

# **GREENING THE BUILT EDGE**

THE LANDSCAPE TREATMENT OF  
THE EDGE OF DEVELOPMENT  
ADJACENT TO OPEN LAND

Supplementary Guidance No. 25



**LEEDS**  
CITY COUNCIL

**DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

This document should be read in conjunction with the Adopted Leeds Unitary Development Plan, to which it provides 'supplementary guidance'.

**List of Supplementary Guidance Documents.**

1	PPG6 – Town Centres and Retail Development	7.10.96	£5
2	Leisure Developments and Other Key Town Centre Uses: Suggested Approach and Applications to Current Proposals	13.10.97	£5
3	Revised Affordable Housing Policy Guidance Note	30.06.97	£5
4	Greenspace Relating to New Housing Development	06.07.98	£5
5	Guidelines for Assessing Developer Contributions to Leeds Supertram	06.07.98	£6
6	Development of Self-Contained Flats	04.05.99	£5
7	Childrens Leisure Centres	13.10.97	£3
8	Rothwell Town Centre Strategy	18.06.96	£4
9	Green Belt Policy for Change of Use of Buildings Superseded by Adopted UDP though Para. 5.5.3 Remains useful guidance on procedure. Withdrawn.	16.02.98	£5
10	Sustainable Development Design Guide	30.03.98	£6
11	Section 106 Contribution for School Provision Draft for Consultation	15.02.99	£5
12	Holbeck Urban Village Planning Framework	29.03.99	£4.50
13	Housing Densities Draft for Consultation	15.02.99	£5
14	Leeds City Centre Urban Design Strategy	18.09.00	£15
15	Sites of Ecological & Geological Importance – Consultation Draft	30.03.98	(photocopy cost)
16	Bramhope Village Design Statement	12.10.01	£10
17	Bardsey Village Design Statement	28.05.02	£10
18	East Keswick Village Design Statement	Awaiting final draft	(£10)
19	Pool Village Design Statement (see Nigel Lees tel 2478067)		
20	Leeds Supertram – Design Standards Guide (see J Richards)	March 2002	£85
21	Leeds Waterfront Strategy 2002 (see Peter Vaughan tel 2478140)		
22	Sustainable Drainage (Draft in Preparation Spring 2002)		
23	Telecommunications Development	14.5.03	
24	Templar Street Planning Brief (draft prepared spring 2003)		
25	Greening the Built Edge (supporting UDP Policy N24)		

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## GUIDANCE NOTE FOR

THE LANDSCAPE TREATMENT OF  
THE EDGE OF DEVELOPMENT  
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this design guidance note is to provide more detailed supplementary planning guidance to support Policy N24 of the Adopted Leeds Unitary Development Plan.

1.2 This policy as amended, states that:

**“WHERE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ABOUT THE GREEN BELT, GREEN CORRIDORS OR OTHER OPEN LAND, THEIR ASSIMILATION INTO THE LANDSCAPE MUST BE ACHIEVED AS PART OF THE SCHEME. IF EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES WOULD NOT ACHIEVE THIS, A LANDSCAPING SCHEME WILL BE REQUIRED TO BE IMPLEMENTED WHICH DEALS POSITIVELY WITH THE TRANSITION BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND OPEN LAND”.**

1.3 This document aims to give guidance to the developer on what is meant by the policy phrase ‘deals positively’, and is intended primarily for developers. It sets out the criteria against which any specific proposals will be assessed by the planning authority.

1.4 ‘Other open land’, as referred to in the above text, encompasses designated areas such as existing and proposed Greenspace, protected or proposed playing fields, (including school grounds and playing fields), land protected under UDP Policy N11, other open spaces without formal designation, (with or without public access), and other rural land not defined as Green Belt.

1.5 Such open land may also include significant watercourses and transport corridors.

1.6 The need for development to meet Policy N24 requirements will be assessed not only in respect of any formal designation but also in respect of the visual character of the area, where the impact of development would otherwise be unduly intrusive.

1.7 This document has been the subject of consultation with developers, amenity interest groups and others (see page 14), and is now adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.



