

View Points & Blinds

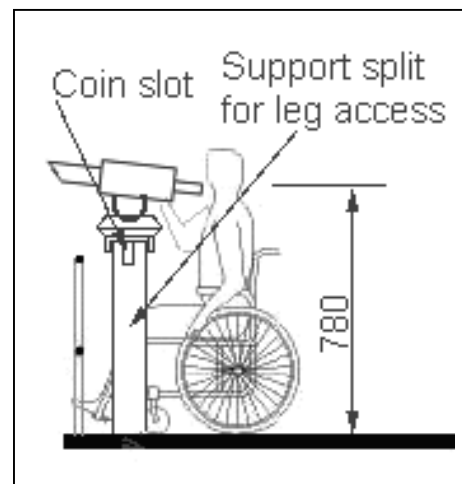
View Points

People with disabilities wish to enjoy views as much as anyone.

- ◆ View points should provide at least one parking space designed to accessible standards (see Parking above) which offers a level (small incline) firm route to the view point.
- ◆ View points should have a firm level surface with sufficient space for a mobility vehicle and carer to take in the view without obstructing other passers by. (1750 mm deep and 1200 mm wide min.)
- ◆ Guard-rails should not obstruct the view of seated people (680 mm height pref.) and will therefore be below the normal safe height.



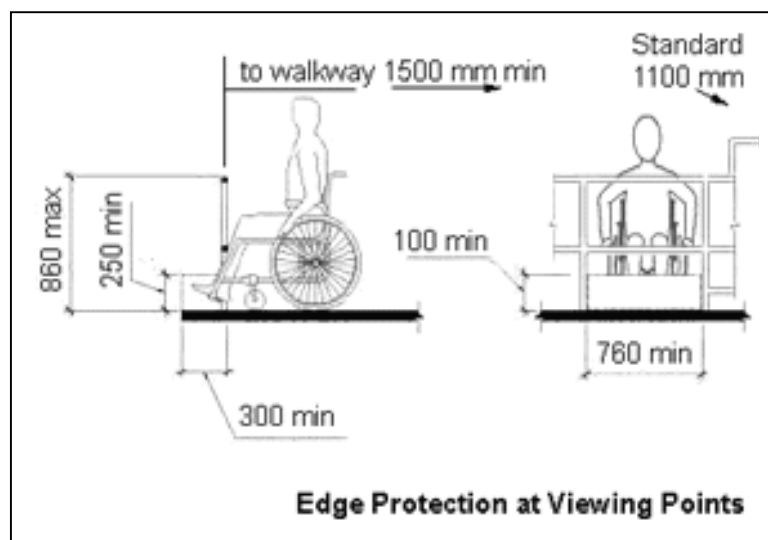
- ◆ Where telescopes etc. are provided, coin slot heights should be 700-1100 mm height. The scope's need to be available in at least two heights to suit seated people (and children) and to suit those who find it a problem to bend their back or necks. 780 mm and 1500 mm ranges provide for a wide range of users.



For wheelchair access the support column should be split or cantilevered for leg access.

The higher units for use by standing people should have side extensions below the scope to act as arm rests and provide body support.

The base could



also be made height adjustable.

Foot rests should not be fixed to the base of those intended for wheelchair users.

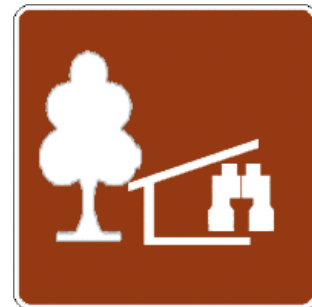
Controls should be positive and offer large easy grip wheels and levers etc.

- ◆ Tactile Signage and the use of warning tiles/pavers (400 mm from the rail and two pavers wide) and colour contrasts should be used to caution those with low vision or hearing that the low rail is in place. (See Sketch.)
- ◆ Seating and perches should be available along any route longer than 50 metres and at the view point themselves. See our guide 'Street Seating' for further details.
- ◆ Where the view point is some distance from vehicles a shelter should be provided suitable for mobility vehicles and companion dogs, together with seating for those who require it.
- ◆ Building a simple gazebo at the site can enhance scenic overlooks. This structure invites the visitor to rest and admire the view. It also provides a point of shelter from sudden summer thunderstorms. You may gain tremendous satisfaction from showcasing your property and your stewardship to other landowners that visit your property.

Wildlife Observation Blind

Introduction

The complete blind has one or more comfortable seats and several ports to facilitate viewing. Although blinds can be placed anywhere, the best locations are near wildlife travel corridors, water sources, or places of abundant food. You may wish to locate blinds for both morning and evening observation.



Design considerations include the numbers of people likely to visit, and for how long. Hides intended for individuals or small groups solely to watch wildlife for short periods of time when visiting a park wetland, for example, can be much simpler than those designed for large groups with toilets, lecture facilities and educational displays.

