

LANDSCAPING

Supplementary Planning Guidance Note Ref: SPG 01 - NLLP Policy DSP.4 and NBE 1 & 2

Copies available from Planning & Development, Fleming House, Cumbernauld G67 1JW - as approved 22nd Sept 2009

One key element of successful schemes is an attractive well designed landscape – using shrubs, trees, walls, ground surfaces and street furniture imaginatively to provide an appropriate setting around buildings. A good landscape scheme should be developed as an integrated part of the design, and will help integrate the new development into the existing context – taking full advantage of the existing site and its location.

The purpose of this leaflet is to:-

- advise as to what a “landscape scheme” should include
- ensure landscape schemes accompany relevant applications for planning permission. The granting of consent may otherwise be delayed.
- provide a checklist (on back page) which will be used by to assess submitted landscape themes.

Related Guidance will cover: 02 Trees; Public Realm; 09 Drainage & Flooding; Open Space Requirements, and Biodiversity. See also 1A for Species Guidance.



Good landscape can enhance the environment, and soften the hard appearance of buildings or car parks

The latest Supplementary Planning Guidance can be found online at:- www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/spg

A. LANDSCAPING

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

1

What are you seeking to achieve?

- To screen or soften the development? To create a pleasant place?
- To create privacy? To hide or emphasise views? To be useable?
- To add value & quality to the development?
- To assist nature conservation & wildlife?
- To distinguish public or private areas? Defensive planting to boundaries?
- To emphasise entrances and pathways/ desire lines?
- To provide interesting playspaces & links to green networks?
- To provide a safe environment for people of all ages and abilities?

Landscape design should be an integral part of an overall scheme of development – not an afterthought. It should form part of pre-application discussion or planning application. If in doubt appoint a Landscape Consultant at an early stage.

2

What is worth keeping?

- Can existing trees, hedges, water features etc be retained or enhanced to give an initial maturity to your scheme (and save money)?
- Can you re-use existing stone walls and old materials to add value and character? Retaining existing mature trees or hedges helps.
- Are there views to protect or to be enhanced?
- Can the proposed new buildings & roads be laid out to protect landscape features and retain existing trees?
- Temporary protection to trees will be needed during development? Is the location of such temporary protection shown on the plans?

A scheme should incorporate and complement any existing features of interest and build upon the existing landscape to provide early maturity (e.g. retaining mature trees and hedges). The Council's Greening Framework partnership can advise on tackling vacant & derelict land.

3

Will the plants grow?

- Is the site in sun or shade? Exposed or sheltered? Open or enclosed?
- What sort of soil and drainage is there? Clay?
- Has allowance been made for adequate ground preparation? And for retaining topsoil on site?
- Where are the underground services? Are they shown on the drawings?
- Do you need to use hard surfaces? Is water run-off minimised? Do you need to ensure your drainage is sustainable? (see “Drainage” leaflet)
- Is there sufficient space for plants to grow?

A scheme should give careful consideration to the physical conditions of the site. Existing trees & shrubs provide a useful indicator of what is suitable or likely to survive. Any existing problems (hydrology or ground conditions) should not be exacerbated.

4

Has maintenance been considered?

- Is the scheme designed to be easily maintained once established?
- Does it avoid awkward corners? Steep slopes? Small grassed areas?
- How are the edges between different surfaces to be treated?
- Who will be responsible for maintenance?
- Wildflower meadows require less mowing than traditional grass cover.

A scheme should be designed to avoid potential maintenance problems. Good quality landscape adds long term value, and helps reduce pollution and increase carbon capture.

