QD15 Landscape design

All proposals for development must submit details to show that:

a. adequate consideration has been given to landscape design, including all the spaces between and around buildings, at an early stage in the design process;

b. the proposal includes suitable open space provision;

c. high quality plant materials and high quality landscaping materials have been selected, which are appropriate to the site and its proposed use;

d. effective use has been made of existing landscape features;

e. where appropriate, existing nature conservation features have been retained and new suitable ones created; and

f. if the location is appropriate, the site contributes to the Brighton and Hove Greenway Network.

Planning conditions may be imposed or a planning obligation sought in order to secure the provision of landscaping and future maintenance.

On major schemes, details of structural landscaping that contributes to the existing overall landscape quality of an area will need to be agreed with the planning authority prior to the determination of a planning application. It will be a requirement, in appropriate cases, that some landscaping is planted prior to development commencing.

3.60 Consultees involved in the preparation of this Plan placed a lot of importance on open spaces and landscape. The spaces between and around buildings are just as important as the buildings themselves. It is essential that careful attention is given to these spaces within the overall design of a scheme in order to achieve good design. Indeed, good design involves consideration of the landscape as an integral part of the design process. The objective of a scheme should be to integrate a development into its surroundings with minimal impact on the environment, whilst at the same time creating an attractive setting in the immediate vicinity.

3.61 The council aims to promote a high standard of design. New developments are encouraged to express individuality and a legible sense of identity whilst retaining the character of the local area. Landscape schemes will be sought which are attractive and distinctive and make a positive contribution to the site and its surroundings. Materials should be carefully selected to suit and work with the function of the space. Personal and community safety should be carefully considered in all schemes. For example, landscape proposals adjacent to railways should ensure trees are located well away from the railway boundary as they could provide a means of illegal access onto the railway line and leaves falling onto the line could cause major problems and train delays.
3.62 Landscaping can support and provide new nature conservation features (as defined in Chapter 7 ‘An integrated approach to nature conservation and the countryside’) which contribute to the creation of a stimulating environment and can serve as an educational resource. Landscape features includes trees and hedgerows which are also subject to a separate policy, QD16. It is important in terms of ‘quality of life’ for people to have easy access to natural open space. This was recognised by English Nature, which produced a research report entitled ‘Accessible natural greenspace in towns and cities: A review of appropriate size and distance criteria’. Regard will be given to this document when considering proposals and landscape schemes.

3.63 Effective landscaping will also be required where proposals involve changes of use. A change of use to a building may require an alteration to the materials in the landscaped area so that the new function of the building, and consequently its character, is reflected in its surroundings. The landscape and external space can play an important role in determining access into areas, use of spaces and the hierarchy of public / private outdoor spaces with differing levels of privacy and security. Careful consideration should also be given to ensure that the role of the landscaping does not conflict with the requirements of the Building Regulations, for example, landscape schemes should not hinder emergency access points.

3.64 Planning applications will be required to submit a design statement. Landscape plans will be required as part of the design statement in order that they can be considered as part of the entire scheme and problems can be raised at an early stage and easily resolved. Proposals must include information about materials to be used and details of all aspects of planting. It should be noted that native species will be encouraged, where appropriate (and where possible, native species of local origin).

3.65 Conditions may be imposed in order to secure the provision of landscaping. For example, to secure the completion of a landscape scheme prior to occupation of a site and / or an adequate maintenance programme and the replacement of any plants that fail within the first five years on a ‘like for like’ basis, unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority. Where landscape plans have not been agreed but are felt to be resolvable, the planning authority may grant planning permission with appropriate landscaping conditions.

3.66 Applicants are recommended to seek professional landscape advice at an early stage in the design process. Additional advice and guidance is available from the council’s arboriculturists, ecologists and landscape designers. A Street Design Manual will also be published by the council, which should be taken into account.

3.67 Policy QD15 has particular links with the following in this Plan: the policies relating to trees and hedgerows; design; development densities; crime prevention; unstable land; surface water runoff and flood risk; conservation areas; listed buildings; historic parks and gardens; urban open space; the retention and integration of nature conservation; species protection; greenways; provision of outdoor recreation space in housing schemes; traffic calming; external lighting; and public art.