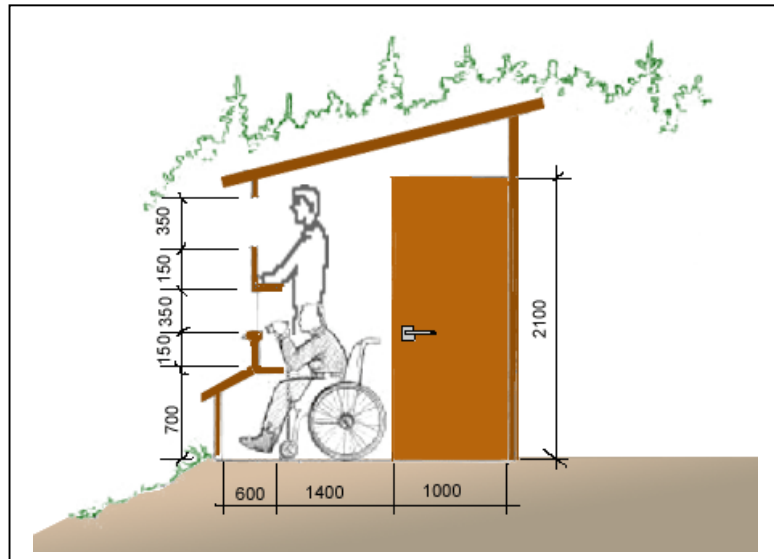
Building materials used should be appropriate to the design and the aesthetics of a hide's appearance in the landscape.

Siting Considerations

The ideal location for a wildlife observation blind or hide is on the south east, south, or south west bank of a water body. This is

allows the sun shining directly on the viewing subject most of the year.

A blind could be situated on the north bank of a water body, but viewing and photographing would not be ideal, except in summer, due to the sun angle. In addition, wildlife tends to be more active at dawn and at dusk when the lighting is from the south east and south west.



Consider siting the blind reasonably near masses of vegetation that attracts wildlife for shelter, food, or nesting reasons, yet not close enough to disturb the animals with human activity.

Where possible site approach paths behind plantings or rock walls which will conceal visitors as they approach the blind and reduce interference with the wildlife. Providing a built path to the blind this encourages visitors to stay out of site of the wildlife. Care needs to be taken regarding the height of shielding bushes etc. as some people will be unable to bend and move to stay below the height of low bushes.

Wildlife is adaptable and mobile. If a favoured tree should fall down, animals, especially birds, may move on to a new site. For this reason, any new structure should be sited so that it is valuable for viewing wildlife in more than one small area of the habitat, such as a single tree.

The approach to the blind, and the blind itself, must be designed to accessible criteria.

Design Considerations.

In areas where vandalism and security are issues, an open design is best, with the blind open to the approach so that it can be viewed by the staff and passing visitors. All facilities where children are common users should be open to view by staff and passing visitors.

Placing the opening to the south, this orientation can take advantage of solar heating for viewers and to melt path and blown snow in the winter. South orientation will normally provide protection from prevailing winds.

If the blind is to accommodate larger groups of visitors, it should be a minimum of 25-30 square metres and provide seating for groups of up to 20 people.

Seating should accommodate groups of four to six people per bench, and several seating locations should be available. Seats should be available

with and without back and arm rests. Space should be available for mobility vehicle riders to bring their vehicle to the view port. Consider providing perches at view ports. If installing fixed seating, allow some space for those who use tripod-mounted telescopes and cameras or arrive on mobility vehicles.

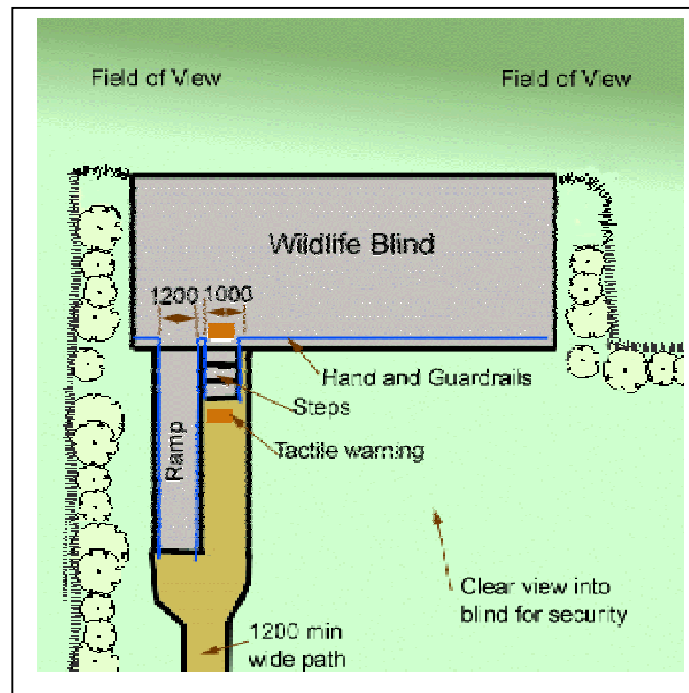
In the simplest blinds, you need virtually nothing, although it is desirable to have a ledge at the view ports for people to rest their elbows on while looking through binoculars or focussing cameras.

