6 Landscape design and trees

KEY MESSAGES

- Camden's trees and green spaces are integral to its character.
- Landscape design and green infrastructure should be fully integrated into the design of schemes from the outset.
- We require a survey of existing trees and vegetation to be carried out prior to the design of a scheme.

6.1 This guidance sets out how to protect trees and vegetation and design high quality landscapes in conjunction with development proposals to ensure an attractive, safe, accessible, sustainable and ecologically diverse environment.

6.2 This chapter sets out:

- how existing trees and landscape should be protected;
- what specific protection is given to some trees;
- how new landscaping should be incorporated into developments; and
- considerations for specific landscaped areas and types of landscaping.

6.3 The green landscape of the Borough is formed by parks and open spaces, railway and canal corridors, trees, gardens, green walls and roofs. These landscape components provide Camden's green infrastructure and play a key role in maintaining the local climate, reducing storm water run off, increasing biodiversity, providing space for urban food production and providing public enjoyment.

6.4 We expect landscape design and the provision of green infrastructure to be fully integrated into the design of development proposals from the beginning of the design process.

6.5 This section sets out further guidance on how we will apply Core Strategy Policy CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage and Development Policy DP24 Securing high quality design.

Where does this guidance apply?

6.6 This guidance applies to all proposals affecting or including landscape design on and around buildings and proposals relating to on and off site trees.

How should existing Trees and Landscape be protected?

Benefits of retaining vegetation and trees

6.7 Vegetation of all types is at a premium in Camden given the Borough's dense urban environment. Camden's tree canopy and other existing vegetation are integral to its character. If you maintain existing trees and

vegetation on a development site it will help provide a sense of maturity to a development and integrate a development into its setting. Existing trees and vegetation are a key component in adapting to climate change and conserving biodiversity. See CPG3 Sustainability chapters on Climate change adaptation and Biodiversity. Existing species can serve as an indicator of what might be successfully grown on the site when selecting additional plants. The retention of existing mature trees and vegetation also make an important contribution to the sustainability of a project. For example by reducing the impacts and energy demand associated with the provision of new plants such as in their transportation and the irrigation required.

How should existing trees and vegetation be protected?

6.8 We will require a survey of existing trees and vegetation to be carried out prior to the design of a scheme in order to identify what trees and vegetation should be retained and protected on site. We will expect developers to follow the principles and practices set out in BS 5837: 2005 Trees in relation to construction to integrate existing trees into new developments.

6.9 BS5837: 2005 Trees in relation to construction outlines the survey method for identifying which trees should be retained and protected. Once the survey has identified the important trees and vegetation a Tree Constraints Plan (TCP) needs to be prepared for the site. The TCP is essential to site planning as it provides the limitations for development including:

- site layout and building lines;
- changes in levels;
- foundation design; and

- service provision where the root zones and crown spread of trees are to be protected.

NEW UTILITIES

Useful guidance for the installation of new utilities in the vicinity of trees is also provided in National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) Vol 4 - Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees

6.10 The TCP should also identify the provision of sufficient space, above and below ground for new planting to develop and mature and existing trees to continue to grow (see paragraph 6.42 below regarding soft landscape design).

6.11 Where trees are identified to be retained it is imperative that contracting and site supervision procedures are in place to ensure that there is no damage during and after construction. We will normally seek a Method Statement which sets out how trees that are to be retained, both on and adjacent to the site will be protected. The Method Statement should identify how the provision of site accommodation, storage areas, site access and the positioning, heights and arcs of cranes will not affect the trees and vegetation that are to be protected.

Root zone

The area and volume of soil around the tree in which roots are found. May extend to three or more times the branch spread of the tree, or several times the height of the tree.

Crown spread

The extent of the branches, twigs and leaves that form the top of the tree

Specific protection for trees

6.12 Where a planning application involves works that affect trees either within the application site or on adjacent land (including street trees) we will require the following information to determine the application:

1. A Tree Survey
   (see section 4.2 of BS5837:2005)
2. A Tree Constraints Plan
   (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 of BS5837:2005)
3. An Arboricultural Implications Assessment
   (see section 6 of BS5837:2005)
4. An Arboricultural Method Statement for the protection of trees to be retained including a Tree Protection Plan
   (see section 7 of BS5837:2005)

6.13 Failure to supply the documents outlined above may lead to a planning application not being validated.

6.14 To obtain a copy of BS5837:2005 please visit www.StandardsUK.com and for a list of arboricultural consultants visit www.trees.org.uk, www.charteredforesters.org and www.consultingarboristssociety.co.uk.

