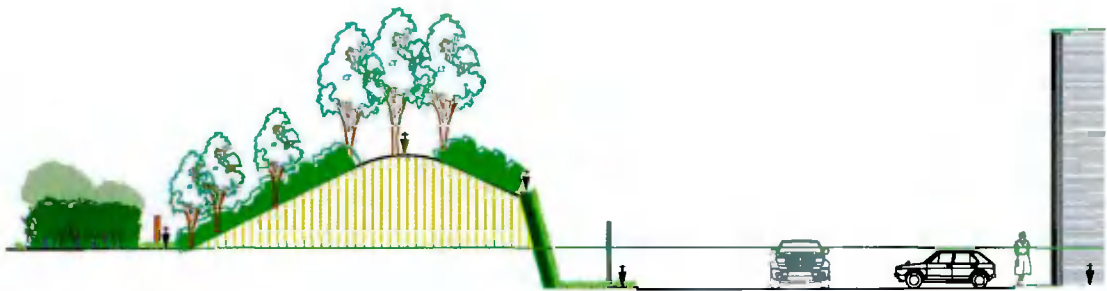


**EDC DUB05 Data Centre
At Ballymakailly, Grange Castle Dublin**

Planning Submission



**Landscape Report &
Outline Landscape Specification**

20th February 2021

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Landscape Report

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Kevin Fitzpatrick Landscape Architecture Ltd. has been commissioned by the applicant to provide landscape architectural consultancy in relation to a planning application for the proposed Data Centre at Grange Castle, Dublin. This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Kevin Fitzpatrick Landscape Architecture Drawing, 0401-101 – Landscape Masterplan
Kevin Fitzpatrick Landscape Architecture Drawing, 0401-102 – Landscape Sections
Kevin Fitzpatrick Landscape Architecture Drawing, 0401-103 – Planting Plan and Schedule
Kevin Fitzpatrick Landscape Architecture Drawing, 0401-104 – Earthworks Modelling

1. Existing Landscape

1.1 Overview

The proposed development is located to the south of the Grand Canal towpath. The R120 Road separates the proposed site from the three other Data Halls which are built or under construction and are located to the west. To the west of the site, there are agricultural fields with traditional hedgerow boundaries, while further south-west are various commercial developments surrounded by traditional farmland.

1.2 Landscape Character

In the wider landscape the site is located in a generally flat landscape on the edge of two landscape types. The landscape to the east and south is characterised by large built developments and new tree lined roads. Between these built developments are large flat green areas that were used for agriculture and the landscape is still of a traditional field and hedgerow boundary typology. To the west, the landscape is that of a traditional agricultural landscape with medium to large field patterns. The landscape to the north beyond the canal is that of the urban fringe characterised by the transition from rural landscape to a built urban environment.

1.3 Existing Trees and Vegetation

There is a significant amount of vegetation within and around the perimeter of the site. Native hedgerows run through and around the site and include many native species such as Hawthorn, Elm, Blackthorn, Elder, Ash and Bramble. The hedgerows are generally of reasonable quality and continuity, however there are some areas of hedgerow which have been affected by invasive species along with the loss of original species, which had led to gaps in certain areas. Despite there being a very generous amount of tree cover in the northern section of the site, much is of poor quality and will have to be removed.

2 Landscape Strategy

2.1 General Aims

The landscape strategy aims to integrate the new built development with the existing landscape and permitted landscape scheme and create a network of attractive spaces while adding privacy and security to the overall site and contributing to the local biodiversity. The character of the landscape proposed is one of large trees and woodland copses, dense woodland planting, planted berms, wetlands and shrub and ornamental planting and formal clipped hedges. Wildflower meadow and native hedgerow provide habitats and improve local biodiversity.



