

# Landscape matters!

Supplementary Planning Document  
on  
Landscape, Design, and Open Space  
in  
Weymouth and Portland.

**WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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## Introduction:

Landscape and open space are key factors in creating and sustaining quality of life for the inhabitants and visitors to Weymouth and Portland. They reflect the history, growth, and culture of the Borough. Landscapes can inspire people, are places to relax, enjoy, or contemplate, and can be calming and refreshing, allowing us to reflect and revitalise or rejuvenate ourselves. Open spaces may be places to play or sit and admire the view, or they may simply be undeveloped areas with semi-natural or cultivated vegetation. The arrangement, form, and style of spaces, landscapes, and construction also represent the local tastes, prosperity, and aspirations at particular times during the history of Weymouth and Portland. Landscape and Open Space matters associated with development proposals are immeasurably more than a patch of grass and a token tree!

The Weymouth and Portland Local Plan, the product of extensive public debate and consultation, is the key statement of local planning policies and aspirations for sustainable development within the Borough. However, as a policy document it cannot include all the details and processes that contribute to achieving sustainable communities and environments. **Landscape, design, and open space are crucial to achieving high quality development in urban areas, and hence attractive and economically vibrant places to live and work.** The challenge to create, sustain, and make wise use of local landscapes and open space increases with national encouragement from government to reuse brownfield sites and limitations on greenfield areas.

Landscape, design, or open space issues occur in the majority of the Local Plan Review policies. This emphasises the well recognised and long standing importance the Council attaches to these matters, and the contributions they make to the quality of the environment of Weymouth and Portland. There is, however, concern that landscape matters should be consistently implemented to a high standard. Landscape is a many faceted concept, involving visual, heritage, amenity and functional dimensions. To assist understanding of the subject, these are considered in greater detail in Appendix 1.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill currently envisages **a duty on local planning authorities**, in the exercise of their functions, **to contribute to achieving sustainable development.** Locally, sustainable development includes quality of environment, quality of life, and quality and wise use of resources in the development and construction processes.

However, the Borough Council and its officers are not the sole guardians protecting the landscape character of the coast, countryside, villages, and urban areas of Weymouth and Portland. Professional advisors, developers, contractors, and residents also have responsibility to current and future generations for the impacts of their developments on the environment of the Borough.

Nationally, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is strongly encouraging the “Sustainable Communities” initiative. The local environment is seen as vitally important, government is looking for “lasting, rather than temporary, solutions”, and some key requirements are

“A safe and healthy local environment with well-designed public and green space” and  
“A ‘sense of place’ .”

It has recently established the CABA Space project to assist in the development of green space strategies for improving the quality of parks and urban green spaces.

The Borough Council believes these are all important matters, and that it is right and proper to set out what it is going to require of developers, applicants for permissions, and its own staff in seeking to enhance landscape, design, and open space. This document, therefore, is the fourth in a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes adopted by the Council.

### **What are the purposes of having Supplementary Planning Guidance?**

Supplementary Planning Guidance aims to inform and facilitate the implementation of Local Plan policies. Whilst landscape, design, and open space are integral to many policies, the main topics are

- ◆ Preserving existing landscape features (**Policies D2 & 3**), including trees (**Policy B2**)
- ◆ Appropriate landscape treatment as part of site design (**Policy B1, Policy H5**)
- ◆ Open Space provision (**Policy C10**) including situations where off-site contributions are acceptable
- ◆ Natural and heritage environments (eg **Policies N12-18, B1-10**)
- ◆ Maintaining the character and quality of the tourist attractions and facilities (eg **Policies TO2-9**)
- ◆ Sports and play strategies (eg **Policies C1 & C9**)

The Borough Council sees the following objectives as **desirable and beneficial outcomes** of adopting Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Enhancing the quality of planning applications
- Better information included within planning applications
- Adding value to developments
- Facilitating the determination of applications
- Moving away from simply imposing planning conditions and moving towards requiring and accepting proposed landscape solutions and landscape plans when planning applications are submitted
- More effective implementation and establishment of landscape works.

The Council recognizes that applicants and agents will need to

- **survey their sites more closely,**
- **demonstrate how they have considered the existing and potential landscape and design issues,**
- **provide landscape plans, and**
- **follow guidelines and checklists.**

Nevertheless, it is confident that there are also benefits for applicants and agents, primarily in **aiding the processing of applications and resulting in a higher quality development which will have economic benefits.**

Additional benefits are likely to include

- Consistency of approach by all applicants
- Opportunities to consider and assess site potential explicitly and evaluate project enhancements and quality
- Recognizing and using existing features and site characteristics to save resources
- Choice of landscape treatment rather than imposed conditions
- Greater confidence in the outcome of applications
- Clearer and consistent landscape management responsibilities

It is important to note that **appropriate landscape assessments, sensitive design, appropriate landscape plans and works, and attention to open space matters are relevant for all forms of development from a single unit in-fill to major new schemes. This includes retail and employment development, transportation, institutional services, and tourism activities, as well as housing and the issues associated with large houses and domestic gardens. They apply equally to the utilities and statutory providers of services and facilities.**

## Part 1

### A Landscape and Development Guide

The Borough Council has prepared a Guide, and associated Planning Application Checklist, to help the developer or planning applicant work through a credible and realistic landscape survey and assessment process. This will then enable them to provide the appropriate information to facilitate the consideration of their planning application.

Applicants and agents **must consider the local landscape character, local site conditions, and what effects the proposals would be likely to have on the environment**; and demonstrate clearly that they have taken them all into account.

The Guide indicates how to appraise the landscape characteristics of a site and its context to enable proposals for development to be formulated that respect and integrate with the local environment. Detailed plans and information on landscape and environmental matters will be required to accompany a planning application.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION.** This includes ownerships, designations, legal constraints, and national and local planning policies.

**SITE SURVEY.** Applications must show details of the site as it is before development. An accurate measured drawing of the site, with contours, is essential to identify the precise position of all significant features; eg trees, hedges, services, levels and boundaries. Some features may need separate detailed schedules – for example descriptions of woodland. Consideration must also be given to other relevant and useful information, such as soils, geology, drainage, wildlife, the aspect and climate of the site, and any historic associations.

**Weymouth and Portland has a unique landscape character** stemming from its  
geology,  
geographical setting and land use, and  
particular characteristics of  
soils (eg clay, limestone, chalk),  
climatic variations (eg exposed to salt spray; sheltered inland valleys  
etc),  
vegetation (eg salt tolerant or chalk tolerant species), and  
land form (eg chalk downland, clay vales, limestone cliffs).

All these local landscape characteristics should be noted and assessed for the site. This information must be shown clearly at a scale of 1:200 or 1:500 as part of the consideration of the landscape context of the site. This is particularly important if the development involves a large area, tall buildings, the redevelopment of an established site, a Conservation Area, a Tree Preservation Order, or a proposal outside a designated development area.

**SITE ANALYSIS.** Site characteristics should be identified to inform and influence the type, scale, and form of the development proposals. Submitted plans should

indicate the possible ways the proposal can integrate with the existing local landscape character. The analysis should demonstrate how the proposal will affect the site and the adjoining areas, taking advantage of good views, trees, shrubs, streams, slopes, hedges and walls, wildlife and historic features. Opportunities should be explored to improve poor views, exposed situations, areas of poor drainage and pollution. The best positions for access should be considered, bearing in mind tree/hedge retention and sight lines. Study the planning application checklist (Appendix 4) and show this information at a scale of 1:200 or 1:500 and attach any written notes. It will be easier to use the same size and scale plans throughout the landscape assessment.

