

Specification for Soft Landscape Works and 5 Year Management Plan

Proposed Development at:

3 – 5 Newells

Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 2PH

OS 2635-23-Doc3

April 2024

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For

Proposed Development at

Newells, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 2PH

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Date:	05 th April 2024

Revision History:

Rvs No	Date	Description
A	23.09.24	Minor Revisions

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1.0 SPECIFICATION FOR SOFT LANDSCAPE WORKS

1.1 Setting Out

The Contractor is responsible for setting out of all plants in accordance with the contract drawings. The Contractor should ensure that his work will not interfere with, or damage any part of existing cables, pipes or other services, above or below ground level. Any damage to existing services caused by the Contractor must be rectified at his own expense.

1.2 Delivery of Plants

The Contractor shall ensure that adequate protection is given to all plants and their root systems to preclude failure due to lack of moisture or exposure during transportation to the site. Where plants cannot be planted immediately upon arrival, they shall be stored safely until required. Representatives of each plant species delivered to site shall be tagged with labels with the botanical name clearly printed thereon. Labels shall be removed after planting.

1.3 Plants – Generally

- i) Plants to be in accordance with BS 3936-1:1992 'Specification for trees and shrubs' for nursery stock.
- ii) Plants shall be well branched and symmetrically shaped, of normal habit for particular species. All plants shall conform to the measurements and requirements in the plant list or within this Specification and shall be the minimum acceptable size for each species. All necessary pruning shall be carried out at the time of planting. All container grown plants must be well established in order that, on removal, the root ball remains intact through the planting operation.
- iii) Any stock which subsequently deteriorates in quality through mishandling or maltreatment shall be replaced by the Contractor at his own expense.
- iv) The Contractor shall be held fully responsible for the condition of all trees under his possession at all times.

1.4 Planting Generally

- i) Plants shall be planted at the same depth at which they were previously growing. Care should be taken to avoid damage to the root system and stems when planting and the root ball around pot grown plants.
- ii) All plastic and other imperishable containers shall be removed before planting.
- iii) Any broken or damaged roots shall be cut cleanly back to sound growth. Backfill should be firmed as filling proceeds, layer by layer, care being taken to avoid damaging the roots.

- iv) Soil is to be firmed around plants to ensure that no voids are left.
- v) Backfill once placed should not form an obvious mound around the base of any shrub or transplant. Any excess backfill, after planting shall be evenly distributed around the immediate vicinity of the plant.
- vi) Planting is to be carried out in suitable weather. On no account, shall stock be planted in conditions of frost, frozen ground, strong winds or heavy rainfall that renders the soil water logged or in a “sticky” condition. All plants lifted during frosts should be re-firmed.

1.5 Trees – Generally

Generally, trees will be procured, handled, planted and maintained in accordance with BS 8545:2014 ‘Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations’.

1.6 Planting of Trees

- i) Trees should be well-branched trees with symmetrical crowns and straight stems and leaders. Trees of the same species shall be uniform in size, shape and in good condition. All trees to be supplied in ‘air pots’, or as pot grown, unless otherwise stated.
- ii) All trees to be pit planted in accordance with BS 8545:2014 (to suit 8-12cm girth trees) and the requirements of this Specification. Topsoil is to be used for backfill, firmed thoroughly during the planting operation. Remove all arisings.
- iii) Any dead, damaged or diseased branches or roots to be removed prior to planting using a sharp knife or secateurs. Pruning is to be carried out in such a manner as not to change the natural habit or shape of the trees. All tree work shall comply with the recommendations set down in BS 3998: 2010 ‘Tree work. Recommendations’. Arisings from tree works shall be carted off site to tip at the Contractors own expense.

1.6.1 Trees up to 12cm Girth

- i) Trees should be staked with one stout, round straight, pressure impregnated softwood stake of approx. 1.5m length and 75mm diameter pointed at one end. The stake is to be driven at a 45 degree angle to ensure that the stake penetrates no part of the root ball and in such a way as to hold the tree securely vertical.
- ii) The tree shall be secured to the stake using 1 No. bio-degradable tie and one bio-degradable spacer per tie. Ties to be fixed to stake with a minimum of 1 No. 50mm flat head galvanised nail.