Tree preservation orders

6.15 Many trees in Camden are covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Please contact the Council to find out if a tree is protected by a TPO.

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

A tree preservation order is made by the Council to legally protect specific trees or groups of trees that provide public amenity.

Unauthorised works to a tree with a TPO is a criminal offence and may result in prosecution and, upon conviction, a fine.

6.16 Works (above or below ground) to trees with a TPO require our permission. Application forms for these works are available at www.camden.gov.uk.

6.17 Works to a tree with a TPO required to enable the implementation of a planning permission are dealt with as part of a planning application. A further TPO application is not required.

Trees in Conservation Areas

SECTION 211

Under Section 211 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree in a Conservation Area must provide the Council 6 weeks notice of their intention to do so.

6.18 All trees in Conservation Areas with a trunk diameter of 75mm or greater measured at 1.5m above ground level are protected under section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). If you are proposing works to a tree in a Conservation Area, above or below ground, you are required to give Camden Planning Services six weeks notice of your proposals (See above link for forms). Works to a tree in a Conservation Area required to facilitate the implementation of a planning permission are dealt with as part of a planning application. A further section 211 Notification is not required. If you carry out unauthorised works to a tree in a Conservation Area is a criminal offence and may result in prosecution and, upon conviction, a fine.

How should new landscaping be included into a development?

General principles

6.19 Urban landscape design encompasses the following types of spaces:

- streets and associated public spaces,
- parks, public and private squares, gardens,
- amenity and servicing space around buildings; and

- buildings themselves.

6.20 The principle components of landscape design are soft landscape details (planting) and hard landscape details (the constructed aspects of design) for example surfaces, lighting, seating, water features and boundary treatments.

6.21 Urban spaces have particular character which results from a combination of factors including geology, ecology, topography and the history of their development and use. We will expect new landscape design to respond to, preserve and enhance local character, including through the:

- preservation of existing trees and hedges;
- planting of new trees and hedges; and
- detailed design of boundary treatments and spaces within the site particularly where they are visible to the public domain.

6.22 Planning applications will be assessed against

- the successful resolution of the above elements into the design of the site
- whether the site design has optimised opportunities to increase a site's sustainability and function in adapting to climate change (see CPG3 Sustainability for further details on Biodiversity and Climate change adaptation)
- the need to reduce opportunities for criminal behaviour (see the chapter in this guidance on Designing safer environments)
- the need to provide inclusive environments (see CPG6)

Specific areas that are landscaped and contain trees

6.23 Areas within a development site that are generally landscaped include:

- gardens;
- access and servicing routes;
- parking spaces and cycle stores;
- boundary walls, fences and railings; and

- building roofs and walls.

Gardens

6.24 Front, side and rear gardens make an important contribution to the townscape of the Borough and contribute to the distinctive character and appearance of individual buildings and their surroundings. Gardens are particularly prone to development pressure in the Borough with their loss resulting in the erosion of local character and amenity, biodiversity and their function in reducing local storm water run off.

Front Gardens

6.25 The design of front gardens and forecourt parking areas make a large impact on the character and attractiveness of and area and in particular the streetscene. The design of front gardens and other similar forecourt spaces should:

- consider a balance between hard and soft landscaping. Where changes take place no more than 50% of the frontage area should become hard landscape. Where parking areas form part of the forecourt enough of the front boundary enclosure should be retained to retain the spatial definition of the forecourt to the street and provide screening;
- retain trees and vegetation which contribute to the character of the site and surrounding area;
- retain or re-introduce original surface materials and boundary features, especially in Conservation Areas such as walls, railings and hedges where they have been removed. If new materials are too be introduced they should be complementary to the setting; and
- prevent the excavation of lightwells as a means of providing access to basements where this does not form past of the historical means of access to these areas.

Paving of front gardens

CHANGES TO PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

The General Permitted Development Order no longer allows the creation of more than 5 square meters of impermeable surfaces at the front of dwelling houses that would allow uncontrolled runoff of rainwater from front gardens onto roads without first obtaining planning permission.

Changes to frontages incorporating hard standings may also be affected by Article 4 Directions. Article 4 Directions are issued by the Council in circumstances where specific control over development is required, primarily where the character of an area of acknowledged importance would be threatened, such as conservation areas

6.26 Planning Permission will not be granted for hard standings greater than five square metres that do not incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) into the design. SUDS incorporate permeable surfaces to allow water to soak into the subsoil, rather than being diverted into the stormwater system. SUDS are particularly appropriate in the parts of the borough north of Euston Road as this area has predominantly clay soils. Methods for choosing the appropriate design of a SUDS are provided in "Responsible rainwater management around the home" available from www.paving.org.uk. Planning applications which incorporate car parking areas into developments will be required to demonstrate that the chosen solution is appropriate to the underlying soil type.

