

Landscaping

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs), amplifying the development plan policies and other issues in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality of new development. The Notes are intended to offer broad guidance which will assist members of the public and officers in discussions prior to the submission of planning applications and assist officers in handling and members in determining planning applications.

2 STATUS AND STAGES IN PREPARATION

- 2.1 The Council's SPG Notes are not part of the adopted plan. However, they have been the subject of both a formal Council resolution and public consultation. The Welsh Assembly Government (The Assembly) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPAs) approval, SPG can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Assembly determine planning applications and appeals. This Note was approved by Full Council on June 3rd 2003 for use in development control. A statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the Council's response to these representations is available on request.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Landscaping is a vital component of any new development, and should be considered at the earliest opportunity when considering making a planning application. The retention of the existing features and the addition of new landscaping can enhance the quality and improve the value of the development. Landscaping is often seen as an afterthought to a development scheme; however it is important that this is avoided and that the landscaping is considered within the design process and as an integral part of the development.

4 POLICY

- 4.1 The broad objective of the Council is to retain existing features which contribute to the landscape wherever possible, and to encourage the incorporation of additional landscaping as an integral part of new developments. This is promoted through policy GEN 6 (General Development Considerations) and ENV 7 (Landscape / Townscape Features).
- 4.2 The aims of these policies are to ensure that the proposed development is designed to make the best use of the topography, site features and local conditions, with appropriate siting of buildings, roads, paths, open areas, planting etc. This should result from an analysis of the natural features, views etc. A scheme should be designed which fits into the local surroundings as well as satisfying the functional requirements of the development. Buildings, particularly large structures, should where possible be positioned where they will be least intrusive in the overall landscape and space for any large trees and necessary screen planting should be left free of obstructions and services.

5 PREPARATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As part of the submissions for new developments the planning application should be accompanied by a site survey and detailed landscape proposals plan. In the case of detailed applications it is preferable that planting plans are submitted with the proposals rather than dealt with by condition. Failure to submit these details may cause delays to the processing of the application.



6 SITE SURVEY

- 6.1 In order to investigate the landscape potential of a site and adjacent area, a detailed physical survey should be undertaken prior to the design of the development and the overall landscape setting of the site noted. The site survey should include -
- the topography i.e. ground levels, slopes;
 - drainage i.e. ponds, ditches, wet areas;
 - soil type e.g. clay, sand, loam, acid or calcareous soils;
 - vegetation i.e. the species, height and condition of trees, shrubs and hedges on or adjacent to the site. The accurate position and extent of the vegetation, including overhanging trees, should be plotted.
 - boundaries i.e. walls and fences, indicating materials and building style;
 - existing underground and overhead services;
 - site features e.g. buildings, paths, steps;
 - views i.e. good and poor views within the site, from the site outwards and from outside viewpoints into the site;
 - climatic conditions i.e. prevailing winds, sheltered areas, areas in sun or shade;
 - wildlife interest and the presence of protected species.
- 6.2 If trees on the site would be affected by the development the applicant should check with the Planning Authority that these are not covered by a Tree Preservation Order. Guidance on this subject and general tree protection is given in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note No. 6, 'Trees and Development'.
- 6.3 Generally speaking, all hedgerows should be retained as an integral part of the development. Removal of most hedgerows in the countryside without permission is an offence under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations.

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7 THE LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS PLAN

- 7.1 The approach to landscaping will depend on the scale and nature of the development and whether the site is rural, within a village, in an urban or urban fringe location. The landscape treatment around new buildings and residential extension areas in the countryside, particularly within the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, should be in keeping with the surroundings and generally bounded by stone walls or mixed hedges. Large agricultural buildings should preferably be positioned where these will not be prominent in the landscape and sited where existing trees and hedges supplemented with new planting will help screen the buildings and integrate them into the surrounding countryside.

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8 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The landscape scheme for residential areas should include space for large growing trees in public open spaces, beside roads, footpaths or on the edges of the development. Small trees and shrubs are usually most appropriate for the confined space of small gardens. Planting is particularly valuable on the edge of urban areas or villages to break up views of new developments from the surrounding countryside. The design of the landscape should take crime prevention into account, particularly in areas of open space and on footpaths to avoid creating enclosed or isolated spaces away from public view.

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9 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The landscape scheme for large scale industrial or commercial developments should include a framework of planting linked to the existing vegetation of the area. The unrelieved outline of buildings should be broken up with tall growing trees and space should be made available in the layout for such trees to grow to maturity. Mass planting of mainly native trees and shrubs would normally be appropriate particularly on the perimeter of the site. Dense planting of small trees and shrubs will usually make more rapid growth and be

more effective than planting a small number of larger trees, although some planting of large trees is often required for early impact. Car parks associated with commercial and industrial premises generally provide opportunity for planting large growing trees. Existing walls and hedges, particularly along site boundaries, should be retained to screen vehicles from outside the site.