**SKETCH PROPOSALS.** The building and external works layout follows on from the site analysis. It should take account of the scale and form of the proposed development, as well as spaces and changes of levels. Features being retained should be clearly shown, and vehicle, pedestrian, and cycle routes, together with walls and surface treatments, should be identified. At this stage it should be apparent how the proposal “fits in” with the local landscape character, as well as with adjacent buildings and features. It is important always to aim to enhance and improve the area by the proposals. It is advisable, particularly on larger sites, to discuss this plan and the way in which you have thought about it, with Planning Officers before submitting a planning application and before proceeding with the preparation of detail drawings.

**DETAILED LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS.** It is important to distinguish between features to be retained and those proposed. Topics to be covered include the following as appropriate to the nature and scale of the site:

- ◆ Land Form - levels, banks, slopes, hollows and drainage falls.
- ◆ Soil Preparation - subsoil treatment, depth of top soil required, treatment required to soil, eg weeding, stone removal, fertilising, mulching etc.
- ◆ Planting - the major structural areas and the smaller, more intricate ones. Plans should show the location of all plants and trees, and their species and density and be accompanied by a plant schedule indicating the sizes and quantities to be planted.
- ◆ Construction - protection of landscape features, trees, special areas of vegetation and topsoil during construction.
- ◆ Establishment Works - temporary fencing for the protection of plants, staking of trees, initial maintenance requirements etc.
- ◆ Surfaces - the surface treatment of open spaces, play areas, footpaths, drives and parking areas.
- ◆ Structures - walls, fences, steps, play equipment, lighting etc.
- ◆ Adopted Areas - all areas which are proposed to be adopted by the Local Authority.
- ◆ Management and Maintenance – how the vision of the landscape is to be

achieved and how the land is to be maintained, including arrangements for replacing material that fails during the period of the management plan. The Planning Authority will require a landscape management plan in most situations.

- ◆ Schedules to calculate the payment of maintenance contributions, when appropriate, to the Local Authority

Again, the Planning Application Checklist will help. Plan scales should be appropriate to show details clearly.

## **Landscape Design**

The quality and appropriateness of landscape design, working with the existing landscapes and using native and ornamental species where appropriate, are key issues. To help applicants for planning permission enhance their applications and appreciate some of the matters that concern the Borough Council the following checklist is provided. This has similarities to the checklist in SPG 3; Urban Design, as there is a lot of common ground within landscape, design, and open space and the public and private realms of urban design. It focuses on issues to be considered in landscape design.

### **Checklist**

#### **Character**

**Does the proposed development take into consideration the character of the area and enhance it, or develop it and establish a place with its own identity?**

- ◆ The special features and character contributing to a sense of identity.

**The site's landform and character should be taken into consideration when laying out new development.**

- ◆ Natural features can give shape to a development and integrate it into the wider area, contributing to a sense of place.
- ◆ Natural features can be conserved to provide a better relationship between new development and its environment.
- ◆ Studying the local ecosystems can help determine ways the development can sustain or enhance biodiversity.

**New development should not be imposed upon its landscape setting but should be integrated into it in order to reduce its impact on nature and support local distinctiveness.**

- ◆ Structural planting, shelter belts, green wedges, and green corridors can assist integration into the wider landscape.
- ◆ Planting of local species can reinforce the distinct natural qualities of a place.
- ◆ The treatment of boundaries between new and existing development is often critical.

**New development should reinforce a sense of place by responding to local forms and character through detailed design and layout.**

- ◆ Visual character, rhythm, and scale are key features.
- ◆ Standard, “anywhere” solutions are rarely acceptable as they are unlikely to



contribute to local identity or integrate a site with its particular locality.

- ◆ The use of local materials, methods, and details help to enhance local distinctiveness.

**The scale, massing, and height of proposed development should be considered in relation to topography, adjoining buildings, views, and landmarks.**

- ◆ Buildings should step up sloping sites, respecting the topography.
- ◆ The historical scale varies with locality and new development should echo this scale.
- ◆ The form and characteristics of the skylines should be respected, and new development should not be detrimental. Only development that contributes positively to views and vistas, possibly as a landmark, could be allowed to stand out from the background of buildings.

**Continuity and Enclosure**

**Does the proposed development provide a place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguishable?**

- ◆ Respect local structure and the relationships between buildings, streets, and existing spaces.
- ◆ Recognise and work with the building line and the boundaries of spaces.
- ◆ Consider whether a proposed development provides visually uninteresting vistas or by use of curves and bends hints at a finer prospect beyond.

**Quality of the Public Realm**

**Does the development provide a place with attractive and successful outdoor areas?**

**New development should provide open and green spaces that are linked, easily accessible, and respect natural features.**

- ◆ Public spaces should be integral aspects of the design and not merely parts of the site that have not been built on.
- ◆ Spaces should be linked via a network of routes suitable for users of all ages.
- ◆ Street furniture and lighting contribute to the local character, particularly the much neglected night-time landscape.
- ◆ Spaces should make use of natural assets, which in turn will encourage biodiversity.

**Public space should relate to the landscape character, buildings around, and the streets.**

- ◆ Well designed space has a purpose, and clear function and good design can encourage beneficial use and help avoid vandalism.
- ◆ Appropriate overlooking contributes to security and safety.

**Microclimate is crucial in the design of public spaces.**

- ◆ Understanding aspect, and providing both sunny and shaded areas, contributes greatly to the attractiveness and comfort of public spaces.
- ◆ Buildings can channel and strengthen winds, and care is necessary to ensure the prevailing wind is not funnelled and exaggerated by poor design and layout.

**Public Art enhances the sense of place.**

- ◆ Whether in a park, square, or pedestrianised street, public art can be a focus of attention, uplifting, and a topic for debate, enhancing the cultural character and sense of place.

### **Ease of Movement**

**Does new development provide a place that is easy to get to and move through?**

- ◆ Developments should contribute to well designed and connected spaces and routes for all modes of transport.
- ◆ Transport routes should have intrinsic design qualities that contribute to the character and quality of the neighbourhood, and not just cope with traffic considerations.
- ◆ Traffic calming should utilise designs and materials sensitive to the character and scale of the locality, avoiding “anywhere” solutions, to integrate with the established scene.

### **Legibility**

**Does the proposed development provide a place with recognisable landmarks and features for people to find their way around?**

- ◆ Siting should respect and enhance existing views and vistas, creating new ones, and contributing to local character.
- ◆ Landscape details that are sensitive and memorable help people to use an area with the minimum of intrusive signage.

## **Diversity and Adaptability**

**Is the development rigid and inflexible or does it have variety and the capability to accommodate changing circumstances?**

- ◆ Clear structure and obvious links to existing landscape and environmental characteristics are likely to stand the tests of time and change more readily than very specific and fiddly designs related to narrow purposes.
- ◆ Public spaces with strong character and flexible layouts can be simply modified to accommodate changing lifestyles and public requirements.
- ◆ Variety can occur through the seasons or spatially across landscapes and public access areas.

## Open Space

Open Space can be any undeveloped land or water. It can also be the space and light above land and water. Open Space can also be specifically designed, and hence developed, for its aesthetic qualities and for relaxation and recreation, or it can be accessible coast, countryside, or wide-open urban areas. Open Space is not necessarily physically open or accessible to the public.

