



## Nottingham City Council - Guidance on Cover Layers & Verification Testing

The requirements of Nottingham City Council in relation to simple cover systems in order to protect future occupiers during the lifetime of the building without the need for the developer to undertake post-completion monitoring are that:

- All private rear gardens and larger front gardens shall have a minimum of 1m of clean material which may include retained strata (natural or otherwise) and imported clean material (topsoil / sub-soil) providing a sufficient level of in-situ soil testing has verified that the material is suitable.

This standard will also be required where private rear gardens and larger front gardens on a residential development include decking, patio or hard-standing, unless otherwise approved in writing by Nottingham City Council as it is reasonable to anticipate that a future resident may wish to alter, plant or create a soft landscape in their garden

- All communal landscaped areas shall have a minimum of 0.5m of clean material which may include retained strata (natural or otherwise) and imported clean material (topsoil / sub-soil) providing a sufficient level of in-situ soil testing has verified that that the material is suitable.
- All smaller front gardens (particularly where the front garden incorporates hard standing for parking and very limited planting) shall have a minimum of 0.3m of clean material which may include retained strata (natural or otherwise) and imported clean material (topsoil / sub-soil) providing a sufficient level of in-situ soil testing has verified that that the material is suitable.

While it is advisable to test at source any imported topsoil or subsoil, the key issue for the verification testing of the top 1m of material in private rear and larger front gardens, the top 0.5m in communal landscaped areas and the top 0.3m in small front gardens, is the in situ testing of the material making up the cover layer.

The depth of the cover layer and the soil testing of material in garden areas shall be verified at frequencies and depths as set out in the table below. The testing frequency must be applied to the number of plots supplied with imported material from a single source & may be amended by Nottingham City Council as site specific circumstances require.

| <b>Overall Site Size Supplied by a Single Source</b> | <b>Gardens &amp; Landscaping – In-Situ Verification Testing of Soil &amp; Depth of Cover Layer</b>  |
|--|---|
| <b>1 to 5 plots</b>                                  | 1 sampling location per each plot for rear gardens & per 5 plots for front gardens:<br>Soil samples tested from 3 depths beneath finished ground levels in rear gardens & 1 depth in front gardens (0.0m –to 0.2m, 0.5m to 0.6m & 0.8m to 1.0m) |
| <b>6 to 20 plots</b>                                 | 1 sampling location per 2 plots for rear gardens & per 4 plots for front gardens:<br>Soil samples tested from 3 depths beneath finished ground levels in rear gardens & 1 depth in front gardens (0.0m –to 0.2m, 0.5m to 0.6m & 0.8m to 1.0m)   |
| <b>21 to 40 plots</b>                                | 1 sampling location per 3 plots for rear gardens & per 6 plots for front gardens:<br>Soil samples tested from 3 depths beneath finished ground levels in rear gardens & 1 depth in front gardens (0.0m –to 0.2m, 0.5m to 0.6m & 0.8m to 1.0m)   |
| <b>41 to 60 plots</b>                                | 1 sampling location per 4 plots for rear gardens & per 8 plots for front gardens:<br>Soil samples tested from 3 depths beneath finished ground levels in rear gardens & 1 depth in front gardens (0.0m –to 0.2m, 0.5m to 0.6m & 0.8m to 1.0m)   |

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Over 60 plots</b>             | 1 sampling location per 5 plots for rear gardens & per 10 plots for front gardens:<br>Soil samples tested from 3 depths beneath finished ground levels in rear gardens & 1 depth in front gardens (0.0m –to 0.2m, 0.5m to 0.6m & 0.8m to 1.0m) |
| <b>Communal Landscapes Areas</b> | 1 sample location per 500m <sup>3</sup> of imported material & a minimum of 1 sample per discrete area of landscaping taken in situ (based on area & number of separate / distinct landscapes areas).  |

Where natural strata has been retained within the top 1m in private rear and larger front gardens, the top 0.5m in landscaped areas or 0.3m small front gardens and a sufficient level of in-situ soil testing has verified that the natural strata is suitable for use (as approved in writing by Nottingham City Council), then this material will not require further verification testing providing adequate physical & management procedures are in place to protect this material during construction. Any cover layer will require in-situ soil testing at the frequency set out above with the sampling depths governed by the depth of the imported cover layer.

Cut & fill operations and the use of stockpiles of material derived from site are also subject to the in-situ soil testing frequency set out above.

The remediation strategy shall be agreed with the Nottingham City Council & shall include

- details of the verification process
- details & plans of any cut & fill operations and the use of stockpiles of material derived from site
- the sources of any imported material

The verification report must include photographic evidence of the cover layer depth verification, soil test results, the finalised cut and fill plans, documentation for imported material and material removed from site & an assessment & interpretation of the remediation results. The verification report findings are subject to agreement & approval in writing by Nottingham City Council.

**Environmental Health & Safer Places  
Nottingham City Council**

**END  
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