

Landscape Management Plan

HEYFORD PARK, Village Centre North

Dorchester Living

December 2018

Landscape Management Plan

Heyford Park, Bicester, Village Centre North Dorchester Living

December 2018

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

- 1.1.1 This report presents a Landscape Management Plan for the Village Centre North associated with the development at the land within the development of Heyford former military base and the wider context encompassing surrounding development parcels. The Village Centre North is to be managed for the primary purpose of low-key recreational use, to provide biodiverse ecological habitat and to provide an attractive setting to the Heritage Centre.
- 1.1.2 The management responsibility will be with the appointed Management Company. Areas are to be managed in accordance with this Management Plan for a minimum ten-year period, commencing at the time of completion of the contractor's defects liability period. For the duration of the contractor's defects liability period (12 months after completion of works) the maintenance liability of all areas will lie with the developer.
- 1.1.3 It is the intention that the areas of land that this document relates to are covered by landscape management instructions for a full duration of ten years. After the initial ten year management period, this document is to be reviewed to check for its relevance to the landscape.
- 1.1.4 This report has been designed to provide a steering manual for the day-to-day management of the site and one, which can be updated as required. It sets out in broad terms the landscape and biodiversity aspirations for the site, both in the short and longer term and provides practical means by which these aims may be translated to well managed results on the ground.

1.2 Report Structure

- 1.2.1 The report is structured as follows:
- Section 2: describes the management aims and objectives for the Site.
 - Section 3: gives a site description and evaluation of baseline conditions.

- Sections 4 and 5: sets out the management strategy for the existing Site. This includes new planting on the Site with specific advice relating to routine maintenance, management operations and species specific information.
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2 MANAGEMENT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Aims and Objectives

2.1.1 The primary landscape objective for the landscape areas subject to this Management Plan is to create and maintain a functional, attractive and sustainable space, to increase the sense of site unity and to increase the visual appeal and emphasise the site's characteristics. The main aim of the Management Plan is to set mechanisms in place which ensure that the open space is well managed, for the benefit of the residents so that it does not become degraded through neglect, inappropriate management or misuse.

2.1.2 The primary biodiversity objective is to maintain ecological connectivity within the site and create a range of habitats to serve as resting, shelter, foraging and commuting habitat for a range of species. To this end, wild areas that interconnect without habitat fragmentation i.e. interlinking green corridors within and around the site will be maintained.

Where practicable the habitats and landscaped areas will be enhanced and managed to maximise the potential biodiversity in the site. Enhanced value to wildlife is important to the overall impact of the management proposals.

2.1.3 An acceptable visual appearance and the provision of an ecologically sustainable, healthy and diverse vegetative framework will ensure that the appeal and functional purposes of the area is sustained in the foreseeable future.

2.1.4 The general principle aims for managing the site are as follows:

- To introduce sensitive management policies which will enhance the visual and ecological appeal of the site.
- To encourage appropriate use of the site by residents, whilst strongly discouraging inappropriate and indiscriminate use of the site by, for example, vandalism, tipping, anti-social behaviour.
- To ensure that the long term health and vigour of the new planting is optimised in the future.

- To implement a programme of measures to increase the visual and amenity appeal of the site.
- To monitor developments and allow flexibility to the management approach.

2.1.5

The specific site objectives are as follows:

- To optimise the biodiversity of the grassland and both native/ornamental planted areas within the Public Open Space.
 - Encourage populations of notable and protected species including bats, birds, insects, hedgehog and reptiles that may encounter the site by encouraging the development of habitats of notable and protected species, promote structural and age diversity of vegetation, including newly planted trees planted within close proximity to existing mature specimens.
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3 MANAGEMENT PLAN

3.1 Works Programme

- 3.1.1 It is expected that the Management Plan will commence following completion of the landscape works. The provisions of the establishment maintenance specification set out below should also be adopted by the contractor during the 12 month defects liability period, prior to handover.
- 3.1.2 It should be noted that the proposed annual timing of operations in the following Works Programme are flexible and it is anticipated that the exact programme of works will be influenced by seasonal weather conditions and factors such as variability in growth rates and perceived effects on biodiversity.
- 3.1.3 In the management schedules set out below, the timing of operations (by season or month) is only given where this is critical, either in terms of achieving optimum results or minimising potential disturbance to wildlife. In general terms pruning or other works to established trees, which may contain breeding birds, should avoid the bird breeding season. In most years, this is from February to August inclusive.