Creating a cross over

6.27 For single family dwellings planning permission is not required for the creation of a cross over unless the property is affected by an Article 4 Direction or the cross over is to a classified road. However permission is required for the formation of a cross over from the Highways Authority. The Highways Authority will generally refuse permission where it would result in the loss of on street car parking spaces.

6.28 Planning permission is required for forecourt parking at the fronted of buildings divided into flats. Listed Building Consent is required to alterations to structures affecting listed buildings including structures within their curtilage.

Listed building consent

Legally required in order to carry out any works to a Listed Building which will affect its special value. This is necessary for any major works, but may also be necessary for minor alterations and even repairs and maintenance. Listed Building Consent may also be necessary for a change of use of the property.

Rear Gardens

6.29 Rear gardens are important as they:

- form part of the semi public domain where they are over looked by large numbers of properties and the occupants of surrounding buildings benefit from the outlook.

- form the character of an area in terms of the relationship between buildings and spaces and the resulting openness or sense of enclosure
- provide a sense of the greenery where they can be viewed through gaps between buildings
- provide a sense of visual separation and privacy
- soften the impact of buildings and integrate them into their setting
- play a significant role in maintaining the biodiversity of the borough (see CPG3 Sustainability for further details on Biodiversity). In particular groups of trees and vegetation along the rear boundaries of garden provide important wild life corridors within existing development patterns.

6.30 The potential detrimental affects of new structures in gardens can be reduced by:

- carefully siting structures away from vegetation and trees,
- designing foundation to minimises damage to the root protection zones of adjacent trees,
- including green roofs, green walls on new development and vegetation screens.

Root protection zone

The area around the base or roots of the tree that needs to be protected from development and compaction during construction to ensure the survival of the tree.

6.31 Planning permission is unlikely to be granted for development whether in the form of extensions, conservatories, garden studios, basements or new development which significantly erode the character of existing garden spaces and their function in providing wildlife habitat (See the chapters on Extensions, Alterations and Conservatories in this guidance document, and CPG4 on Basements).

Access and servicing areas

6.32 Where underground parking and/or servicing forms part of a larger development, access should be integral to the design of the development. Entrances and ramps should be discrete.

6.33 Entrances and adjoining areas of buildings are often spaces which require the integration of a number of competing needs such as the provision of bins, cycle storage, meters and inspection boxes and external lighting. These elements should be constructed with materials sympathetic to the site and surroundings. You can minimise the visual impact of storage areas by careful siting and incorporating planters to screen developments and incorporating green roofs as part of their structure.

6.34 Space and location requirements for the storage of waste and recycling can be found in this guidance in chapter on Waste and recycling

storage. Further guidance on how access to site and parking areas should be designed can be found in CPG6 Transport.

Boundary Walls, Fences and Railings

6.35 Boundary walls, fences and railings form the built elements of boundary treatments. They should be considered together with the potential for elements of soft landscaping. For example, we encourage the combination of low brick boundary walls and hedges as a boundary treatment. Boundary treatments should:

- delineate public and private areas;
- contribute to qualities of continuity and enclosure within the street scene; and
- provide site security and privacy.

6.36 Due to the prominence of the boundary treatments in the streetscene we will expect the design, detailing and materials used to provide a strong positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area and integrate the site into the streetscene.

6.37 With regards to boundary walls, fences and railings, we will expect that:

- you consider repairing boundary walls, fences and railings before they are replaced;
- they make a positive contribution to the appearance and character of the development site and to the streetscene;
- you consider designs to be effective for their function.
- the design and construction does not damage any on site or off site trees that are identified for retention (See paragraphs 6.15 to 6.18 above).

6.38 For boundary treatments around listed buildings or in a conservation area we will expect:

- the elements are repaired or replaced to replicate the original design and detailing and comprise the same materials as the original features
- the works preserve and enhance the existing qualities and context of the site and surrounding area

6.39 Planning Permission is not required for the erection of a boundary treatment no higher than 1m where it abuts the highway or 2m on any other boundary. These heights are measured from ground level and include any structure that may be attached for example a trellis attached to the top of boundary wall.

6.40 Listed Building consent may be required for any works to boundary treatments within the curtilage of a listed building.

Types of landscaping

6.41 Landscaping are divided into the following broad types:

- soft landscaping (planting);
- hard landscaping; and
- landscaping on building.