2 **AIMS OF THE POLICY**

- 2.1 The primary aim of the policy is to achieve appropriate integration of new development and adjacent open land. This approach is supported by PPG1, para 13, which states: ‘The appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are ... material considerations in determining planning applications and appeals’.
- 2.2 The intention is to soften the appearance of new development, and to create a sense of visual harmony between the built form and the open land beyond.
- 2.3 This aim will normally be met through the provision of an adequate level of landscape screening, or by some other equal and appropriate means of integrating new development into the local landscape.
- 2.4 Every opportunity should be taken to ensure that nature conservation benefits are gained by the provision of new or enhanced habitats for flora and fauna, in support of UDP nature conservation policies.
- 2.5 Additional benefits may be sought through the provision of new public footpaths and associated access and amenity benefits, provided that such amenities do not prejudice unduly the needs of the users of the adjacent land.



3 **DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The landscape proposals should be carefully designed, preferably by a Landscape Architect or other suitably qualified professional, to ensure that a well considered, high quality scheme is created.
- 3.2 A landscape analysis will normally be required, to be prepared and submitted as part of the overall development proposals, in order to inform the design process. The analysis should show the site and its context within the local landscape, as well as analysing the site in its own right.





3.3 A detailed survey should be carried out, preferably by a qualified professional, to identify existing features of interest such as trees, shrubs, walls, ponds, etc. These features should be retained, where appropriate, within the new landscape proposals.

3.4 The survey should extend up to 10 metres beyond the site boundary in order that due account can be taken of existing off-site features in the design of the proposed landscape.

3.5 It will normally be the case that the new landscape proposals should be located within the boundary of the development site. It is recognised however, that in certain circumstances it may be feasible to carry out landscape works on adjacent open land, with the agreement of the land owner. This could provide a means of ensuring adequate landscape provision for small development sites. However, the application site boundary will need to be extended accordingly, with landscape works controlled by planning condition and a legal agreement, and arrangements for continuing maintenance secured.

3.6 It is essential that the proposed landscape is sympathetic in character with the wider landscape beyond the development site.

3.7 Where appropriate, the use of species already existing in the locality can help to strengthen visual coherence in the wider landscape, and also help consolidate existing plant habitats.

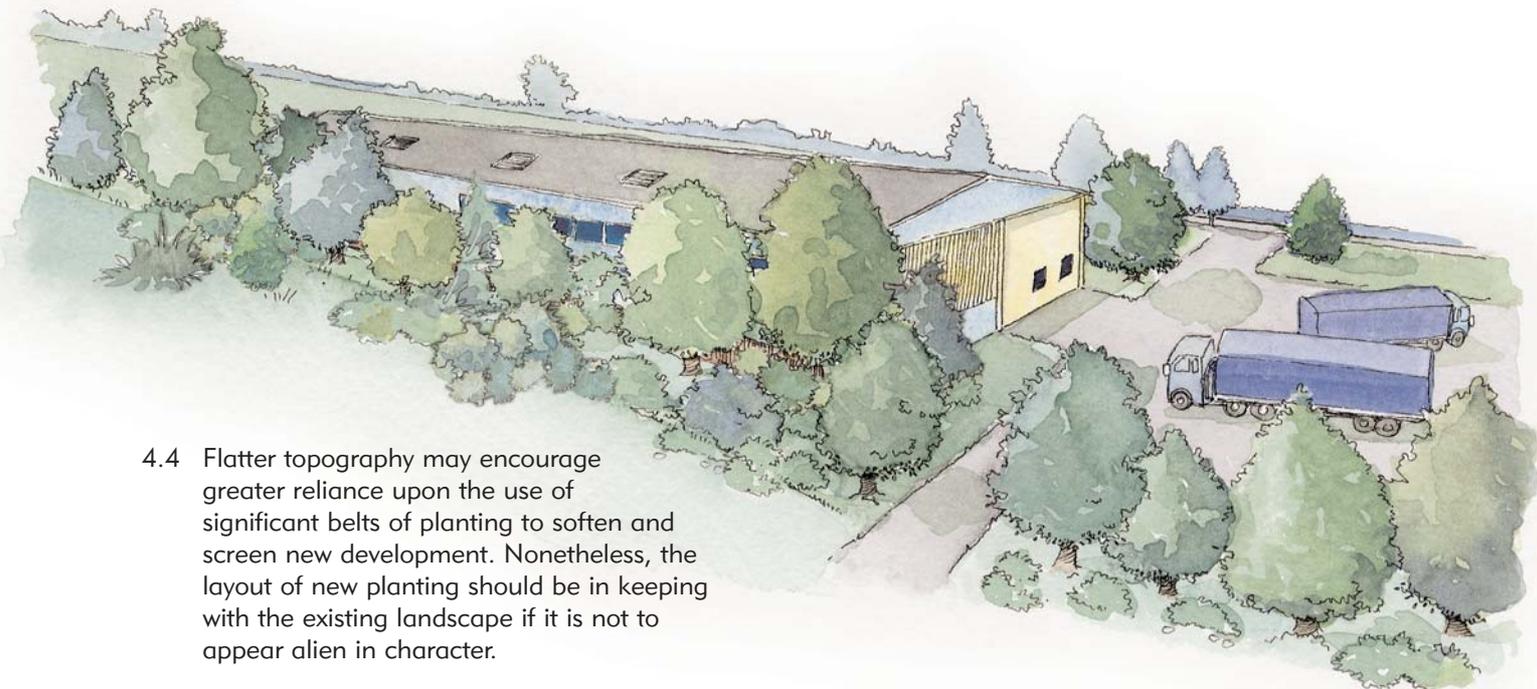
3.8 To this end new proposals should seek to use locally-native plant species wherever possible.

