

# Landscape Specification & Management Plan

For

## Proposed Residential Development – Bedwlwyn Road, Ystrad Mynach

Prepared By



On Behalf of

## Wales & West Housing

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## PROGRAMME

All soft landscape works shall be implemented during the first planting season post practical completion to ensure that a net benefit for biodiversity will be achieved within as short a time as possible. The specific timing and duration of construction activities and conservation measures are to be confirmed to the local authority, by the main contractor, prior to commencement.

Landscape works to be implemented in a single phase.

All bare-root stock is to be planted between November and March while trees are still dormant.

Containerised stock can be planted at any time of year but not during very cold or wet weather when the ground is likely to freeze or become waterlogged.

## SOFT LANDSCAPE SPECIFICATION

### Generally

All works shall be carried out in accordance with BS4428:1989, Code for General Landscape Operations.

### Clearance

Any significant clearance of vegetation shall take place between September and March so as to avoid the bird nesting season.

## Soil

Due to the lack of existing soil resources on site, all required soils for landscaping will be imported. All imported soils to be in accordance with BS3882:2015.

### Soil Profiles

**Shrub Planting** - 300mm imported Freeland Free Draining Topsoil over 300mm imported Freeland Free Draining Subsoil (or similar approved).

**Tree Planting** - 300mm imported Freeland Free Draining Topsoil over 600mm imported Freeland Free Draining Subsoil (or similar approved).

**Rain Garden Planting** - 300mm imported Freeland Bioretention topsoil over 300mm imported Freeland Bioretention subsoil (or similar approved).

**Wildflower Seeding** - 300mm imported Freeland Free Draining Subsoil only (or similar approved).

Spread subsoil should be loosened/ripped after replacement to remove compaction and maximise aeration and drainage. De-compaction to be performed with a tined ripper pulled by an earth-mover or excavator, undertaken when soils are sufficiently dry to be friable.

Any imported soil is to be approved for use by a suitably qualified soil Scientist.

### Fallow Cultivation

The contractor shall by cultivation or other approved means allow for suppressing all weed growth on all areas which lie fallow whilst awaiting suitable weather or the right season for planting or seeding.

**No Cultivation to take place within the root protection areas of retained trees**

## Cultivation

On newly topsoiled areas or on undisturbed areas where depth of not less than 300mm of topsoil exists after clearing all vegetation, beds shall be dug by hand or cultivated by machine to a minimum depth of 300mm breaking down all lumps and leaving the surface level with a medium tilth. All weeds and debris shall be collected and removed from site. No cultivation is to take place within the root protection areas of retained trees.

## Nursery Stock

Where possible all native species planting stock shall be primarily sourced from nurseries providing stock derived from local seed sources. In the eventuality of insufficient availability, stock derived from seed sourced from Forestry Commission UK seed provenance zone 303 in accordance with the Forest Reproductive Material Regulations (2002) shall be used. Where plants from this zone aren't available materials from an adjacent zone shall be sourced. All native species planting stock shall be of British provenance.

All stock must comply with BS3936 (Nursery Stock).

- Top growth shall be typical of the variety and well branched, except for varieties normally grown with a single stem.
- Roots shall be in balance with the size of plant and sufficiently fibrous and developed.
- All containers must be weed free.
- All plants must be fully hardened off prior to planting where protective growing techniques have been used.

All root-balled and containerised tree stock to be supplied in accordance with BS:8545:2014.

## Season

All trees, shrubs and ground cover plants shall be planted during suitable weather between October and April. However, containerised material may be planted between May and October. Planting of bare root stock shall be undertaken between November and March while plants are still dormant. Planting shall not be carried out when the ground is waterlogged, frozen or snow covered.

## Planting Trees

Preparation of trees for planting: remove any ropes, wrappings, tree frames, etc., where used for protection of tree in transit and temporary storage. Remove any dead, diseased or broken branches. Shorten any unusually long branches by one third.

Tree pits must be no deeper than the root-ball so that the top surface of the root-ball aligns with the soil surface, with mulch placed above, not so that mulch aligns with the soil surface. The width of the planting hole opening should be twice root-ball diameter with gently sloping, scarified sides, with an undisturbed base.

Tree pits to be backfilled with subsoil below 300mm. The final top 300mm to be backfilled with topsoil. Backfill under and around rootballs in 150-250mm layers firmly consolidated to eliminate air pockets. Make allowance for settlement in the thickness of the final layer which should not be consolidated.

Watering: water whole area of the tree pits thoroughly upon completion of backfilling but delay watering if there is risk of frost within 24 hours.

Mulch should be applied to 2m<sup>2</sup> where practicable, but tapered towards the base of the stem, so that the root-ball surface receives a thin (1 inch) covering of mulch. Mulch must be maintained for at least three years post planting and be a chipped hardwood bark to Landscape Institute specifications.

## **Planting shrubs, Bio-retention planting & Hedgerows (open ground and containerised)**

All plants shall be planted at the same depth as previously grown; care being taken to avoid damaging the root system. Sufficient soil shall be taken out of the planting station to enable the roots to be fully spread, packing them round with fine soil before firmly heeling in. The roots of balled trees or shrubs shall not be disturbed during planting.

Shrub planting pits to be 150mm wider than root spread.

## **Mulching**

On completion of planting the shrub beds shall be mulched with 50mm depth of ornamental bark mulch. Mulch shall only be applied when the soil is moist.

## **Wildflower Seeding**

### **Emorsgate EM8:**

Ground Preparation:

Endeavour to select ground that is not highly fertile and does not have a problem with perennial weeds. Good preparation is essential to success so aim to control weeds and produce a good quality seed bed before sowing.

