

# Landscaping and Vegetation

*Landscaping and vegetation can help subdivision and development fit into the surrounding environment by providing screening, context and maturity. If used inappropriately, fencing can impede views across the rural landscape, vegetation can create prominent artificial lines, and ancillary elements can draw unnecessary attention to a development. The rural context of landscaping is important and styles associated with the urban environment should be avoided. A variety of techniques can be used to make development sympathetic to its rural surroundings.*

## Biodiversity

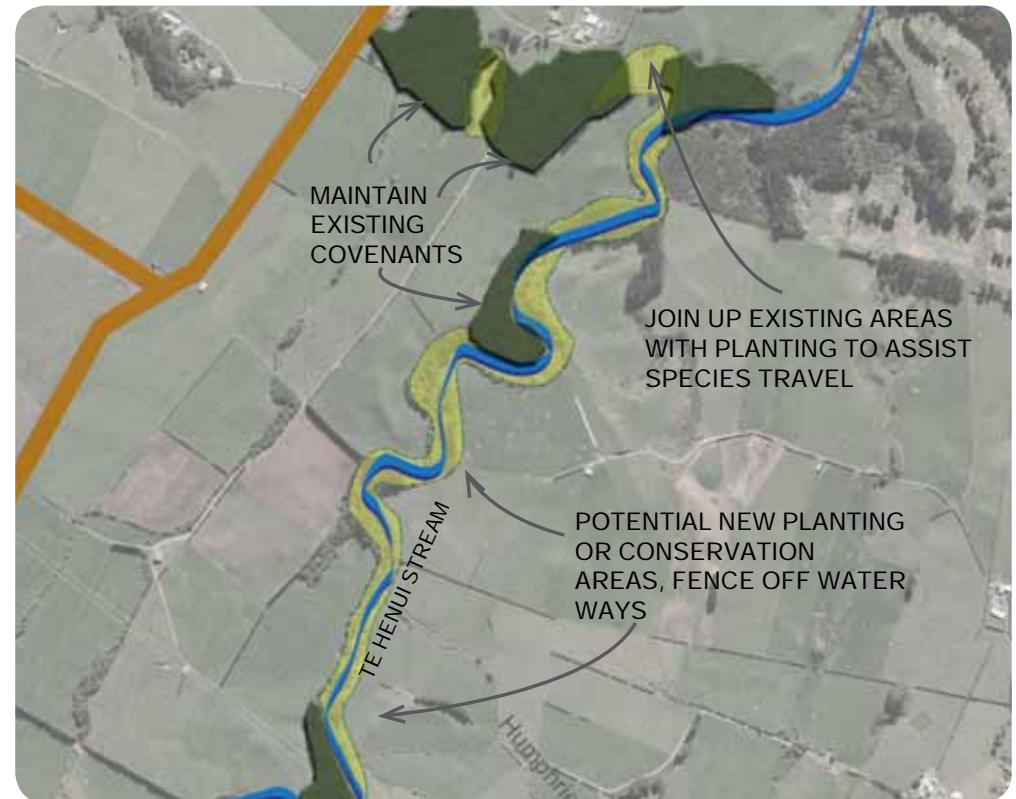
Consider how vegetation can contribute to the biodiversity values of the site.

Tips:

- Plant vegetation that will link with existing groups of vegetation, providing connectivity.
- Consider the use of covenants to protect areas of vegetation and important species of fauna, e.g. QEII Trust - <http://www.openspace.org.nz/>
- Plant vegetation common to the local area and conditions, e.g. consider climate and exposure to wind and the coast.
- Contact Taranaki Regional Council to find out about its riparian management scheme and how to access cheap plants: <http://www.trc.govt.nz>
- Protect ecological values of significant vegetation by providing a buffer between existing vegetation and ornamental gardens, e.g. locate an access strip around bush edges.



*Above: Ensure new planting uses species common to the local area. You can employ skilled people with knowledge on restoring biodiversity values in your site to advise on plant species. Above: Nikau; ti kouka - cabbage tree; ponga - tree fern; kowhai; horoeka - lancewood*