**Town squares, parks, and gardens are often meeting places**, with part of their character deriving from the interaction of design, materials, and the people using the areas. They are also places for public art, some times in the form of commemorative statues and in others by commissioned sculptures or murals. Within the business and activity of towns, such squares and open spaces can be both havens for rest and uplifting experiences. Nevertheless, even with the provision of trees and planted areas squares tend to be predominantly hard surface areas, robust to take an intensity of use. The beneficial effects of tree planting providing greenery, softening the scene, and providing shade in heavily used pedestrianised streets is demonstrated in St Mary Street and St Thomas Street. Borough gardens, play areas, and parks have some hard surfaces but the balance is towards softer surfaces, such as grass, with a greater provision of flowers, trees, and shrubs. Some of these may be created as part of recreation space within new developments or may be funded or enhanced by nearby developments.

**The Local Plan Review seeks to address the distribution, character, scale, and number of open spaces.** There should be play and relaxation spaces within and in easy reach of residential development, and matching town spaces within reach of shops and places of work. Large spaces, parks or squares big enough to accommodate a small event, should then be available covering the catchments of a number of the smaller spaces. A main square and substantial park for each urban centre then completes the hierarchy of space provision. The character and attributes of these open space landscapes are likely to be different, reflecting the nature of the locality, the period when it was established, and the resources.

These **open spaces**, contributing to the distinctiveness of the town, **need both management and resources to manage them.** Like many coastal towns, Weymouth and Portland have the additional attraction of the beaches and coastline. The Weymouth sea front is a particular type of open space, with historic style and character. With the benefits, however, come management responsibilities and costs.

Car parks are a particular category of open space that varies in character with use. They may be associated with business / industrial sites, tourist facilities, or shopping. They can be open and bleak, expanses of tarmac, or filled with shining and colourful vehicles. Subjectively, many people find either state visually unattractive. Using the topography and site features can “lose” vehicles in hollows, behind walls, or round the curve of a slope. The planting of hedges and trees within the rows of vehicles can visually divide a car park into smaller areas, provide some vertical structure and seasonal variety, contribute shade, and reduce both the perception of the extent of the car park and the negative impacts of a basic land use. An example of this being successfully achieved is **[Dorset County Hospital]**.

A similar issue occurs on a smaller scale with the need to provide off street parking with flats or high density housing developments. Amenity spaces, in addition to parking areas, are needed to create and sustain a quality of local environment for the inhabitants of the flats. Again, a landscape assessment of the site, its features, and characteristics can help resolve these matters.

The Borough Council is clear that Local Open Space is to be retained and protected from development, and new developments should provide open space with provision for their future maintenance. In situations where there are valid reasons for not doing so, off site provision or financial contributions to create or enhance new or existing open spaces will be required. Financial contributions will also be required for the longer term management and maintenance of open spaces.

## **Landscape is fundamental.**

All too frequently landscape matters have been the last topic to be dealt with. Possibly this is a result of a perception that shrubs and trees are planted and turf laid at the end of a construction contract. As can now be appreciated, understanding the landscape, design, and open space issues is fundamental to considering potential developments, their scale, form, and quality. Landscape, whether hard or soft, is fundamental, it should not be an afterthought.

**Attention to landscape matters can be a very cost effective way of adding value to a development.** A careful landscape appraisal of a potential development site may well identify existing site features that will be beneficial to the final development. Quite obviously, retaining those features rather than clearing the site can save money and speed the planning permission and construction processes.

The Borough Council, via its Local Plan policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, and the actions and decisions of its Committees and Officers, has every intention of enhancing the landscapes and open spaces of the town.

## Part 2

### The Local Planning Authority's Role.

#### Five approaches

Reflecting its commitment to landscape, design, and open space, the Borough Council and its officers are tackling landscapes matters on five fronts:

1. Local Plan policies,
2. Requiring applications for permission for developments to be formulated on the basis of landscape surveys, site characteristics, the landscape context, and supported by landscape plans,
3. Being more robust about planning conditions, landscape works, their approval, and implementation.
4. Protecting and enhancing the character and supply of open space.
5. Tree protection.

#### 1 Local Plan Policies

Sustaining and enhancing the character and quality of landscapes, design, and the provision and management of open space are key themes running through the Local Plan. Progress in each of these subjects is seen as major contributions towards achieving sustainable development and an enhanced quality of life for residents and visitors. This strategy will carry forward into the Local Development Documents envisaged in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill currently before Parliament. In addition to the landscape, design, and open space recommendations in individual subject and topic policies the Local Plan puts considerable emphasis on respecting the character and integrity of national and local landscape and environmental designations.

#### 2 Landscape Surveys and Plans

Officers will expect applicants seeking planning permission to provide detailed information, derived from a site survey, regarding the features and characteristics of the site and its context with their application. Officers will encourage this information to be available for pre-application discussions to enable them and the applicant to focus more clearly on the capabilities and opportunities of the site. This landscape information is just as important for outline as for full applications, and officers will expect applicants to be able to demonstrate that they have considered all the landscape issues in formulating credible proposals. Landscape plans, setting out the landscape treatment of the site and covering implementation, establishment, and management will be required with planning applications.

The inclusion of **a landscape assessment of the site and a landscape plan for the proposal will assist the process of determining a planning application.** The need for this information will apply to outline applications and **only in exceptional cases will landscape matters be accepted as a “reserved” item.**

In addition to providing the Landscape Guide and Planning Application Checklist in Appendices 3 & 4, Officers will discuss these matters at their liaison meetings with local agents and development orientated professions.

The Council will expect the preparation of a planning application to have included the following three major steps:

1. Landscape survey and assessment
2. Design statement, leading to the proposals
3. Landscape plan

Applications without this landscape information will not be registered.

### **3 Landscape conditions, implementation, and enforcement**

The implementation of landscape plans can greatly aid the standard of landscape work. Plans [and schemes] required by condition will be monitored by officers to be executed in an effective and timely way. All requirements of the Council, either by expressed planning condition or through a legal agreement (under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act) are legally enforceable and will be in place before development commences.

The Council will use the powers available to it [in Circular 11/95] to require landscape management plans, typically for 10 years.

Considerable emphasis will be placed on ensuring that applicants are fully aware of the importance of planning conditions in relation to landscape and open space matters. In particular, **the need to ensure that all matters are attended to and formally agreed with the Council** (either by reference to the relevant Committee or by Officers with delegated authority) **before development commences cannot be overstated.**

Planning approvals will be monitored to ensure conditions are being complied with at the correct time. One issue that has limited the success of landscape and planting schemes in the past is the lack of attention to replanting of failed or damaged material. The tendency to leave such matters to the end of the maintenance time period is unsatisfactory, and **Officers will expect failed or damaged material to be replaced as soon weather conditions permit.** If it transpires, despite earlier best endeavours to select material appropriate to site conditions, that plants or materials are unlikely to succeed then an amendment to the condition or landscape plan can be negotiated. Any maintenance or management time period for such negotiated changes will restart in full for the changes from the time of the amended agreement. As has already been noted, **the Council will require landscape management plans**, typically for ten years, to ensure that schemes are fully implemented and managed to maturity.

In relation to **tree planting associated with Landscape Plans or planning conditions**, it is vital that trees appropriate for the site and conditions are used – “the right trees in the right site.” Officers will advise that whilst ornamental trees and shrubs have a place in private and formal gardens, native trees of local provenance have considerable wildlife benefits and are more likely to establish quickly and successfully. The Council will expect work to be undertaken by competent and skilled personnel to ensure, for example, that plant material is properly handled, trees are planted in pits of sufficient size, with appropriate additional organic material, and properly staked and secured. A major cause of tree failure has been identified as



exposure of roots to wind and sun, hence drying them out, during the planting programme. Lack of watering is also a major problem, along with physical damage to stems by mowers when trees and shrubs are planted in grassed areas.