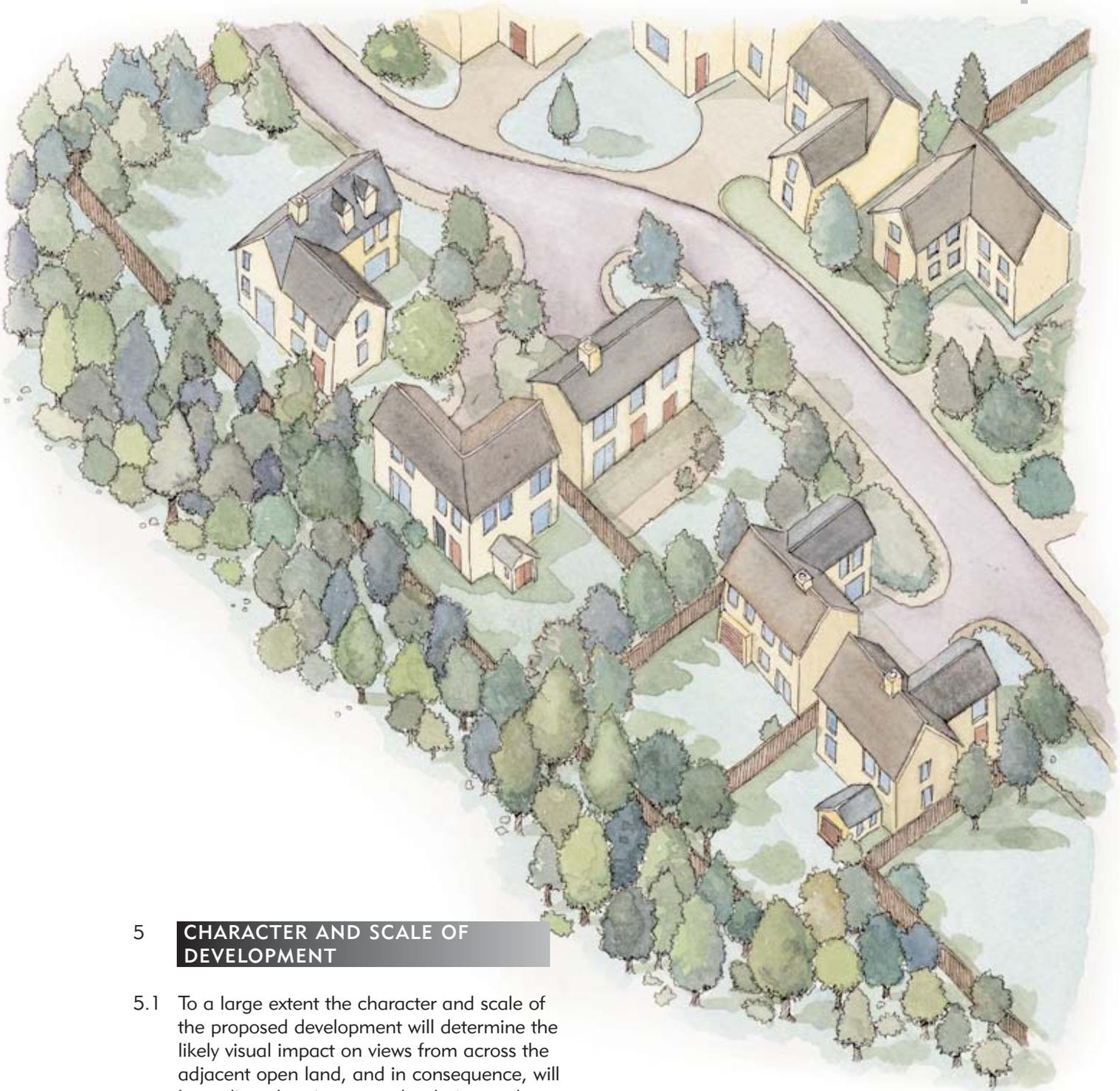
3.9 Opportunities should be taken for the landscape treatment to link into and complement existing off-site features to help provide a sense of continuity and coherent structure within the overall landscape.



