

Appendix A10.6: Landscape Objectives

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The proposed scheme presents significant opportunities to contribute to, and enhance, the environmental quality of the existing A9 road corridor to deliver a high quality, integrated, biodiverse, adaptable and sustainable transport corridor. At the broadest level these landscape opportunities have been identified with a view to meeting the four key aims of Fitting Landscapes: Securing more Sustainable Landscapes policy (Transport Scotland, 2014), which are to:
- ensure high quality of design and place;
 - enhance and protect natural heritage;
 - use resources wisely; and
 - build in adaptability to change.
- 1.1.2 The vision of the Fitting Landscapes policy is to promote the more sustainable design, implementation, maintenance, and management of the transport estate and ensure that the landscapes that are created and managed are of a high quality, well integrated, bio-diverse, and adaptable, and deliver a meaningful contribution to national sustainability targets. In addition to meeting the above four key aims, the policy requires Landscape Objectives to be set to inform the planning, design, implementation, and management of new transport infrastructure.
- 1.1.3 The following project-specific Landscape Objectives have been developed in accordance with the policy to help achieve the above four key aims and the principles of good design expressed in LD 117 (Highways England et al, 2020). The process of setting the objectives has been informed through:
- engagement with statutory consultees;
 - review of findings from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process, including the Environmental Design Principles; and
 - collaboration between landscape architects and specialists from other disciplines including engineering, ecology, cultural heritage, noise, hydrology, land use, accessibility and architecture.

1.2 Landscape Objectives

- 1.2.1 The Landscape Objectives for the proposed scheme are as follows:
- Maintain and enhance the 'Gateway to the Highlands' experience.
 - Integrate the road with Murthly Castle and the Hermitage Gardens and Designed Landscapes.
 - Provide strong connectivity across/ under/ over the A9 and maintain/ enhance amenity of active travel routes.
 - Visual screening of the road from local communities including Birnam, Dunkeld and Inver.

1.3 Application of Landscape Objectives

- 1.3.1 The Landscape Objectives aim to guide the planning, design, construction and management of the proposed scheme. It is recognised that they will not always be fully achievable; a range of factors needs to be considered, including engineering feasibility, road safety, effects on landowners, and constrained locations where effects on multiple environmental sensitivities must be balanced and the optimum solution may be a compromise.
- 1.3.2 Details on how the Landscape Objectives set out in Section 1.2 above are tailored to the receiving landscape are outlined below:

Maintain and enhance the ‘Gateway to the Highlands’ experience:

- for A9 users through maintaining the enclosed character of the road corridor by protecting/ replacing lost woodland areas and maintaining controlled views to the surrounding crags and hills;
- for users of the B867 and NCN 77 through careful control of views of the surrounding landscape and sensitive design of the new Birnam Junction and associated bridge; and
- for travellers on the Highland Main Line Railway arriving at Dunkeld & Birnam Station through enhancing the (formerly strong) connection between the station and Birnam.

Integrate the road with Murthly Castle and the Hermitage Gardens and Designed Landscapes through:

- protection of important historic landscape features where possible, but ensuring sufficient land-take to support appropriate contemporary landscape design.

Provide strong connectivity across/ under/ over the A9 and maintain/ enhance amenity of active travel routes through:

- minimising severance of routes;
- taking opportunities to extend the existing active travel network;
- creating safe and attractive new crossings under the A9; and
- diverting routes away from the A9 carriageway edge and screening views of the road where possible.

Visual screening of the road from local communities including Birnam, Dunkeld and Inver though:

- careful alignment and earthworks design to minimise loss of roadside planting; and
- new planting or other screening measures.

1.4 References

National Highways, Transport Scotland, Welsh Government, Department for Infrastructure (2024). Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB): Sustainability & Environment. LD 117 'Landscape Design' (Version 0.1.0). Available at:
<https://standardsforhighways.co.uk/search/html/23894e23-0626-4b57-bab4-38c123582433?standard=DMRB> (Accessed February 2025)

Transport Scotland (2014). Fitting Landscapes: Securing more sustainable landscapes. Available at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/33663/j279083.pdf> (Accessed February 2025)