Fig 01 – Landscape Masterplan

2.2 Protection and Enhancement of Existing Landscape

The protection and enhancement of the existing landscape is an important aspect of the overall landscape strategy. The landscape strategy proposes to enhance and strengthen the existing hedgerows using native hedgerow and woodland species, while retaining the existing trees planted in and around the hedgerows. There will also be significant habitat creation through the planting of woodland, wildflower meadow and wetland areas. This will also enhance local biodiversity and green infrastructure links associated with the Grand Canal green route.

2.3 Screening

Screening will be implemented through the use of undulating, naturally shaped earth berms and tree planting, and is an essential part of the landscape scheme. Screening, in the case of this development, has a dual purpose. It provides internal privacy and security within the site as well as contributing to landscape sensitivity by blocking undesirable views and sounds to users outside the site such as nearby residents or street users. Berms will exist at varying heights, ranging from 3m to 7m, depending on location, and are situated in specific locations relating to existing views. Large native trees have been selected to give instant impact, rather than planting smaller trees which would take considerably longer to achieve the required screening.

2.4 Wetland as a Focal Landscape Space

The wetland space to the North of the site has been designed as a landscape feature, providing an aesthetic view from outside the site. The proposed wetland enhances the view from the R120 Road, adding aesthetic value to the overall landscape approach. The wetland when combined with the permitted wetland adjacent to it will increase local biodiversity and create new habitats in the area, while also adding to the visual amenity of the overall site. Another advantage of the wetland is that, in terms of green infrastructure, biodiversity and amenity value, it will enhance the existing green infrastructure of the Grand Canal and its associated green route along with the wetland in the previously permitted site on the other side of the R120.

The design of this space is focused around using and enhancing the existing topography and landform to create an ecologically functional and visually pleasing space. This improves local biodiversity, provides a visual connection from outside the site and creates a focal point in the landscape. Tree planting is not as dense as other parts of the site, which will provide clear views of the wetland area. Wildflower meadow, small woodland berms and wetland planting create a habitat for local flora and fauna while also contributing to the aesthetic and natural qualities of the landscape. The design of this landscape allows for the wetland area to fill with rainwater in periods of heavy precipitation, while also functioning in dryer conditions. To enhance the view of this space from the road and to maintain continuity of landscape typology between the proposed data centre site, the Grand Canal and previously permitted sites, the earth berms have been set back from the wetland. The berms still function in screening the data centre from outside the site, however they allow the wetland to be viewed fully, thus contributing to visual amenity in the area.

The boundary treatments to the wetland space consist of a proposed timber fence and formal hedge inside a grass verge along the north-western site boundary, this provides a buffer between public road and footpath.

2.5 Ecology and Biodiversity

All of the various landscape spaces and typologies in this development have been designed to consider local biodiversity and ecology. Maintaining and creating natural habitats for native flora and fauna and creating ecological networks is an essential element of the landscape strategy.

Significant areas within the site will be seeded with wildflower which supports local flora and fauna, thus increasing local biodiversity. In the northern section of the site, there are various existing unoccupied farm buildings and barns, these will be retained. All hard-standing areas associated with the existing buildings are to be broken out, soiled and seeded with wildflower.

Retaining and strengthening existing native hedgerows, as well as proposing new native hedgerows, creates biodiverse native habitats and ecological green corridors which run through the site and link with external landscape features.

The wetland establishes a unique ecological space, which provides contrasting ecological and environmental qualities to the other landscape spaces throughout the site. The landscape typology will attract specific fauna such as certain types of birds and insects, while the planting strategy allows wetland flora to flourish.

Woodland planting along site boundaries combined with the permitted woodland belts and on earth berms create dense belts of native woodland spaces which act as native habitat and similarly to the native hedgerows, form

ecological corridors which connect with other landscape elements throughout the site. A hedgerow is proposed running east west through the centre of the site creating an ecological corridor adding a further connection between the proposed woodland belt on the west and the permitted woodland on the east.

