

LANDSCAPE & ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Proposed Care Home,
Graven Hill,
Bicester

Project: Care Home
Location: Graven Hill, Bicester
Date: 19th June 2025
Prepared for: LNT Care Developments
Ref: 24_330_LEMP_R01

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1. Introduction/Background

1.1.1. This Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been prepared by Mood Landscape on behalf of LNT Care Developments for the proposed new care home located on land at Graven Hill, Bicester.

1.1.2. This document explains the habitat enhancement and management approaches for the landscape areas associated with the proposed development as shown on the detailed soft landscape plans, drawing numbers 24_330_101 and 24_330_102.

1.1.3. Mood Landscape seek to ensure that the landscape proposals and their maintenance and management realise the objectives of this LEMP. The proposals ensure the habitat protection, creation, management and maintenance maximise the ecological value of the site and ensure that biodiversity is enhanced and maintained in the long-term.

1.1.4. This report has been prepared pursuant to the discharge of the following Planning Condition which states:

“Prior to construction of the development hereby approved, a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the LEMP shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect habitats of importance to biodiversity conservation from any loss or damage in accordance with Policy ESD10 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 and Government guidance contained within Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.”

1.1.5. This report draws upon the following documents:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (June 2024) by Ecus
- Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline Assessment (October 2024) by Ecus
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (November 2024) by Waterman

2. Site description

- 2.1.1. The site measures approximately 1.1 hectares and is located to the north of the wider Graven Hill development which is on the south side of Bicester. The A41 passes close to the northeast corner of the site. The site location is on the edge of a widely urban area of Bicester with the surrounding area comprising of mainly residential and industrial buildings.
- 2.1.2. The site is not in any obvious use and comprises of a large area of bare ground with sparse vegetation including areas of bramble scrub.
- 2.1.3. The approved development comprises:
- 66 room, two-storey care home
 - entrance road, car parking and set-down area with landscaping
 - grassland areas with trees
 - native hedges
 - ornamental gardens with lawns and raised beds
- 2.1.4. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), prepared June 2024 by Ecus Associates, reviewed the site. The primary habitat on the site was sparsely vegetated urban land which was assessed as being in poor condition.
- 2.1.5. The modified grassland on site was found to be in poor condition. Other habitats found on site were areas of bramble scrub and one tree. Sections of the bramble scrub are to be removed to facilitate the development.
- 2.1.6. The proposed development does not require removal of any of the existing trees. An English Oak tree is found just outside the southern site boundary. The tree was found to be of moderate quality (category B) and is to be retained and protected during the site works. The tree is outside the site boundary so is not included within this management plan.
- 2.1.7. The Detailed Soft Landscape Proposals (Mood Landscape) were prepared to address the clients' requirements for a new planting scheme for the site while mitigating any potential residual impacts on the site ecology and by the creation of habitat and suitable ecological enhancements on site.

3. Development proposals

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. The landscape proposals are provided on the Detailed Soft Landscape Proposals drawings; 24_330_101 and 24_330_102, these give full planting details for the ornamental garden areas, car park and entrance areas and site boundaries.

3.1.2. The proposed landscape and ecological enhancement features include:

- Tree planting
- Native mixed species and single species hedgerows
- Native thicket
- Species rich meadow grassland
- Amenity grass
- Ornamental shrub beds and herbaceous borders
- Bulb planting

3.2. Habitat creation

3.2.1. Where possible, habitat creation comprises native species appropriate to the local area and of benefit to wildlife. Where this is unable to occur, and non-native species are planted in garden areas, they are selected for both their landscaping role as well as their wildlife value. Species have been selected to maximise the benefits to wildlife including birds, pollinating invertebrates and small mammals.

Trees

3.2.2. A total of 60no. trees are to be planted providing a greater species diversity and food and shelter for wildlife, particularly foraging birds and invertebrates. Trees also provide clean air, offer protection from flooding and store carbon.

3.2.3. The native tree species are field maple, alder, downy birch, hazel, oak and rowan. Where native trees are not suitable the tree section includes cultivars of maple, serviceberry, birch, bird cherry, thorn and crab apple.