In order to achieve a noticeable impact Officers will give attention to the timing of planting and the size of plant material. Large, containerised, trees can make an immediate visual contribution, particularly where development has removed features from a site, has changed the scale and character of enclosure, or the scale of the development is such that large landscape features are required to complete the scene.

#### **4 Open Space provision and management**

Open space can take many forms, for example, Radipole Lake, the Espanade, Portland Bill, play areas, and sports grounds. In terms of the fabric of the Borough open space does not necessarily have to be publicly accessible. However, in terms of new and re-development both **open space for the inhabitants and users of a development and public open space are perceived as significant contributions to the quality of the environment.** The National Urban Forestry Unit commissioned a report that indicates that over the long term tree planting is more cost effective, contributes more to biodiversity, and creates more landscape features for open spaces than mown grass, despite its initial lower cost. Trees, however, may not be appropriate everywhere, such as exposed coastal sites or the open ground of Portland.

Historically there have been “rules of thumb” for the areas of open space and playing fields, for example the National Playing Fields Association guide of 1.6 - 1.8 ha of sports grounds per 1000 population, and children’s play space and equipped play areas of 0.6 - 0.8 ha per 1000 population. Ideally these facilities should be within easy reach of homes.

The recently revised PPG17 (2002) advises against arbitrary standards and recommends local consultation on determining local levels of provision. Nevertheless, the implication in the advice is that local authorities define higher levels of provision rather than lower. **Weymouth and Portland has an uneven distribution of sports grounds but an overall level beyond the NPFA standard. There is, however, a general shortfall of play areas. Policy C10** expects developments of 9 or more dwellings to contribute 45m<sup>2</sup> of open space for recreational use per dwelling. This locally derived level is very similar to the NPFA standard.

Urban spaces, such as squares and public gardens, are not independently defined by such standards or policies nor is open space associated with business developments. Nevertheless, there are many businesses that support the view that a high quality and well maintained landscape around business premises is beneficial for business both in attracting clients and retaining staff, as well as contributing to public amenity and biodiversity.

The importance of **Local Open Space** is identified in Policy C9 where only development ancillary to the recreational and amenity value of the designated area will be permitted.

The provision of open space can be considered in terms of a typology or hierarchy,

either by the character of the spaces or the uses made of them. This can assist both the Council and applicants for planning permission in considering open space provision. The Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions has issued a 'Typology of Urban Greenspace', in their report 'Improving Parks, Play Areas and Green Spaces' (2002). This divides green spaces into main types and subdivisions as a guide to local authorities when assessing their greenspace. **The Borough is fortunate in having green corridors and wedges which link both major and smaller open spaces.** They can be seen on plan in Appendix 6.

There are parallels with affordable housing in considering the basic provision of open space associated with a development. Based in the number of open market units, a threshold is triggered to incorporate, or make provision elsewhere, a specific number (usually from a pre-determined scale) of affordable housing units. This approach is being applied to open space where provision on site would not be compatible with the design and character of the area. In order to retain flexibility, and avoid the provision of tiny, token, ineffective or inappropriate play areas or patches of grass with a seat, realistic contributions to more appropriate and substantial facilities nearby will be accepted in lieu of on-site provision where the Borough Council considers appropriate. Examples of these sites are listed in Appendix 5.

However, unlike affordable housing, **there are maintenance and management responsibilities and costs that accrue to the Council when public open space is created.** Again, realistic rather than token **financial contributions to cover these costs will be required from developers for twenty years**, either annually or in a lump sum. The scale of management costs will relate to the nature of the open space and its uses. There is an incentive, within a sensible appraisal of the public use of the area and the objective of providing a high quality of environment, to design for sustainability and reduced demands for maintenance. The landscape plan will be a key element in determining the scale of maintenance contribution, which will need to be realistic, based on national figures for landscape work (eg Spons, Parker and ....., Cobham), and geared to take account of inflation.

**The development layout** is a separate issue from accessible open space, and may, for example, include front gardens and create quite a wide space between buildings at eaves level or have buildings fronting direct onto the pavement and hence create relatively narrow and enclosed streets. The latter reduces private space and draws buildings closer together whilst the more traditional approach may not achieve the densities of development currently favoured. A layout might, however, include a wider public space in the form of a village green or accessible banks of a stream which could be categorised as open space.

**Open space may be private and not necessarily be publicly accessible.** Undeveloped land, gardens, hedgerows, and tree belts contribute to the character of a locality. Recent appeal decisions recognise the amenity aspects and value to the community as a whole of such open space. In addition, many of these features are homes or corridors for wildlife which, in turn, contribute to the interest and amenity of the neighbourhood. These features also help sustain biodiversity. The loss of green space, often private but contributing to the character and ambience of a neighbourhood, has occurred when properties with large gardens have been redeveloped for multiple occupation units such as flats. This has also led to landscape

features, such as trees, only being retained on the edges of sites. The Local Plan Review seeks to address this issue in **Policy H5** with at least 10% of the site being landscape and amenity open space for the residents of conversions and at least 20% for new build schemes.

## **5 Tree Protection**

Trees can be major features of landscapes and open spaces. The Council has specific duties in relation to with the purposes of **Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation Areas** protecting and maintaining trees that contribute amenity value and are publicly visible. The Council has the authority to make TPOs and as a general principle permission is required from the Council (or Officer with delegated authority) for works on trees covered by a TPO or for felling. Conditions may be attached to any permission, including planting replacement trees. Any potential work to a tree in a Conservation Area should be notified to the Council so that it has six weeks to consider making a TPO or agreeing to the work. Clearly there is scope for seeking views from Council Officers, however the procedures are laid down in legislation so the scope for local flexibility is limited.

**Where a planning permission is sought there is a requirement to identify trees and point out those that would be removed during the proposed development.** It is important that full information is provided as the granting of planning permission means a separate application under the TPO legislation for any of those trees to be removed is not required. Clearly the presence of trees, and protected trees in particular, is a material matter in determining a planning application. It has emerged, however, that in some cases where the redevelopment of a site has been approved, and TPO trees have been legitimately removed, the new tree planting provided does not benefit from any protection. The Council intends that in such cases the new trees will be protected, either by a new TPO or by amending the original TPO.

## **Part 3**

### **The Role of Owners, Managers, Planning Applicants, and Agents**

The Borough Council acknowledges that many owners, developers, agents, and landscape architects are aware of landscape, design, and open space issues. However, there may be occasions when they will wish to draw the attention of colleagues, clients, and contractors to this document so that they are aware of the Council's aspirations and requirements in these matters.

There are five areas for consideration:

1. Manage and maintain your landscapes
2. Follow good practice
3. Seek advice
4. Follow the Council's guidance on planning applications
5. Honour conditions

#### **1 Manage and maintain your landscapes**

Caring for your site and paying attention to the existing landscape features of it may be more profitable than ignoring it or clearing it. Those features may contribute to the design of your development scheme, giving it added value, and hence facilitating its progress through the planning approval system.

Landscape schemes may look good on paper however they need specialist care and attention to reach maturity and make that paper vision a reality. After the initial and exciting implementation stage there is an establishment period ensuring plants put down roots and continue to grow. Thereafter features need to be maintained, for example grass cut and shrubs pruned. The timing of work should contribute to biodiversity and avoid, for example, hedge cutting in the bird nesting season and cutting wild flower pastures before the flowers have had time to set seed. Attention should be given to the management and use of machinery as it can save time but also create problems. All too often trees planted in grassland die because over-enthusiastic or careless operators allow mowers to hit the base of the tree, damage the bark, and effectively ring bark it. Allow realistic sums in your budgets to maintain your landscapes; missing out on regular tasks for a period of time can take more than the cost of those tasks to correct!