- 9.1 In large sites with phased development of buildings, structure planting, particularly on site boundaries, would normally be required in advance or concurrent with the first phase of the development of the site. The detailed landscaping of areas within this framework may take place in later phases as the site is developed. (Fig 1)

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10 RETENTION OF EXISTING FEATURES

- 10.1 Features such as ponds, ditches, trees, hedges and banks should be retained where possible, particularly if these have wildlife value. Information on protected species can be found in the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note No. 18., 'Nature Conservation and Species Protection'.

Trees, shrubs and hedges should generally be retained where they -

- are sound and in good condition;
- are a feature of the site or part of an important group;
- form an important part of the site boundary;
- are important within the overall landscape of the area or contribute to the street scene;
- screen unsightly views;
- would usefully screen the proposed development;
- help maintain wildlife corridors and biodiversity.

Trees to be retained require special consideration to ensure -

- there will be space available to grow to mature size;
- they will not cause excessive shading of properties;
- that the roots, which extend beyond the spread of the branches and are usually located very close to the surface of the soil, will not be severed by building operations, path construction, etc.;
- the trees roots would not be cut by proposed underground services.

- 10.2 It may be more appropriate to remove one tree from a group to give space for development than damage several trees in an attempt to retain all of them.

- 10.3 Trees and hedges to be retained within a development area should be shown on the landscape scheme. These will generally require substantial fencing. Fences should be positioned to the outside of the crown spread of the trees to be protected before any site development is begun in order to prevent compaction or damage to the tree roots. Trees, shrubs and hedges to be removed should also be indicated on the landscape drawing.

Further details can be found in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note No. 6., 'Trees and Development'.

- 10.4 Where trees are shown to be retained and protected, planning conditions will be used to prevent works and storage of materials within the fenced areas. Conditions on site will be monitored during development and enforced as necessary.

- 10.5 Ponds, ditches and other water features should also be shown on the landscape scheme and carefully protected and fenced prior to development.

- 10.6 Walls and hedges on the site frontage should be retained or extended where typical of the area, or repositioned if required to improve sight lines. Care should be taken to use the same building techniques for replacement walls and to replace hedges with similar species to those removed, including any associated ground flora of interest, which should be set aside and reinstated. (Fig 2)

- 10.7 Areas of traditional paving and historic materials should be retained where possible and extended where appropriate.

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11 PLANTING PLANS

- 11.1 The planting of native trees and shrubs typical of the locality is encouraged as these are most likely to be suitable for the soil and climatic conditions and grow well, helping to integrate the site into the surrounding landscape. In rural areas the planting of hedge species typical of the area is preferred and the use of rapid growing conifers, for instance, is not favoured in prominent locations. Ornamental planting is generally more appropriate within gardens and in urban and industrial areas.

Trees and shrub species should be carefully selected to ensure -

- the ultimate size of the plant is appropriate for the position;
- the plant is suitable for the soil type;
- the plant is sufficiently hardy for the location;
- tree roots will not damage underground services;
 - n.b. poplars and willows should be kept well clear of water pipes and sewers;
- tree branches will be clear of overhead wires.

Detailed planting plans should show

- the species or variety of trees or shrubs in each planting area;
- the form and size of the plants i.e. height, girth, spread or container size;
- the density of planting i.e. the number of plants in each planting area;
- the proposed protection from vandalism, grazing stock or rabbits, i.e. fencing, rabbit guards.

A typical planting plan for a rural location is shown in Fig 3

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12 MAINTENANCE

- 12.1 Details of proposed maintenance of planting will be required in the form of weed control, watering and the replacement of any failures for a period of five years following planting.
- 12.2 The level of proposed maintenance should be considered and where low maintenance is required, such as in industrial estates and on road sides, reflected in the selection of species and density of planting. Species diversity can be encouraged in amenity areas and verges where a low level of maintenance is proposed.
- 12.3 The management of existing site features of wildlife value such as water areas, species rich grassland coppice and woodland, as well as newly created habitats, should be detailed. Larger schemes such as areas of open space will require management schemes for long term maintenance and these should be detailed as part of any submission.

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13 PLANTING SEASON

- 13.1 The planting of bare-rooted stock should generally be carried out when plants are dormant from November to March. Evergreen plants establish more readily if planted in early autumn or late spring providing watering is carried out in periods of dry weather. Container-grown plants may be planted throughout the year in appropriate weather conditions provided that they are regularly watered.

