

**ADVICE NOTES
RELATED TO
TREES AND LANDSCAPING**

Available from Planning and Transport

- 21 The Siting and Landscaping of Built Development in the Countryside.
- 22 The Survey of Trees on Development Sites.
- 23 The Specification of Landscaping Proposals for Development Sites.

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Angus Council



ADVICE NOTE 21

**THE SITING AND
LANDSCAPING
OF BUILT
DEVELOPMENT
IN THE
COUNTRYSIDE**

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The location of buildings within the landscape can, in some landscape situations, contribute significantly to the character of the landscape. Consequently it follows that inappropriately sited buildings can appear as incongruous features in the landscape. This is particularly true when design and on-site landscaping is either inappropriate or inadequate. Buildings should, as far as possible, be designed to fit into the landscape by taking account of site levels and other features such as trees and hedges. An appropriately sited building should generally be in accordance with the existing pattern of built development within the relevant landscape tract.

Consideration of the full extent of the landscape impact of a possible location should also include other ancillary works such as access road/driveways which themselves can be incongruous features in the landscape.

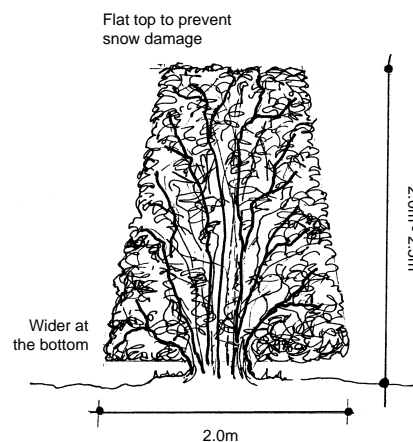
The landscaping within the site and the boundary treatment around it is, in most cases, important to making a development an acceptable component within the landscape. Similarly, appropriate landscaping can significantly shelter development both reducing energy requirements and creating a more pleasant living environment.

An acceptable landscaping scheme should have regard to the following:-

- (i) Specification of landscaping schemes should be in accordance with the Council's Advice Note 23: "The Specification of Landscaping Proposals for Development Sites" available from the Planning & Transport Department, St. James House, Forfar.
- (ii) Existing trees on site should be surveyed in accordance with the Council's Advice Note 22: "The Survey of Trees on Development Sites" also available from the Planning & Transport Department.
- (iii) Trees to be retained should be protected in accordance with the guidance contained within BS 5837:1991, "Guide for Trees in Relation to Construction".
- (iv) The underbuilding of buildings should be avoided as this usually makes it difficult to satisfactorily incorporate it in the landscape. Underbuilding can be avoided by adequate site survey and creative design together with careful siting of buildings within a site.
- (v) Much of the Angus landscape is enclosed by either drystone dykes or hedges, or a combination of the two. Cognisance should be taken of where development sites are already bounded by such features, as it will be expected that they be restored where feasible. They should be created where there are no such features or a new boundary is to be formed.
- (vi) Drystone dykes are best reinstated by professional dykers and should, as far as possible, attempt to replicate the vernacular form. This is principally dependant upon the nature of the stone available within different parts of Angus. Heavily mortared walls of suburban character will not be acceptable. Conditions may be imposed on planning consents requiring the provision of drystone dykes.
- (vii) The character of hedges can vary significantly depending upon their species composition and, the way in which they are managed. Whilst Hawthorn

(*Crataegus monogyna*) is the dominant hedging species, it is also commonly found in mixture with Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) as the traditional 'Scotch Hedge'. It can sometimes appear that Beech has been traditionally planted as single species hedges, but such examples are commonly Scotch Hedges within which the Hawthorn and Holly components have failed to thrive or survive under inappropriate management regimes. Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) is not uncommon where the ground is wetter. Whilst a number of mixtures are likely to be acceptable, the use of any mix including Cypress (*Cupressocyparis ssp and Chamaecyparis ssp*) with their strong suburban character will not usually be acceptable. It is worth noting that well managed hedges comprised principally of deciduous species can, by their dense twig structures, provide an effective windbreak and visual screen even during winter months.

- (viii) Hedges can become bare at the bottom under inappropriate management regimes. In extreme cases this can result in a hedge no longer performing the function of screening and shelter. This is particularly a problem with Cypress species as the bare areas will not regenerate. The solution is to ensure that sufficient light reaches the bottom of the hedge, particularly on the northern side. This can be achieved by trimming the hedge to an 'A' profile with a flat top.



- (ix) In order that the hedge performs its function of shelter and screening, as well as providing a wildlife habitat, it should ideally be 2 metres wide at its base and 2-2.5 metres high. It is, however, accepted that a shortage of space may dictate a hedge of lesser dimensions.
- (x) The optimum plant spacing for hedges will depend upon the species chosen; the intended objectives; and how the hedge will be managed.
- (xi) Most new developments in the countryside should benefit from the planting of trees which over time will give the new development a feeling of long-establishment. Planting will also reduce the "rawness" of new development. Rarely will planning consents for new developments in the countryside be granted without conditions requiring a submission of a scheme of landscaping which will then require early implementation.

- (xii) Whilst prevailing winds are normally from the south-west, the coldest winds tend to come from north and north-east. Significant tree planting is desirable to create shelter from these directions.
- (xiii) Groups of trees are also normally desirable along prominent site boundaries, dependant upon the level of prominence. Avoid regimented lines or belts of trees.
- (xiv) Trees selected should preferably be native species attaining medium stature or larger if there is sufficient spaces on site. For example trees of medium height would include Rowan, Gean, Birch and larger trees would include Oak and Ash.
- (xv) Often a larger number of younger trees will provide a better result than fewer older trees as they normally establish quicker and are likely to become larger sooner. Both styles of planting can be contained on the same site, with specimen and small groups planted at a larger size than would be a more substantial planting area. The size of planting stock will moreover be dictated by site conditions. For example in exposed conditions or poor soils, trees planted young often thrive better.
- (xvi) As a general rule, no trees should be planted within 5 metres of a Council adopted and maintained road carriageway

Example below of a new house that has both respected the pre-existing and enhanced the newly formed environment:-

