



Isle of Man
Government

Planning Circular 1/93

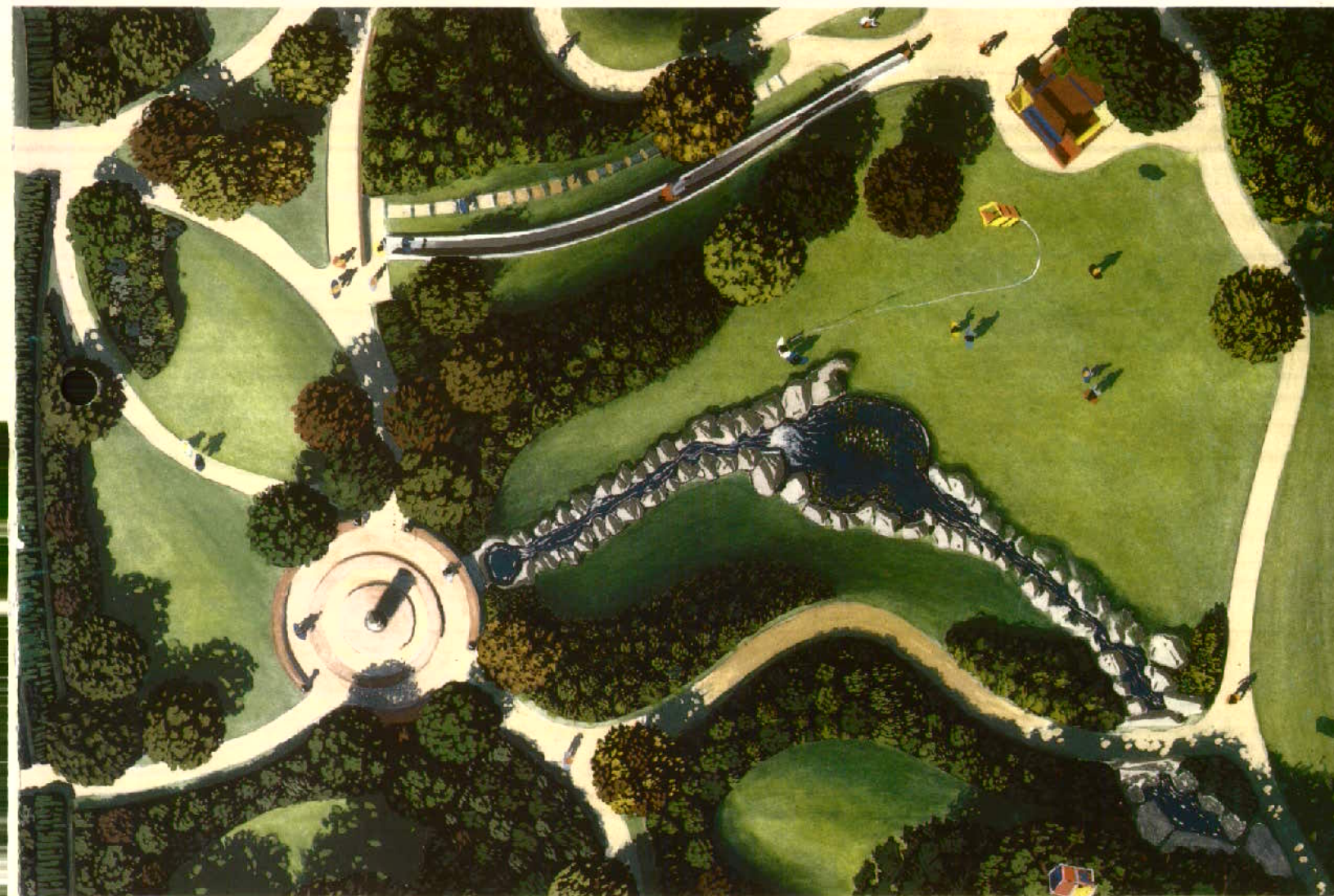
LANDSCAPE GUIDANCE NOTES

Department of Local Government
and the Environment

Office of Planning.