#### 4 LANDSCAPE AND LANDFORM

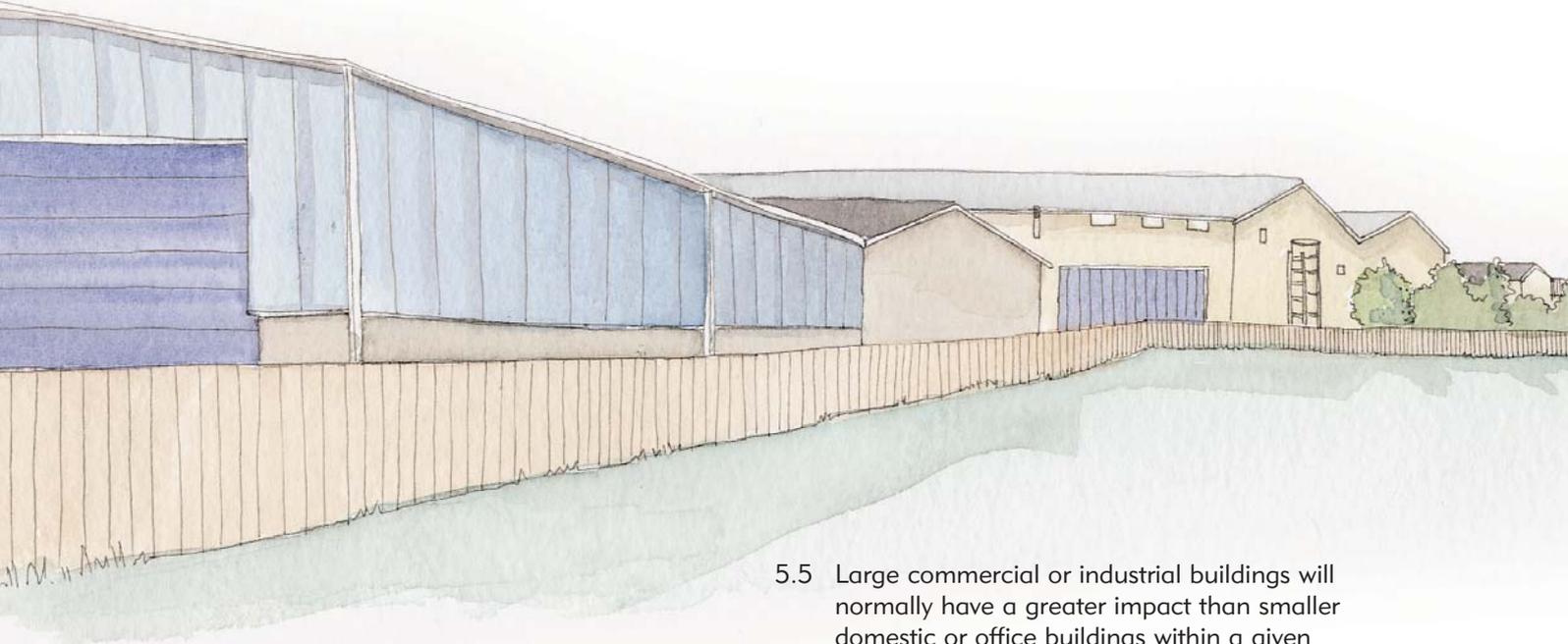
- 4.1 Variations in local landscape character should be taken into account when designing proposals, in order that the new landscape will develop to be in sympathy with its surroundings.
- 4.2 It is recognised that differences in topography through the Leeds area will inevitably influence the nature of landscape proposals.
- 4.3 In more undulating parts of the Leeds area, much can be achieved by utilising the natural landform to limit the visual impact of development. In such circumstances the use of clumps of planting in conjunction with the landform, may prove to be a more sympathetic and effective solution than continuous screen planting.
- 4.4 Flatter topography may encourage greater reliance upon the use of significant belts of planting to soften and screen new development. Nonetheless, the layout of new planting should be in keeping with the existing landscape if it is not to appear alien in character.
- 4.5 Boundary treatments, such as planting, walls and fencing, should be planned to relate to the natural topography wherever possible. This will help to lessen the visual intrusion of new development upon the existing landscape.
- 4.6 The use of earthmodelling in conjunction with planting may increase the effectiveness of screening. However care will need to be taken to ensure that earthworks in themselves do not become unacceptable intrusions into the landscape. Normally they should blend in with the existing contours of the wider landscape.
- 4.7 In most cases it will be unacceptable for arisings from building works to be used in the construction of any proposed earthworks, because of the variable nature of this material, unless it can be demonstrated that this will be suitable.