Native hedge planting

3.2.4. A total of 356 linear metres of mixed native hedgerow is to be established around the site boundaries. Mixed native hedges will be planted in a double staggered row, 7 plants per linear metre to a width of 1m.

3.2.5. The native hedge mix comprises of native species of benefit to biodiversity including hawthorn, field maple, dogwood, holly, hazel, guelder rose, dog rose and blackthorn.

3.2.6. A total of 84 linear metres of native hornbeam hedgerow is to be established along the site frontage and entrance road, it will be planted in a double staggered row, 7 plants per linear metre.

3.2.7. Hedges provide excellent natural shelter for wildlife and are a source of food and habitat for birds, bats, invertebrates and small mammals. They will also protect the outdoor garden spaces from strong winds, while also offering screening for privacy.

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- 3.2.8. During the establishment period hedge maintenance includes cutting/pruning undertaken where necessary to promote healthy vigorous growth and checking plants for signs of stress during prolonged periods of dry weather.
- 3.2.9. After establishment, a regular hedge-cutting program will be introduced to keep the hedge at a suitable width against the boundary fence, with particular care taken that thorny plants do not protrude into the garden areas.
- 3.2.10. Hedges will be maintained at approximately 1.8m tall. Mixed native hedges and single species hornbeam hedges will be maintained at 1m wide.

Native thicket

- 3.2.11. 866m² of native thicket mix are to be established on the eastern and western site boundaries. The thicket mix contains a mix of native shrubs and trees. These areas are to be managed primarily for wildlife.
- 3.2.12. No fertilizer or pesticides shall be used in the scrub areas. Spot treatment with suitable herbicide for specific areas can only be used to treat invasive species in a targeted manner.

Meadow grassland

- 3.2.13. Emorsgate EM1 basic general purpose meadow seed mix (or native wildflower turf) will be sown in the meadow areas shown on the landscape drawings. This mix will create a greater species diversity to these areas which will bring benefit to a range of species, particularly foraging birds and invertebrates.
- 3.2.14. Grassland areas will be sown in the autumn months.
- 3.2.15. Following sowing, the swards will not be cut until early August of the first year. Early perennial weeds should be retained in the first season following sowing as these can shelter the meadow seedlings while they establish.
- 3.2.16. Once established, the cutting of the meadow grass will occur twice per annum during mid-summer and during autumn, to remove undesirable species. A third early spring cut will be undertaken if required.
- 3.2.17. The management of the meadow grass will be reviewed on a regular basis in conjunction with the ecologist to ensure that the long-term biodiversity gains are realised. The meadow grass will be managed to ensure structural diversity across the areas to provide opportunities for the largest range of species within the site.

Mown grass

- 3.2.18. More formal areas of grass are proposed to the communal gardens, around the entrance to the site and car park. These areas will be turfed with Rowlawn 'Medallion' or similar which will be maintained by regular mowing (approximately 18-20 times per year) down to 30mm. Edges will be trimmed each year in the spring.

Ornamental planting

- 3.2.19. Ornamental planting is proposed within the gardens, car park and entrance areas and comprises a mix of deciduous and evergreen shrubs, herbaceous flowering plants and ornamental grasses. Planting will include species selected to provide a variety of colour, seasonal interest, and flowers to attract pollinators where possible.

3.2.20. Maintenance of ornamental planting will involve keeping planted areas weed free. Plants are to be pruned or cut back or dead-headed as necessary in accordance with good horticultural practice for each individual species, to remove overhanging vegetation and promote bushy growth where required.

3.3. Timing of landscape works

3.3.1. The proposed landscape works described above and shown on the landscape drawing numbers 254_330_101 and 24_330_102 will be carried out in the first available planting season following completion of the construction works.