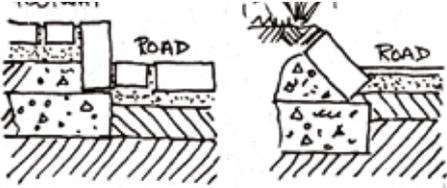
The council will seek to ensure these principles are achieved through the development management process

B. HARD LANDSCAPING

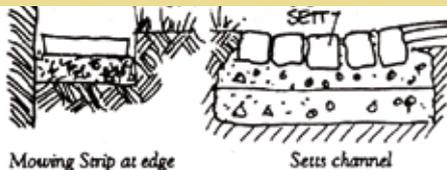
Hard surfaces and materials will be appropriate in heavily used locations and to complement areas of soft landscaping. Consideration needs to be given to minimising additional surface water run-off (see separate Guidance Note). However well designed buildings can also be spoiled by unsuitable external works – or unsympathetic use of modern materials. The Council will seek to encourage the positive examples below:-*The importance of Landscape and Natural Heritage is flagged up in paras 125 to 133 of the Scottish Planning Policy (Feb 2010) as well as in Local Plan Policies DSP4, NBE1, NBE2 and NBE3.*



B.1 SURFACING



Brick paving block on edge
Careful attention to the junctions between different materials is needed



Moving Strip at edge
Setts channel
Careful attention to the junctions between different materials is needed.

USE

- Interlocking clay/concrete paving blocks in natural or darker colours. These can provide quality & texture and be laid economically to various patterns.
- Rows in different colours or unit (eg granite setts) can be used to reduce the scale of larger areas.
- Paving materials & foundations appropriate to their function (eg vehicular or pedestrian)
- Existing stone or brick paving slabs or edging when available
- Permeable surfacing materials to improve drainage (see separate Guidance Note on SUDS & drainage)

AVOID

- Large unrelieved areas of tarmac, concrete or concrete flags. Break up such areas with different materials or planting. Minimise water run off.
- Brightly coloured or fancy shaped paving blocks
- Loose gravel in well used areas
- Concrete kerbing in rural or green belt locations (where it urbanises)
- Paving or tarmac not laid to proper drainage falls
- Steps where ramps (ideally to max 1:20 slope) can be provided
- Importing waste materials for landscaping purposes. Permission or licences may be required from SEPA (www.sepa.org.uk)

B.2 WALLS AND FENCES



USE

- Existing masonry walls retaining where possible. If they have to be taken down-store carefully & reuse.
- Masonry walls to public boundaries (over 2.1m high where needed to screen from eye level).
- Expansion joints & piers to masonry if not using lime mortar.
- Ensure a robust coping detail.
- Roughcast render finish is usually more appropriate in traditional settings than smooth or Tyrolian Finish.
- Iron or metal railings – galvanised to protect from rust.
- Planting to soften fencing or blank walls – especially to the public face.
- Boundaries appropriate to location (stone walls or post & rail in rural areas; or natural hedging)

AVOID

- Timber fencing to public roads - its life is likely to be too short
- Chainlink fencing without a planting screen to soften the appearance.
- Perforated concrete blocks and other over ornate materials.
- Ranch (horizontal) style fencing.
- Artificial stone near to natural stone.
- Interwoven panel fencing to public boundaries.
- Poorly defined boundaries between public and private space
- Open access where security is required.



Walls can have multiple uses



Timber fencing needs planting to be effective



Water & planting can create secure boundaries

Lighting columns/ Seats/ Litter bins/Signs/
Planting boxes/ Play Areas / Cycle Parking

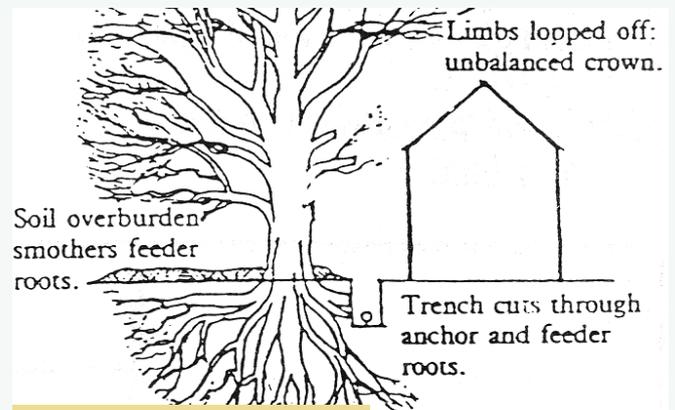
B.3 STREET FURNITURE

see also public realm guidance



C. SOFT LANDSCAPING

Trees, shrubs and grassed areas are the individual elements of the “growing” landscape. They need to be considered as part of the overall design – and not used just to fill in the spaces after buildings, roads and paths have been provided. Trees and shrubs have an important role in securing an attractive and safe development, in providing a buffer and softening at development edges, and in providing screening for privacy, enclosure or shelter. They can provide character and define open areas and provide shelter and food for birds and other wildlife. If carefully planned a planting scheme can retain its attraction and interest throughout the seasons of the year. The use of herbaceous perennials and naturalised bulbs can add to the seasonal interest.



