

Wider application

The case study shows how an early commitment to advance landscape planting can help to buffer neighbouring land uses and provide commercial developments with a mature green infrastructure. As the density of new housing in the UK increases, then a bold approach to communal landscape, established early in the development process, is likely to add significantly to its popular appeal and economic success.

Further information

National Urban Forestry Unit

This leaflet is one of a series produced by the National Urban Forestry Unit. NUFU is a charitable trust and it provides a national focus for the exchange of information and good practice in urban forestry. If you would like further information on other case studies, or if you have examples of good practice to share, please contact:

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William Davis Homes

The company has been established for over 60 years as a housebuilder in the East and West Midlands.

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Further reading

English Partnerships & the Housing Corporation (2000) *Urban design compendium*. London

National Urban Forestry Unit (1999) *Trees and Woods in Towns and Cities - How to develop local strategies for urban forestry*. Wolverhampton

National Urban Forestry Unit (2001) *How to create new woodland*. Wolverhampton

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Urban Forestry in Practice

Woodland planting in advance of built development



CASE STUDY 42

Woodland planting in advance of built development

Introduction

Vacant development land is rarely given more than cosmetic treatment until construction work commences. Even then, most landscape planting is usually implemented only after final completion of the building work. This means that neglected pockets of bare land can blight many neighbourhoods. When new planting is eventually implemented it can be unnecessarily expensive and have low initial impact.

Woodland planting offers an inexpensive means of greening development land. Advance planting can enhance the general environment, and provide such benefits as increased shelter, air pollution filtration and continuity of habitat for wildlife whilst land is awaiting development. If some planting can take place ahead of building work, then even relatively narrow belts of young woodland around site boundaries can provide rapid impact at very low cost.

Some of the woodland may need to be regarded as temporary and sacrificed when building begins. Nevertheless, any of the advance planting which can be retained will provide relative maturity and reduce the overall cost of post-development landscape treatment.

Specific example

Project name and location

MANOR GRANGE, Brizlingcote Valley, BURTON-ON-TRENT, Staffordshire, UK
Grid reference SK 273228

Project partners

- William Davis Limited, house builder
- East Staffordshire Borough Council

Project objectives

- To establish a green setting for a new housing development by respecting existing landscape features and planting new tree belts
- To achieve maximum benefit from the landscape investment at the point of sale

Site description

Manor Grange is part of the Brizlingcote Valley housing development, comprising almost 600 three and four bedroom detached houses and bungalows. The first phase was built in the mid 1980s and construction is continuing through to 2006. It is located on the edge of Burton-on Trent, in the National Forest.



Even a planting belt as narrow as 10m across can help to create a green setting for future development

Design process and implementation

The developer, William Davis Ltd, worked to a design brief prepared by East Staffordshire Borough Council that set out strict environmental requirements. The masterplan called for retention of as much of the existing natural landscape as possible, the creation of a substantial tree belt along two sides of the development and reinforcement of existing hedgerows with native shrubs.

The substantial belts of woodland which were planted in advance of development around the margin of the site are predominately made up of pioneer species such as silver birch and hawthorn, but with some Scots pine, oak and rowan. A number of other native tree species have also successfully colonised the planting.

Results



Many developers have landbanks which they hold for many years ahead of building. The long-standing commitment by William Davis Ltd to development in the Brizlingcote Valley has been vital to the success of this project.

Advance planting of the new woodland, together with the integration of existing hedgerows has preserved and enhanced the biodiversity of the area and produced a development where small individual neighbourhoods are integrated into the wider landscape.

The advance planting along the boundary of the development site has grown rapidly, and is clearly visible on the skyline. This acts as a buffer between the established and new housing areas and reduces the visual impact of the new housing considerably. It also helps to provide a wooded outlook when viewed from within the development itself.

The care taken in developing and implementing the concept was acknowledged in 2002 when the developer won a New Homes Marketing Board *Greenleaf* Housing Award for landscape excellence. They also won the special *Greenleaf* urban forestry prize, which is presented by the National Urban Forestry Unit each year.

greenleaf awards



Since 1986, the House Builders' Federation's New Homes Marketing Board has promoted housing landscape excellence through the Greenleaf Housing Awards