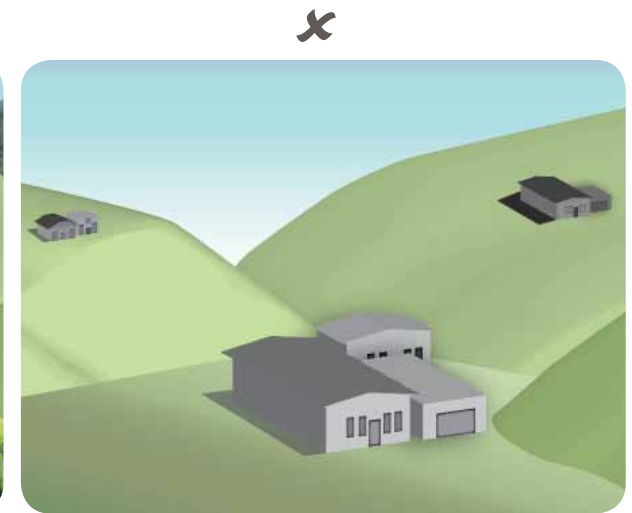
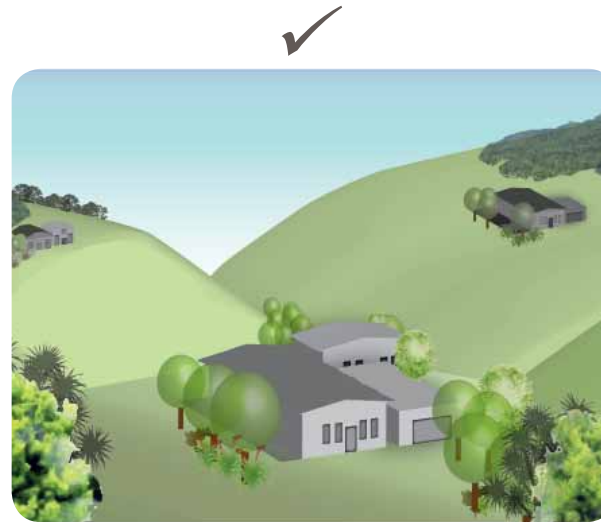
*Above: QEII covenants protecting vegetation along Te Henui stream. Groups of vegetation are not required to be directly adjacent to each other to achieve valuable biodiversity benefits. However, it can enhance biodiversity further by connecting separate established areas with new planting.*

## Retain Existing Vegetation

Consider retaining existing vegetation at the outset of subdivision or development as it provides context and maturity to a new development and can contribute to a pleasant living environment in the form of shelter and screening.

Tips:

- Consider how existing indigenous vegetation maintains the biodiversity on-site.
- Minimise the effect of new development by using existing vegetation to screen development until proposed vegetation is established.
- Consider using indigenous plant species that are found on-site when planting new vegetation.
- Plant trees where possible.



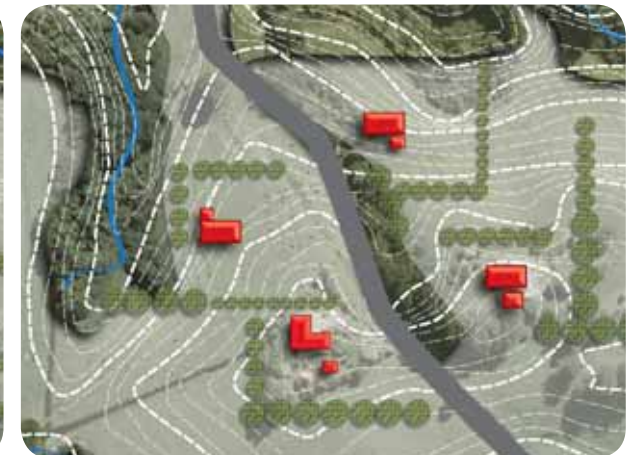
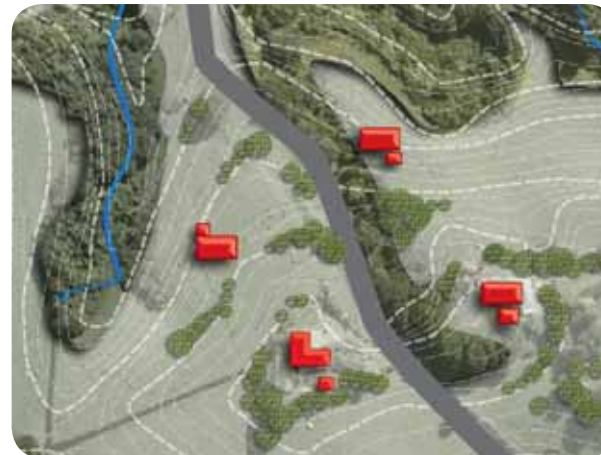
*Above: Existing vegetation improves the amenity of a new development as it immediately settles it into the surrounding area. Removing too much existing vegetation leaves the site bare and buildings have a stark appearance.*

## Planting with Land Contours

Plant vegetation so that it follows the natural shape of the underlying land.

