A11. Design Guidelines {Confirmed to replace A3.4 - NatEnv cl.16[1]}

[1] **NatEnv cl.16:** New Appendix A11 was notified as Appendix A3.4. Changes to formatting and wording have been made to clarify provisions. This does not change the effect of provisions. Where elements of the guidelines have been amended in response to submissions, strikethrough and underlining is used and submitter references are provided.

A11.1 Introduction

The design guidelines relate to buildings and structures, and associated earthworks, forestry, and shelterbelts and small woodlots. They are intended to provide guidance on a range of methods that may be used in the siting and/or design of these activities, to reduce or mitigate potential effects on landscape values and natural character values.

Guidelines can only be of a general nature. Because every site is different, it is not possible to offer specific advice. It is important that each individual site is assessed to determine an appropriate design solution based on site character and the specific development requirements. However, the following principles should be taken into account.

A11.2 Buildings and structures, and associated earthworks

1. Where possible, locate a new building or structure in association with a stronger natural feature e.g. a group of trees. Ensure that it has a backdrop of land or vegetation rather than sky as seen from main viewpoints. Seek to avoid prominent ridgelines, spurs and hilltops.
2. Consider planting vegetation to integrate buildings and structures with their landscape or coastal setting. ***{NatEnv 447.134}***
3. In siting, take care to minimise the need for any earthworks and align the buildings with the direction of the landform. Blend any cut and fill required with the surrounding natural contours.
4. Locate at a distance from adjacent roads where appropriate to retain the spaciousness of the rural landscape. Take care not to block or detract from any significant views.
5. Where other buildings already exist, locate the new buildings or structures to visually relate to the group rather than be seen as an isolated element.
6. Aim to relate the building or structure to the land by keeping it as low as possible. The proportions should be wider rather than higher. Relate floor levels to the ground level and avoid high foundations.
7. Traditional, simple, non-fussy designs are likely to integrate most readily into the rural setting. Where practicable, relate roof shapes to the lie of the land and break up large wall and roof planes. Provide for eaves and the shadow line they create which helps to tie the building or structure visually with the land.
8. Use materials which occur naturally in the area e.g. local stone or timber, or materials that have traditionally been used in rural buildings e.g. appropriately coloured corrugated iron. Materials with a rough, course texture will help to minimise reflectivity of light. Do not use a great variety of different materials. Keep the effect simple.
9. Minimise the visual impact of buildings by using colours which blend with, or provide subtle contrast with, the background landscape. Avoid sharp colour contrasts. Generally, roofs should be darker than walls to help visually relate the buildings and structures to the land.
10. Glazing should be designed (placement and glazing type) to minimise the potential for glare effects. ***{NatEnv 447.36}***
11. Lighting should be kept to a minimum and designed to minimise effects on landscape and natural character values, including impacts on indigenous fauna. ***{NatEnv 900.70}***

A11.3 Forestry blocks

1. Wherever possible, the edges between forestry and adjacent land uses should be located to reflect the natural landform rather than human-imposed boundaries, e.g. a fence line. Planting which recognises variations in topography will reinforce natural landscape character and is more likely to maximise productivity through being responsive to variations in soil and microclimate. It is usually desirable to avoid planting on prominent skylines as this will minimise the negative impacts on the landscape during the harvesting phase. Highly visible forest edges adjacent to roads require extra care. Provide generous edges and plant a long term species to provide screening during the harvesting phase. Irregular natural looking edges responsive to any landform features will help to integrate the forest more than straight lines. Avoid planting where the plantation will block or detract from significant views or shade roads and contribute to problems with ice in winter.
2. Where areas of native bush and shrubland remain, these should be retained as far as possible.
3. When planting adjacent to watercourse or streams (riparian areas) leave an unplanted margin and allow native vegetation to establish. This helps to protect water quality during harvesting, provides a richer habitat for wildlife, and helps to emphasise the stream or gully as a natural feature. The boundary between the gully and the riparian species should be located to reflect the landform.
4. Use contour planting rather than rows running up and down the slope for a more natural appearance. If possible, use a mixture of species rather than just one, to reflect changes in landform, soil or microclimate and to create a more diverse landscape, and richer wildlife habitat. This may also help to reduce the severity of landscape change during harvesting.
5. Keep access tracks off conspicuous faces, or as low in the landscape as possible. Avoid firebreaks which do not follow the landform. Live firebreaks of native species in damp gullies are much preferable to artificial-looking cleared swathes.
6. Avoid using species which are likely to create wilding tree spread problems e.g. species listed in Rule 10.3.4.

A11.4 Shelterbelts and small woodlots

1. If practically feasible, avoid highly visible areas, otherwise a careful assessment of the underlying topography and existing natural features should be undertaken to ensure minimum impact on the visual integrity of the landscape.
2. Reinforce the natural character of the landscape by siting shelter plantings to relate to natural features such as a change in slope or a water course. Avoid shelter plantings which cut across the natural features and patterns of the landscape, and which will block significant views.
3. Traditional lineal shelter-belts may not always be the best solution. Group plantings can provide effective shelter and can lessen risks associated with increasing wind turbulence on the downwind side and cold air ponding. Where rows are desirable, their integration with the landscape can be enhanced by linking them with other planting where possible, and by minimising regularity by widening out in places.
4. Where appropriate, link shelter planting with existing areas of trees. Small disjointed lines of planting should be avoided in favour of unified entities.
5. The dark colours and strong forms of exotic coniferous species such as Pine and Macrocarpa make them very visually dominant. The use of other species with rounded forms and softer colours will make shelter plantings easier to integrate with the landscape.
6. The use of local native trees helps to promote distinctive local landscape character and has advantages for indigenous wildlife habitat. Avoid adding ornamental trees or shrubs to enhance amenity as these typically look fussy and inappropriate in the scale of the rural landscape.
7. Use species which will reach an appropriate height at maturity so that they will not have to be trimmed or hedged. The use of a range of species can help to reduce the visual impact of shelter plantings. Species

should be mixed naturally and informally. Avoid use of variegated or golden varieties as these attract too much attention and give an unnatural appearance.

8. Avoid using species which are likely to create wilding tree spread problems e.g. species listed in Rule 10.3.4.