

**North East Lincolnshire  
Supplementary Planning  
Guidance  
Note No. 13**

**Landscape Design**

**Adopted April 2005**

# Supplementary Planning Guidance

## Landscape Design

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 The Aim of the Guidance Notes**

- 1.1.1 The broad intention of the Council is to achieve sustainable development within North East Lincolnshire - that is to accommodate a level of development which is within the *capacity* of the local area and its landscape. To achieve that goal, the adoption of a systematic approach to development as outlined in this guidance will help to encourage good design and integration of development into the landscape, thereby maintaining and enhancing its character and value for the benefit of future generations.
- 1.1.2 These guidance notes are supplementary to the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2003), which sets out the Council's policies and proposals for use of land within the Borough. This guidance primarily supplements Development and Landscaping Policy GEN3 but also relates to Natural Heritage Policies NH1 to NH10. The notes are intended as guidance for developers; they do not replace any other planning obligations that might relate to the site. Where an Environmental Assessment is required, for example, the contents of this guidance will form part of the scoping exercise.

## **1.2 The Landscape Context**

- 1.2.1 Landscape should not simply be seen as grass and trees. Rather it is the combination of all physical elements which together create the overall setting or context within which development occurs. These constituent elements can be defined as either "hard" landscape, which includes paving, walls, seats, railings, fences, bollards, etc., or "soft" landscape, which includes trees, shrubs, grass, earth mounds, etc.
- 1.2.2 All landscapes, whether in urban or rural locations, have interest, meaning and value to those who live and work within them or visit them. They can have a locally distinctive character that sets them apart from the rest. All landscapes also have, to varying degrees, value for wildlife, and the diversity of species of vegetation within a landscape is a significant factor in determining that value.
- 1.2.3 The Council recognises that the inherent characteristics of a landscape are vital factors in giving it local distinctiveness, and that in order to maintain this distinctiveness the characteristics must be retained and enhanced wherever possible. By taking account of this on development sites the integration of new development into a landscape can be more successfully achieved. Within the overall landscape context there are a number of other design principles which should also be taken into account by developers in order to achieve a layout which is not only safe and attractive, but is also more sustainable and environmentally sound.

### 1.3 The Role of Developers in the Landscape Design Process

1.3.1 In order to achieve successful integration of development into the landscape and restoration, retention or enhancement of local landscape character the Council expects developers to follow a systematic approach as outlined on the following pages. The objective is to ensure that the commercial aims of development are consistent with the principles of sustainability, landscape enhancement and nature conservation. Proper consideration of landscape issues should not be seen as a financial burden but as a positive benefit in terms of its value to a development.

1.3.2 The extent to which the Council will expect the detailed provisions of this approach to be adhered to by developers will be dependent on factors such as the size of the proposed development and/or the relative sensitivity of the site. The Council will seek to advise developers of its expectations at an early stage through pre-application discussions. Notwithstanding this, the principles contained within these guidance notes should still be relevant to anyone involved in the development process whether on a large or small scale, and will be applicable to all development, whether industrial, commercial or residential.

Photo illustrating enhancement of local landscape character

Photo illustrating enhancement of local landscape character

Photo illustrating example of large-scale development

Photo illustrating example of small-scale development

## 2 PRELIMINARY WORK

### 2.1 Site Survey and Appraisal

2.1.1 At the stage of applying for outline or full planning permission, or when undertaking a feasibility study on which the Council's views are sought, the developer will be expected to carry out and submit an accurate site survey and comprehensive site appraisal to include:

- ❑ levels/contours;
- ❑ landform (*e.g. slopes, orientation, etc.*);
- ❑ existing features (*e.g. trees, hedgerows, other significant areas of vegetation, water, ditches, boundary treatments, significant structures, areas of paving, etc.*).
- ❑ visual qualities (*e.g. views in/out, quality of views, character, local distinctiveness, dominant features, etc.*);
- ❑ designations (*listed buildings, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, archaeological sites, Conservation Areas, Tree Preservation Orders, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, etc. – the Council can help to provide this information*);
- ❑ context (*a description and analysis of the surrounding areas, including hard and soft landscape, buildings, etc., and an indication of important links and inter-relationships*).