Example of bad practice to avoid

It is important that the shape and design of the overall scheme should relate to the form and layout of the development, enhances the existing landscape, and promotes defensible space. The Council will seek to encourage the positive examples below.

see also separate Supplementary Planning Guidance note on Trees and Development

C.1 TREES

USE

- Whips, which are economic and cost effective when mixed with standards, to achieve dense screening & fast growth
- Standards (2.5m-3.5m high) for groups in gardens or enclosed spaces
- Heavy standards (over 3.5m high) as specimen trees for public areas or to provide scale.
- Species should enhance the wildlife and biodiversity by providing nesting areas, food material or shelter
- Trees grouped in a natural way.
- Proper planting procedures (see planting tips)
- Trees of the right scale for the location – allow ample room for growth. In busy areas trees should have a 1.8m clear stem
- Root containment for trees/shrubs adjacent to roads, pavements & car parks

AVOID

- Rows of fast growing conifers – this usually illustrates a design problem.
- Trees (especially Willow, Poplars, Elm and Ash) close to foundations or underground services.
- Damage to existing trees by protecting them with temporary fencing (see Tree Note)
- Limes and Sycamores in parking areas to prevent sap staining.
- Trees under power or telephone lines.
- Large trees (trunk girth at 1m height) too close to windows of buildings
- The overuse of trees with red, purple or yellow foliage
- Increasing or reducing the ground level around existing trees.
- Parking areas without any trees or soft landscaping.
- Obscuring visibility or informal surveillance

TOP TIPS

- Landscaping should be phased according to building program and season and completed timeously - avoiding work on trees or hedges from April to September.
- It is a standard condition that dead, dying or vandalised trees shall be replaced within 2 years of planting. So get it right initially!
- Once established – shrubs are much easier and cheaper to maintain than small grass areas
- Mature trees may be covered by a Tree Preservation Order and may require a Bat Survey. Check Tree Guidance Note
- There are a wide variety of trees and plants to choose from. Check their ultimate height and spread to ensure they are appropriate for the site e.g. see the various Tree & Shrub manuals, or nursery catalogues
- Remember that a mulch or recycled green waste compost helps suppress weeds & conserve moisture
- Good planting is a simple and cost effective way of improving the quality of a scheme
- All trees and hedgerows should be surveyed during the nesting season i.e. April - September



Trees and shrubs are important in breaking up spaces like car parks.

C.2 SHRUBS

USE

- Plants which are well suited to the type of soil and degree of shade
- A planting density which will achieve an attractive initial effect but also takes account of the ultimate size of each species
- Plants to achieve a specific objective.
- A mix of trees, shrub planting & hedgerows which can connect green features to benefit wildlife
- Shrubs to screen and soften walls and fences
- Temporary protective fencing around new planting
- Use species which enhance wildlife value and biodiversity.

See separate Guidance on Flooding & Drainage (SPG09) and Biodiversity (SPG20)

AVOID

- Too many different varieties in one group
- Shrubs standing alone – plant in mass groups
- Low ground cover where pedestrians may take shortcuts
- Unrelieved masses of evergreens
- Incorrectly sized plants which are too small or large for the location
- Shrubs which require frequent pruning
- Ornamental planting in rural locations – other than close to the development
- Planting which hinders natural surveillance (eg of cycle parking)

see additional insert SPG.01A for guidance on appropriate species and typical specification



Well situated planting will close vistas, soften exposed edges, and help to “ground” the building and integrate it into its context.

D. GRASSED AREAS

Grass areas form important elements in many developments. They provide a setting for buildings and should be carefully designed to fulfil their intended purpose (eg casual play area). Although they are normally arranged and laid out to be regularly mown, the taller flowering wild grasses can be used in some areas. Grass seeding is best carried out in Spring or early Autumn, and may need initial protection. Perennials & naturalised bulbs can also be used to add colour and interest with low maintenance.