4. Management objectives

- 4.1.1. Covering an initial period of ten years, the LEMP intends to ensure that the habitat creation proposals are managed correctly to maximise the ecological value of the site and ensure that biodiversity is enhanced and maintained in the long-term.
- 4.1.2. The effective management of landscape areas and habitat features is an essential component in realising these enhancements and will encourage the natural dispersal of wildlife within the site and surrounding areas.
- 4.1.3. The establishment and future success of the external landscape is largely dependent on the standard and frequency of the subsequent maintenance and management it receives. Throughout the development period and thereafter a maintenance and management regime will be adopted with the following aims and objectives:
- To ensure the successful establishment and continued growth through to maturity of the soft landscape scheme shown on the detailed soft landscape proposals drawings 24_330_101 and 24_330_102.
 - To ensure that the maintenance and management of the soft landscape areas is commensurate with and achieves the aims and objectives of sound ecological management and enhancement.
 - To achieve rapid establishment of the plant material with resultant total ground cover, thereby suppressing weed growth and reducing maintenance requirements.
 - To retain the natural growth form and maximise the seasonal potential of individual species by the pruning methods adopted.
 - To manage the landscape in a manner convivial with the safety of site users, such as maintaining visibility splays and the removal of dead, dying or diseased tree and plants.
 - To ensure the successful establishment and continual enhancement of the whole site in accordance with ecological principles to provide a net gain in biodiversity across the site.
 - To enhance the ecological value of the site above and beyond its current value.
- 4.1.4. For twelve months after practical completion the soft landscape will be maintained by the landscape contractor responsible for the implementation of the works. A defects liability clause within the contract will ensure replacement planting is carried out. After the initial twelve months, maintenance contracts will be organised annually by those responsible for facilities management.
- 4.1.5. In order to monitor standards and make amendments where required, it is expected that the maintenance work will initially be reviewed (with reference to this document) annually. A major assessment will be carried out after 5 years in conjunction with an Ecological Consultant to allow revisions of the maintenance and management regimes if necessary. Following this, it is recommended that maintenance is reviewed every three years. Maintenance reviews will respond to natural or man-made changes in the environment e.g tree disease and allow for adaptations to meet the changing needs of site users and any changes within the biodiversity of the site.

5. Maintenance and management operations

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. The descriptions of the maintenance and management operations are provided for each habitat type to be retained or created. An overall objective is provided for each followed by the management regime.
- 5.1.2. The operations outlined below are to cover a period of 10 years, they can be extended after this initial period and will need to be adapted as required to suit changes in conditions.

5.2. Replacement planting

- 5.2.1. Any tree or shrub which dies, is removed or become seriously damaged or diseased within 5 years from planting, shall be replaced in the first available planting season on a like-for-like basis.

5.3. Trees

Management objective

- 5.3.1. Newly planted trees will be maintained to ensure continued growth and development to ensure longevity and good condition for the benefit of biodiversity and visual amenity.
- 5.3.2. All tree care and planting works shall be carried out in accordance with BS: 3998 and BS:8545. No new tree planting will be pruned within the first 18 months of planting.

PROPOSED TREES	TIMING
All trees to be checked by a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant to ensure healthy growth and safety of site users.	March – September annually
Water all trees at a rate of 25 litres per tree between April and September. This should be carried out at a frequency of once per fortnight and weekly during drought periods. Increase watering frequency during continuous hot weather lasting more than 7 days. There will need to be provision for the use of potable water when, in times of drought, the means of watering and how often will need to be auditable and recorded.	Fortnightly from April to September, weekly during drought periods.
From 18months after planting until year 5, a programme of formative cutting/pruning will accord with good practice and be undertaken - where necessary - to promote healthy vigorous growth. Any formative pruning shall be in accordance with BS: 3998. Beyond year 5 pruning to be undertaken where appropriate e.g removal of basal growth, epicormic stem growth, crossing branches. All tree pruning works must avoid bird nesting season.	Formative pruning shall be in accordance with BS: 3998 then as necessary thereafter.
Adjustment of stakes and ties to allow for growth. Any damaged or broken stakes are to be replaced on a like-for-like basis.	As necessary following

Ties and stakes to be removed when tree has established sufficiently to support itself, this should be no sooner than Year 2.	annual inspection
Check spiral rabbit guards around trees, adjust or replace when required and remove when the tree outgrows the guard. Also check after frosts or high winds and re-firm as necessary.	As necessary
In years 1-5, top up ornamental bark mulch to all tree positions to a depth of 70mm.	Once per year

5.4. Native Hedges

Management objective

5.4.1. Proposed hedge planting will be maintained to achieve a dense green boundary and improve the species diversity and visual amenity on the site. The native mixed hedge will provide habitat that has benefit for biodiversity.