Photo illustrating site before development showing existing features within the site

Photo illustrating site before development showing relationship to surrounding area

## 2.2 Outline Landscape Plan

2.2.1 The site survey and appraisal lead on to the next element of the feasibility or application stage when the developer will be expected to draw up and submit an outline scheme for landscape treatment of the development site, to form the basis of a detailed scheme to be submitted later. This is to ensure that landscape matters are being considered at the outset as an integral part of the development.

2.2.2 The outline plan should contain general information on the landscape approach to the site including:

- ❑ the treatment of site boundaries;
- ❑ the use of existing landscape features;
- ❑ intended access points and circulation routes;
- ❑ the main “structural” planting and significant areas of hard landscaping to be incorporated within the development.
- ❑ details of any existing trees or other landscape features which it is proposed to remove.

2.2.3 Conditions which are imposed on the subsequent granting of planning permission will be related to the landscape structure that is submitted. However, it is expected that the structure will not over-constrain the submission of details. What are being sought are broad principles.

Photo illustrating example of landscape features that could be retained

Photo illustrating example of “structural planting” within a development

### 3 DETAILED DESIGN

#### 3.1 Design Principles

3.1.1 Before development commences on site the developer will be required to submit, and have approved by the Council, a detailed layout and a landscape plan for the site. These should be based on certain design principles and should obviously also be based on the survey and appraisal and consistent with the overall context described in the outline landscape plan, unless convincing arguments can be put to the contrary.

3.1.2 The detailed layout should address the following issues:

- ❑ *the layout and design should be appropriate to the area and establish a built environment of quality and variety by the manipulation of the built form and landscaping;*
- ❑ *consideration should be given to the use and form of space when planning the site;*
- ❑ *the layout should maintain and enhance the diversity and character of the established vegetation on the site and utilise it where appropriate for shelter and passive enjoyment;*
- ❑ *where appropriate the layout should provide an integrated, attractive and safe environment for pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities;*
- ❑ *consideration should be given to “designing out crime” – e.g. by not creating screening which could conceal anti-social or criminal activity, or by using thorny ‘deterrent’ shrubs to prevent access;*
- ❑ *where appropriate (i.e. mainly for housing developments) there may be a requirement to provide recreational open space within the layout (the Council will be able to advise on the policy for this), and consideration should be given to integrating any such provision into the development;*
- ❑ *consideration should be given to how the hard and soft landscaping will be maintained in the future;*
- ❑ *the surface water drainage system should minimise run-off and utilise natural and sustainable drainage systems where appropriate.*

## 3.2 Landscape Design Details

3.2.1 The detailed landscape design should take account of:

- ❑ *use of species, materials and street furniture which reflect local character;*
- ❑ *use of recycled materials and materials from sustainable sources;*
- ❑ *incorporation of existing plants and other features;*
- ❑ *use of plants to create screening and microclimatic conditions through shade, shelter, etc.;*
- ❑ *use of plants and public art to create focal points;*
- ❑ *selection of plant species to provide year-round interest;*
- ❑ *selection of plants to encourage wildlife where appropriate;*
- ❑ *suitability of plants for the location (e.g. their ultimate size and habit, tolerance of soil conditions and shade, root spread, long-term ease of management, etc.);*
- ❑ *specification and depth of topsoil for different types of planting;*
- ❑ *use of larger tree stock to resist vandalism;*
- ❑ *future maintenance needs of, and access to, hard and soft landscaped areas for, e.g. litter clearance;*
- ❑ *landform, and the treatment and use of sloping ground, taking account of the needs of people with impaired mobility;*
- ❑ *drainage and the use and conservation of water;*
- ❑ *means of defining boundaries;*
- ❑ *creation of an overall character and unifying landscape structure for the development;*
- ❑ *integration of the development into the surrounding landscape (e.g. the transition from residential to agricultural land).*

3.2.2 The detailed design should include the following information:

- ❑ *botanical names, including genus, species and varieties of all proposed trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants;*
- ❑ *planting sizes of all proposed plants;*
- ❑ *the proposed positions and spacing of plants;*
- ❑ *the species mix percentages for grass seed;*
- ❑ *accurately plotted positions of trees, shrubs, other vegetation and features to be retained and precise details of their means of protection during the construction period;*
- ❑ *the position of existing trees and other significant landscape features which it is proposed to remove;*
- ❑ *the type, location, surface finish and colour of all hard landscape items, including paving, fencing, railings, bollards, signs, public art, etc.;*
- ❑ *a north point.*