#### **2 Follow good practice**

There are numerous handbooks and guidance notes from trade and professional organisations. The British Standards Institute in particular provide guidance on a range of topics from topsoil through to the protection of trees during the construction processes. Be clear that you are following the appropriate guidance for the situation. There have been cases where consultants have followed the procedure for tree surveys set out in the BSI document "Guide for trees in relation to construction" 1991 and then presented the tree survey as a landscape assessment. Landscape and visual assessments should follow the procedures in the Landscape Institute's "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment" 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2002 or the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage publication "Landscape Character Assessment"

2002.

Consider and set out in your landscape proposals how the site will mature in 5, 10, and 20 years time. That can assist in the selection of appropriate species for the site. Some trees, such as Sycamore or Horse chestnut, grow very large while Field Maple is a relatively small tree when fully mature. Not only should the environmental conditions be right for the tree (or shrub) but the species should be chosen so that its ultimate size at maturity will be in scale with the site and overall design. It may be that to create a relatively rapid effect more trees and shrubs are planted than will finally be needed, and part of the longer term management plan is that they are thinned after 10 years.

### **3 Seek advice**

Lists of qualified landscape architects, planners, arboriculturalists, and chartered surveyors are available from their professional bodies, often via a web site or from leaflets available in the planning office. Suppliers and manufacturers provide information about their products, particularly installation of hard landscape features, and growers are keen to ensure their plants are properly planted and maintained as a positive advertisement for them. DEFRA co-ordinates advice about the appropriateness and safety of herbicides and pesticides. Complex sites may warrant the services of a soil scientist. English Nature, Dorset Wildlife Trust, and the Dorset Environmental Records Centre can assist with wildlife information. Historic aspects can be researched via English Heritage, archaeologists, and local museums and libraries. The Borough's planning officers have a wide range of expertise, and are also aware of appropriate advisors in the locality.

### **4 Follow the Council's guidance on planning applications**

In addition to the policies set out in the Local Plan the Borough Council provides Supplementary Planning Guidance on a number of topics. Checklists are available to aid the process of filling in the forms and providing the appropriate plans and supporting material. Design criteria are set out in **Policy B1**, and design statements are required for major developments (**SPG3**).

In relation to **landscape matters**, applicants should employ an appropriate landscape or environmental consultant with relevant proven ability and experience. Following the **Landscape and Development Guide** (page 6 and Appendix 3), and working with the **Landscape and Development Checklist** (Appendix 4), will demonstrate that a site has been surveyed and assessed, and that the proposals derive from a considered appraisal of the capabilities of the site and its setting. This should help applicants and their agents demonstrate how the proposals and design have been arrived at. The landscape plan should show how they could be achieved. This approach gives credibility to an application, builds confidence that the landscape issues have been considered, and will enable planning officers to follow the process when explaining the application to others, for example consultees or elected councillors. Providing the surveys and plans set out on the checklist will avoid the embarrassment of the application being deemed incomplete and not registered.

The **site survey** is a vital pre-requisite to considering the potential of the location. It should include

- Accurate measured site and context plans with contours / topography
- All significant features identified on the plans, eg, trees, hedges, services, boundaries as well as existing buildings, hard surfaces, and circulation
- National, county and local designations, eg, AONB, Conservation Area, TPO
- Ground vegetation, soils, geology, wildlife, aspect and associated micro-climate, and heritage associations
- Nearby buildings, trees, landscape features, and land uses to illustrate the context of the site
- Any areas of contaminated land and sources of pollution
- Landscape assessment statement, including the condition of identified features

The context of the site within the neighbourhood is important in considering the distinctiveness of the site, its current integration within the surrounding area, and the capabilities of the site and the area to absorb, accommodate, or integrate change or development.

**The landscape assessment** should focus on

1. The specific characteristics and qualities of the site, eg, topography, geology, soils, aspect, trees and shrubs, ground vegetation, wildlife, heritage associations, boundaries, services, surfaces, access, and existing structures
2. The relationship of the site to its surroundings, including land uses, plot size, height, scale, proportion, building massing, layout, and alignment, transport routes, privacy, and formal designations
3. The linkages to other sites, views, and open spaces.

**The development proposals** should demonstrate how the landscape features and assessment have been taken into account and how the landscape proposals contribute to the project.

**The Landscape Plan** should cover the landscape proposals and the landscape management for the longer term. Topics to be covered include the following as appropriate to the nature and scale of the site:

1. Land form, eg, levels, banks, slopes, drainage
2. Soil preparation, eg, subsoil treatment, depth of topsoil, weeding, stone removal, fertiliser
3. Planting, both major structural areas and smaller, more intricate, ones. Locations of trees, other plants, their species and density should be shown and accompanied by a plant schedule of species, sizes, and quantities to be planted
4. Protection during construction of landscape features, trees, special ground vegetation, topsoil.
5. Establishment, eg, tasks to ensure the implemented landscape work does grow satisfactorily such as temporary protective fencing, tree stakes, watering
6. Surfaces, eg, the treatment of open spaces, play areas, footpaths, drives and parking areas
7. Structures, eg, walls, steps, decking, fencing, lighting
8. Adopted areas, all those areas which are proposed to be adopted by the Local Authority
9. Management and maintenance, eg, how the vision of the proposed landscape

is to be achieved and maintained, including arrangements for replacing material that fails during the period of the management plan

10. Schedules to calculate the payment of maintenance contributions, when appropriate, to the Local Authority

## **5 Honour conditions**

Planning conditions are there to sustain and enhance the quality of the environment for the whole community. They are important as conditions attached to a planning permission can enable a development that might otherwise be refused. Failing to comply with conditions dissipates Council resources carrying out checks and enforcement action, and can be costly to the applicant, disrupting the construction timetable, providing bad publicity, and delaying the marketing programme.

The Council is determined that it will play its part in seeking to achieve sustainable development. If that means taking rigorous and tough action against those who do not honour planning conditions, for example preparing, submitting and gaining approval for their landscape scheme before development commences, then it will not shirk from that responsibility. Conversely, it will use its best endeavours to determine speedily those applications that comply with policies and provide adequately all the information and materials required on the check lists. Equally, those who comply with conditions at the appropriate times will not be hindered or hampered in progressing their projects.

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## **Appendices**

- 1 What is Landscape?
- 2 Why are Landscape, Design, and Open Space Important in Weymouth and Portland?
- 3 Landscape and Development Guide
- 4 Landscape and Development Planning Application Checklist
- 5 Open spaces “ Shopping List ”.
- 6 Green Corridors, Wedges, and Spaces Plan
- 7 Where you can get advice
  - Reminder of good practice eg BS Protection of Trees and Construction
  - What it means if you have a tree with a TPO
  - What it means if you have trees and live in a Conservation Area
- 8 Landscape Conditions for planning permissions

## Appendix 1

### **What is landscape?**

Landscape is an urban as well as countryside concept. Historically landscapes have been contrived or designed views, idealised creations for the famous and wealthy on their land, frequently with classical scenes to enlighten the observer. The nineteenth century and the urbanisation of the population saw an appreciation of green and open spaces for fresh air and recreation as well as urban parks providing the setting for upmarket developments. The concept of landscape was becoming more functional and holistic, moving away from simply a visual aesthetic. The twentieth century has seen the parallel rise of the domestic flower garden - tiny personal landscapes - and the appreciation of wilderness and wildlife at all scales, particularly in the publicly accessible domain. Landscape and environment have moved closer, so much so that the term environment is often used when landscape is the focus of attention.