Soft Landscape Details (Planting)

6.42 Soft Landscape is a term to describe the organic, vegetative or natural elements of Landscape Design. There are three main objectives in planting design (1) Functional (2) Ecological and (3) Aesthetic. Each of these objectives is likely to be inter related however one may be prioritised over another for the purpose of a particular project.

6.43 Functional objectives include:

- integrating a site with its surroundings;
- providing spatial definition and enclosure;
- directing pedestrian and vehicular movement;
- providing shelter,
- providing micro climatic amelioration and
- providing SUDS.

Ecological Objectives include:

- maintaining and enhancing natural processes; and
- increasing the biodiversity value of a site.

Aesthetic Objectives include:

- creating or contributing to the character of a place; and
- adding to people's sensory enjoyment in the use of a space.

Crown canopy

The uppermost layer in a forest or group of trees.

6.44 Landscaping schemes need to maintain and plant large canopy trees as a means of countering the negative effects of increasing urban temperatures due to climate change. Existing large canopy trees are part of the character of several areas in the Borough. In these areas in particular and other areas where the opportunity arises space should be made for the growth and development of large canopy trees. Large canopy trees are usually considered to be trees which reach a mature height of 15-20m+. Site design should make provision for the expansion of the crown canopy of these trees and sufficient soil volume to support a trees growth to maturity. As a general rule the soil volume required to support a healthy large canopy tree is 6m x 6m x 1m depth. The detailed requirements for the growth and development of large canopy urban trees can be found in “Up by the Roots” by James Urban (International Society for Arboriculture, 2008).

6.45 The long term success of planting schemes will determine species selection suitable for local growing conditions (soil conditions, temperature ranges, rainfall, sun light and shade) and provision for on

going maintenance. Generally native species are considered to be most adapted to local conditions however there are a range of exotic plants which are at least equally adaptable to the unique ecology of urban areas and which provide an important contribution to a site's biodiversity.

6.46 Maintenance requirements should be considered at the design stage in terms of ensuring there is access for maintenance, whether maintenance materials need to be stored on site and that there are available sources of water. Water conservation should be intrinsic to the design of a planting scheme whether it is by selecting drought tolerant plants, maintaining soil conditions conducive to water retention with, for example, mulching or providing for on site water harvesting and grey water recycling.

6.47 Planning applications will be assessed against the degree to which planting schemes meet their objectives and that the chosen objectives are appropriate for the site. Planning applications should be accompanied by:

1. a statement of the design objectives of planting plans;
2. planting plans indicating species, planting patterns, planting size and density; and
3. where appropriate managements plans.

Hard Landscape Details

6.48 Hard landscape is a term used to describe the hard materials used in landscape design such as paving, seating, water features, lighting, fences, walls and railings (see paragraphs 6.35 to 6.38 above for guidance on boundary walls, fences and railings and the chapter on Design excellence regarding the design of public space).

6.49 Hard landscape makes a significant contribution to the character of the Borough. The scale, type, pattern and mix of materials help define different uses and effects the perception of the surrounding buildings and soft landscape and overall quality of an area. To help integrate the development with its surroundings and contribute to the sustainability of the project we will expect:

- the selection of materials, patterning and methods of workmanship to consider those already at use in the area;
- traditional and natural materials to be used, especially in Conservation Areas (Guidance can be found in Conservation Area Statements, Appraisals and Management Plans);
- the use of salvaged and re used materials, where appropriate; and
- all paving to be level and accessible where used by pedestrians, this needs careful consideration where the use of historic materials is proposed.

6.50 The Council will discourage the replacement of soft landscaping with hard landscaping in order to preserve the environmental benefits of vegetation identified above. However where hard landscape is

unavoidable we will seek sustainable drainage solution to any drainage (see CPG3 Sustainability chapter on Flooding).

Lighting

6.51 Lighting can make an important contribution to the attractiveness of an area. It is also important for the security and safety of an area. The design and siting of columns and lights can provide a significant role in the creation of the character of a place. Other lighting techniques include wall mounting, bollards with integral lights and ground level up lighters. While adequate lighting is required, the intensity of lighting should be appropriate to its function. Care should be taken not to over light which can lead to unnecessary light pollution and energy consumption and in some cases become a nuisance to neighbouring residential properties. Lightning can also become a disturbance to local wildlife, particularly bats, and can affect the wildlife that uses and lives on the canal.

Landscaping on buildings

6.52 Landscaping on buildings includes both soft and hard landscaping and occurs in the forms of green and brown roofs and green walls. Green roofs, brown roofs and green walls can provide important landscape detail, biodiversity improvements, prevent local flooding and keep a building insulated. See CPG3 Sustainability (Green roofs and walls chapter).