Photo illustrating use of planting to define boundaries

Photo illustrating use of planting as a focal point

Photo illustrating use of planting for shelter/screening

Photo illustrating 'transitional' landscape on site boundary

## 4 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

### 4.1 Maintenance Considerations

4.1.1 The success of any landscape scheme will, to a significant extent, be determined by the standard of maintenance undertaken following implementation of the scheme. Consideration must therefore be given to how the works are to be maintained in the future to ensure that the original design is effectively turned into an attractive landscape.

4.1.2 For hard landscape areas, the maintenance programme should incorporate actions to keep all materials and street furniture in a good, safe and attractive condition. Consideration should be given to keeping areas free of litter and other debris. Methods of keeping paving free from chewing gum and walls free of graffiti should be considered.

4.1.3 For soft landscape areas, consideration should be given to watering in the early stages where necessary. Excessive weed growth can inhibit the development of young plants and measures must be considered whereby weeds are suppressed by use of mulching techniques. These can include the use of mulch mats around individual plants, textile membranes over planting beds, or shredded bark or other suitable loose material to a depth of at least 50mm. The use of chemical herbicides should be kept to a minimum to ensure that accidental damage to plants does not occur through inappropriate application.

Photo illustrating potential maintenance problems in hard landscaped areas

Photo illustrating use of mulching techniques for weed control

Photo illustrating potential maintenance problems in soft landscaped areas

## 4.2 Maintenance Responsibilities

- 4.2.1 All landscape schemes will require an on-going commitment to management. Planning conditions may impose a limited period of maintenance or replacement of failed plants to ensure initial establishment, but developers should ensure that a longer-term programme of management is in place from the start.
- 4.2.2 Responsibility for future maintenance should be clarified at the earliest opportunity by making all parties aware of areas that they will have to maintain. Where public areas are created, consideration should be given to how these will be maintained in the future. If the Council is to be asked to take ownership of such areas for future management, this should be made clear at an early stage in the development process and transfer of land will only be agreed in accordance with current Council policies. This may involve agreements under the Town and Country Planning Act and the payment of a commuted sum by the developer.

Photo illustrating example of poor management

Photo illustrating example of good management

## 4.3 Management Plans

- 4.3.1 For larger schemes it may be appropriate, or may be required as a condition of planning approval, that a management plan be prepared. Such a plan will contain details of how maintenance is to be carried out, who will be responsible for carrying it out and how frequently it will need to be carried out. A management plan is particularly relevant where the responsibility for maintenance will rest with a different party after works have been completed, and it is essential that the management plan is understood by the recipient prior to responsibility being handed over.

## 5 FURTHER ADVICE

### 5.1 Council Contacts

5.1.1 Further advice on landscape matters relating to development can be obtained from:

Landscape Officer  
Environmental Planning  
Environmental Services  
North East Lincolnshire Council  
Civic Offices  
Knoll Street  
Cleethorpes  
North East Lincolnshire  
DN35 8LN

*Tel* 01472 324279  
*Fax* 01472 324274  
*E mail* mike.leary@nelincs.gov.uk

5.1.2 Other useful Council contacts are:

Trees & Woodlands Officer	<i>Tel</i>	01472 324271
Ecology Officer	<i>Tel</i>	01472 323436
Conservation Officer	<i>Tel</i>	01472 324266
Archaeologist	<i>Tel</i>	01472 323586

### 5.2 Other Contacts

5.2.1 Other organisations dealing with landscape design and management are listed below:

Landscape Institute -  
Directory of Landscape Architects

*Tel* 020 7350 5200  
*Fax* 020 7350 5201  
*E mail* mail@l-i.org.uk

Arboricultural Association -  
Directory of Consultants and  
Contractors

*Tel* 01794 368717  
*Fax* 01794 368978  
*E mail* admin@trees.org.uk

British Association of Landscape  
Industries (BALI)

*Tel* 02476 690333  
*Fax* 02476 690077  
*E mail* contact@bali.org.uk

**If you would like to receive this information in another language or in another format such as large print, Braille or on audio tape, please contact**

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