PROPOSED HEDGE PLANTING	TIMING
Keep areas clear of weed growth by hand weeding from mid-April to late September.	Four times per year
<p>During the establishment period (years 1-5) water hedges during dry periods (being any period without substantial rainfall for 14 days or more), until hedges are successfully established.</p> <p>In dry periods, water the ground around the transplants until the soil is saturated. This should be carried out at a frequency of once per fortnight until substantial rainfall returns.</p> <p>Increase watering frequency during continuous hot weather lasting more than 7 days. There will need to be provision for the use of potable water when, in times of drought, the means of watering and how often will need to be auditable and recorded.</p>	As necessary depending on weather conditions
Check shelter guards and refirm / replace when required. Adjust stakes and tied to allow for growth. Remove weed growth from within guards.	Four times per year
Remove branches that overhang footpaths or prevent access for grass cutting.	Annually (year 1-5) and then as necessary beyond.
Prune mixed native hedges to ultimately achieve approximately 1.8m in height and 1m in width (approx. timing September) as required depending on establishment. Cut sides, tops and ends to straight and true lines. Pay particular attention to the care-home side of the hedge and ensure no thorny branches protrude into the garden areas, cut back any thorny branches.	Cut hedge once per year or as required to retain desired height, with localised pruning carried out as required

Prune hornbeam hedge to ultimately achieve approximately 1.8m in height and 1m in width (approx. timings May & September) as required depending on establishment. Cut sides, tops and ends to straight and true lines.	Twice per year
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5.5. Meadow grassland

Management objective

- 5.5.1. Proposed meadow grassland will create a species rich sward with >20% cover of wildflowers within a standard 2m x 2m quadrat, which will provide a habitat resource for a range of invertebrates and small mammals.

PROPOSED MEADOW GRASS	TIMING
<p>Following sowing, the swards will not be cut until early august of the first year. Early perennial weeds should be retained in the first season following sowing as these can shelter the meadow seedlings while they establish.</p> <p>During the establishment period, all cuttings will be removed to preclude nutrient enrichment of the soil.</p> <p>NOTE: If wildflower turf is used rather than seeding, establishment will only involve a suitable watering regime to ensuring rooting is successful.</p>	As specified to aid establishment.
<p>Once established, meadow grass to be cut twice per annum, a main 'hay 'cut during July/August and a second cut will occur during late autumn.</p> <p>Leave the arisings to dry and shed seed; scattering the arisings within the meadow after the first cut will avoid animals sheltering under vegetation heaps when the second cut happens. The meadow can be cut again even shorter to 50mm, but this should be done in a directional manner 48hrs after the 150mm cut with the arisings either removed or scattered.</p>	Twice annually in July/August and October/November
<p>Once established, meadow grass only to have pernicious weed growth removed where it may be detrimental to establishment of wildflower sward. Weeds to be hand pulled or if necessary, spot treated with a non-residual herbicide.</p>	As necessary

5.6. Mown grass

Management objective

- 5.6.1. Proposed mown grass will be maintained as a close-mown sward in ornamental areas on the site where long grass is not desirable. These areas will not be specifically managed for wildlife.

PROPOSED MOWN GRASS	TIMING
Grass cutting with edge trim (where required). Litter will be collected immediately prior to mowing. Excessive arisings to be removed from site.	12-18 times/year dependent on season.
Application of fertilizer as appropriate.	As necessary
Water grass in first year as necessary to achieve establishment and maintain healthy growth.	As necessary
Shape grass edge with half-moon spade to maintain tidy edge to planted areas and kerbs. Timing to be agreed with Contract Administrator.	Two times

5.7. Ornamental planting

Management objective

Ornamental planted areas will be maintained to establish planting beds which are attractive and tidy, appeal to the senses and are structurally diverse. Shrubs and herbaceous plants are to be maintained as appropriate to the species and to maximise flowering/fruitleting.