Blinds are built to allow people to look at wildlife. In the simplest, cheapest blinds, this can be done through apertures or horizontal slits that should be wide enough to allow a good field of view, preferably wide enough to survey the full area in front of the hide where wildlife is likely to be seen.

View ports can be made at a several heights to accommodate a variety of users – from young children to tall adults both standing and seated. Viewing slots should be available at 680-700 mm and 13-1700 mm heights.

Viewing slits sometimes have hinged shutters so that they can be closed when not in use; without shutters birds such as swallows may nest inside the blind itself.

Glass windows may be used instead of viewing slits. Advantages include better weather- and sound-proofing. Tinted glass will help keep the interior dark but may affect some photography. Glass can



be angled so that the top of the window is further out than the bottom; this helps prevent birds from attacking their reflections on the exterior.

The main screen wall of the observation blind should offer viewing from both vertical and horizontal view ports at various heights including a 680 mm high port for wheelchair riders and smaller people.

The interior of the blind should be relatively dark so that wildlife cannot see inside to be spooked by movement.

The blind should have a roof with 2100 mm head clearance.

Wherever the floor of the blind is more than 300 mm above the adjacent surface and is unprotected by a wall, there should be a 1100 mm high minimum railing for safety.

It is preferred that both ramped and stepped entry from the path is available. Tactile warning pavers should be used at the top and bottom of the steps. Handrails must be provided on steps and on ramps 1:20 or greater.

Avoid recessing the floor below the surrounding ground surface as this brings drainage problems.

The building material selected for the blind should blend into its surroundings as well as possible, in form, line, texture, and colour. The interior of the blind should provide colour contrasts at skirting level and between wall, floor and furnishings.

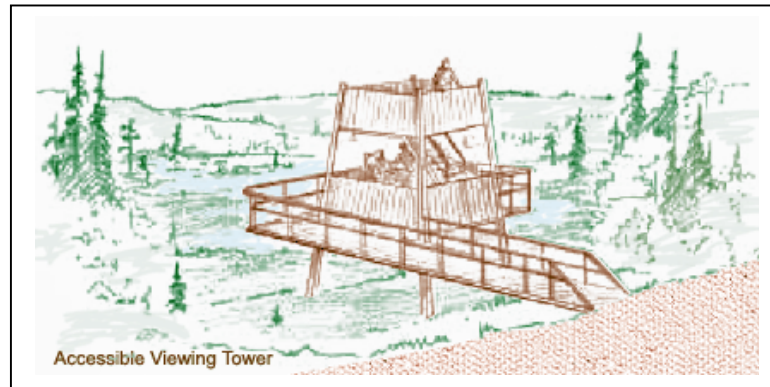
Carpets or matting on the floor and at the entrances will reduce the sound of tramping feet.

Doors to blinds should be screened to prevent wildlife seeing back-lit human silhouettes. Insulation on door jambs will reduce noise from closing doors and shutters.

Depending on space and resources, basic improvements can include fixed benches (at the right height or heights for people to view from), wildlife identification posters, an annotated list of birds and other animals seen at that site, and whiteboards with markers (for up-to-date news about sightings and site conditions). Locations for interpretative signs where provided should comply with sign and notice accessibility guidance.

Perches and platforms can be sited at convenient distances in front of the hide. Small islands or floating platforms can be used at wetland hides for birds to roost or nest on. Dead trees, standing or fallen, as well as rocks, can be placed to provide suitable perches for good viewing. High perches may be used as vantage points for raptors.

As an alternative a tower style lookout can be constructed on a hillside allowing level access to at least one level of the tower. The access bridge should be at least 1200 mm wide and doorways should be at least 1000 mm.



The ramp should be built separately from the tower's construction in order to avoid vibration that may disturb the bird-watching

The tower should be designed to provide protection from wind and rain.

The railing/wall around the edge of the platform should be designed to allow a person sitting or in a wheelchair to see out.

Maintenance

The need for regular inspection and ongoing maintenance must also be considered at the planning stage, not only of the blind structure but of the interior furnishings, fittings, educational displays, signage and access paths as well.

Provision must be made for the disposal of rubbish and the regular removal of litter and cleaning.

In addition to this, the area occupied by the wildlife may require some maintenance – such as the replacement of fallen perches and the pruning of vegetation to prevent fire hazard and allow a clear field of view.

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