In towns such as Weymouth and Portland the disposition and juxtaposition of buildings and spaces, wide avenues and narrow alleys, grand frontages and domestic scale, broad vistas and focused views, green corridors reaching towards the countryside and formal gardens all contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the locality. The very nature of towns means that many of the features are architectural or linked to roads, frequently utilising bricks, stone, and other hard materials, often of local and distinctive origin. Gardens, private and public, street trees, and riverside vegetation provide the green foils to set off or ameliorate the stone, brick, and hard surfaces. Together with boundaries - walls, fences, railings - the houses, shops, and institutional buildings create spaces, and the size and dimensions of these spaces and the mixture of linked buildings and associated spaces between buildings give character to the urban environment.

The shapes of these spaces, the height of the surrounding buildings, the gaps between them, and their orientation influence the micro-climate, and hence human comfort, of these areas. South facing crescents create warm areas whilst those spaces open to the north and screened from the sun by buildings on the south are cool and damp. Squares with routes in and out from all four points of the compass channel winds whatever direction they blow, and such squares are draughty and uncomfortable places except on the hottest of days. These urban spaces, the buildings, and the linkages between them are subtly different at different times of day - the morning light from the east reaches and spotlights different features from the evening light from the west - and through the changing seasons. The materials, form, and design of the urban artefacts are key elements in creating sense of place and local distinctiveness, those aspects that identify a locality and are typical of the area. Portland stone is an obvious feature of the Borough, and, unlike many towns, there is also a strong maritime influence often demonstrated by wind bent trees and the presence of salt resistant trees and shrubs.

Weymouth and Portland have a greater variety of landscapes than most towns. In addition to the town centre, industrial and business areas, transportation corridors, and housing developments there are the sea frontages, the harbours, holiday sites, villages, and open countryside. Radipole Lake and Lodmoor provide added landscape dimensions, and coast protection and defence works are the interface of the forces of

nature and human construction. The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty represents nationally designated and important landscape, the World Heritage Coast is internationally recognised, and the Local Plan identifies locally important landscapes.

It can be appreciated, therefore, that whilst trees and vegetation can be important elements in landscapes it is often the constructed environment that contributes significantly to the form, character, and quality of urban landscapes. Nevertheless, trees, shrubs, hedges, and valleys, possibly linked to a series of private gardens or a public park, create green corridors which provide visual variety, containment for the localities between them, and form both reservoirs and highways for wildlife. All these features and spaces contribute to the character of places for people to live, work, and relax. Quality, and sustaining that quality for future generations, is a key landscape, design, and open space issue. Quantity and distribution are, however, equally important.

Possibly because historically there have been tree planting conditions attached to planning permissions there is the misunderstanding that trees are landscape. This is not the case. Trees may be significant features or elements in particular landscapes, adding form, height, and structure. They may act to blur, disguise, or screen unwelcome or or unattractive sights. With good landscape design, trees are an integral part of the scheme, not a mechanism to hide things that are unsightly. There may still be occasions where planting trees contributes to enhancing the environment or continuing an existing feature. For example, it would be appropriate to plant trees alongside an extension to a residential road that already has established street trees. Planting of specimen trees in pedestrianised streets helps change the scale of the street and soften the fabric of the otherwise hard and sometimes harsh environment.

## Appendix 2

### **Why are landscape, design, and open space important?**

Landscape and open space are key factors in creating and sustaining quality of life for the inhabitants and visitors to Weymouth and Portland. They reflect the history, growth, and culture of the Borough. Landscapes can inspire people, are places to relax, enjoy, or contemplate, and can be calming and refreshing, allowing us to reflect and revitalise or rejuvenate ourselves. Open spaces may be places to play or sit and admire the view, or they may simply be undeveloped areas with semi-natural or cultivated vegetation.

The arrangement, form, and style of spaces, landscapes, and construction also represent the local tastes, prosperity, and aspirations at particular times during the history of Weymouth and Portland. Government advice (PPG1, PPG3) recognises the contribution these matters make to the character and quality of local environments, and the importance of translating strategic aspirations and policy statements into practical activity. The buildings, and particularly Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, are vital parts of the urban fabric. There are important matters of urban design intertwined with the town landscapes and **SPG 2** – Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas – and **SPG 3** – Urban Design – should also be consulted.

It is important to note that **appropriate landscape assessments, sensitive design, appropriate landscape plans and works, and attention to open space matters are relevant for all forms of development. This includes retail and employment development, transportation, institutional services, and tourism activities, as well as housing and the issues associated with large houses and domestic gardens.**

Landscape, design, and open space have added importance in Weymouth and Portland where, in addition to the urban settlements, there are also areas of coast and countryside. For example, the seafront, harbours, Wey valley, and Chesil Bank and the Fleet add to the variety and quality of landscapes within the Borough. These provide special opportunities for fresh air and exercise, and contribute to the quality of life for people within Weymouth and Portland.

### **Appreciating landscape structure.**

It is often said that all landscapes have character, and identifying and recognising that character is a descriptive and objective process which does not involve attributing relative values. This is quite separate from “evaluation”, with its connotations of quality comparisons and subjective, or informed, opinion. The structure, form, and function of landscapes frequently relate to topography and aspect. Natural and built features, their relationships to one another, and their association with the surroundings all play a part in creating and sustaining pleasant and pleasing places. The grounds of a large house are a significant part of the setting of that building, its location within the site, and showing off the building to best advantage. Whether the house is in a high position, with commanding views but exposed to the elements, or sheltered in a secluded hollow, a combination of practical and aesthetic choices have been made in determining the situation of the building. That has been done both within the site and the context of the site in the wider local environment.

There have been a number of re-developments of houses with large gardens in Weymouth. Some of these have taken quite a long time to resolve, largely due to the density of building proposed, the scale in relation to the local environment, the need for retention of built and landscape features, and the amount and quality of the landscape space. These are situations where detailed landscape assessments of both the site and the immediate neighbourhood would have informed and contributed to the formulation of the proposals, the character and quality of the spaces around the new construction, and facilitated the consideration of the planning application.

The amenity aspects of landscape flow from the matters of form, texture, and balance. Green vegetation, with its variety of shapes and hues, is generally pleasing and relaxing to the eye, and sharper, more rigid types provide some stimulus and contrast. The balance of vertical and horizontal elements, and the scale of features relative to the location and context, contribute greatly to the style and pleasantness of a landscape or the effectiveness of landscape works. For example, a tub of flowering plants does little to create a local landscape of character at the base of a towering office block but a grove of substantial trees with seats and a water feature go much further towards balancing the scale and form of the office building.

### **The importance of scale and detail.**

Attention to detail and scale is important, and appropriate professional advice and assistance should be sought. Many of the terms used, for example, enclosure, privacy, exposure, are self-explanatory. However there are many aspects to consider, and some topics have a number of attributes. Views, for example, can be short, long, deflected, focussed, expansive, channelled, framed, or filtered. Boundaries – their materials, height, solidity (or lack of it) – can contribute greatly to feelings of enclosure, confinement, or openness, while the balance of hard (bricks, stone, pavers) and soft (grass, flowers, shrubs) surfaces and materials is crucial to achieve robustness without excessive austerity. Similarly the balance between public and private space influences the feelings of accessibility, security, and privilege. Furthermore, private space, or features (such as trees) within it, contribute to public amenity and the character of a locality. Roof gardens and other planting on buildings as part of an overall design can be significant attributes to an area.