PROPOSED SHRUB AND HERBACEOUS PLANTING	TIMING
Tidy up areas removing rubbish, litter etc. from planted areas.	At each visit
Water ornamental shrub and herbaceous planting beds to maintain healthy growth.	As necessary
Treat pests and diseases by agreement with the Contract Administrator.	As necessary
Prune plants as necessary to avoid conflict with footpaths, grass mowing, etc and to achieve desired form and prevent invasive species smothering less aggressive species. Deadhead flowering plants as appropriate to the species.	As necessary
Removal and replacement of missing / diseased or dead plants. Any replacement planting shall be of the same size and species as originally specified unless agreed with the contract administrator.	As necessary
Keep ornamental areas clear of weed growth by hand weeding.	As necessary
In years 1-3, top up ornamental bark mulch to all planting beds to a depth of 70mm. In subsequent years assess need for mulching depending on extent of ground cover.	Once per year Years 1-3, then as necessary.

5.8. Wildlife Precautions

5.8.1. The following precautions will be taken throughout all management and maintenance works to minimise the risk of harm to animals occupying the site and to the ecology of the site and the wider area:

- If any vegetation is removed from the site, it must be taken to a suitable disposal facility and must not be discarded on site (or in any other natural or public area).
- Care must be taken when removing scrub/shrub vegetation to avoid harm to hedgehogs which may be present. Once vegetation has been removed to a height of 150-300 mm, it should be checked by a member of site staff to ensure that no hedgehogs are present. If any hedgehogs are present, they may be moved to suitable habitat nearby.
- To avoid destruction of active bird nests, any dense vegetation removal may only be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (typically March to August inclusive). Dense vegetation removal may only be undertaken during the nesting season if a careful check by a suitably experienced ecologist, within 24 hours of any clearance works, can confirm that no active bird nests are present. If bird nests are present within vegetation to be removed, they must be left in place and not disturbed until all the young have fledged and cease to return to the nest.

6. Monitoring and review

6.1. Overview

- 6.1.1. Monitoring and remedial measures will be ongoing for a minimum 10-year period following the completion of the landscape works.
- 6.1.2. Monitoring will involve assessing the development of the habitats to ensure that the proposed aims continue to be achieved.
- 6.1.3. Maintenance will be reviewed in order to respond to natural or man-made changes in the environment which affect the landscape types (e.g. tree disease) and also to allow for potential adaptations to meet the changing requirements of the site users.
- 6.1.4. Any remedial measures required to achieve the aims set out in this LEMP within the first ten years, will be provided to the Site Manager and maintenance team in a written report. The monitoring report will also be sent to the Local Planning Authority for information.
- 6.1.5. After 10-years this LEMP should be reviewed and a new timeframe for monitoring agreed up to 30 years.

7. Responsibilities

7.1. Overview

- 7.1.1. The site covered by this LEMP will remain in private ownership.
- 7.1.2. The implementation of this LEMP will be the responsibility of the Site Manager (a representative of the landowner), prior to completion and the responsibility of the Operator post completion. If the Site Manager changes the local planning authority will be informed in writing.
- 7.1.3. The Site Manager or Operator will appoint a Private Landscape Management Company who will employ a landscape team to carry out all necessary landscape works at the appropriate times as outlined in the LEMP. They will be responsible for managing and monitoring their landscape team's work programme and inspecting the works carried out.
- 7.1.4. The Site Manager or Operator will report any concerns with the quality or timings of the landscape management operations to the Private Landscape Management Company. At this point, a timeframe shall be agreed between both parties for any remedial work to be carried out.
- 7.1.5. The Operator will hold an annual review of the LEMP with the Private Landscape management Company in order to make any required improvements and adjustments and agree a suitable timeframe for this, as outlined in Section 6.