To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds using repeated cultivation. Then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll, or tread, to produce a firm surface.

### Sowing:

Sowings on ground prone to winter flooding are safest either in the early autumn or in spring once the land has drained. Most plants need time to grow mature enough to withstand flooding.

The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or broadcast by hand. To get an even distribution and avoid running out, divide the seed into two or more parts and sow in overlapping sections. Do not incorporate or cover the seed but firm in with a roll, or by treading, to give good soil/seed contact.



## LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Management Plan Objectives

The objective of the management plan is to ensure that measures to protect and enhance both natural and created habitats and their associated species in the long term, while ensuring that due consideration is given to the needs of public health and safety. The main aims of the plan are:

- 1) To maintain and where possible enhance the ecological value of the habitats present
- 2) To encourage the successful establishment of newly created habitats
- 3) To provide a management framework for the long-term management of the site ensuring the protection and enhancement of valuable ecological features

### Management Responsibilities

This document is intended to be used as the management plan for the site in perpetuity.

Following the implementation of the landscape proposals, the management of landscape areas at the site will be undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor to be appointed by the site operator. The contractor will be expected to make site visits, spread throughout the year to suit the season. All Management will be undertaken in accordance with the specification contained herein.

## Landscape Management Specification

All planted areas are to be maintained in a weed free condition and any newly planted trees or shrubs which die, or are destroyed, within 5 years of practical completion shall be replaced in the appropriate season with plants of the same species.

The contractor shall eradicate weed growth within planted and seeded areas by manual or mechanical. The use of herbicide is not permitted.

## Existing Trees

Existing trees to be assessed once annually by a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant. Resulting works are to be undertaken in the best interest of the tree and its long-term quality and value.

## Newly Planted Trees

All root-balled and containerised tree planting aftercare must be in accordance with BS:8545:2014. Any necessary formative pruning to tree planting must be carried out in accordance with BS: 3998:2010

Check stakes and ties and adjust to allow for growth and movement and replace any broken or defective items. Stakes and ties for tree planting must be removed after no more than three growing seasons. Any sockets at base of tree stems caused by movements to be filled with fine soil.

Any dead twigs or water shoots occurring on the clear stems of newly planted trees shall be removed and disposed of by the contractor.

Minor settlement of newly planted tree pits to be made good by topping up with fine topsoil to grade in with surrounding levels.

For 24 months following practical completion all trees are to be watered at least 5 times during the growing season commencing in May, and thereafter as appropriate, to thoroughly wet the tree pits throughout their full depth. In the third and subsequent years trees should be watered during extended dry periods only (March through to October).

### **Newly Planted Shrubs**

Shrub bed areas shall be maintained as bare earth and kept free from weed growth, litter and rubbish at all times. Any shrubs overhanging pedestrian routes or adjacent grassed areas are to be pruned back during the appropriate season and arisings removed from site.

Pruning of ornamental shrubs should be done to encourage healthy and bushy growth and promote desirable ornamental features, e.g. flowers, fruit, autumn colour, stem colour.

All shrub beds to be treated with a slow-release fertilizer, as chosen by the landscape maintenance contractor, in March or April. Treatment to be undertaken on an annual basis as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Mulch to be maintained at a 50mm thickness. Any weeds growing on, or within, the mulch to be removed by hand weeding and taken off site.

### **Wildflower Areas**

**Emorsgate EM8:**

#### **First Year Management**

Most of the sown meadow species are perennial and are slow to establish. Soon after sowing there will be a flush of annual weeds, arising from the soil seed bank. These weeds can look unsightly, but they will offer shelter to the sown seedlings, are great for bugs, and they will die before the year is out. Resist cutting the annual

weeds until mid to late summer, especially if the mixture contains Yellow Rattle, or has been sown with a nurse of cornfield annuals. Then cut, remove and compost the cuttings. This will reveal the young meadow, which can then be kept short by grazing or mowing through to the end of March of the following year. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.

### **Management Once Established**

In the second and subsequent years EM8 sowings can be managed in a number of ways which, in association with soil fertility, will determine the character of the grassland. The best results are usually obtained by traditional meadow management based around a main summer hay cut in combination with autumn and possibly spring mowing or grazing.

Meadow grassland is not cut or grazed from spring through to July/August to give the sown species an opportunity to flower. After flowering in July or August take a 'hay cut': cut back with a scythe, trimmer or tractor mower to c 50mm. Leave the 'hay' to dry and shed seed for 1-7 days then remove from site. Mow or graze the re-growth through to late autumn/winter to c 50mm and again in spring if needed.

### **Hedgerow Planting**

Once established, hedgerows to be cut twice during the growing season to maintain a height of 1.2 metres and a formal box shape.

## Bio-Retention Areas

Rain gardens to be kept free of litter and dead leaves. Particular attention to be paid to gullies to ensure they do not become blocked.

**Ajuga reptans:** Cut back any faded flower spikes after flowering.

**Asplenium scolopendrium:** Remove dead foliage in spring

**Calamagrostis brachytricha:** Cut back old stems to the ground in early spring before growth resumes.

**Cornus sericea Flaviramea:** Leave the plant unpruned for the first year after planting. Once established cut new growth back hard to within 5-7cm from the ground in March.

**Deschampsia Cespitosa:** Cut back old stems to the ground in early spring before growth resumes.

**Helleborus foetidus:** Remove faded or damaged foliage as the flowers appear.