GRASS

USE

- A grass seed mixture appropriate for the site and its use, and to minimise mowing
- Ensure access routes for machinery
- A good quality topsoil (min 150mm deep) – with proper drainage (on heavy clay this can be a problem)
- Native wildflower meadows mixes are available for a variety of surface conditions & allow a reduced mowing regime. These require less maintenance than traditional amenity grassland. They prefer nutrient poor soil so do not require fertiliser or topsoil. ✓

AVOID

- Slopes exceeding 1 in 3 (use ground cover shrubs instead)
- Irregular shaped "left over" areas which are difficult & expensive to mow
- Excessively uniform mounds or steep ridges or banks
- Gaps of less than 3m between trees in grassed areas (to ease mowing)
- Mixes containing vigorous ryegrass unless the area will be heavily used
- Complex edge details which are difficult to maintain
- Surfaced footpaths which don't follow natural desire lines ✗

E. MAINTENANCE

On larger schemes the Council will normally expect a developer to pay a commuted sum (based on 10 years estimated maintenance costs) in return for adopting the landscape and open space elements of a development. Where this is not the case the developer will need to submit details of the proposed factoring or maintenance arrangements, together with any proposed bond or insurance - so as to ensure that maintenance is

- properly undertaken,
- at a reasonable cost, and
- is notified to all prospective purchasers



Hard & soft landscape elements combine to create a pleasant place

GOOD MAINTENANCE PRACTICE

FENCING Temporary chestnut fencing/post & wire with wind breaks should be used to protect plants until they are established.

REPLACEMENTS Replace any dead, dying, or diseased plants when necessary.

PRUNING All shrubs should be pruned to remove dead, dying and diseased branches.

WEEDING Keep areas free from weeds at all times by spot spraying around the base with an approved herbicide (see www.sepa.org.uk PPG9 on Preventing Pesticide Pollution) Take care not to damage plants. Remove litter from site.

MULCH Annually with 50mm of bark chips or recycled compost.

WATERING Ensure that planting is suitably watered in on planting so that roots do not become too dry. Water more frequently during dry periods.

FERTILISER Apply twice a year taking care not to damage plants. Use a slow release fertilizer in Feb/March, or a fertiliser in April/May

Checklist

The Council will expect landscape schemes to be submitted with all major applications - providing the information on the right. Otherwise consideration of your application will be delayed.

On larger sites you may benefit from the advice and expertise of a qualified landscape architect. A list of local practices may be obtained from:

The Landscape Institute,
33 Great Portland street,
London W1W 8QG
Tel: 020 7299 4500
www.landscapeinstitute.org
www.li-scotland.org.uk

your scheme should include...

- A survey of the existing site showing trees, hedges, levels, north, etc.
- Proposed location of tree protection and temporary fencing for existing trees or retained features
- Details of any necessary surgery to existing trees
- Information on proposed materials and details of hard landscape (e.g. heights of walls & fences) – ideally with typical sections and sketch details
- Information on appropriate new tree and shrub planting – specifying the species, size, density and location of such new planting
- An explanation in the Design Statement as to how the Landscape scheme seeks to reflect and complement the layout of the development eg highlighting and reinforcing entrances, doors, movement lines, security.
- An explanation as to how appropriate privacy/ screening/ enclosure and security are to be achieved.
- Proposals for adoption and maintenance – e.g. replacing dead plants; mulching; mowing regime, etc (as above) – including the adoption or explicit factoring arrangements to be applied .
- Consultation with the local roads authority if considering planting within road boundaries
- Consultation with SEPA where invasive Japanese knotweed is found (www.sepa.org.uk)

The latest Supplementary Planning Guidance and index can be found online at:-
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/spg

This is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Leaflets aimed at encouraging good practice in the design and layout of new development. The advice supplements the policies in the emerging North Lanarkshire Local Plan. The Council will have regard to this Guidance when assessing the merits of planning applications. This leaflet was approved on 22nd Sept 2009 following public consultation and consideration of all comments made. It is available on-line can be translated or provided in other languages or formats on request.

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