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Rheynn Reiltys Ynnydagh
as y Chymmyltacht.



£1.00

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INTRODUCTION

MOST Planning Applications for the layout of new residential, industrial, or commercial development now include reference to planting or landscaping schemes, and indeed, many recent developments have been considerably enhanced by the implementation of these schemes.

These notes are intended to give guidance in the preparation of the documents and plans which should be submitted as part of a planning application for development which involves landscaping.

TO be effective, landscape design should be carried out together with the detailed design of the associated buildings and other siteworks.

The term "landscaping" includes not only planting but also engineering and architectural features such as drives, paths, fencing, walls, hardstandings, banking, ground modelling and water features.

Where there is a valid Approval in Principle, the conditions of that approval may give specific guidance on the content of the landscaping scheme, and will usually require that:

- No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Planning Committee a scheme of landscaping which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development.

It is recommended that, prior to the preparation of the scheme, consultations be held with one of the Department's planning officers.

DOCUMENTS

All detailed planning applications should include a location plan at a scale of 1/2500 or 1/1250, and a site plan at a scale of 1/500, on each of which the site boundary should be delineated with a red line.

Outline landscaping proposals, survey information, ground modelling and levels can be accommodated on the 1/500 plan. Planting and hard surface details should be shown on a larger scale plan - 1/100 or 1/200.

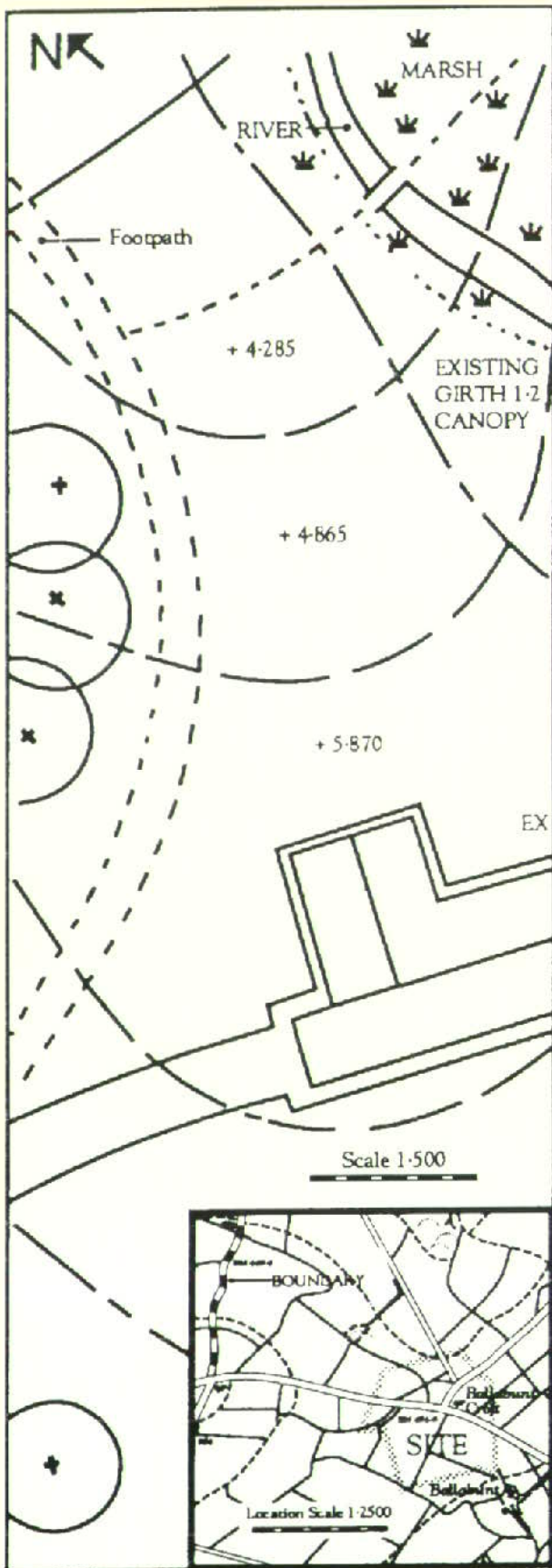
It will also be necessary to prepare a plant schedule referring to areas delineated on this plan, and specifying species, the size of plants, and the density of planting.

