

Useful Websites

<http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profiles1105/gardendesign.asp>

<http://www.trees.org.uk/leaflets.php#CT>

Useful Publications

Advice on Tree Planting Specifications for Planning Applications,
Forest of Dean D.C.

Advice on Hedgerow Planting Specifications for Planning
Applications, Forest of Dean D.C.

Enhancing Biodiversity & Encouraging Wildlife in our Gardens

This document can be made available on audiotape, in Braille, large print, a range of languages and in other formats if required. For further information please contact us on 01594 810000.

If you have any questions please contact the Countryside Team on 01594 81000.

Completed plans and specifications for approval should be sent to

**Planning Services,
Forest of Dean District Council,
High Street,
Coleford,
Gloucestershire,
GL16 8HG.**

Please ensure that the application and location details are included.

March 2007



Notes on

**Landscape and Biodiversity
Considerations for Small Scale
Planning Applications**

This leaflet forms one of a series of advice notes, which have been produced to help people take into consideration the important issues of landscape and biodiversity when preparing a planning application. The purpose of this leaflet is to explain what considerations should be made when designing small scale landscaping schemes, and what information needs to be provided within the planning application.

Landscape Design

The initial stage of a landscape design involves looking at the existing landscape and planting features of a site, and where possible using these as a base for the design. There are two main elements that can be included in the design and these are referred to as soft and hard landscaping.

Soft landscaping (planting) should:

- Represent the character of the local landscape, and where possible link with existing vegetation; have a look around the local area to see what species are present (see link to Forest of Dean Landscape Character Assessment, at end of document);

- ☐ Species, numbers (or planting density), distribution and sizes of proposed new planting.
- ☐ Type of protection planned for any new planting.
- ☐ Planting schedule.
- ☐ The location of any existing or proposed underground or overhead services which could affect existing or proposed planting.
- ☐ Survey report for any protected species on the site of the application.
- ☐ Any mitigation measures to be carried out to protect and enhance protected species found on or near the site.



Specifications

The details you will need to provide in your Landscape Scheme.

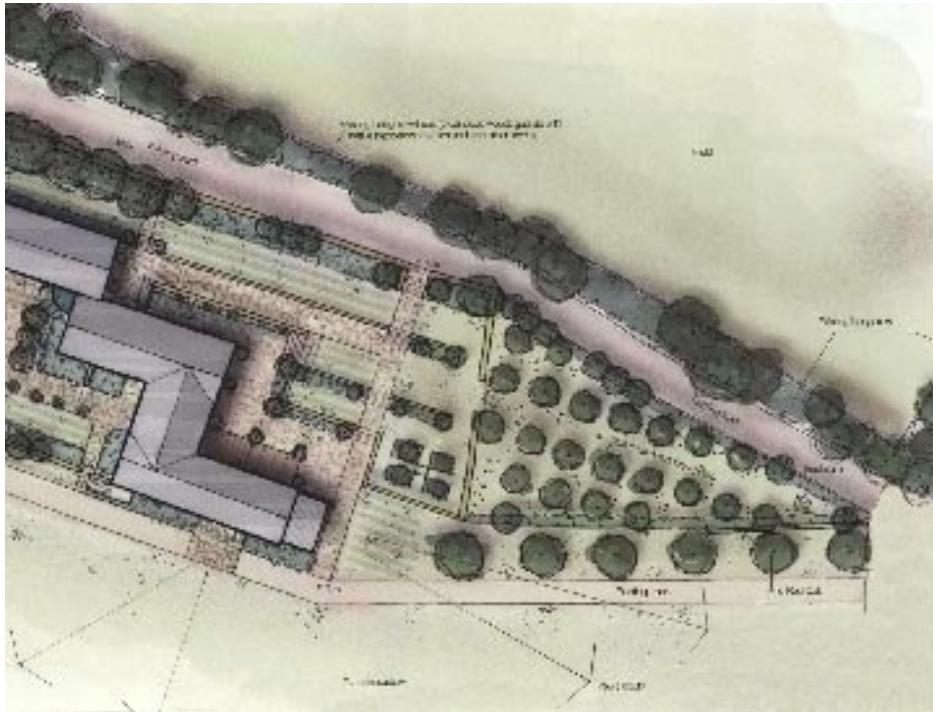
In order to ensure that landscaping and biodiversity considerations forms an integral part of any development, it is important that certain details are submitted to the Council with the planning application, even if the scale of the application is small. The information you will need to provide includes:

- ☐ Plans showing details of proposed hard and soft landscaping.
- ☐ Details of proposed boundary treatments, including materials, height, and location.
- ☐ Existing and proposed levels (to be shown on a plan), including information on any surplus materials to be taken off site, or fill material to be imported (if applicable)
- ☐ Existing trees and other soft landscape features to be retained, and methods of protection during construction.
- ☐ Details of all existing and proposed hard landscape materials, and their location

- Take into consideration the visual and physical impact of the proposals on the existing landscape.
- Reflect the function and character of the site;
- Relate to the buildings, either to soften or screen them, or to act as a good background;
- Produce a safe, practical, usable landscape;
- Be appropriate for the growing conditions;
- Take into account the resources available for the long-term management and maintenance of the site.

Hard landscaping should:

- Where possible incorporate the use of local materials;
- Take into consideration the visual and physical impact of the proposals on the existing landscape;
- Reflect the function and character of the site;
- Produce a safe, practical, usable landscape.



An example of a plan showing an annotated landscaping scheme.

Choices in both hard and soft landscaping will be influenced by physical and technical restrictions on the site. Therefore there are a number of things to consider.

Table 1. Protected species that are most likely to be affected by householder development (please remember this list does not cover all protected species).

Species	Signs to look for	Ways to enhance gardens and buildings for the species
Bats Protected by British and European law. A licence may be needed for certain types of development work	Sightings of bats flying or roosting. Droppings – these look like mice droppings but crumble if compressed. Feeding remains, e.g. insect wings.	Bat boxes and bricks.Plant night-scented flowers that attract night-feeding insects, which the bats feed on.Plant hedgerows and trees.Create garden ponds.
Great-Crested Newts Protected by British and European law. A licence may be needed for certain types of development work	Sightings.The presence of suitable habitat, e.g. ponds within 250m.They are often found in piles of stones or rotting vegetation.	Create new ponds.Leave areas of the garden wild.
Nesting Birds All nesting birds and their nests are protected by law	Sightings. Birds carrying nest-building material or food for their young.	Install nest boxes, in the garden and on the buildings.Plant trees, hedgerows and other plants that provide food for birds or insects.
Reptiles Slow-worms, adders, common lizards, and grass snakes, are protected by British law.	Sightings.Suitable habitat, e.g. piles of stones and rotting vegetation; compost heaps	Create garden ponds, piles of stones and rotting vegetation/ compost.Minimise the use of garden chemicals.
Badgers Badgers and their setts are protected by law. Any development within 30m of a badger sett may need a licence.	Sightings.Latrines, setts, marked pathways often under fences and hedges. Digging of lawn areas. Footprints.	Somepeople like to fee badgers on peanuts so that they are able to watch them more closely.
Trees and hedgerows Some trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, or because they are within a Conservation Area. Field hedgerows are protected under the Hedgerow Regs.	Sightings.	Good management of existing trees and hedges.

In addition to the measures for contributing to biodiversity indicated above, applicants are encouraged to consider further methods for enhancing biodiversity in their homes and gardens. There are lots of ways that people can encourage wildlife into the area where they live, so for more ideas, please see our leaflet, 'Enhancing Biodiversity and Encouraging Wildlife in Our Gardens'.

If you think there are any protected or priority species at the site of the planning proposal, then you should make the Council aware of this in your application.

If it is thought that any protected or priority species could be present, a species survey may be requested by the Council.

If a protected species is found to be present, mitigation measures will be needed to ensure its protection during and after the development.

This may mean that you will need to re-think your proposal in light of the surveys findings.