Tips:

- Plant in clusters to retain views across the rural landscape. Avoid planting along rigid boundaries and fence lines that can block views.
- When reinstating earthworks, consider how new planting can complement the site.
- The best way to ensure a good landscape structure is achieved is to plant it prior to selling allotments.



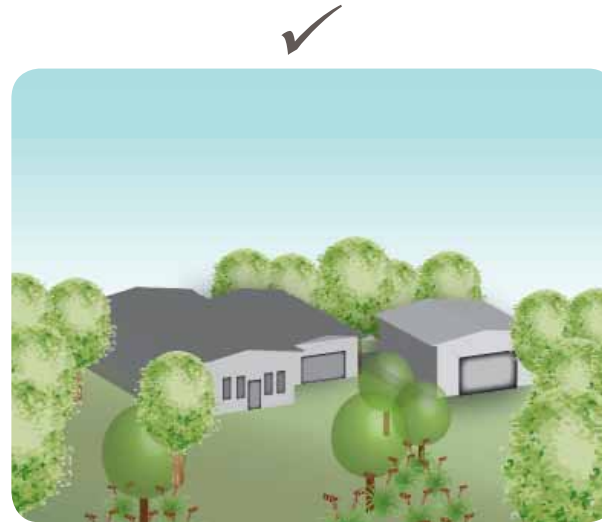
*Above: Working with the land contours helps to make new development sit in the landscape while rigid lines give the impression the development and landscaping have been planned without consideration of the site's unique qualities. Clusters of planting strategically placed can serve multiple functions: Screening, wind shelter, framing views.*

## Screening and Privacy

Use vegetation to screen and soften buildings and to create shelter and privacy.

Tips:

- On rolling land, use screening in combination with breaks in the landscape to conceal buildings.
- On flat land use vegetation to soften the hard edges of buildings, particularly larger buildings. Trying to fully screen a building can create hard, artificial lines so allow screening to provide filtered views.
- Vegetation can provide shelter from the weather, particularly in more exposed locations.
- Vegetation clustered along boundaries or around a development can increase privacy from roads and neighbours.
- Screening does not need to be around the boundary itself but may be more appropriately focused on the buildings on the site.
- Place building platforms in locations that are screened from main viewing points, e.g. road or neighbours property.
- To enhance the living conditions of new development, locate outdoor living space so that it is appropriately screened from public view points but positioned to the north of the main building and any large groups of vegetation to obtain maximum sunshine hours.
- For practical reasons, ensure trees are planted in locations that can accommodate the mature size of the species, e.g. appropriately set back large tree species from buildings.
- Set back vegetation from critical sight lines for safe access to vehicle entrances.



Above: Use vegetation to soften edges of buildings. Complete screening can have a negative effect on amenity for building occupiers and the public.



Above: Combine appropriate building platform location and vegetation to screen and frame views of the building from public view points while maintaining good views from the building. Avoid locating the building platform where it will be seen too obviously from public view points.

## Fencing and Signage

When fencing, consider the appropriateness of fencing types in relation to the landscape. Try to ensure fencing and signage serves a functional purpose (e.g. stock proofing) and relates to the site.

Tips:

- Use fencing styles which allow views across the rural landscape such as open board and batten and post and wire, instead of fencing styles which limit or obstruct views across the rural landscape such as masonry block and closed board and batten.
- Erect fences that follow the natural contour of the underlying land instead of erecting fences in straight lines.
- Use private covenants to control the location, style and height of fences.
- Restrict signage on fences.
- Consider a mixture of low fences and hedges to retain the spacious character of your site.
- Check the District Plan regarding signage and comply with applicable rules.

## Landscape Surrounds and Boundaries

Consider the most appropriate way to manage boundaries. The most common options are using vegetation, fencing or a combination of both.

Tip: Scan the surrounding environment for pleasant and/or objectionable views to consider how the boundaries should be treated and where screening is desirable.



Left: A landscape concept plan sets out planting goals for a new development. Further detail is added, e.g. plant species as the development moves from planning to implementation phases.



Above: Fencing - Post and rail.



Above: Fencing or retaining greater than 1.5m high is out of human scale and obstructive to the maintenance of rural character.



Above: Fencing - batten and wire rural fencing with farm gate detail and a cluster of vegetation to draw focus to the entrance.



Above: Large-scale solidly detailed fencing draws a lot of attention in the simple uncluttered rural landscape. It should be reserved for only special types of development that signal a particular use.