A specification should be included which covers ground preparation and aftercare.

Reference should also be made to the method to be used for the protection of existing trees and other features which are to be retained.

If necessary the application can be accompanied by a covering letter containing any further information which could help the Planning Committee.

SURVEY



AN accurate dimensional and level survey should be carried out and plans should clearly illustrate:

VEGETATION

The position of existing trees (woodland, coppice or individual specimens) must be accurately located on a scaled drawing with supportive descriptive documentation on approximate height, canopy spread, species and condition. Hedgerows within or around site boundaries, scrub, marshland and other areas of landscape interest should also be shown.

LEVELS/CONTOURS

The topography of the site may be illustrated by means of a grid of spot heights or contours.

ACCESS

Existing and proposed site access arrangements should be indicated together with any existing rights of way, footpaths, wayleaves, etc.

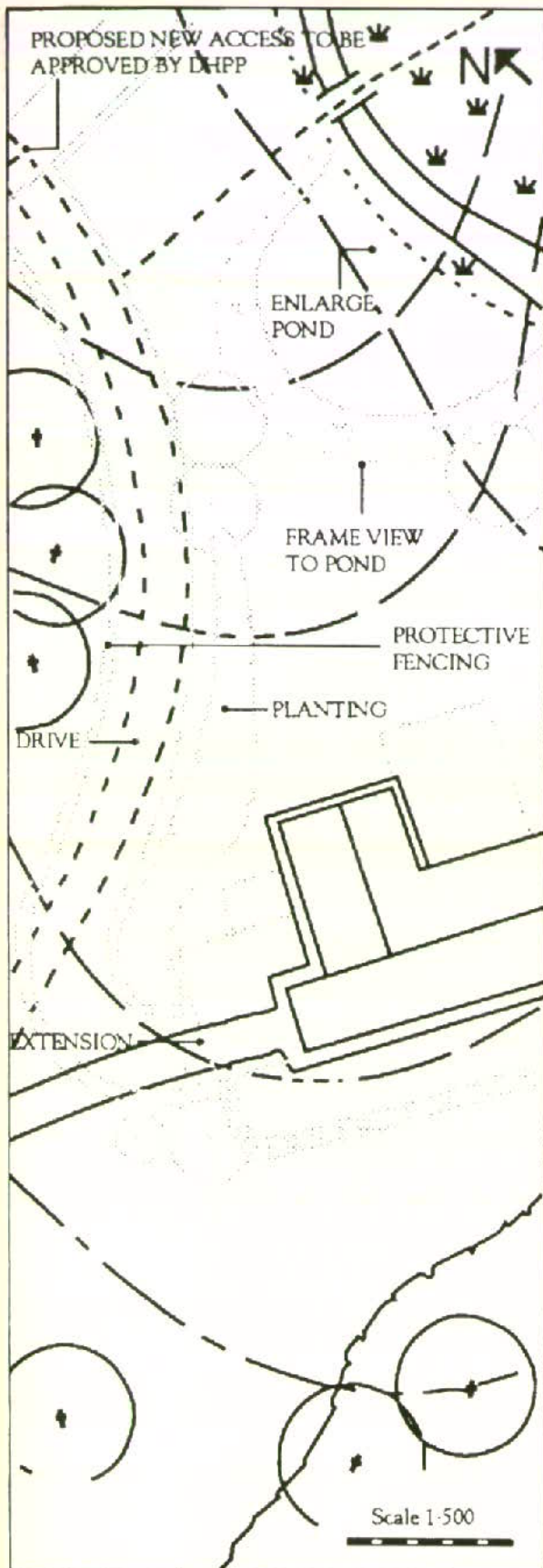
ARTEFACTS/SERVICES

The outline of existing buildings (whether to be retained or removed) must be indicated together with stone walls, ditches or stream courses, drainage runs, archaeological artefacts, powerlines and other services (above and below ground).