3.2 Legal Constraints

- 3.2.1 Presence/potential presence of statutorily protected species will need to be given due consideration with respect to management operations in the affected areas.

3.3 Management of Existing Mature Trees

Objective : existing mature specimen trees are to be subject to some arboricultural works, to ensure public safety but also to enhance their longevity, their value to the setting of the site and to optimise their wildlife potential. Mature/veteran trees will be retained if deemed structurally sound and dead branches/ standing dead wood only removed where it is not safe to be retained *in situ*. Annual inspections should be carried out on trees in areas of human activity i.e. near paths or roads, with other trees undergoing a detailed inspection every 3-5 years. Dead wood arisings will be maintained on site to create habitat piles. Prior to any works on mature trees

capable of providing suitable features for bat roosts these trees will be inspected by a licensed bat worker and works will be undertaken in accordance with 'Best Working Practice', as specified by The Bat Conservation Trust (Hundt 2012).

- 3.3.1 Following the inspection, a schedule will be provided of essential remedial surgery/other works or tree removal required for public safety/tree health reasons and this to be supplied by Cherwell District Council as required. Works are to be carried out in accordance with BS 3998 - 2010 Tree Work - recommendations or refer to 'the current document' of that standard. These works are to be undertaken at a time to avoid the bird breeding season and preferably during the winter months unless more urgent action is required. As the site is located within a conservation area, the local council will require consultation prior to major pruning works to existing trees.
- 3.3.2 The report and drawings have been produced in relation to the Site Surveys: Arboricultural Impact Assessments by Ruskins & WestWaddy ADP detail how existing trees will be retained within the proposals.
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4 MANAGEMENT OPERATION FOR NEW PLANTING TO COMMUNAL AREAS AND POS

4.1 Aims and Objectives

4.1.1 It is expected that the management operations will commence following Practical Completion of the new planting.

4.1.2 It should be noted that the proposed timing of operations in the following Works Programme are flexible and it is anticipated that the exact programme of works will be influenced by seasonal weather conditions and factors such as variability in growth rates.

4.1.3 In the maintenance schedules set out below, the timing of operations (e.g. by season or month) is only given where this is critical, either in terms of achieving optimum results or minimising potential disturbance to wildlife. In general terms pruning of mature shrubs as well as operations to mature trees, which may contain breeding birds, should avoid the bird breeding season. In most years this is from late February to August inclusive.

4.1.4 Please refer to Appendix A for detailed planting proposals, drawings 1619 A13 06-07 for proposed planting schedule.

4.2 Operation 1: New Specimen Trees

4.2.1 **Objectives:** to promote early establishment and vigour in all newly planted trees within the development area. Longer-term management to include replacement as required and formative pruning to create a healthy, strategic landscape component and to perpetuate the original design aims.

Establishment Maintenance of New Specimen Trees

4.2.2 Establishment Maintenance of newly planted trees will be required for the first three years after planting to ensure rapid early growth. Visits shall be undertaken at least monthly between April and September, with two visits during the dormant season, to ensure that the following maintenance requirements are satisfactorily undertaken:

- Watering as required to ensure healthy growth, particularly in Years 1 and 2. All trees to be visited weekly in periods of dry weather and sufficient water to be applied to eliminate drought related stress.
- All trees to be treated with an annual application of an approved slow-release fertiliser (e.g. Osmocote) at the manufacturer's recommended rates in April of Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Trees that have become loosened, lifted up or out of the ground to be set upright and re-firmed by treading. Tree supports (including underground guys) to be regularly checked, adjusted, repaired and replaced as necessary and irrigation tubes to be kept free of blockages.
- Weed control is required to keep all planting areas free of grass and weed growth. This weed control must be by hand in Year 1, with chemical control, using Glyphosate, permitted only in 1.0m squares around clear-stemmed trees in Years 2 and 3.
- Trees to be kept free of pests and diseases; regular monitoring to be undertaken.
- General pruning to be carried out to remove straggling stems, over-vigorous shoots, suckers and dead, misshapen, broken or otherwise unhealthy branches.
- Planting areas to be kept free of litter and leaf fall and grass edges to be kept regularly trimmed and tidy.
- Where mulch is used as a top dressing, this to be regularly topped up to 100mm, to ensure a minimum depth of 75mm. Mulch to be kept cleared off adjacent grass, paved areas etc.
- General autumn tidy.
- All arisings to be removed from site and the site to be left clean and tidy at all times.