- iii) Stakes must not chafe against any part of the tree or damage the roots during planting. Any excess length to the top of the stake should be removed to within 50mm above the tie.

1.6.2 Trees in Raised Planters

- i) Trees to be secured with a 'deadman' below-ground guying system, GreenBlue Urban 'Arborguy' anchor system or similar.
- ii) Installation of guying system to conform to manufacturer's specifications.

1.7 Planting of Shrubs Including Herbaceous Plants

- i) Plants are to be positioned in the locations and numbers shown on the drawings and placed to achieve even spacing and proper matching of shapes.
- ii) Pits for shrubs shall be of a sufficient size to take rootlets without breaking them or roots without bending or cramping. Planting pits shall be excavated 100 mm wider than the root spread.

1.8 Planting of Bare-root Whips/Transplants (Hedging) and Feathers (Scrub Planting)

- i) The planting of whips and transplants are to conform to the mix, siting and spacing in accordance with planting plans.
- ii) The roots of all plants shall be kept moist at all times by heeling into a temporary storage area and regular watering prior to planting. In any event, temporary storage on site shall be limited to a maximum of 3 No. days.
- iii) Plants shall be notch planted into prepared ground and shall be firmed in and planted so as to adopt a truly vertical position. All plants shall withstand a firm but gentle pull and be planted at the same depth as their original growing position. Damaged or broken plants will be rejected from site and require immediate replacement with matching species.
- iv) Any surplus soil arising from planting operations shall be evenly distributed throughout the planted area.
- v) Whips and transplants are to be protected with a biodegradable spiral guard, or a single plastic shelter-guard, 0.4m high, supported and secured in an upright position by the use of a single bamboo cane and tie.
- vi) Feathers are to be protected with a biodegradable spiral guard, or a single plastic shelter-guard, 0.6m high and a single wooden stake (refer to Tree Stakes and Ties).
- vii) Upper 1/3rd of transplants/whips to be removed after planting to promote branched growth.

1.9 Mulching with Chipped Bark

- i) A 75mm deep trench, 100 - 150mm wide will be formed at the edges of planting beds abutting paved areas prior to mulching so as to prevent mulch spilling off the plant beds. 75mm of semi-composted chipped bark to be laid.

1.10 Plant Maintenance Prior to Practical Completion

Prior to the date of Certificate of Practical Completion, the Contractor shall maintain the works to the standards specified at no additional cost.

2.0 PREPARATION OF PLANTING BED

For preparatory works within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of retained trees, all preparation work will be in accordance with paragraph 2.1 below, or, if Arboricultural Method Statements are in place for the site, in accordance with such method statements.

2.1 Preparatory works for new landscaping within the RPA of retained trees

- i) Cultivation of any proposed shrub bed within the RPA of any tree to be retained will be carried out using hand tools only (ie. cultivators and rotovators shall not be used).
- ii) All planting works within the RPA of retained trees will be carried out by hand.
- iii) Sub-soil areas will be broken up to a depth of 100mm by hand, prior to spreading of top soil.
- iv) Top soil may be spread over proposed soft landscape areas previously covered by the concrete or other hard surface, and be graded to adjacent levels.

For preparatory works outside of the Root Protection Areas of retained trees, work will be in accordance with paragraph 2.2 - 2.5 below.

2.2 Site Clearance

- i) Existing areas to receive soft landscape to be cleared of all hard landscape materials, including any surface layer, sub base and sub soil to a depth of 400mm to allow for a minimum depth of 400mm topsoil (after settlement) for bed formation in proposed planted areas, and a minimum depth of 150mm for proposed grassed areas. Sub soil to be ripped and graded to a generally even surface prior to the laying of topsoil.

