

The Code for Sustainable Homes – DesignWild can help you achieve higher ratings

In 2006 the Code was introduced as part of the British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) which exists to assess the environmental performance of new and existing buildings.

As part of this, the **Code for Sustainable Homes** sets targets which newly built dwellings must meet to at least a minimum level.

The advantages of exceeding the minimum standards are:

- Increased environmental benefits in reduced carbon footprint, reduced water run off
- Increased energy efficiency, resulting in greater comfort and lower running costs.
- Increased value.

The space outside buildings is subject to the same standards with respect to materials and management, and there are further measures which can be taken which are beneficial to carbon footprint, energy use and flooding risk

There is potential for landscape and garden treatment to affect **CfSH** scores significantly:

Category One: Energy and CO₂ emissions

The buffering effect of vegetation and its role in sheltering buildings reduce energy use, while plants absorb CO₂ from the air.

Category Two: Water Use

A large part of external water use is in the irrigation of gardens, which can be virtually eliminated by appropriate choice and positioning of plants. Water harvesting reduces water use, and also surface water run off. (see 3)

Category Three: Materials

Materials used in the garden can be local and natural, and be both sustainable and visually pleasing. The choice of base materials is at least as significant as wearing courses, and we can help you with designing unusual solutions to familiar issues. Fencing and walls are also rated, and there are further benefits beyond the criteria for rating which DesignWild will propose where appropriate.

Category Four: Surface Water Run Off

Gardens hold the key to reducing run off from the site. Planning permission is now required for resurfacing front gardens if permeable paving or other measures for eliminating run off are not used. We can introduce novel ways of achieving this while enhancing the appearance of frontages.

Rain gardens, swales, water harvesting and soakaways all ameliorate or eliminate run off of water and filter and oxidise pollutants. Different subsoils require different solutions.

Category Five: Waste

Compost heaps and bins can accommodate all garden waste, and much kitchen waste as well as cardboard and other biodegradeable packaging.

Category Six: Pollution:

All plants, but particularly trees, process gases and dust in the air absorbing pollutants, and dust scrubbing by particulate deposition. Leaf size and density of foliage are important as are seasonal changes in plants

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/campaigning/our-campaigns/Documents/urbanairqualityreport.pdf>

Category Seven: Health and Well Being

Research shows that many measurable indicators of health and well being are improved by access to plants and green spaces. Schools and hospitals have long recognised the benefits of varied and multi-layered green space

Category Eight: Management

Security optimised by design of outside spaces. The appropriate organisation of paths, sightlines and boundaries can be a significant deterrent to burglars. Defensive planting also enhances privacy and creates barriers to approaching windows The Secured by Design police initiative promotes the design of gardens as one of its tools in preventing crime against property, which is a factor in BREEAM assessments

Category Nine: Ecology Gardens are the key resource in providing ecosystem services in domestic settings, but interventions on walls, roofs and garden buildings will also contribute. The protection of existing vegetation and soils of value, as well as the introduction of planting to encourage wildlife can be the difference of almost 10 points in the assessment.

Maximum Code for Sustainable Homes points available: 90 achieves level 6
Possible points as result of landscape treatment: 21.2, which can make a difference of two Code levels eg a Level 1 to Level 3, or Level 2 to Level 4.

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