NOTE

Trees must not be felled until and if consent for so doing has been obtained from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. In the case of registered trees, this advice applies also to topping, lopping, or other surgery. If in doubt, contact a forester in the D.A.F.F. at St. John's.

SITE PREPARATION



CAREFUL site investigation will help determine site treatment prior to and during development.

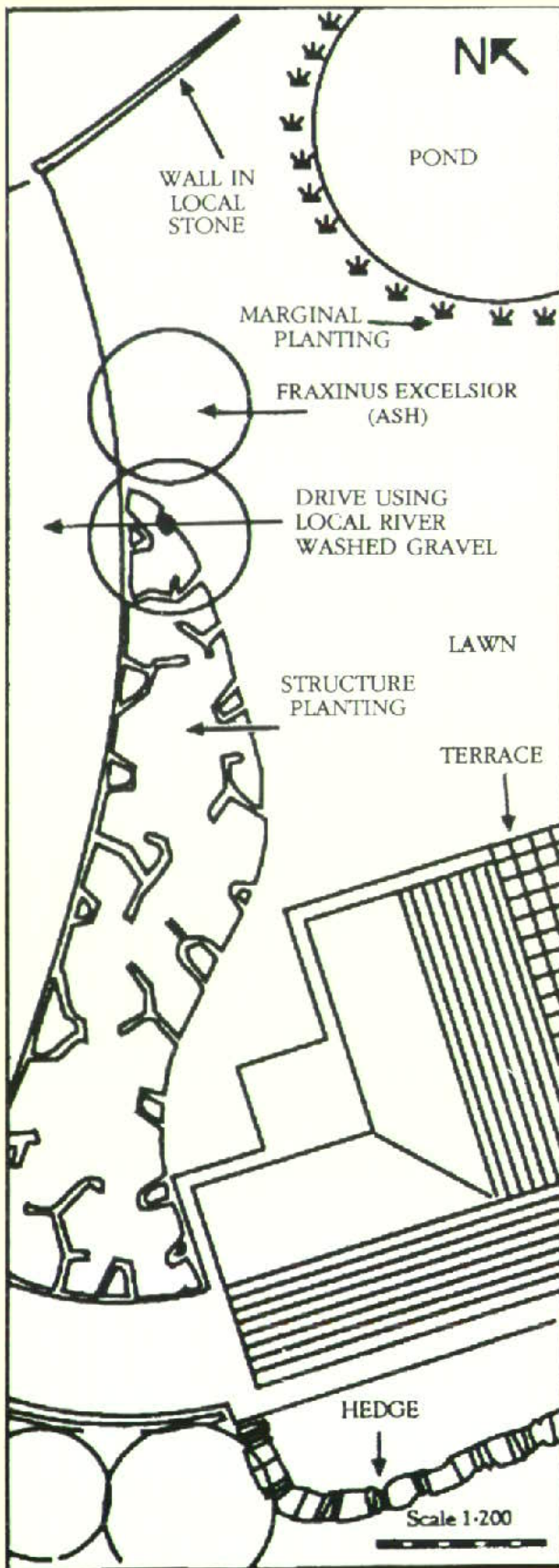
Existing trees should be retained wherever feasible. They are an intrinsic part of the Island's beauty and will greatly enhance any new developments. They must be physically protected during any site works with no burning, storage of toxic materials or heavy vehicular traffic allowed below the canopy. Timber fencing (chespale/post and rail) is the most functional method of protection and must be retained throughout building works.

All major earthworks, service trenches and drainage runs must be confined to areas outside the canopies of existing trees, and should conform to BS 5837: 1980 (Trees in Relation to Construction).

The Island's soils vary but are generally acidic and prone to waterlogging. Land drains may be required to improve ground conditions, but their effect on existing trees must be taken into account. Heavy or compacted soils should be ripped prior to cultivation. The incorporation of organic compost into heavy soils will render them more "friable" or workable. Applications of ground limestone will improve acidic soils by releasing soil nutrients to plants.