2.3 Topsoil – Imported

- i) Generally, imported topsoil will conform to BS 3882: 2015 'Specification for topsoil'.
- ii) Topsoil shall be of medium texture with a high proportion of loamy material. It shall not be "sticky" or leave a polished surface when smeared. It shall be free from subsoil, rubbish, roots or perennial weeds and other material injurious to plant growth. It shall be easily moulded when moist and have a neutral reaction with a pH 6.0-7.5. The topsoil shall contain less than 20 percent by dry weight stones which shall be less than 38mm in any one dimension.

2.4 Topsoil – Placement

- i) Once all pernicious weeds and all stones in excess of 38mm in any one dimension have been removed, topsoil is to be laid in layers not exceeding 150mm thick where so described in the specification. Care must be taken that the subsoil and topsoil

are not contaminated by any other deleterious material. If any subsoil or topsoil which was suitable become contaminated it shall be replaced at the Contractor's expense.

- ii) The Contractor must not carry out this operation if the subsoil is in a saturated or "sticky" condition.
- iii) Topsoil which becomes compacted shall have compaction relieved by ripping or cultivation.

2.5 Topsoil – Cultivation and Grading

- i) Final grading of the top 150mm is to be carried out to ensure a true specified level and slope to avoid any dishing or other depression where water may collect. The level of the topsoil, at the time of spreading is to be at least 50mm above adjacent paved areas and kerbs etc. to allow for shrinkage and/or settlement. Slopes and banks shall, where space allows, be slightly concave in section and with well-rounded shoulders and even transitions into adjacent levels and existing soiled or grass areas. Where possible, slopes are to even out into a flat area adjacent to kerbs, paved areas etc. in order to prevent soil washing onto areas of hard standing.
- ii) Cultivation of the top 50mm of topsoil should be carried out in accordance with BS 4428: 1989 'Code of Practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces)' to obtain a fine crumb size.

3.0 LAWN AREAS

3.1 Amenity Grade Garden Turf

- i) All turfing operations to conform with British Standard 3969:1998 + A1: 2013 'Recommendations for Turf for General Purposes'. Areas to be turfed to be rotovated to a depth of 150mm and all grass sods, stones greater than 38mm in any one dimension and any other item of rubbish to be carted off site to tip.
- ii) Additional top soil to be supplied and spread to make up levels and to create even falls, as required. Prior to the laying of turf, the area to be turfed shall be cultivated to a depth of 25mm to form a fine tilth and be dressed with 'Growmore' N7:P7:K7 fertiliser at a rate of 50g/m².
- iii) Turf to be supplied in rolls, not dried out or yellowed. Turf will be laid on the day of delivery. Turf rolls are to be undamaged without holes or torn or ripped edges. Turf grown on any nylon matting will not be accepted and turf will be weed free and of a uniform size and thickness.
- iv) Turf must be laid from suitably sized running boards. Walking over or standing on the turfs or prepared ground will not be allowed until fully established.
- v) Final surface (after settlement) is to be 25mm above any adjacent hard surface.

3.2 Amenity Grass Seeded Areas

- i) Grass seed mix to be Amenity grade, containing not less than 60% perennial rye grass.
- ii) Areas to be grass seeded shall be rotovated to a depth of 150mm. All grass sods, stones greater than 38mm in any one dimension and any other item of rubbish to be carted off site to tip.
- iii) Areas to have a 100mm minimum depth of topsoil. Areas to be raked and rolled to produce a firm and level seed bed. Final levels after settlement are to be 25mm above any adjacent paving, kerb, or other hard landscape edge.
- iv) Areas shall be cultivated to a depth of 25mm to a fine tilth.
- v) Grass seeded areas to be dressed with a 'Growmore' N7:P7:K7 fertiliser at a rate of 50g/m² and worked into the top 25mm of tilth 7 days prior to seeding and watered in well.
- vi) Grass seed is to be spread in two directions at the rate specified by the manufacturer of the seed mix used. Grass seed areas to be lightly raked to ensure seed is evenly incorporated into the upper 10mm or soil and lightly raked.