2.6 Planting Strategy

The plant species are chosen to respect the local environment while providing suitable vegetation that is harmonious with the existing area and will be successful through all stages of its maturity. Therefore, the planting palette has a mix of species chosen for their appropriateness and with a preference for native planting where possible. Various types of planting are used to create different atmospheres for certain spaces, and to serve various functions throughout the site.

Native Oaks, Common Alder, Birch and Scots Pine are the dominant tree species proposed throughout the site, including all woodland areas, berms as well as the wetland zone. These trees will mature into large woodland specimens. When the trees mature, they will have a very strong visual impact and will define the character of the development, providing visual screening and aesthetic qualities. In spaces which are located further inside the site and in closer proximity to the building, more ornamental species will be used, creating more visual interest for employees and other users.

Species in the wetland area are distinct from other species throughout the site and have been chosen specifically to function in wet, damp conditions and to enhance ecology and biodiversity in this area.

Particular attention was given to introducing certain pollinator species to various plant mixes in woodland and hedgerow areas as outlined and in referral to the '**Councils: actions to help pollinators; All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020**'

Boundary treatments include native hedgerows, formal hedges and woodland belts. Native hedgerow mixes are composed of native and naturalised species chosen to provide habitat and increase other ecological qualities. Formal hedges form boundaries to more open public parts of the site.

2.7 Planting Schedule

Plant Name	Ht/Sprd	Girth	Root	Density
Trees				
Alnus glutinosa	425-600	14-16cm	RB	
Alnus glutinosa	325-400	12-14cm	RB	
Alnus glutinosa	300-350	8-10cm	B	
Betula pendula	425-600	14-16cm	RB	
Betula pendula	325-400	12-14cm	RB	
Betula pendula	300-350	8-10cm	B	
Quercus palustris	325-400	12-14cm	RB	
Quercus petraea	425-600	14-16cm	RB	
Quercus petraea	325-400	12-14cm	RB	
Quercus petraea	300-350	8-10cm	B	
Conifers				
Pinus Sylvestris	250-300cm	-	RB	
Pinus Sylvestris	40-60cm	-	C	1/m2
Larix decidua	40-60cm	-	C	1/m2
Hedging				
Ligustrum ovalifolium				
Woodland Transplants				
Alnus glutinosa	100-120cm	-	B	1/m2
Betula pendula	100-120cm	-	B	1/m2
Corylus avellana	80-100cm	-	B	1/m2
Crataegus monogyna	80-100cm	-	B	1/m2
Ilex aquifolium	40-60cm	-	C	1/m2
Prunus avium	100-120cm	-	B	1/m2
Prunus padus	100-120cm	-	B	1/m2
Quercus petraea	100-120cm	-	B	1/m2
Rosa canina	80-100cm	-	B	1.5/m2
Ulex europaeus	40-60cm	-	C	1.5/m2
Viburnum opulus	80-100cm	-	B	1.5/m2
Wetland Plants				
Apium nodiflorum	100-120cm	-	C	3/m2
Caltha palustris	100-120cm	-	C	3/m2
Cardamine pratensis	100-120cm	-	C	3/m2
Epilobium palustre	100-120cm	-	C	3/m2
Iris pseudacorus	80-100cm	-	C	3/m2
Lythum salicaria	80-100cm	-	C	3/m2
Myosotis scoroides	80-100cm	-	C	3/m2
Myriophyllum spicatum	80-100cm	-	C	3/m2
Phragmites australis	100-120cm	-	C	3/m2
Ranunculus spp.	100-120cm	-	C	3/m2
Sparganium spp.	40-60cm	-	C	3/m2
Typha latifolia	80-100cm	-	C	3/m2

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**Appendix 1
Outline Landscape Specification**

1.0 EARTHWORKS SPECIFICATION

1.1 STRIPPING AND STORAGE OF TOPSOIL

1.1.1 Weather and Soil Conditions

All work involving topsoil shall not be carried out, unless the engineer permits otherwise;

- a) where areas have been exposed to a cumulative rainfall exceeding 60mm over the preceding 28 days measured at a point approved by the engineer; or
- b) where moisture content is wetter than the Plastic Limit (PL) of the soil less 3%. The PL of the soil can be assessed in the field as the minimum moisture content at which the soil can be rolled and moulded into a thin thread approximately 3mm in diameter without breaking or cracking and in a laboratory according to BS 1377:Part 2.
- c) when heavy rain is falling.