## 5 CHARACTER AND SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 To a large extent the character and scale of the proposed development will determine the likely visual impact on views from across the adjacent open land, and in consequence, will have direct bearing upon the design and layout of the boundary landscape treatment.
- 5.2 It is likely that, for any given site, the scale of landscape treatment needed will increase in parallel with the scale of development proposed, although the nature of the development and other factors such as existing vegetation and local topography will influence this.
- 5.3 Whilst each development will be considered on its own merits the level of visual impact or other loss of amenity inherent in the proposals will serve to determine both the extent and design of the boundary landscape.



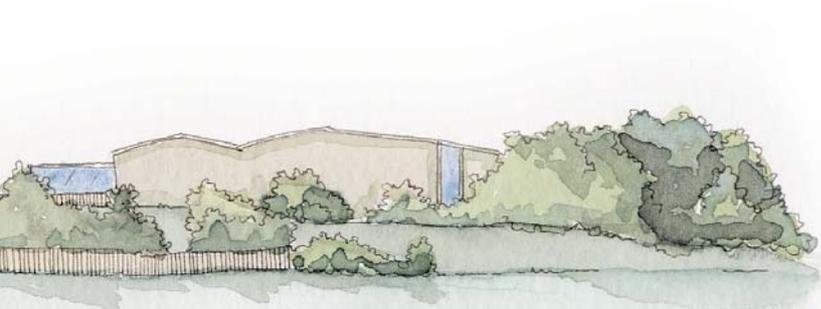
5.4 Sympathetic building design is an important consideration, being of great significance to the effective assimilation of new development into the wider landscape. An architectural style which reflects the established character of the area is likely to be the more effective in this respect.

5.5 Large commercial or industrial buildings will normally have a greater impact than smaller domestic or office buildings within a given area, although this may be influenced to some extent by layout, building design, materials used and local factors such as topography.

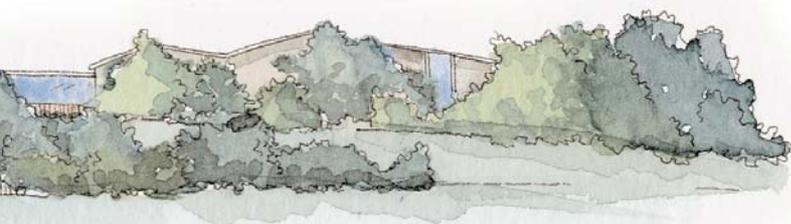
5.6 Therefore it is unlikely that this type of development would be easily assimilated into the adjacent open landscape, so that the most effective treatment may well be the provision of a substantial planting screen.

5.7 The intention would be to create a woodland screen adjacent to the open land. Sufficient space would therefore be allocated, to allow for the inclusion of an adequate depth of large-growing tree species within the planting belt.





- 5.8 However, such an approach should not be seen as providing an excuse for poor quality building design. The assimilation of new development into the landscape will be improved through the use of good and innovative building design, and the use of visually recessive materials.
- 5.9 In proposals for more numerous smaller-scale buildings, such as residential or office developments, as an alternative to the provision of continuous screening the design solution might involve a reduction in building density towards the boundary.
- 5.10 This would allow for the creation of 'fingers' of planting, extending between buildings with stands of planting towards the site boundary to 'filter', rather than completely block, views of the built development.



