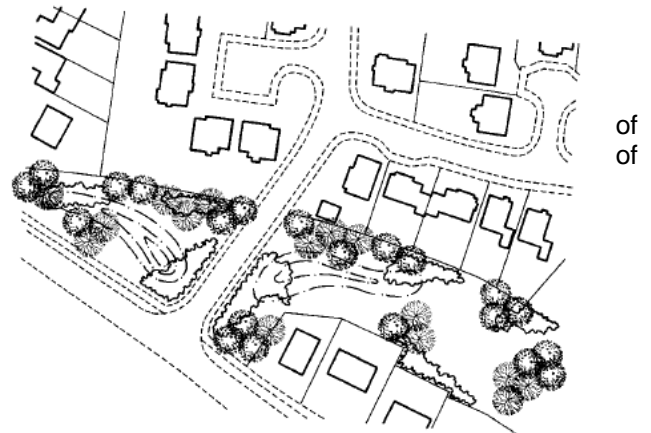
Developers are urged to submit a landscaping scheme at the same time as other details of the proposed development. Landscaping schemes should include the following:

1. Drawings should be clearly legible and based on an accurate site survey. Final landscape schemes must overlay the final development layout drawing.
2. The scale of the drawings should be adequate for a detailed landscape scheme ie 1:500, 1:200, 1:100 or 1:50, as appropriate.
3. A north point, scale bar and a key to any symbols used. Note that keys should rely on symbols and not colour coding to ensure legibility as a black and white copy.
4. Clear identification of existing site and landscape features such as trees and hedgerows. The full extent of the hedge and tree canopy spread should be shown to scale together with clear indication of whether they are to be retained, removed or replaced as per BS5837. They should be clearly and separately identified from proposed planting.
5. Means of protecting existing site features such as trees and hedgerows during construction as per BS5837. The type and position of this protection should be clearly identified as per the submitted Tree Protection Plan.
6. Proposed planting to include a schedule showing details of the species to be planted, the numbers or densities of each, the planting sizes for each species, planting specification (pit size for trees), method of support (trees) and the method of weed control e.g. mulching and future maintenance to ensure that the planting will survive and mature.
7. Existing and proposed levels together with cross and long sections (as necessary).
8. Details of boundary treatments including walls and fences and hard materials for paths and other surfaces.

Design issues

In designing landscaping proposals it is important to consider the intended function of the landscaping for example screening, nature conservation, shelter, enclosure space or views, specimen planting and formality. The scale planting should also be appropriate to the space available for it and have regard to proximity to existing buildings especially houses. Care should be taken to ensure that planting will be in harmony with existing and proposed dwellings both within the site and on adjoining land. The following general points should be considered:

1. Shelter planting on exposed edges linking to existing features.
2. Structure planting to link the development to the wider landscape character.
3. Buffers between rural and urban edge to include transitional planting.
4. Boundary treatments – materials, heights and position.
5. Proposals for habitat gain in including wildlife corridors.
6. Diverse / attractive edge to the development.
7. Framed views of the development.
8. Protected species.
9. Feature tree planting to provide long term principal landscape elements.



You are strongly advised to seek professional advice at the outset in order to save time and money by advising on the most appropriate and cost-effective landscaping scheme, reducing delay and avoiding the need to submit revised plans and ensuring that landscaping is properly carried out, at the appropriate time and is maintained satisfactorily. Professional advice may be gained from:

The Landscape Institute 020 7299 4500 <http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/>

The Arboricultural Association 01794 368717 <http://www.trees.org.uk/>

Sources of further information and guidance:

- ❖ BS 5837 - Trees in Relation to Construction - Recommendations. This is a guide produced and published by the British Standards Institute. It is intended for use by arboriculturists, architects, builders, engineers, planners, surveyors and all others involved with the relationship between trees and construction.
- ❖ BS 3998 – Recommendations for Tree Work.
- ❖ Arboricultural Association: Leaflet No 9 Protection of Trees on Development Sites.
- ❖ National Housing Building Council (NHBC) NHBC Standards, Ch 4.2 Buildings near trees