

**GUIDELINES FOR A LANDSCAPED BUFFER BETWEEN
NON-RESIDENTIAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES**



Landscaped buffer at 99 Newtown Lane

Village of East Hampton
Design Review Board

Adopted May 5, 2010

GUIDELINES FOR A LANDSCAPED BUFFER BETWEEN NON-RESIDENTIAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

Village zoning code **§278-3-E (2) transitional yards and screening**, requires screening, such as landscaping plantings and fencing, to reduce to the greatest extent practicable the effects of a non-residential use on an adjacent residential property in a residential district. The code gives the Design Review Board the ability to require a plan for a landscaped buffer that best addresses the circumstances of each property and to require, where appropriate, that a six-foot-tall fence and an evergreen buffer, a minimum of 20 feet wide, be installed along the entire length of each residential property.

These guidelines address standards for establishing effective and attractive buffers for sight, sound, light and other objectionable activities or impacts and to provide a sense of separation and aesthetic appeal to protect residential properties from adjoining non-residential uses.

Owners of the adjoining residential properties should be notified so that they will have the opportunity to comment before a plan for a landscaped buffer is approved.

The Design Review Board may ask the applicant to provide information or designs from professionals regarding issues of landscape design, light or sound.

Approved plantings should be maintained by the property owner in good condition. The buffer should be kept free at all times of debris, lights, signage and advertising of any kind. Continuous compliance with, and maintenance of, the approved screening is a continuing condition of Design Review Board approval of the application.

GUIDELINES

Trees and shrubs

The standard for a landscaped buffer along a property line is a grouping of a variety of evergreen trees providing a dense buffer at least twenty feet wide. The buffer may consist of rows or groupings or a combination of both planted in such a way as to provide a solid and deep screen.

The landscaped buffer should include a variety of species and sizes to achieve an informal appearance and seasonal color. The buffer may include a combination of needled and broad-leaved evergreen trees and shrubs and deciduous trees and shrubs, all of varying heights and widths.

If such a twenty-foot landscaped buffer is not practical or desirable in some instances, because of the unique circumstances in the relationship between adjoining non-residential and residential properties, the Design Review Board may determine that another design is more appropriate. For example, the screening may extend, reflect or complement existing landscaping, including that of residential neighbors, if the Design Review Board determines it to be appropriate to satisfy the aims of the Village Code and these guidelines.

The character of the buffer at maturity should be considered along with the possible necessity of pruning to maintain trees and shrubs at desired heights and breadths. Consideration of the mature height of trees should include the impact of shading on neighboring properties and the impact on the character and scale of open spaces and the neighborhood.

Specific guidelines for evergreen trees, deciduous trees and shrubs follow.

Evergreen trees

The following table provides standards for the size and spacing of some species of evergreen trees. The table also identifies species that may require pruning to maintain a desirable height. These guidelines encourage a variety of species and this table is not intended to limit plant species, but to establish some general standards and to identify characteristics to be considered. A range of sizes at planting, such as 8' to 14' in height, does not mean that it is acceptable to plant all 8' trees, but that the trees may represent this full range of sizes, all as determined by the Design Review Board in each specific case.

Forest trees such as white pine, Norway spruce and blue spruce are less desirable in a buffer since they grow to significant heights and lose their lower branches.

Species Common name & botanical name	Size at planting	Spacing on center	Maintenance
American or English Holly <i>Ilex opaca</i> or <i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	8' to 14'	6' to 8'	Pruning not likely necessary to maintain at a height of 25'.
Giant (Western) Arborvitae <i>Thuja plicata</i> 'Green Giant'	10' to 14'	5' to 6'	Pruning very likely necessary to maintain at a height of 25'.
American Arborvitae (Dark Green) <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> "Nigra"	8' to 14'	5' to 6'	Pruning likely necessary to maintain at a height of 25'.
American Arborvitae (Emerald) <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> 'Emerald'	10' to 14'	5' to 6'	Pruning not likely necessary to maintain at a height of 25'.
Leyland Cypress <i>Cupressocyparis leylandii</i>	10' to 16'	6' to 8'	Pruning of top and sides very likely necessary to maintain at a height of 25' and to control width.
Japanese Cedar <i>Cryptomeria japonica</i>	8' to 14'	5' to 6'	Pruning likely necessary to maintain at a height of 25'.
Eastern Redcedar <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	10' to 14'	5' to 8'	Pruning likely necessary to maintain at a height of 25'. Lower branches tend to die out.