### **Understanding landscapes.**

In a similar way that streets are surveyed for buildings and features, and those of particular or special character are noted and described, so are landscapes assessed systematically. There are nationally recognised methodologies for area or district scale surveys – The Dorset County Landscape Assessment and A New View of Dorset followed these approaches – which are periodically updated to take account of research and practice experience.

A Borough Landscape Evaluation is seeking to identify landscape units at an appropriate local scale, and qualitatively assess them. Ultimately this will aid consideration of the context of individual sites and the landscape integration of developments.

## **Site Specific Landscape Assessments**

At the individual site level a topographic survey is a useful starting point. Features, such as buildings and trees, and their disposition are noted, along with site aspect and relationships to adjoining facilities, and services. The context of the site within the neighbourhood is important in considering the distinctiveness of the site, its integration within the surrounding area, and the capabilities of the site and the area to absorb, accommodate, or integrate change or development. The site survey is a vital pre-requisite to considering the potential of the location. It should include

- Accurate measured site and context plan with contours
- All significant features identified on the plan, eg, trees, hedges, services, boundaries as well as existing buildings, hard surfaces, and circulation
- National, county and local designations, eg, AONB, Conservation Area, TPO
- Ground vegetation, soils, geology, wildlife, aspect and associated micro-climate, and heritage associations
- Nearby buildings, trees, landscape features, and land uses to illustrate the context of the site
- Any areas of contaminated land and sources of pollution
- Landscape assessment statement, including the condition of identified features

## **Protecting and Creating Landscapes.**

Existing landscapes and open spaces are familiar and therefore rather easier to appreciate and understand than proposed new ones that do not yet exist. Surveying, analysing, and assessing existing landscapes are pre-requisites of determining whether they are locally cherished, worthy of protection, in need of enhancement or management, or would benefit from a “make over” or redevelopment. The location, character, and individual attributes of a landscape or open space can be considered in much the same way that wildlife sites are. Similar to building designs and styles landscapes may be representative of a particular era, for example, the late Victorian – Edwardian town parks and formal borough gardens. Typicality, representativeness, size, rarity, distribution, history, and condition (or “state of health”) are factors that are considered when evaluating existing landscapes.

Depending on the scale of proposed development there will be opportunities to create features, elements, and spaces that provide character. That may stem from the design, form, and materials of new buildings and surfaces, and the spaces created, accesses, and associated planting. Working with the characteristics of the site is more likely to achieve a successful outcome than imposing an outlandish or alien scheme. The site analysis, for consideration with the development opportunities, should include

- Valuable site features
- Topography, soils, and aspect
- Access and potential circulation
- Sensitive land use relationships and constraints
- Stability and services

With some developments, perhaps in association with a high density redevelopment of a brownfield site, it may be appropriate to apply Policy C10 and contribute to the provision of open space, or the enhancement of facilities, nearby and accessible from

the development. Creating and establishing new spaces and landscapes are significant challenges, needing relevant professional skills, that can supplement the existing provision and enhance the overall character and quality of the town.

**WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
LANDSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE 2003**

The Borough Council has consistently attached importance to the environmental and landscape aspects of proposed development and land uses. In order to assist applicants, improve the quality of applications, and facilitate the processing of valid applications, it has provided this guidance note. It means it will be necessary to provide additional environmental information with planning applications, whether they be for a single dwelling, a large housing estate or some other form of construction or development.

Applicants and agents need to consider the local landscape character, local site conditions and what effects their proposals would be likely to have on the environment; and to demonstrate clearly that they have taken them all into account. To help you, the Planning Department has produced this LANDSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE and a CHECKLIST.

This GUIDE is produced to help you, the developer or planning applicant, appraise the landscape characteristics of your site and its context, to enable you to formulate proposals for development that respect and integrate with the local environment. Detailed plans and information on landscape and environmental matters will be required to accompany your planning application. You can help progress your application by following the same principles, and presenting in plan and sketch form for your own site, the type of information illustrated in this guide. You should appreciate that expert advice from a qualified landscape architect will be advantageous to you and to save you time. The Weymouth and Portland Borough Council's Planning Department keeps a lists of local Chartered Landscape Architects and other professional advisors and consultants, and is always willing to give advice on landscape matters. Registered landscape practices can also be found on the Landscape Institute's website [www.l-i.org.uk](http://www.l-i.org.uk) You should read this GUIDE and the accompanying CHECKLIST together.

Please remember: it is just as important to follow the advice given here for an Outline Planning Application as it is for a Full Planning Permission.

1. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION.** This includes ownerships, designations, legal constraints, and national and local planning policies.
2. **SITE SURVEY.** Applications must show details of the site as it is before development. An accurate measured drawing of the site, with contours, is essential to identify the precise position of all significant features; eg trees, hedges, services, levels and boundaries. Some features may need separate detailed schedules – for example descriptions of woodland. Consideration must also be given to other relevant and useful information – soils, geology, drainage, wildlife, the aspect and climate of the site and any historic associations. Weymouth and Portland has a unique landscape character stemming from its geology, geographical setting and land use, and particular characteristics of soils (eg clay, limestone, chalk), climatic variations (eg exposed to salt spray; sheltered



inland valleys etc), vegetation (eg salt tolerant or chalk tolerant species), and land form (eg chalk downland, clay vales, limestone cliffs). All the relevant local landscape characteristics should be noted and assessed for the site. This information must be shown clearly at a scale of 1:200 or 1:500 as part of the consideration of the landscape context of the site. This is particularly important if the development involves a large area, tall buildings, the redevelopment of an established site, a Conservation Area, a Tree Preservation Order, or a proposal outside a designated development area.

3. **SITE ANALYSIS.** Site characteristics should be identified to inform and influence the type, scale, and form of the development proposals. Submitted plans should indicate the possible ways the proposal can integrate with the existing local landscape character. The analysis should demonstrate how the proposal will affect the site and the adjoining areas, taking advantage of good views, trees, shrubs, streams, slopes, hedges and walls, wildlife and historic features. Opportunities should be explored to improve poor views, exposed situations, areas of poor drainage and pollution. The best positions for access should be considered, bearing in mind tree/hedge retention and sight lines. Study the CHECKLIST and show this information at a scale of 1:200 or 1:500 and attach any written notes. It will be easier to use the same size and scale plans throughout the landscape assessment.
4. **SKETCH PROPOSALS.** The building and external works layout follows on from the ANALYSIS. It should take account of the scale and form of the proposed development, as well as spaces and changes of levels. Features being retained should be clearly shown and vehicle, pedestrian, and cycle routes, together with walls and surface treatments, should be identified. At this stage it should be apparent how the proposal “fits in” with the local landscape character, as well as with adjacent buildings and features. It is important always to aim to enhance and improve the area by the proposals. It is advisable, particularly on larger sites, to discuss this plan and the way in which you have thought about it, with Planning Officers before submitting a planning application and before proceeding with the preparation of detail drawings.
5. **DETAILED LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS.** It is important to distinguish between features to be retained and those proposed. Topics to be covered include the following as appropriate to the nature and scale of the site:
  - ❖ Land Form - levels, banks, slopes, hollows and drainage falls.
  - ❖ Soil Preparation - subsoil treatment, depth of top soil required, treatment required to soil, eg weeding, stone removal, fertilising, mulching etc.
  - ❖ Planting - the major structural areas and the smaller, more intricate ones. Plans should show the location of all plants and trees, and their species and density and be accompanied by a plant schedule indicating the sizes and quantities to be planted.
  - ❖ Construction - protection of landscape features, trees, special areas of vegetation and topsoil during construction.