## 6 BOUNDARY TREATMENT

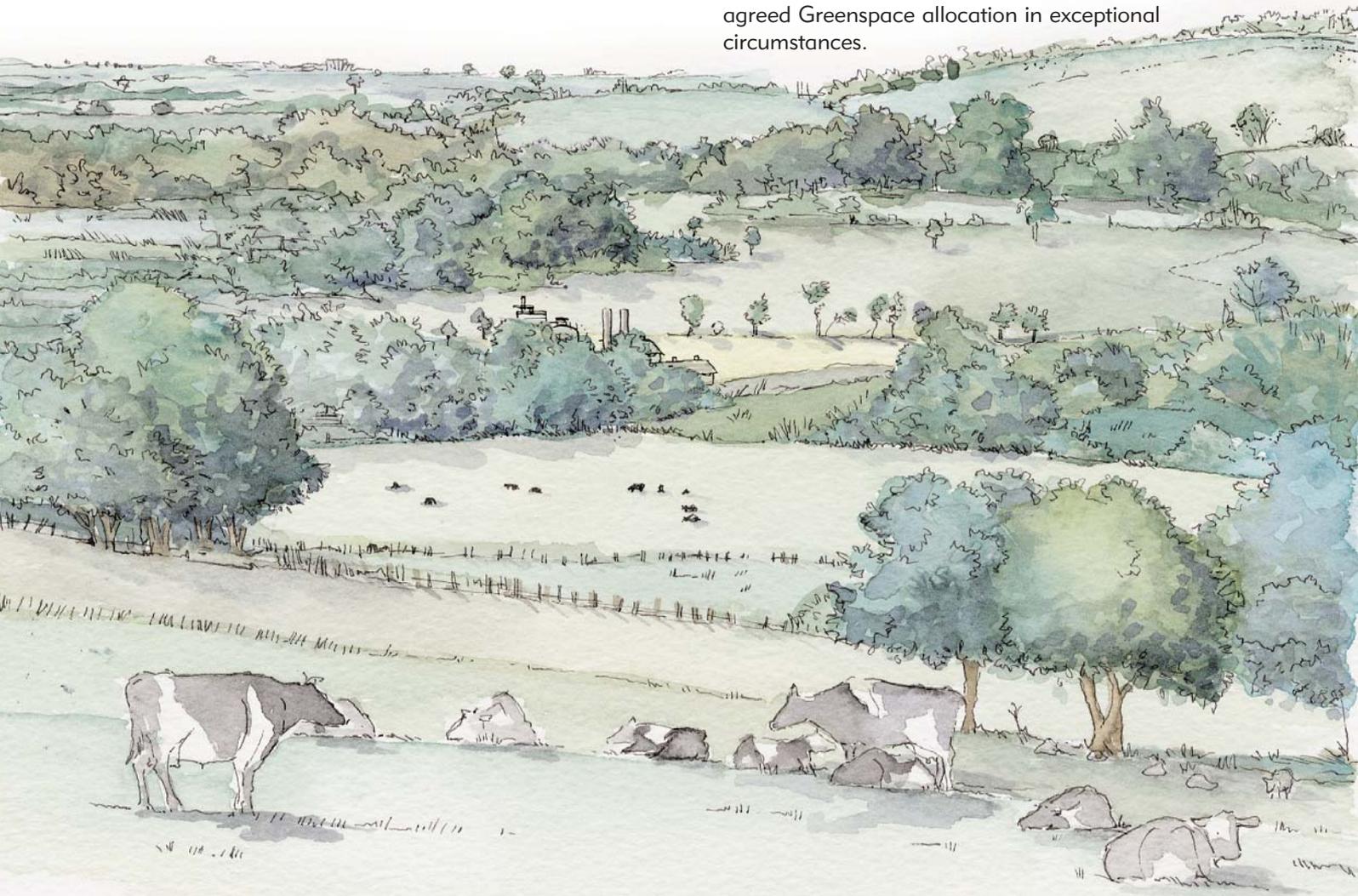
- 6.1 It will normally be desirable to provide some clear means of identifying the site boundary, both for visual and security reasons, and to define the extent of land ownership.
- 6.2 In instances where substantial planting is to be provided to the edge of development, a timber post and rail, or post and wire, fenceline will normally be sufficient to protect the planting whilst remaining visually unobtrusive. Where additional security or other intrusive boundary treatment is proposed, this should normally be located behind planting to ensure adequate visual screening.
- 6.3 Where a more limited depth of planting is necessary, due perhaps to irreconcilable limitations of space, hedgerow planting may provide an alternative solution. Again an acceptable form of protective fencing will need to be provided.
- 6.4 Where grazing animals are likely to be present it will be necessary to construct stock-proof fencing at a suitable distance to prevent damage to new planting.
- 6.5 Fencing or walling may, in appropriate circumstances, be acceptable boundary treatments either in their own right, or in combination with planting works.
- 6.6 Every effort should be taken to ensure that these are designed to be in harmony with the character of the local landscape, either by replicating suitable existing designs in the area, or by producing designs which complement these.
- 6.7 The choice of materials used is of great importance to the success of development proposals. The use of similar or complementary materials to those existing in the local landscape will normally be encouraged.
- 6.8 As in the design of buildings, particular attention should be paid to the use of colour in the design of boundaries to ensure that these are not visually intrusive.