Deciduous trees

In some instances deciduous trees can make an important contribution to a landscaped buffer by adding to the sense of separation and aesthetic appeal and providing seasonal screening when appropriate.

Tall shade trees can also make an important contribution to the public view of a property when a landscaped buffer extends to the street.

When a landscaped buffer is close to a parking area, tall deciduous trees can be valuable for providing shade.

The degree of shade tolerance of evergreen trees beneath the canopy of a deciduous tree should be taken into consideration.

Deciduous trees should be not less than 3 ½" to 4" caliper at planting.

Shrubs

The landscaped buffer may include evergreen and deciduous shrubs.

Shrubs may also be used when low screening is appropriate, such as around a parking area that is well set back from a residential property when it is desirable to maintain a view or the quality of an open space.

Deciduous shrubs contribute variety, an informal appearance and seasonal color to a landscaped buffer.

In some instances a privet hedge alone or a solid wood fence with privet on either side may be appropriate depending upon the relationship between adjoining non-residential and residential properties and the character of their existing landscaping.

Evergreen and deciduous shrubs should be not less than 4' in height and spread at planting. Privet planted in association with a six-foot fence should not be less than 6' in height at planting.

Existing vegetation

The first step in developing a landscape plan should be to evaluate existing trees and shrubs to identify plants that should be retained.

Location

The landscaped buffer should be placed along the boundary with adjacent residential properties unless the Design Review Board determines that a different location will provide adequate protection and will preserve other important characteristics of the properties, such as an open space or view important to the residential property and the public.

In some cases the Board may determine that a landscaped buffer placed adjacent to a parking area that is well set back from an adjoining property is a better solution than a landscaped buffer on the property line itself. In other cases the Board may determine that a landscaped buffer would best be broken down into two or more components, for instance with plantings both adjacent to a parking area and on a property line.

Grade

The natural grade should be maintained with no built-up berms, although there may be modest grading required for a planting bed or for proper drainage.

Maintenance

The property owner should be responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of the plantings approved by the Design Review Board. A plan for maintaining the desired character, height and breadth of the plantings should be part of any approved plan. All plants and trees should be maintained in a healthy condition and should be replaced when necessary. An irrigation system should be installed for at least the first two years following planting but may be necessary for a longer period for the health and growth of the plants and trees.

Fences

The standard landscaped buffer includes a six-foot-tall solid wood fence along the property line. When sound is a concern, the board may require that the applicant install a fence that incorporates an acoustic barrier. The Design Review Board may require that an acoustic evaluation and specifications for installation of an acoustic fence be provided by a professional.

The Board may decide that a fence at a location other than the property line will provide adequate protection and will preserve other important characteristics of the properties. The Board may also conclude in some instances that a six-foot-tall solid wood fence is not necessary and approve a plan with no fence or with a different type of fence.

When automobile headlights, parking lot lighting or sound is a concern, a fence of vertical boards with tongue & groove, shiplap or board-and batten joints should be installed.

The finished side of the fence should face the residential property and the structural side of posts and rails should face into the non-residential property.

When blowing trash may be a concern, there should be a gap of no more than 2" between the bottom of the fence and the ground.

Approved fencing should be maintained in good repair and replaced when necessary. It should be kept free of debris, lights, signage and advertising of any kind.

Landscape plan

A landscape plan drawn to scale showing dimensions and distances and indicating proposed plantings and fences should be submitted providing the following information:

1. Plant specifications including the botanical name, common name, quantities and size at planting (for evergreen trees height, for deciduous trees caliper, and for shrubs height and spread) and probable size at maturity.
2. The location and distance between plants on center for proposed trees and shrubs.
3. Information on the proposed irrigation system.
4. Information on the maintenance program.
5. The location of fences and specifications on the fence construction material and finish.