Topsoil shall not be stripped, excavated or worked in way when frozen or waterlogged.

1.1.2 Stripping

Prior to stripping existing, all vegetation will be cut to a maximum height of 100mm and sprayed with an approved systemic herbicide.

Existing topsoil to a maximum depth of 150mm shall be stripped from all areas liable to disturbance of any kind including building works, all temporary access routes, underground services, permanent mounding areas, ponds, compounds and storage areas.

Do not run machinery over ground before stripping. Strip the full depth of the sod and topsoil, but avoid extending the stripping into the subsoil layers. Doubling handling/working of all material shall be avoided.

1.1.3 Stockpiles

Stockpiles shall be kept as low as possible, and shall not exceed 1.5m metres in height. Avoid running machinery over stockpiles, if this is compatible with the operation of the machines employed. In all cases, minimise the running of machinery over stockpiles. Do not compact them. In formation of stockpiles, soil should be loosely dumped and stockpiles should be shaped to shed water. Any temporary stockpiles, made before loading, shall not exceed 1.5 metres in height. Do not run machinery over the surface of stockpiles.

Stockpiles shall be located on dry, free draining ground, not subject to temporary standing water. If water ponds against the stockpile, temporary drains shall be cut to relieve it.

Topsoil stockpiles shall not be covered or contaminated by subsoil, rock, rubble, remains of trees, site debris, fuel or chemical pollution. Any contaminated soil stripped from the site shall not be incorporated into the stockpile. Where space is short, or where there is any risk of contamination or of topsoil and subsoil stockpiles intermingling, the topsoil stockpile shall be surrounded with a temporary fence.

Temporary yards or hardstandings, or any area where fuel or chemicals are stored shall not drain towards topsoil stockpiles.

1.1.4 Maintenance of Topsoil Stockpiles

Stockpiles of One Year's Duration or less: Treat growing weeds with 'Roundup' applied to manufacturer's recommendation and to the approval of the Engineer, diluted and applied in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for the equipment used, when they are growing strongly. Noxious weeds (Docks, Thistle, and Ragwort) shall be treated before they flower.

Stockpiles of up to Two Year's Duration: Roughly grade top and slopes of topsoil to reasonably even slopes (no flat areas). Sow Italian Ryegrass at 50 kg. per hectare as a temporary grass cover. Control noxious weeds (Docks, Thistle, Ragwort) with a proprietary selective weedkiller such as 'Bandock', diluted and applied in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for the equipment in use, when they are growing strongly

1.2 SPREADING OF TOPSOIL

1.2.1 Decompaction

Prior to subsoiling or topsoiling all disturbed areas (excluding engineered slopes) shall be decompacted using a back-actor of a 'Hymac' to a depth of 450mm and only during dry weather condition

1.2.2 Subsoil Formation

Formation levels shall allow for the following depth of Class 5A topsoil, after settlement and cultivations:-

Grass Areas:	200 mm.
Shrub Planting	350 mm

Make up excessive depth with subsoil material before topsoiling. This material shall be clean subsoil (soil layer extending between the natural topsoil and the parent material), free draining, free from rubbish, building contamination, large stones/rocks greater than 250mm. Subsoiling operations shall be carried out in layers with each layer being lightly consolidated with a maximum depth of 250-300mm per layer.

Allow for topsoil to stand 30 mm proud of all kerbs, paths, edgings and manhole covers etc.

1.2.3 Topsoil - General

Topsoil for use in all landscape areas shall be subject to the inspection and approval of the landscape architect before spreading.

