landscape content of major planning applications

This guidance should be read in conjunction with its companion document *"urban design content in submissions for planning applications[1]."* A thorough site survey and analysis will lead to a meaningful design statement. To be informative, the landscape component of a design statement should analyse survey information, identify how landscape opportunities have been used and promote best "fit" and a responsive approach to the local context.

The survey should assess the following at an appropriate scale to embrace the wider context:

- Mapping of the form of **existing built and spatial context,** including figure ground studies, character of highways and verges, pattern of private gardens, woodland, open space*
- Surveying **existing pedestrian and cycle networks** and bridleways and their destinations, e.g. local shops, public transport, shopping centres, schools, and open recreational land*.
- Predominant local **building and boundary materials, storey height** of existing development, existing **roof forms** / ridge development, skylines and local building characteristics of note *
- Identify **key views** out from and into the site*.
- Survey **existing vegetation and types**, including woodland, isolated and grouped trees, hedges, scrub, grassland; their species composition, both on site and in adjacent land
- **Habitat mapping** of existing site features, both on site and in adjacent land.
- **Ground levels**, including land contours and slope analysis.

The analysis should include the following themes, and consider the relevant Leeds UDP policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) that may apply to the development:

- **Development spatial structure** and varying **character zones**, their typology and treatment to promote contrast and variety, with good visibility between spaces and **safe character.**
- Entry points and **gateways** and means of highlighting **sense of arrival.**
- **Potential connections** to the neighbouring built and natural environment.
- Consideration of **boundary treatments,** hard and soft and relation to local patterns.
- Analysis of **views** good and poor and how these are to be dealt with.
- Means of dealing with **sloping land** and building mass on prominent landforms.
- Means of **mitigating adverse development** impact on the edge of open land.
- **Strategy for preservation of existing vegetation / habitats** and their enhancement.
- New planting and its context, **supporting local distinctiveness**, avoiding standard plant lists.
- The suitability of **proposed Greenspace,** meeting the Council's design and adoption criteria.

Design Statement Submission

This should normally comprise photographs, written analysis, sketch plans / diagrams and perspective sketches, prepared by an experienced landscape architect with ecologist and arboriculturalist support, where necessary. It should consider any phasing of development, including the potential impacts of the site set-up arrangements. There should be a **clear link** from the analysis to development proposals and submission of these should follow the guidance overleaf.

Some References

By Design - Urban Design In the Planning System : Towards Better Practice. DETR / CABE (2000)
Our Towns and Cities : Delivering an Urban Renaissance DETR (2000)
Paving the way , CABE 2002; Living Places – Cleaner, Safer, Greener, ODPM (2002)
Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies N8, N9, N20, N23-N26, N33, N37, N40-41, N49-N53, LD1, LD2*
Various UDP Supplementary Planning Guidance; Leeds City Centre Urban Design Strategy (2001)*; Leeds Sustainable Development Design Guide(1998); Biodiversity and Development Guide (2002)*; Leeds Biodiversity Action Plan (2001); Greening the Built Edge; Development site tree surveys (Development Department)
Government Planning Policy Guidance PPGs: - 1, 9, 15, 17 are of particular relevance and NPPF

[1] * *items marked * are addressed in the related document "urban design content in submissions for planning applications[1] guidance*

A landscape submission checklist for planning applicants

SPACE - Of fundamental importance to a development's acceptability is allowance of sufficient *space* for an landscape setting appropriate to the scale of development and for the viable retention of existing trees and other natural features. For most major development, a full landscape scheme will be required with a planning application. Exceptionally it may be made a condition of planning permission, where the scope for landscape provision is clear.

Pre-application discussions will help establish the scope of landscape proposals. Below is a list of the many factors that may need to be considered in developing a landscape scheme. Giving due attention to these will enable a scheme to be evaluated promptly, without recourse to protracted requests for further information and leading to an earlier recommendation for approval. The quality of both the design and its specification is important and advice should be sought from an experienced landscape architect.

PLANS - All plans should be drawn to a suitable metric scale, with the north-point indicated. Drawing scales of 1 : 500 may be suitable for illustrating layouts, but planting and layout plans may be required at 1:200 or 1:100 scale, as appropriate. Multiple plans should have a cross-reference inset plan and housing plot numbers should be identified in residential development.

SURVEY - An accurate topographical site survey will often be required showing boundary features, walls, fences, structures; levels, contours, cross-sections where relevant; existing trees including those adjacent to/overhanging the site with their positions, accurate spread and other areas of significant shrubby vegetation; service runs and easements; buildings on site and building edges off-site. Where an application site contain trees, a tree survey will be required – separate guidance is available on this.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS / MASTERPLAN, including a landscape context character statement, with existing features worthy of retention, visual considerations and off-site factors affecting proposals; spatial structure and accent planting concept; evidence of concept design for maintaining and enhancing nature conservation; phasing and programming, Greenspace requirements, access points and link routes.

TREATMENT OF EXISTING TREES including those adjacent to the site where affected; tree retention and felling plan; protective fencing during construction (type and positioning;) tree surgery proposals – all to be cross-referenced to the tree condition survey schedule and its reference numbering.

PLANTING PLAN including**: proposed trees,** with positions, species / variety, size when planted, staking method, pit size, grille and guard specification, if any; **shrub areas -** planting beds, shrub and herbaceous species / variety, density of planting, mix proportions and location, size of plant and/or container size supplied; plant handling / storage code; **grassed and meadow areas** – levels shown as existing and proposed contours, gradients, seed mix or turf specification; topsoil depths for each of the above, specification and additives / ameliorants; **weed control measures** including proposals for maintaining areas prior to planting; residual herbicides, mulch specification and depth; **protective measures** such as permanent or temporary fencing and shelters from grazing animals/rodents, pedestrian movement & vehicle impact, vandalism, as appropriate; **slope** stabilization methods; **management plans** including objectives and aftercare maintenance.

HARD LANDSCAPE PLAN: existing and proposed levels as spot heights and contours with cross-sections; surfacing, edge restraints, internal plot and boundary walls and fences, retaining walls; special tree pit and shrub bed construction; means of protection against vehicle impact, pedestrian short cuts and vandalism (bollards, tree guards, permanent fencing, low walls, etc.) lighting, street furniture; location and design of special features, refuse storage structures, sub-station locations and utility routes.

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E-mail: landscape.planning @leeds.gov.uk
www.leeds.gov.uk