Any excavations should only be undertaken after careful reference to site services, drainage and their location in relation to existing vegetation. It is advised that in instances where major earth moving operations are envisaged, reference be made to the Manx Museum who can advise on the possible existence of archaeological remains. Where major earth moving operations are proposed care should be taken to ensure that ground levels in the vicinity of existing trees are neither raised nor lowered.

DESIGN



LANDSCAPE design is concerned with the design of the whole environment, the juxtaposition of buildings, open space, roads, surface treatment, circulation, boundaries and plant groupings. A high quality environment enhances new development and can provide a valuable contribution to the Island's landscape.

Spatial form and quality are created or modified by the positioning of enclosing elements such as buildings, structures, boundaries and vegetation. Careful detailing of hard (walls, footpaths, fences, etc.) and soft (planting) landscape elements creates visual interest.

Wherever possible local materials and construction details should be utilised. Manx hedges should be in accordance with the advice in Planning Circular 1/92.

Planting should not be seen as purely "cosmetic". Trees and shrubs should complement buildings, be used to frame good views, screen poor views, provide shelter and human scale to developments as well as providing improved wildlife resources.

On larger projects, structure planting, consisting primarily of belts of trees and shrubs will provide shelter, screening, enclosure and green "corridors" for roads whilst reducing the visual scale of development and creating a more hospitable and amenable environment. These belts, usually located along roads and boundaries, should be informal and comprise densely planted, mainly indigenous feathered trees, whips and shrubs supplemented with larger trees in key locations for initial maturity.

Entrances, areas immediately adjacent to buildings, and other areas where space is restricted may need a more formal approach to design using more ornamental trees, shrubs, formal hedging and lawns.

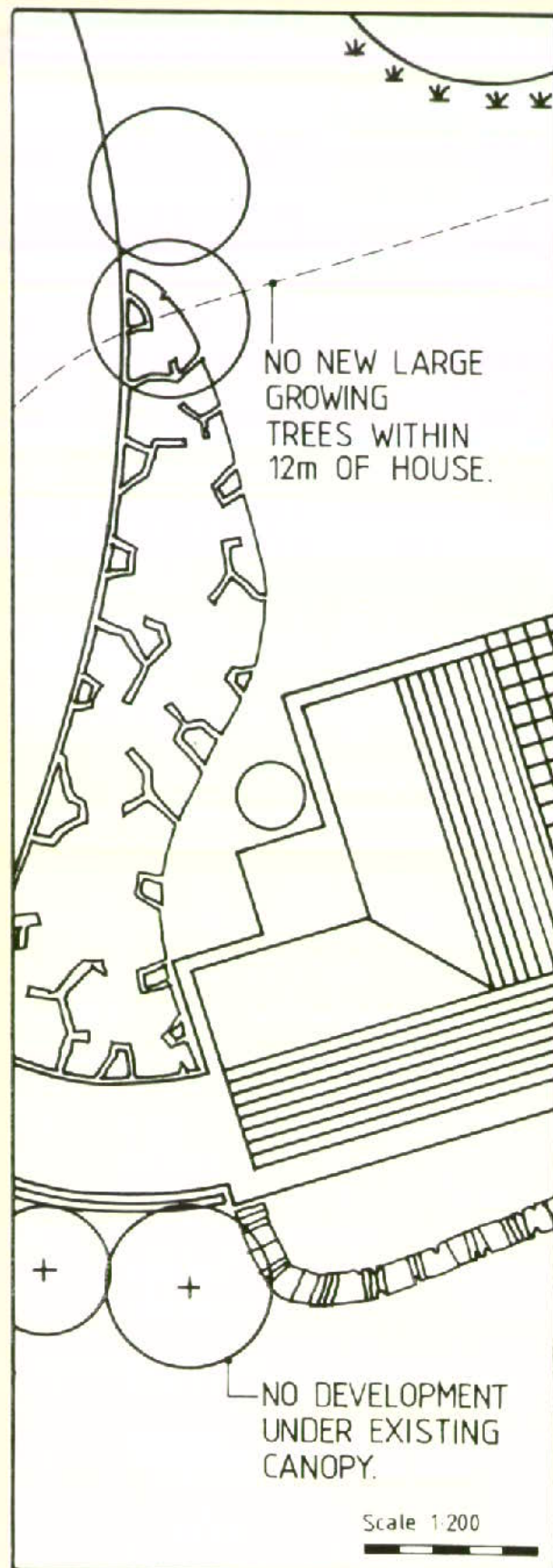
Planting design is most effective when bold and simple. A few species, to complement each other, are far more impressive than a large variety of plant material scattered in unrelated groups.