4.2.3

An inspection is to be made in August each year. Any losses of planted trees, whether by natural means or vandalism and any other plants that have failed to thrive, to be replaced in the planting season following the loss. Replacement trees are to be of the same specification and size as the original plants.

Aftercare specific for Trees in Planters

- 4.2.4 Soil should be kept moist but not waterlogged, at all times, even during winter. Rainwater to be used where possible, and to be water beneath any other foliage to ensure water reaches the soil.
- 4.2.5 The top layer of compost should be refreshed annually in the spring (remove and replace around 5cm). Slow release fertiliser granules should be included in the mix.

4.3 Operation 2: New Ornamental Shrub and Herbaceous Planting

Objective: to encourage rapid establishment of a closed canopy of shrubs and ground cover planting in ornamental and native planting beds and to create consistently dense, substantial hedge structures. Longer term management will aim to sustain shrubs, hedges and herbaceous planting in a healthy, vigorous condition and to maximise the visual amenity of the planting. Please refer to Appendix A drawing 1619 A13 06-07 for planting schedule.

Establishment Maintenance of Ornamental Shrub and Herbaceous Planting

- 4.3.1 Establishment Maintenance of new planting will be required for the first five years after planting to ensure rapid early growth. Visits to be undertaken at least monthly between April and September, with two visits during the dormant season, to ensure that the following maintenance requirements are satisfactorily undertaken:
- 4.3.2 Watering as required to ensure healthy growth, particularly in Year 1 and 2. All planting areas to be visited weekly in periods of dry weather and sufficient water to be applied to maintain planting areas in moist condition but without risk of waterlogging, to eliminate drought related stress.
- 4.3.3 All shrubs, hedge plants and herbaceous plants to be treated with an annual application of an approved slow-release fertiliser (e.g. Osmocote), at the manufacturer's recommended rates in April of Years 1, 2 and 3.
- 4.3.4 Plants which have become loosened, lifted up or out of the ground to be set upright and re-firmed by treading. All tree and shrub guards and other protection, to be regularly checked, re-firmed, repaired or replaced as necessary.

- 4.3.5 Regular hand weeding will be required to ensure weed free planting areas throughout. The need for weed control will be minimised through the use of a 75mm minimum layer of mulch. The mulch is to be regularly topped up to 75mm, to ensure a minimum depth of 50mm, using the mulch originally specified. Mulch to be kept 10mm below adjacent grass, paved areas etc. and cleared off as necessary. In the gapping up planting areas, stringent weed control is also necessary and may be either by hand or with glyphosate, carefully applied to avoid damage and to create a weed free zone of 1m diameter centred on each plant.
- 4.3.6 It is necessary to ensure that the lower branches and foliage of plants within the mulched ornamental areas (e.g. Hebe) are not smothered. Mulch to be topped up as necessary and kept cleared off adjacent grass, paved areas etc. This will generally suppress weeds but there may be some localised ingress of weeds. Any additional weed control required must be by hand in Year 1, with chemical control, using glyphosate, permitted only in Years 2 and 3 in those areas without herbaceous plants. Where herbaceous species are present hand weeding will be required.
- 4.3.7 Plants to be kept free of pests and diseases, regular monitoring to be undertaken.
- 4.3.8 Ornamental planting areas to be kept free of litter and leaf fall, with all arising's removed from site and the planting areas to be left clean and tidy at all times.
- 4.3.9 General autumn tidy taking care not to discourage wildlife which may be present.
- 4.3.10 New hedging to be subject to specific formative pruning (see below).
- 4.3.11 An inspection to be made in August each year. Any losses of shrubs, hedging or herbaceous plants, whether by natural means, accidental damage or vandalism and any other plants that have failed to thrive, to be noted and replaced in the planting season following the loss. Replacement plants to be of the same specification and size as the original plants.
- 4.3.12 The new formal hedging shall be maintained in accordance with the preceding clauses, with special care to keep hedges clear of invasive ruderal species. Pruning, clipping, and training of hedges shall be carried out in September each year, to avoid disturbance to birds in the breeding season. Once new sections of formal hedge have

reached the desired height of 600mm high, they shall be managed according to the longer term management prescriptions as set out below.

