

This guidance sheet assumes that feasibility has been carried out to determine the suitability of the site for the proposed development.

Planning for development should consider the landscape setting and design aspects from the outset and it is an essential part of the ongoing process. When developing a site it is important to consider the context of its particular Landscape Character. This will result in an appropriate design solution which reflects local character and will help to tie a development into its setting. The input of a Landscape Architect as part of the design team from the outset will ensure that an appropriate design solution is achieved and the creation of a high quality living environment. (See Harrogate District Local Plan Policy C11 - Landscaping of Development sites requires appropriate design solutions)

Introduction

Development constitutes a change of use and can be a change of land use from agriculture to garden or building use such as from hotel to residential on a small scale or from brown field site to industry on a large scale.

All development proposals should be considered in terms of their landscape context and their impact on landscape character from the outset. In the case of small scale development this may involve an overview of the local landscape setting and assessment of potential impact not requiring the services of a landscape professional. However, for many development proposals a detailed look at the landscape setting of the site should be demonstrated to ensure the best possible design solution for the site and its locality.

Landscape information:

There follows a list of landscape information required as part of planning application:

1. Landscape statement

including analysis of landscape character, design philosophy and management aims, addressing sustainable principles and local distinctiveness; spatial analysis and schematic plan.

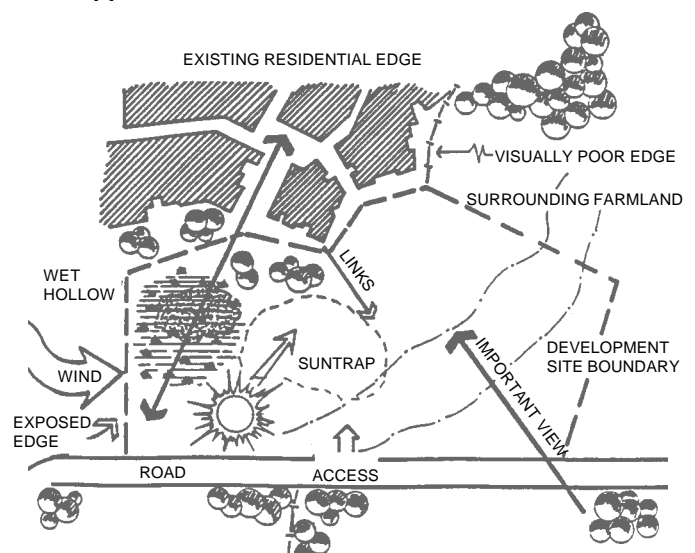
2. Survey and analysis

information on:

- landform
- geology, soils and drainage
- ecological information
- existing vegetation including canopy and condition of existing trees and shrub areas
- circulation, access and open space
- services
- views

- site boundaries
- site features essential to be retained
- major constraints.

Site Appraisal



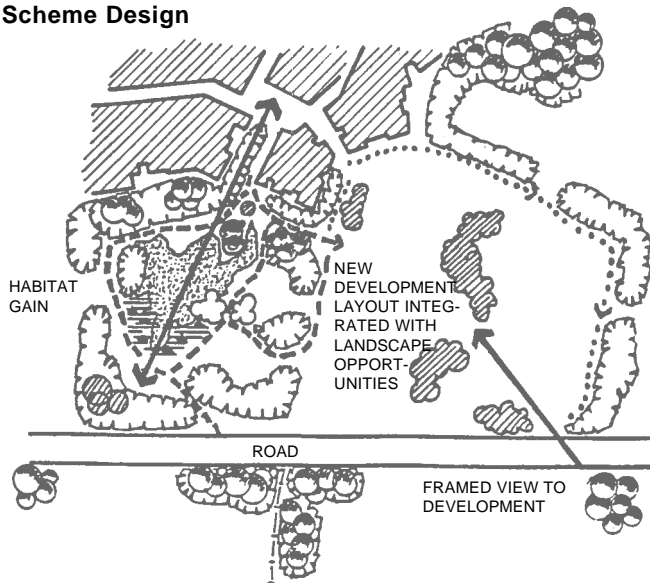
Considerations:

- existing habitat value, especially semi-natural habitats
- existing character and its conservation
- surrounding landscape pattern
- view into/out of site
- features/focal points
- exposed areas/suntraps
- links to existing/new development
- footpath/access potential
- sustainable urban drainage
- floodplains
- status and value of farmland particularly on the urban fringe
- harmful practices and better design solutions

3. Masterplan

or scheme design showing general arrangement, lighting, hard landscape materials, boundary treatment.

Scheme Design



- create shelter on exposed edges linked to open space/site features
- structure planting to link development with wider landscape
- countryside recreation/footpath links
- buffer between farmland/urban edge
- habitat gain - wetland feature
- visually diverse/attractive edge to new development
- framed views to development.