The full range of plant types and uses should be considered for site specific solutions. The following is a short check list for consideration:

- SHORT GRASS/LAWNS
- MEADOW AREAS
- WILD FLOWER PLANTING/SEEDING
- TREES (NATIVE AND ORNAMENTAL)
- SHRUBS (NATIVE AND ORNAMENTAL)
- HERBACEOUS PLANTS
- CLIMBERS
- BULBS
- MARGINAL AND AQUATIC PLANTS
- SHELTER PLANTING
- SCREEN PLANTING
- HEDGEROWS (NATIVE AND ORNAMENTAL)
- GROUND STABILISATION/GROUND COVER PLANTING

With any landscape proposals it is essential that establishment and future maintenance requirements are considered at the design stage. Low maintenance schemes can be achieved by careful plant selection and maintenance over the first and second years.

Maintenance and damage to buildings can be minimised by taking account of the ultimate height and crown spread of trees in relation to the proposed development. It is therefore recommended that a distance of at least 12 metres be maintained between existing trees and new buildings.



PLANT SELECTION & SPECIFICATION

TREES

Ash	(Fraxinus excelsior)
Alder	(Alnus sp)
Aspen	(Populus tremula)
Birch	(Betula sp)
Cherry	(Prunus avium)
Crab apple	(Malus sp)
Eucryphia	
Gum tree	(Eucalyptus sp)
Hawthorn	(Crataegus monogyna)
Holly	(Ilex aquifolium)
Maple	(Acer sp)
Oak	(Quercus sp)
Rowan	(Sorbus aucuparia)
Poplar	(Populus sp)
Willow	(Salix sp)

SHRUBS

Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa)	Cotoneaster
Elder (Sambucus nigra)	Elaeagnus
Gorse (Ulex gallii/europaeus)	Escallonia
Hazel (Corylus avellana)	Fuchsia
Shrub roses (Rosa sp)	Griselinia
Willow (Salix sp)	Hebe
	Olearia
	Potentilla
	Pyracantha
	Senecio

BULBS/WILDFLOWERS

Bluebell	Chicory
Cow parsley	Cornflower
Crocus	Dog Daisy
Narcissus species (Manx doubles)	Hardhead
Lady's smock	Sweet cicely
Meadow buttercup	Pignut
Snowdrop	Red campion
Wood anemone	

PLANTS TO AVOID

The following plants should **not** be used as they can be invasive and damage native vegetation:

Giant Hogweed	Petasites fragrans
Gunnera	Japanese knotweed

Prior to undertaking any major planting scheme or development reference should be made to the Biological Records Officer at the Manx Museum to ascertain if the proposed site holds any unusual flora or fauna. Where wildflower planting or seeding operations are being considered reference should be made to The Wildlife Committee.

WHILST the Island suffers from some climatic restrictions to plant establishment (strong, salt laden winds and heavy rainfall), together with generally poor acidic soils, once established, plant growth rates are excellent and, given protection, even tender plants will survive and thrive. The key to success is to utilise those plants which can be seen growing throughout the Island as "key" species which will offer interest in their own right as well as long term protection for less hardy plants grown in their shelter.

As general guidance native/indigenous plants should be used for larger scale structure planting with more ornamental species utilised in garden or formal settings.

The indicative plant species listed are generally adaptable to conditions on the Island. Local knowledge and observation of plants growing in the vicinity will extend the list to ensure variety and diversity.

Initial impact from planting schemes can be achieved by specifying whips and shrubs within the 600-1200 mm height range and increased planting densities of 2-4 per square metre depending on location. Increased densities afford increased mutual protection to plants on exposed sites increasing survival and growth rates. On very exposed sites protective windbreak fencing must be considered and maintained throughout the establishment period. Thorough ground preparation is also essential before planting, and weed growth should be checked throughout the establishment period. Follow planting instructions and do not allow plants to dry out or plant in waterlogged ground or in frosty weather.