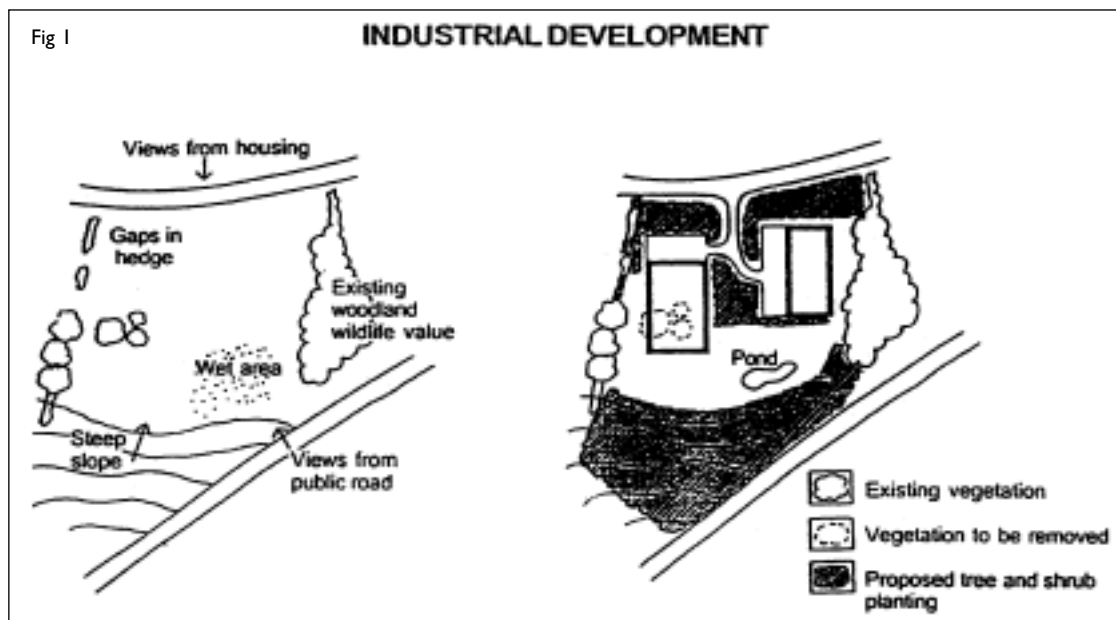
14 HARD LANDSCAPE

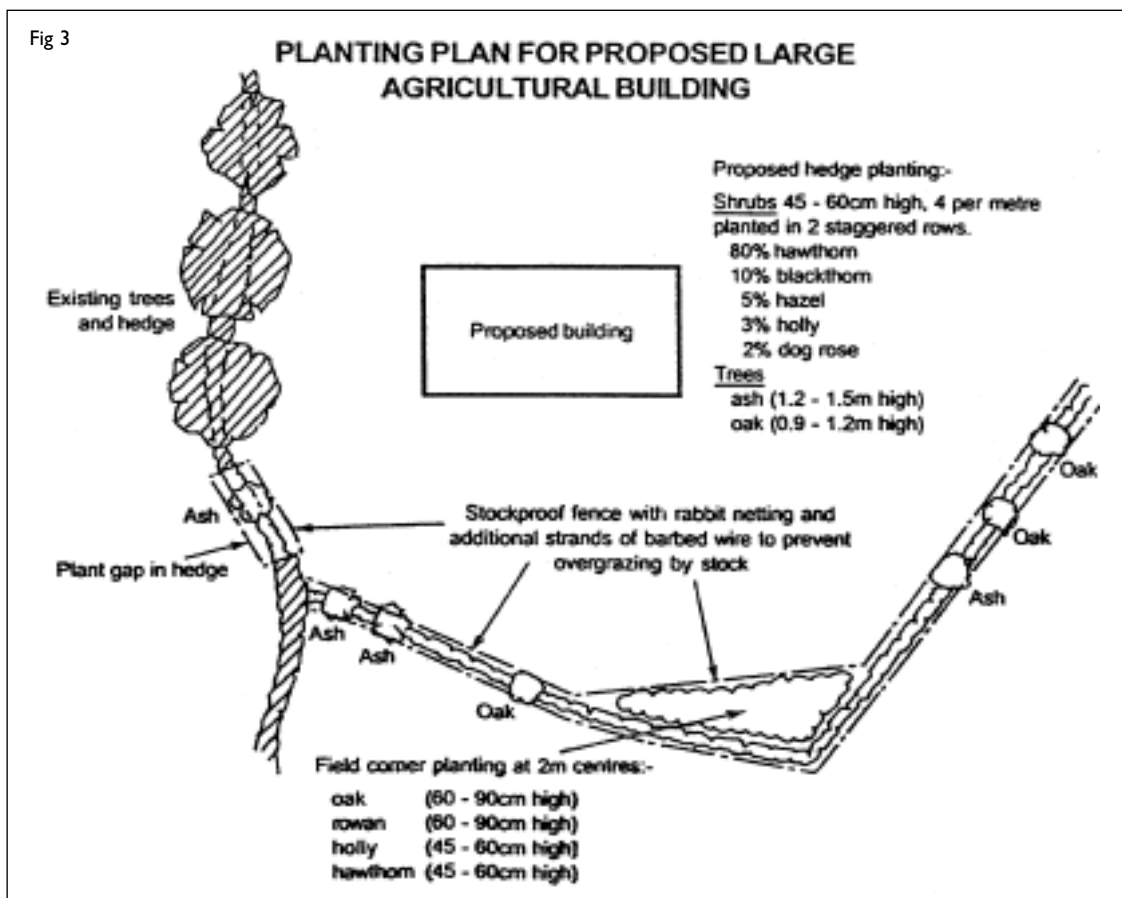
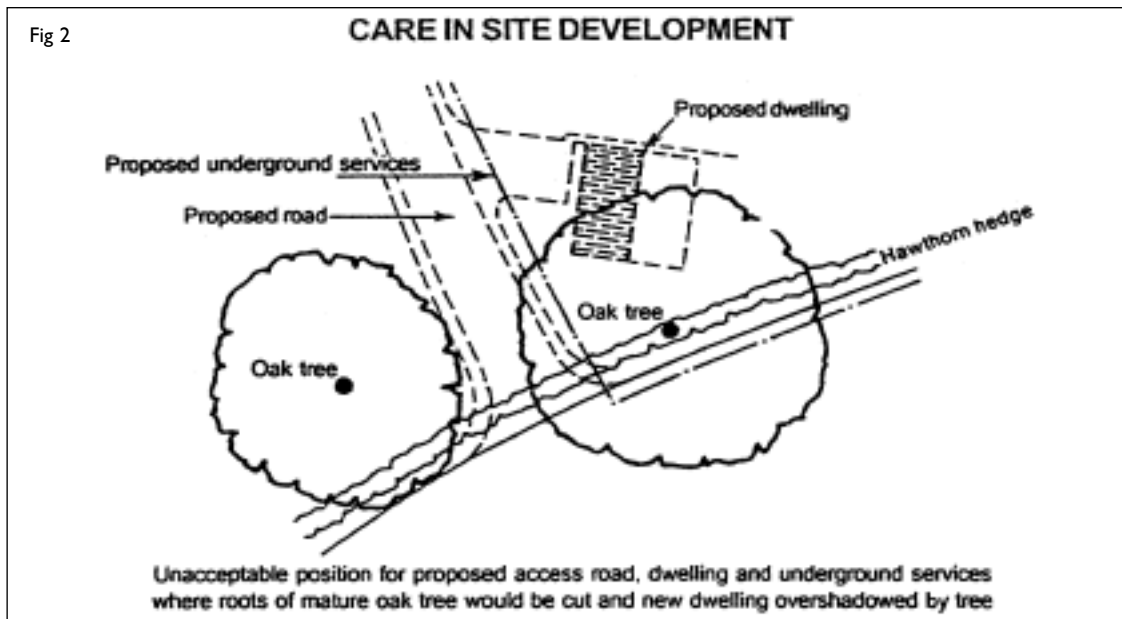
- 14.1 The hard landscape, should contribute to a scheme if properly located and designed with the use of appropriate materials which relate to the surroundings. A landscape scheme should indicate proposed roads, parking and paved areas, paths, steps and ramps (refer to Supplementary Planning Guidance Note No. 8, 'Access for all'), showing materials and levels. The materials selected for surfacing should be in keeping with the character of the area and with the existing or proposed buildings. The traditional materials of the area and local stone should be used where appropriate. Surfacing should be kept simple and the colour range controlled as over-elaborate schemes are unlikely to be aesthetically pleasing.
- 14.2 In schemes such as farm outbuilding conversions, simple surfacing materials such as crushed aggregate, hoggin or tarmac with an exposed aggregate is generally preferable to more modern elaborate concrete paving. In town centres traditional materials using traditional techniques for laying should be used in most instances.
- 14.3 Consideration should be given to the future repair and maintenance of surfaces to ensure materials are chosen which can be replaced if damaged or if access to underground services is required. The landscape scheme should show the position, materials and construction of any new walls, fences, structures, lighting and street furniture which should be in character with the area, and differ in rural and urban situations. Any furniture that is introduced should be appropriate to the development and its surroundings as a whole.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

BS 5837:1991 - Guide for Trees in relation to development

Technical Advice Note 10 - Tree Preservation Orders





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