**7 NATURE CONSERVATION**

- 7.1 New proposals should seek to enhance the existing nature conservation value of the site through the creation of new habitats.
- 7.2 The development of significant planting areas on the edge of open land can provide valuable 'reservoirs' for wildlife, or act as wildlife corridors linking other habitats together, as part of a wider network.
- 7.3 However new proposals should seek to use locally native plant species wherever possible to enhance the nature conservation value of the development.

**8 GREENSPACE**

- 8.1 It will normally be the case that Greenspace provision for residential development will be located so as to be surrounded and well overlooked by the housing that it serves. (Developers should refer to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance No. 4 'Greenspace Relating to New Housing Development', for further details on Greenspace provision).
- 8.2 However, exceptionally, Greenspace provision may be acceptable on the edge of development.
- 8.3 Where such Greenspace provision is agreed to be sited on a boundary with open land, the Greenspace design will need to address the requirements of Policy N24 in addition to the provision of recreational space (as set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance No.4).
- 8.4 Nonetheless landscape provision in support of Policy N24 is only likely to form part of an agreed Greenspace allocation in exceptional circumstances.



**9 OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- 9.1 Development proposals must include details of the intended ownership and management responsibilities for boundary landscape areas.
- 9.2 It is recognised that in most instances, developers will wish to relinquish their obligations for the retention and upkeep of these landscape areas. It will therefore be necessary for the Planning Authority to be assured as to the long-term security and viability of these areas.
- 9.3 It may be that long-term management could be carried out by a separate management company, under a Section 106 Agreement for the development. The Planning Authority would need to be satisfied that such an approach is acceptable in the particular circumstances.
- 9.4 The transfer of ownership to individual property owners will normally only be acceptable for landscape works within site boundaries. It is expected that the obligation for the retention of such landscape works will form a part of the deeds of sale. This should also involve obligation to manage and maintain these works in good order. Works external to the site would remain the subject of a Section 106 Agreement.
- 9.5 In considering available options, developers should give due regard to the need to provide adequate evidence that a satisfactory and consistent level of management aftercare will be sustained in the long-term, particularly for planting.
- 9.6 The Planning Authority will give preference to the most effective means of ensuring long-term retention and consistent high-quality management of such areas, in relation to the particular development concerned.
- 9.7 Where appropriate, the Council will consider protecting both existing and proposed trees by Tree Preservation Order.

**10 FURTHER CONTACTS**

- 10.1 Further advice and assistance can be obtained from the following officers of the Development Department.

LANDSCAPE

**Nigel Lees**, TEL. **0113-247-8060**,  
[for central and north-west Leeds]  
**Andrew Pomeroy**, TEL. **0113-247-8153**,  
[for east and north-east Leeds]  
**Stephen Robson**, TEL. **0113-247-8425**,  
[for south and west Leeds]

NATURE CONSERVATION

**Jan Belton**, TEL. **0113-247-8151**

**CONSULTEES**

Local Planning Authorities in West Yorkshire  
Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber  
Parish and Town Councils  
Countryside Agency  
Environment Agency  
FRCA  
CPRE  
House Builders Federation  
Leeds Civic Trust  
Landscape Institute  
RIBA  
RTPI  
RICS  
TCPA