Topsoil will be premium grade topsoil of high intrinsic fertility, loamy texture and good structure and shall conform to BS3882. It shall be free from pernicious weeds including dock, thistle, stinging nettle, ragwort and couch grass. It shall not have been compacted and shall not be in an inert state.

It shall be acidic, pH 5.5-6.5 and free from stones over 50mm in diameter. It shall be free from subsoil, sods, roots of trees and shrubs, plastics, metals, paper, brick, concrete or any other foreign object. Topsoil shall be from the original surface layer of grassland or cultivated land, to a maximum depth of 200 mm. Soils from woodland, heathland, bog or contaminated land will not be acceptable. Do not strip from under the canopy of any tree, nor closer than 4 meters to a hedge.

The organic content shall not be less than 5% (dry weight). Where the soil contains more than 60% sand, the organic matter shall not be less than 6% (dry weight).

1.2.3 Topsoiling

Topsoil shall not be spread over any area of the site indicated until preliminary ripping operations are complete. Once the topsoil has been spread, **no access** will be allowed for construction plant and machinery. Site preparation and soiling operations shall take place only in suitable dry site and weather conditions.

Final grading is to be carried out to ensure a true specified level and slope and to avoid dishing or other depressions where water may collect.

The use of a heavy roller to roll out humps will not be permitted and any area that becomes unduly compacted during the grading operations shall be loosened by forcing or harrowing. The level of the topsoil is to be at least 30 mm above all paved areas to allow for shrinkage or settlement.

1.3 Finished Levels

Localised hollows and mounds are to be levelled out and areas so finished that they drain to hard standing areas or elsewhere as indicated.

1.2.3 Topsoil for Tree Pits

Planting pits for standard trees will be dug and backfilled with Class 5B topsoil. Volume of topsoil to be as follows:-

Extra Heavy Standard Trees	1.2 cubic metres
Standard Standard Trees	1.0 cubic metres

1.2.6 Reinstatement Work

Reinstate all ground driven over and otherwise disturbed to even flowing gradients. Match reinstated levels to those of surrounding ground. Finished levels shall be free of humps, depressions and vehicle tracks. Rainwater shall not lie on reinstated ground nor on adjacent areas.

2.0 PLANTING SPECIFICATION

2.1 Materials

All plant material shall be good quality nursery stock, free from fungal, bacterial or viral infection, Aphis, Red Spider or other insect pest, and physical damage. It shall comply with the requirements of Part 1: 1965 Trees and Shrubs section of B.S. 3936, Specification for Nursery Stock.

All plants shall have been nursery grown in accordance with good practice and shall be supplied through the normal channels of the wholesale nursery trade. They shall have the habit of growth that is normal for the species.

Except for any cultivated varieties or exotic species which do not set viable seed in Ireland, all plants shall have been grown from seed.

2.2 Species

All plants supplied shall be exactly true to name as shown in the plant schedules. Unless stipulated, varieties with variegated or otherwise coloured leaves will not be accepted, and any plant found to be of this type upon leafing out shall be replaced

Bundles of plants shall be marked in conformity with the relevant part of B.S. 3936. Replace any plants that are found not to conform to the labels. An inspection of plants shall be undertaken prior to planting to ensure quality control.

2.3 Trees

Selected standard trees shall have a minimum girth as specified at 1.00 m above ground level, a clear stem to 1.8m high and a total height of 3.0 to 3.5metres.

Selected standard trees shall have a minimum girth as specified at 1.00 m above ground level, a clear stem to 2.0m high and a total height of 4.0 to 4.5 metres.

Trees shall have a sturdy, reasonably straight stem, a well defined and upright central leader, with branches growing out of the stem with reasonable symmetry, or a well balanced branching head according to the Schedule. The crown and root systems shall be well formed and in keeping with the nature of the species. Roots shall be in reasonable balance with the crown and shall be conducive to successful transplantation.