- ❖ Establishment Works - temporary fencing for the protection of plants, staking of trees, initial maintenance requirements etc.
- ❖ Surfaces - the surface treatment of open spaces, play areas, footpaths, drives and parking areas.
- ❖ Structures - walls, fences, steps, play equipment, lighting etc.
- ❖ Adopted Areas - all areas which are proposed to be adopted by the Local Authority.
- ❖ Management and Maintenance – how the vision of the landscape is to be achieved and how the land is to be maintained, including arrangements for replacing material that fails during the period of the management plan. The Planning Authority will require a landscape management plan in most situations.
- ❖ Schedules to calculate the payment of maintenance contributions, when appropriate, to the Local Authority

Again, the CHECKLIST will help. Plan scales should be appropriate to show details clearly.

Planning Unit  
Environmental Services Department  
Weymouth & Portland Borough Council  
Council Offices  
North Quay  
Weymouth DT4 8TA

January 2004

**WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT**

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**LANDSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT – CHECKLIST**

**TO BE SUBMITTED WITH PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

.....

LOCATION:

.....

...

This CHECKLIST is a guide to both developer or planning applicant and the Local Planning Authority for the presentation and assessment of the environmental aspects of planning applications and should be read and completed in conjunction with the “LANDSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE” produced to accompany it.

The intention is to promote a better awareness of the importance of the existing environment and landscape features, and the proposed landscape treatment, so that an improved environment for all types of development can be achieved.

Read through the “LANDSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE” and this CHECKLIST and ensure that every relevant section has been addressed before finalising any projects or plans. Applicants are strongly advised to seek professional advice in this as the CHECKLIST will form part of any submission and will be seen as an important element in an application.

TICK OFF EACH ITEM AS YOU PROGRESS THROUGH THE PROCEDURE OUTLINED IN THE “GUIDE”.

**1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- Land ownerships
- Designations or similar Restrictions – eg Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, Tree Preservation Orders, SSSI, AONBs, Ancient Monuments, Safeguarding Areas, Flood Risk Areas etc

**2. SITE AND CONTEXT SURVEYS**

- Visual Characteristics
- Ecology

- ❑ Site Character eg Urban, Rural etc
- ❑ Landscape features
- ❑ Boundaries / Walls / Hedges
- ❑ Geology, Stability, and Soils
- ❑ Topography (Levels / Contours)
- ❑ Vegetation / Trees
- ❑ Drainage
- ❑ Site Plan
- ❑ Land Use / Existing structures
- ❑ Nearby buildings – size, form
- ❑ Microclimate / Aspect
- ❑ Historic Features / Associations
- ❑ Access and Circulation
- ❑ Services
- ❑ Pollution / Contaminated Land
- ❑ Context Plan

### 3. **SITE ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

(The amalgamation of the analysis of the survey data with the proposals for development will form the basis of the design.)

- ❑ Valuable site features
- ❑ Areas of major constraints
- ❑ Sensitive Land Use relationships
- ❑ Areas to remain undeveloped
- ❑ Areas to be developed
- ❑ Access/circulation details

### 4. **SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

- ❑ Contours and levels
- ❑ Features to be retained
- ❑ Landscape structure
- ❑ Views / visual features
- ❑ Wildlife / Biodiversity features
- ❑ Historic heritage aspects
- ❑ Location, height and form of proposed structures
- ❑ Relationship to neighbourhood
- ❑ Accesses, footpaths, bridleways, road network
- ❑ Open space provision / network
- ❑ Parking provision
- ❑ Services, existing and proposed
- ❑ Land Drainage
- ❑ Boundary treatments

### 5. **DETAILED PROPOSALS**

- ❑ Layout, locations, surfaces, levels, lighting, gates etc
- ❑ Building details; uses, size and scale, materials
- ❑ Services; locations, types
- ❑ Landscape features and planting details
  - ❑ Land Form - levels, banks, slopes, hollows and drainage falls.
  - ❑ Soil Preparation - subsoil treatment, depth of top soil required, treatment required to soil, eg weeding, stone removal, fertilising, mulching etc.
  - ❑ Planting - the major structural areas and the smaller, more intricate ones. Plans should show the location of all plants and

- trees, and their species and density and be accompanied by a plant schedule indicating the sizes and quantities to be planted.
- ❑ Construction - protection of landscape features, trees, special areas of vegetation and topsoil during construction.
  - ❑ Establishment Works - temporary fencing for the protection of plants, staking of trees, initial maintenance requirements etc.
  - ❑ Surfaces - the surface treatment of open spaces, play areas, footpaths, drives and parking areas.
  - ❑ Structures - walls, fences, steps, play equipment, lighting etc.

## **6. LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

- ❑ Public (areas to be adopted by the local authority) or private
- ❑ Objectives, eg native planted areas, mown grass etc
- ❑ How the vision of the landscape is to be achieved and maintained, including arrangements for replacing material that fails during the period of the management plan.
- ❑ Landscape Management Plan, Time scales, and Schedules
- ❑ Preliminary calculations, when appropriate, of maintenance contributions to the Local Authority

PLANS will be required as part of the overall submission and should be illustrated at 1:100 or 1:200 for details, and 1:500 or 1:1250 for site plan and analysis – reference should be made to the LANDSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE for more information.

**R J BURGESS**  
**DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**  
January 2004

## Appendix 5

This appendix has still to be developed, however it will constitute of an inventory of all the Weymouth and Portland owned open space and the current use of that space. It will also include the condition and constituents of each space, for example, if it is a play area what is the condition of the equipment, and is the area required for this function. It may be that there are two play areas located close together, and one is not utilised and would benefit from removal of some of the equipment and further landscaping and tree planting.

In addition the inventory will also contain a brief description of the potential for the site which, for example, may include tree planting or/and the addition of a seating area; or the addition of play equipment. Furthermore the priority for enhancement will be identified, so that contributions can be directed appropriately.

## Appendix 6

### Green Corridors, Wedges, and Spaces Plan

This appendix has yet to be developed, however it is expected to identify all the areas in Weymouth and Portland that already have, or could have some value for wildlife; and importantly have potential for further habitat improvement, for example tree planting. This is in accordance with the aims of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy. Furthermore Biodiversity is recognised as a key test of sustainability, and the Borough Council is committed to sustainable development. Green Spaces can be invaluable for wildlife not only as a living environment, but also for refuge and foraging. A church yard, for example, can provide valuable habitat for a variety of flora and fauna and is often considered a peaceful oasis in which people can sit and enjoy the wildlife around them.

However to facilitate the movement of species it is important that individual habitats are linked together to form green corridors. Also of significance is that global warming as a result of climate change will be one of the key ecological challenges ahead, one facet constituting the potential of some species seeking to migrate. Where there is public access such corridors also provide opportunities for passive recreation.

It is therefore important that present habitats are maintained and future opportunities identified, and this appendix will assist in identifying where contributions are most needed and thus can be appropriately directed.

## Appendix 7

Where you can get advice

Council

LI

Arb Assoc

BALI

Including

Reminder of good practice eg BS Protection of Trees and Construction

What it means if you have a tree with a TPO

The 2000 publication by DETR “Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to Good Practice”

What it means if you have trees and live in a Conservation Area



## Appendix 8

Landscape Conditions for planning permissions – To be completed.