Always ensure that plants are hardy, i.e. adapted to local conditions, and preferably buy local stock.

HIGHWAYS & DRAINAGE

ENQUIRIES regarding the design of roads, accesses and surface water drainage should be addressed to the Department of Highways, Ports and Properties at the Sea Terminal.

ADOPTION

SIGNIFICANT areas of planting, open space, play areas, or land required for future road widening may be suitable for adoption by the Local Authority, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, or the Department of Highways, Ports and Properties. Prior to making a detailed planning application, there should be consultations with the appropriate authority. The submitted plans should indicate clearly which areas are proposed for adoption by which authority.

MAINTENANCE

MAINTENANCE must be considered in relation to all landscape elements, from hard landscape to grass, planted areas and trees.

HARD LANDSCAPE

Surfaces of gravel and bound gravel may need periodic repair, levelling and rolling; fences and walls may need repair. Reductions in specification may obtain short term savings but may increase maintenance liability for repair or replacement.

GRASS AREAS

Grass areas need cutting, trimming, fertilisation, aeration and weedkilling. The level of these operations (and cost) depends on the level of 'finish' required. Formal lawns are the most intensive and should not be used over large areas where 'meadow' grassland would suffice.

PLANTED AREAS

Ornamental shrub beds require weeding, forking, mulching and fertilising. Individual shrubs need pruning, thinning and replacement if they die (see Landscape conditions).

The maintenance of areas of structure planting can be divided into two phases: i.e. establishment and post establishment.

While the plants are young (establishment phase), maintenance should be increased to prevent weed growth competing with tree and shrub growth, and to help the plants grow vigorously. After the planting is established, the shade of the canopy and strong growth should prevent a weed problem, and periodic thinning and pruning will be the main maintenance requirements, i.e. higher maintenance input over the first few years will reduce, by way of increased growth rates, long term maintenance commitments.

TREES

Trees require selective pruning, periodic checking of stakes and tree ties and feeding. Weed control is necessary, especially in the first few years after planting, again to ensure maximum growth rates.

Maintenance must be borne in mind when preparing landscape proposals. Low maintenance landscape elements including groundcover planting, specially formulated grass seed mixes, densely planted shrub/structure planting areas will reduce long term revenue commitments.

HARD LANDSCAPE

FUNCTION and appearance are important and must be considered when detailing hard landscape elements. Boundary treatments (e.g. fences, walls, retaining walls) must be able to stand up to pressure of high wind etc., and hard surfaces (tarmac, concrete block, stone sett) must cope with the loads they will be subjected to.

In choosing materials for the hard landscape, careful thought should be given to the use of natural materials that will complement the surrounding environment. Local stone must be considered for walls, gravel paths etc.; local construction techniques for boundaries (banks, sod walls) and surface finishes (paint, woodstain) should all seek to complement, not clash with the landscape.

APPROVAL

YOUR detailed planning approval will usually be subject to a condition of the following form:-

- All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Planning Committee gives written consent to any variation.

There may also be a condition requiring that security in the form of a banker's bond and an associated legal agreement should be deposited with the Department by the developer.

CONCLUSION

THE 1982 Development Plan Order requires that the Department should, when it considers planning applications, have regard to "the establishment and preservation of an attractive environment by...the inclusion within layouts of tree-planting and landscaping."

Whilst application of this clause has proved to be increasingly successful during recent years, there nevertheless continues to be a significant number of planning applications which fail to include proper landscaping details.

It is hoped that the publication of this circular will serve both to increase awareness of the desirability of proper landscaping, and also to assist those who are involved with the preparation of planning applications.

This Circular is issued in pursuance of the powers vested in the Department of Local Government and the Environment by Section 5 of the Town and County Planning Act 1934 and Article II(2)(a)(vi) of the Isle of Man Planning Scheme (Development Plan) Order 1982.

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