4. Landscape Design details

- Proposed level, earthworks and drainage plan and section showing areas of excavation and spreading; location and heights of retaining walls; topsoil stripping, storage and spreading; contamination control services
- Planting plan showing location, species, sizes, density, provenance and site preparation
- Phasing plan showing any advance works, features to be retained, features to be removed, protective fencing, phases construction and planting, programme of works
- Arboricultural method statement to BS 5837:1991
- Sketches and sections to illustrate walls, retaining walls, fences, changes in levels, site furniture etc.
- Outline specification including preparatory works; plant species, size, provenance, treatment between lifting and planting, planting operations; protection; maintenance provision including watering; materials and construction of paving, roads, railings, fences, steps, walls and gates.

5. Management

strategy including identification of long term management commitment and the mechanism for ensuring this commitment is implemented.

6. Risk Assessment

listing features and tasks that would require formal risk assessment.

The Design Process

The process of design begins with an assessment of the existing landscape character. Guidance sheet LDG1.5 provides information on Landscape Assessment and Landscape Character.

The recognition of landscape character aids the assessment of how character will be affected by land use changes and enables an appropriate landscape approach to integrate development into its landscape setting. Landscape quality is often ignored or undervalued resulting in the failure to produce a design responsive to place. This can lead to a loss of local identity. Landscape design should be an integral part of the development process.

A detailed site appraisal uses the survey information gathered along with the design brief for the site looks at a range of elements mentioned above.

A synthesis of the site appraisal information will enable a masterplan or scheme design to be developed which takes account of the opportunities and constraints of the site within its landscape setting while achieving the development brief.



Hackfall Wood (a Registered Historic Park)

The landscape design details add information to the masterplan which gives more information about how the development will look during and after construction. Details such as materials used, planting mixes and phasing of work demonstrate how the development will relate to its surroundings.

Management and maintenance is vital to ensure the success of any development and this must include any planting and landscape elements requiring long-term care.

Some factors to consider during design

1. Settlement edges/approach views

Development on the edge of existing settlements should show consideration for the impact of development on the wider landscape. It is important to design the landscape scheme which creates a bold enough framework of planting to balance the scale of the development within the context of the local landscape character.

2. Sequence of road views

New hedgerow/tree planting on road verges can contribute to landscape character in certain parts of Harrogate district and creates interest. However, this approach to design near development sites would not be appropriate in locations where it is not characteristic of the landscape. LDG8.2 gives guidance on the types of hedges found in Harrogate District.

3. Function of planting

Landscape proposals should be considered in relation to their contribution to retaining and enhancing existing landscape character, enhancing and protecting existing ecological diversity, habitats and wildlife, shelter and climatic improvements, as a buffer between uses, enabling development to link into/become part of the surrounding landscape pattern as well as visually enhancing the site. If the function of planting is considered early, it is more likely the eventual landscape plan will be based on a design which has purpose.

4. River corridors and streams

These often make up the boundary of development sites and are ill considered in design. In such cases the opportunity exists to develop the wider natural habitat value as part of the design for a development site. River and stream corridors are an important elements of the fabric of landscape character and should be integral to design on sites where they occur.

5. Setting of individual houses in the countryside

The landscape element for such sites should structure and integrate the development into the wider landscape. Once the setting has been established planting proposals within the garden are of little concern.

6. Ecological Principles

It is important to recognise when a more ecological approach to the design is appropriate. Habitat creation may be appropriate and the local landscape character will provide a guide to appropriate habitat types for the area, but re-creation is never as good as retaining existing semi-natural features.

7. Vistas/views

The creation of vistas and views is often a more effective approach to landscape design where the site has features or focal points of merit or where there are features to view outside the site. Where there are important public views, every endeavour should be made to ensure that these are preserved. However, where there is little of merit on site and development is visually intrusive and woodland/forestry planting is appropriate to the landscape character then screening is often the only solution.



A disused railway finds a new lease of life in the form of a footpath and cycleway.

Residential Landscapes

Residential developments can involve a single building or a number of buildings on one site. The landscape design solutions for residential sites will depend upon the scale and type of development in relation to its landscape context. As highlighted previously it is important to consider development design in terms of landscape setting through assessment and appraisal of existing features, identifying constraints and solutions and possible mitigation of impact on landscape character. Developers will often think about how a site works on its own but not in the context of the site surroundings.

The Harrogate Borough Council Residential Design Guide provides detailed guidance addressing the design issues of new residential development, house extensions and alterations and considers the landscape context of developments as part of the design process.

Planning policy makes it necessary for developers to make provision for recreation and play areas and public open space within larger developments.