- 4.3.13 The herbaceous planting is to be dead-headed after flowering and routinely managed.

Longer Term Management of Ornamental Shrub and Herbaceous Planting

- 4.3.14 Regular maintenance visits should be made at monthly intervals between April and September with two visits during the dormant season each year. It will be necessary to undertake general routine maintenance including weeding, removal and replacement of dead plants, litter and leaf fall clearance (except in native planting areas), topping up, raking and sweeping of mulch to provide a tidy appearance etc., as described above for the Establishment Period. All arising's to be removed from site and the site to be left clean and tidy at all times.
- 4.3.15 An inspection to be made in August of each year until Year 5. Any losses of planted plants, whether by natural means, wear and tear, accidental damage or vandalism and any other plants that have failed to thrive, to be replaced in the planting season following the loss. This to include any plants that are relatively short lived (e.g. Hebe and Lavandula) and which will require routine replacement during the 5 year period of the Management Plan. Replacement plants to be of the same specification and size as the original plants.
- 4.3.16 Following completion of the Establishment Period, the need for both watering and weed control is likely to be reduced but topping up of mulch must still be undertaken as necessary to maintain the ornamental beds in a weed free condition. At this stage, it may be possible for those areas without herbaceous planting, to be treated with glyphosate, to minimise the need for physical removal of weeds. Ornamental planting beds to be maintained in a weed free state and mulch material to be kept topped up to ensure a minimum depth of 50mm, as appropriate.
- 4.3.17 In dry summers, some ornamental beds may require watering to ensure healthy growth, in the longer term.
- 4.3.18 Regular monitoring for pests and diseases will also be needed on an on-going basis and any necessary control measures undertaken as soon as possible. At a time to be agreed (likely to be between Years 4 and 5) and when no longer considered

necessary / inflicting constraint on the plants, plant guards and other protection, to be removed with care to avoid damage to the plants.

4.3.19 General and formative pruning to shrubs to remove straggling stems, over-vigorous shoots, suckers and dead, misshapen, discoloured, thin, weak, over-crowded, old or broken branches from shrubs by pruning back with a clean cut to the main stem, or to a sound and healthy outward growing lateral. Ground cover plants e.g. Hedera and Pachysandra, to be trimmed to shape and to prevent encroachment onto adjoining hard surfaces, shrub species or grass edges in April to June each year.

4.3.20 Specific shrub species shall be pruned in accordance with best horticultural practice and as a general guidance note the following examples have been given:

Euonymus fortunei spp. Clip to shape in April and trim again if necessary in late August.

Hebe spp. To be neatly clipped to a maximum height 1m. Clip in April and remove any dead wood as necessary.

Lonicera nitida Cut all new growths back by half each year in March to encourage bushy growth. Prune in September to maintain shape.

PLEASE REFER TO PLANTING SCHEDULE ON 1619 A13 06-07 (APPENDIX A)

4.3.21 Vigorous species to be pruned as necessary to restrict lateral and top growth, to prevent infringement on adjoining plants, paths, grass, edges etc. It may be necessary in 5 - 15 years after planting, to undertake rejuvenate pruning of these and other species, if they outgrow their location or become over-mature. In these cases, shrubs to be cut to 100mm above ground level in March. Plant re-growth is to be

monitored and any shrubs which do not regenerate successfully to be removed and replaced, with plants of the same size and specification as the original plants.