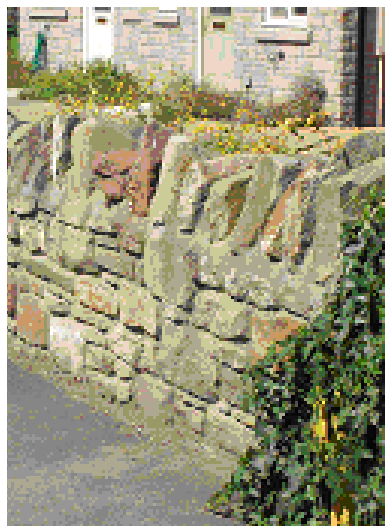


Boundaries

The landscaping scheme should give details of any boundary treatments proposed, including materials to be used and their dimensions (or planting details if the boundary is to be a hedge). When planning boundary treatments, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Consider what the boundary will look like from within and outside the plot and at different times of the year.
- Are there any legal requirements, for example obligations to provide or maintain the boundary; effects on adjacent land/landowners; effects on any known interests (e.g. ancient boundary features, or trees protected by tree preservation orders)
- Think about how the boundary will be maintained in the future. Ensure hedge plants will not create management problems through shading land or growing too vigorously.

- Hedges or tree belts can act as corridors for wildlife, by linking existing habitats. They can also provide habitat for birds or animals, depending on species composition and management. Dry stone walls can also benefit wildlife such as overwintering amphibians, small mammals and lichens.



Tree Planting

When choosing to incorporate tree planting into a landscaping scheme, the following considerations should be taken into account.

- The ultimate size and foliage characteristics of the tree should be considered, and whether it will shade windows and gardens during its growth. The need for regular pruning can be reduced through careful choice of species and positioning.

to be affected by householder development (although there are other protected species not listed), it also shows what signs to look for which might indicate their presence. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any protected species present on an application site, are considered (usually surveyed) and appropriately mitigated for, within the application.



Biodiversity and Development

‘Biodiversity encompasses the whole variety of life on Earth. Not only does it include all species of plants and animals, but also their genetic variation, and the complex ecosystems of which they are part. It is not restricted to rare or threatened species but includes the whole of the natural world from the commonplace to the critically endangered. It includes the plants and animals familiar to all of us in the places where we live or work, wherever that may be.’ (UK Biodiversity Group, Guidance for Local Biodiversity Action Plans, 1997).

Everyone enjoys seeing the first swallows arrive in summer busily chasing insects in the sky, or the watching the leaves change colour in autumn. So it is important that everyone makes a contribution to protecting and enhancing this variety of wildlife, to ensure that it remains for future generations to enjoy. Houses, gardens and out-buildings provide valuable habitats for wildlife in both town and country, with much of the wildlife found there becoming increasingly rare, to the extent that some are now protected by law. It is important to be aware of which species are protected when making a planning application, as the Local Authority will need further details if any such species are present. Table 1, on the following page, shows those protected species which are most likely

- Trees should not be planted over underground services or drains due to possible disturbance and blockage by root damage.
- Tree species selected should be suitable for conditions present on site, both above and below ground (see Table 1).
- Certain trees, such as poplars, willows and ash, may cause damage to foundations and drains by the removal of water from the soil if situated on shrinkable clays.
- Trees such as horse chestnuts, which have heavy leaf fall, should be avoided near roads, car parks and footpaths where slippery conditions could be dangerous. These trees should also be kept away from gutters and drains, to avoid blockages.
- Trees such as limes and sycamores, which are affected by the sugar secreting aphid, should be avoided in car parks or near seating areas.
- Trees should be situated so that they do not cause a traffic hazard by obstructing visibility or the passage of high-sided vehicles. They should not reduce the adequacy of street lighting due to overhanging branches.

- Avoid planting thorny species close to pathways and areas where children play. In other situations planting thorny species may provide a barrier to intruders.
- For details of suitable native trees, and the growing conditions they require, please see the native tree list on our website, or contact the Countryside Team for a paper copy of it.



Future Management of Soft Landscaping

When you are planning any soft landscaping you will need to take into consideration what will be necessary, in terms of future management. Be aware of the possible long-term implications such as plant replacements, thinning, pollarding, and trimming. With any tree planting and landscaping works it is important that the trees and plants are maintained. Under the planning controls, applicants are responsible for the health and condition of plants for at least 5 years after they are planted, and this means that any which die during this period must be replaced. For further information on the cultivation and protection of hedgerows or newly planted trees, please see the 'useful publications' section at the end of this document.