When developing a residential site there is a need to consider how the site relates to the surrounding landscape or townscape and how it works within to provide amenity value for residents. Factors such as how will gardens work and what will the boundary treatment be must be considered in relation to existing landscape context.

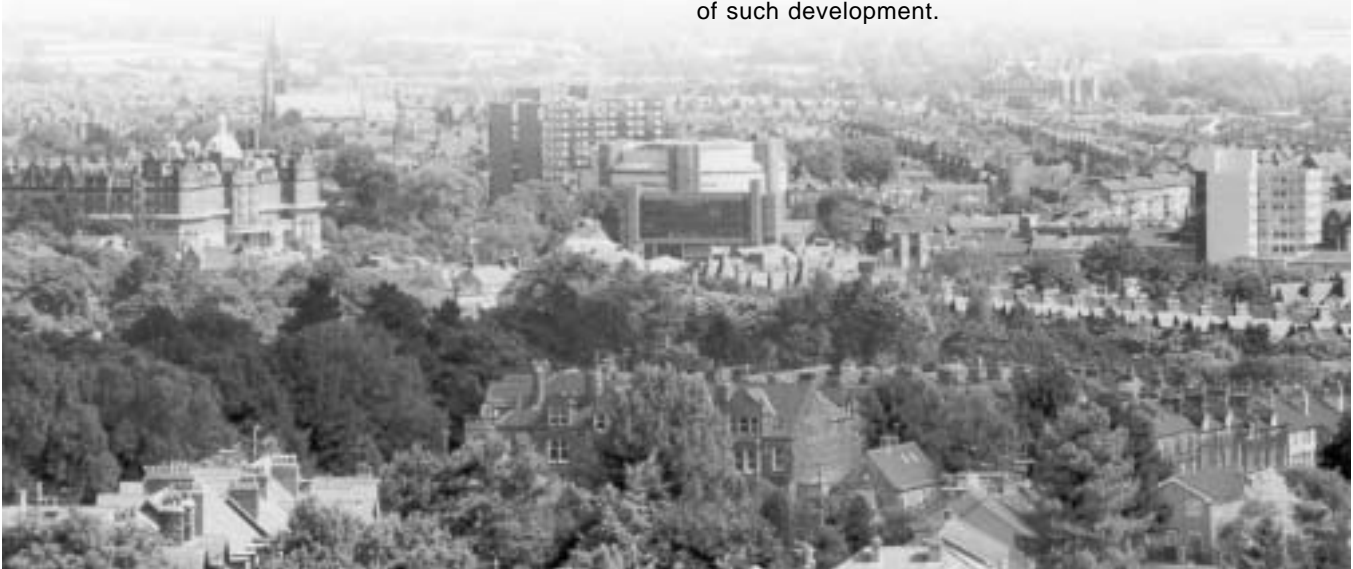


Tree planting on Hornbeam Park industrial estate.

Industrial Estate, Retail and Business Park Landscapes

The design issues associated with these types of development are different to those of residential developments and will lead to different landscape design solutions to ensure that the development fits into the landscape. Buildings on such developments tend to be large and there are large expanses of car parking. Internal layout as well as boundary treatment plays an important part in the design of these sites.

A common solution is to screen these developments. However, this is often not practical and building design, materials and colour play an important role. Planting beyond the site boundary is often an appropriate solution if the agreement of the landowner can be secured. This approach helps to break up views of large developments (e.g. Melmerby Industrial estate).



Structure planting within Industrial estates and business parks will help to break up the massing of large buildings. There is often conflict between landscape solutions and visibility of the site in terms of advertising (e.g. St James Park). Often business using a site will want maximum visibility so that the passing public can see their products. In such cases design of buildings and the associated landscape scheme is vital to ensuring acceptable development for all.

Caravan and Chalet site Landscapes

There appears to be a plethora of caravan and chalet sites (both residential and holiday homes) in the District and applications for such sites continue to arrive indicating that this may be a good alternative source of income for many landowners. However, static caravans in particular have a considerable visual impact and the change of use of a green field site or forestry results in a change to the fabric of landscape character.

By their nature caravan and chalet sites for holiday makers tend to be in rural locations where it is difficult to fit them into the local landscape context. Location and layout is important. A “sea” of caravans should be avoided and where possible the mass of caravans or chalets should be broken up with internal structure planting. Ornamental planting may not be appropriate in the landscape context of the site. Sites should be located where woodland planting is appropriate to the landscape character and where the lay of the land is such that the site is not highly visible. Opportunities to create new habitats and enhance existing landscape features should be considered as a mitigation measure.

A level of design detail is required with a planning application for a caravan or chalet site to ensure that the development is appropriate to the site. All too often the minimum of information is submitted which does not demonstrate an understanding of the potential impact of such development.