- 4.3.22 Herbaceous planting to be dead headed after flowering, with flower stems cut to ground level. Similarly, dead top growth of deciduous species to be cut down to just above ground level in September / October. Where necessary to maintain a tidy appearance and in accordance with good horticultural practice, any dead leaves of evergreen species to be cut back to ground level in the autumn. Those species which retain attractive winter leaves e.g. Heuchera spp. to be retained un-pruned but tatty leaves to be cut out on a regular basis. Any woody growth of species to be cut hard back in late February.
- 4.3.23 Vigorous herbaceous species to be divided and splits used to extend / gap up the original planting in October, as necessary to ensure longevity and free flowering of the parent plants. Particular care will be required in areas of perennial plants that die back in the autumn and in these areas, it will not be possible to use herbicides and mulch will need to be topped up with care to avoid smothering.
- 4.3.24 Due to the relatively short lived nature of the Hebe plants, provision should be made for plant replacement after 5-10 years. Similarly, it may be necessary to replace some of the herbaceous species, which have a tendency to die out, in time. This to be undertaken in early spring, as necessary.

4.4 **Operation 3: Grass Cutting Native Wildflower Grassland (Emorsgate EM10) in Public Open Space**

- 4.4.1 **Objective:** Areas of native wildflower grassland are to be maintained as a high amenity space. Meadow grass for the best part is limited to areas under existing mature trees with the purpose of restricting ambient disturbance by site users.

Establishment Maintenance of Native Wildflower Grassland

- 4.4.2 Areas of newly seeded/turfed grass to be subject to establishment maintenance during the first year after seeding.
- 4.4.3 Cut to height of 75mm, once in late August, once again in mid-October and in mild winters once again in mid-March. All cut material should be collected by sit on mower collection box at once, except for the August cut which shall be left for 3-5 days after

cutting to allow to dry, for re-dispersal of seeds. This can then be collected using the collection box on a sit on mower. NB. It will be necessary for the company maintaining the wildflowers to have an understanding of the principles of wildflower management, which is different from normal amenity grass management. This should ideally be demonstrated before the contract for the grounds maintenance is let.

4.4.4

Strimming by hand may be required in more difficult to reach areas. In this instance, maintenance is to be conducted using the same techniques detailed above. Use of a strimmer will be beneficial and arisings will need to be raked up by hand.

4.5 Operation 4: Site Housekeeping, Hard Landscaping and Open Spaces

4.5.1 **Objective:** Ensure that the site is respected and that the hard and soft landscape elements including high quality fixtures are maintained in good condition, without the risk of degradation through natural processes or abuse.

Routine Site Monitoring

- 4.5.2 All furniture including benches and light fittings etc., are to be regularly checked and cleaned and if necessary repaired, treated with an appropriate preservative or replaced as appropriate, and in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- 4.5.3 Regular routine checks of the site within management, will be required and any litter, dumped material or other debris to be removed on a weekly basis. Vigorous attention will be required with respect to control of dog fouling.
- 4.5.4 All areas of paving, flush and raised edging to paths and planting, kerbs, macadam and other hard surface areas throughout the Management areas of the site, to be kept free of leaves, litter and silt deposits, swept or alternative method of debris removal e.g. suction or blowing, on a monthly basis and maintained free of grass, weed, moss or algae growth, using appropriate translocated (e.g. Glyphosate) and residual (e.g. Casaron) herbicides and moss-killers. Particular attention is required to areas that may be prone to slipperiness. It may be necessary to use a pressure washer on occasion to remove any silt or algae build up.
- 4.5.5 Longer term management of paths, as well as kerbs, macadam and other hard surfaces etc., will include twice annual monitoring in April and September of each year and repair/replacement to be undertaken as necessary, to prevent further deterioration.
- 4.5.6 Site drainage issues also to be addressed on a routine basis to ensure that there are no problems relating to blockages or disrepair of main drains or laterals, dispersal of surface water etc. This will include regular checking and clearance of any drainage gulleys and grated drainage channels and rodding of underground drainage pipes as necessary.
- 4.5.7 Gritting and snow clearance to be undertaken on an 'as required' basis to all paths and other hard surfaced areas.

4.5.8

Any unauthorised use of the areas or vandalism/graffiti/loitering/dens or other abuse or anti-social behaviour, to be reported immediately to the Local Authority/Police (as appropriate) for further action and/or removed as soon as possible. Similarly, any inappropriate use of the open space by residents e.g. installation of personal possessions/ children's play equipment etc. into the communal areas, dumping of shopping trolleys, storage of bikes etc., to be similarly reported and appropriate action/warnings issued.

5

REFERENCES

Arboricultural impact assessments by Ruskins & WestWaddy ADP

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