Trees shall be supplied rootballed unless otherwise scheduled. All trees shall have been regularly undercut or transplanted. Root balled trees shall be supplied with a rootball made from a mechanical 'Damcon' undercutter or similar approved, shall be 90cm diameter, wrapped in bio-degradable burlap and tightened with a 90cm diameter tempered steel root ball cage.

Bare root trees shall have been lifted carefully to avoid tearing of major roots and to preserve a substantial proportion of smaller and fibrous roots. Trees shall have been grown on their own roots. Budded or grafted trees will be rejected.

2.4 Shrubs

Shrubs shall be of the minimum size specified in the schedules, with several stems originating from or near ground level and of reasonable bushiness, healthy, well grown, and with a good root system. Pots or containers shall be as scheduled. Plants shall not be pot bound, nor with roots deformed or restricted. Bare root material will only be accepted where specified.

2.5 Herbicides

All herbicides will be approved under current regulations and proof of compliance provided where requested by the Landscape Architect

2.6 Weedkiller Application

All weedkiller shall be applied with properly designed equipment, maintained in good working order and calibrated to deliver the specified volume, evenly and without local over-dosing. Measure all quantities of weedkiller with a graduated measuring vessel.

2.7 Bulky Organic Manure/ Mushroom Compost

Bulky organic manure shall consist either of spent peat compost, mushroom compost, as described above, spent hops, or of well rotted farm manure. Farm manure shall consist of predominantly of faecal matter and shall be free of loose, dry straw and of undigested hay. Manure shall be free of surplus liquid effluent. This shall be used on mounds only. Well spent mushroom compost shall be used in all ornamental planting areas.

2.8 Fertilisers

Controlled release fertiliser N:P:K 15:9:11 plus trace elements - Osmocote plus or similar approved applied at specified rates. Fertiliser shall be supplied in sealed bags or containers bearing the manufacturer's name, the net weight and analysis.

2.9 Stakes for Extra heavy Standard Trees

Stakes shall be of peeled Larch, Pine or Douglas Fir, preserved with water-borne copper-chrome-arsenic to I.S. 131, to a net dry salt retention of 5.3 kg per cubic metre of timber. Stakes shall be turned, and painted one end. Size shall be 2700 x 75 mm diameter.

Set stakes vertically in the pit and drive before planting. Drive stake with a drive-all, wooden maul or cast-iron headed mallet, not with a sledge hammer.

2.10 Tree Ties

Tree ties shall be of rubber, P.V.C. or proprietary fabric laminate composition, and shall be strong and durable enough to hold the tree securely in all weather conditions for a period of three years. They shall be flexible enough to allow proper tightening of the tie.

Ties shall be min. 40 mm wide for standard trees. Provide a simple collar, free of rough or serrated edges, to prevent chafing. Provide for subsequent adjustment of the tie either by means of a buckle (nail tie to stake immediately behind it) or by leaving heads of securing nails slightly proud, to permit easy extraction and repositioning. All nails shall be galvanised.

2.11 Protection

The interval between the lifting of stock at the nursery and planting on site is to be kept to an absolute minimum. Plants shall be protected from drying out and from damage in transport. All stock awaiting planting on site shall be stored in a sheltered place protected from wind and frost, from drying out and from pilfering. Bare rooted plants not immediately required shall be heeled-in in a prepared trench, the bundles of plants first having been opened, the plants separated and each group separately heeled-in and clearly labelled. The roots shall be covered with moist peat or soil and shall be kept moist until planted. Pots shall not be removed until plants have been carried to their planting station. Plants packed in polythene must be stored in shade.

All forest transplants and bare root shrubs shall be wrapped in polythene from the time of lifting to conserve moisture. Except when heeled-in, they shall be protected in polythene at all times until planted into their final position on site.

Plants shall be handled with care at all times, including lifting in and despatch from the nursery. Plants or bundles of plants shall not be tossed, dropped or subjected to any stress likely to break fine roots.