3.3 Amenity Grass Maintenance Prior to Practical Completion

- i) Grass seeded areas to receive a first cut when grasses are 100mm in height. The same area is to be lightly rolled during this operation.

- ii) Turfed areas to be inspected regularly for shrinkage in the first 4 weeks following laying. Any areas of shrinkage to be filled with a mix of clean sharp sand, compost and topsoil, cultivated to a fine tilth and spread with grass seed at a rate specified by the manufacturer of the seed mix used. Turfed areas to receive a first cut when fully established and growing strongly and at such intervals as required to maintain a 75-100mm high sward until Practical Completion. At no time, will turf areas be allowed to grow above 150mm in height.

- iii) Grass seeded and turfed areas to be watered using a fine spray whenever required to ensure continuing healthy growth until Practical Completion.

4.0 SOFT LANDSCAPE IMPLEMENTATION WORKS

4.1 Implementation for Soft Landscape Works

- i) Generally, the works will be implemented at the earliest opportunity after the completion of all construction works.
- ii) Bare root whips and transplants, including feathers, will be planted in the first dormant season following the completion of all construction works.
- iii) All planting works shall be in accordance with the Specification.

5.0 MAINTENANCE SCHEDULES

5.1 Establishment Period - Year 1

5.1.1 General Maintenance of Soft Landscape Works

- i) General maintenance shall include regular watering, weeding, pruning, removal of litter from planted areas, repair of minor washouts and other horticultural operations necessary for the proper growth of the plants and for keeping the landscape areas neat in appearance.
- ii) No chemical weed killer, insecticide or fungicide shall be allowed in the first year, or subsequent 4 years of maintenance.
- iii) No strimmer shall be used within 1m of the base of any tree unless a suitable guard is in place.

5.1.2 Maintenance Schedule for Planted/Grass Areas

- i) Items to be carried out as required:
- ii) Keep planted areas free from rubbish and weed growth. No chemical weed killer shall be allowed.
- iii) Water sufficiently to allow water to fully penetrate the rooting zone.
- iv) Fork over panned down soil in areas covered with chipped bark.
- v) Maintain mulched areas at specified depth, topping up as necessary to maintain a 75 mm cover of chipped bark.
- vi) Check that each plant is growing healthily and remove all dead wood, damaged or diseased branches, water shoots and reversion growth. Pruning's to be removed off site to tip.
- vii) Re-firm plants which have been loosened by wind or frost.
- viii) Maintain amenity grass areas to a height of between 50-100mm during the growing season.

5.2 Maintenance in Years 2 – 5

- i) Maintenance operations for the following four years are as shown in the Maintenance Table for years 2-5.

5.2.1 Maintenance Schedule Years 2-5 (See next page)

Description	Operation
Newly planted trees	Remove stakes and tie(s) at the end of year 2
Newly planted hedges	Maintain neat appearance with hedge trimmer, facing up to encourage denser growth, and keep from encroaching onto hard landscape or grass areas, outside of nesting season Remove spiral guards at the end of year 2
Shrubs and herbaceous	Trim shrub species to keep within bounds of planting beds <i>Cornus sanguinea</i> – Prune in spring to contain size and shape removing one third of the stems to the ground to maintain winter colour <i>Euonymus japonicus</i> – Trim back stems that have reverted to green. Lightly trim back in spring to control shape and size if necessary <i>Lavendula angustifolia</i> ‘Hidcote’ – Prune back stems after flowering. Prune in Spring to maintain shape and size avoiding cutting into old wood. <i>Dryopteris affinis</i> – Remove dead fronds as required. <i>Berberis darwinii</i> – Keep maintained to a height of 1 meter. <i>Pyracantha</i> – Keep maintained to a height of 1 meter.
Amenity Grass Areas	Cut to maintain in the growing season Trim edges as required
Mulched areas	Top up chipped bark mulch to 75mm as required.
Watering	Water to fully penetrate the rooting zone in times of drought or as prevailing weather conditions require.