2.12 Damage

Any roots damaged during lifting or transport shall be pruned to sound growth before planting. On completion of planting any broken branches shall be pruned.

2.13 Vine Weevil

Line out all container grown plants on level ground. Drench pots with 40 g of 40% Diazinon W.P. in 100 litres water. Allow to stand for at least three days before planting.

2.14 Setting Out

Setting out shall be from figured dimensions where indicated, and otherwise by scaling.

Shrubs and ground covers planted in mass shall be at the spacing indicated on the drawings. Shrubs shall not generally be planted closer to a kerb or to the edge of a planting area than a distance equal to half the spacing indicated for that species.

2.15 Site Preparation

Preliminary Weedkilling: To achieve weed free soil achieved within the current government guidelines.

Shrub Planting: Cultivate beds 225 mm deep, incorporating ameliorants evenly. Remove stones, rubbish over 50 mm dia.

2.16 Extra Heavy + Select Standard Tree Planting

Excavate tree pits to 1.2 cubic metres volume (1.2 m diameter x 1.0 m deep). The base of the pit shall be broken up to a depth of 15 cm and glazed sides roughened. Supply and drive 2nr stakes.

For planting in areas of made up ground, load and carry topsoil from stockpile on site. In undisturbed ground, backfill with excavated material. Mix the following ameliorants evenly throughout the topsoil while it is stacked beside the pit. (Quantities are calculated for a pit of the specified dimensions):-

Soil ameliorant: 0.047 cubic m (equivalent to manure 6 cm deep over 1 m dia. of tree pit).
Osmocote plus: 250 gm

Trees shall be planted at the same depth as in nursery, as indicated by the soil mark on the stem of the trees. They shall be centred in the planting pit and planting upright. The roots shall be spread to take up their normal disposition. Fit tie.

2.17 Planting of Shrubs and C.G. Transplants

Remove all plastic and non-degradable wrappings and containers before planting. Make four vertical cuts with a sharp knife on the quadrants through the edge of C.G. rootballs to sever girdling roots. Excavate hole to min. 10 cm greater diameter than the root spread, and to a depth to allow planting to same depth as in the nursery. Spread out roots of bare root species. Backfill in layers of not more than 10 cm, firming each layer and on completion.

2.18 Replacements

The planting will be inspected in April and September following planting (refer to implementation programme). Any tree or shrub found to have died from any cause shall be replaced. Replacement planting shall conform in all respects with this Specification, including all specified excavation, provision and incorporation of all fertilisers and ameliorants, and weedkiller treatments.

2.19 **IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME**

Programme is subject to alteration dependent on progress of construction works of the site.
A **provisional** programme is as follows but is subject to review at time of appointment of the Landscape Contractor.

	<u>Approx. Time</u>	<u>Element</u>
CRITICAL DATE:	Within first planting season	Start Planting
CRITICAL DATE:	Before March of first planting season	Complete Bareroot Planting
CRITICAL DATE:	March /September after completion of build	Start Seeding
CRITICAL DATE	First Growing Season	Assessment of Plant Establishment
CRITICAL DATE	First leaf out after 12 months from PC	End of Defects Liability Period

Refer to item 2.18 on replacements

Landscape Management

1.0 Introduction

The initial maintenance contract will cover a period of two years. The contract will then be reviewed by the management company on an annual basis by the management company.

The specifications and operations are grouped under the following headings:

Grassland – General
Amenity/Ornamental Grass Areas
Natural/Wildflower Grass Areas
Shrub borders
Ground cover
Hedges
Newly planted trees
Woodland Planting
General litter clearance
Hard paved surfaces

2.0 GRASS AREAS

2.3.1 Natural / Wildflower Grass Areas

2.3.2 Maintenance Objective

To restrict the growth of the coarse species, in order to provide more room for the more desirable ones, through control of nutrition.

2.3.3 Maintenance Operations

a Cutting

Cutting should only be done when the sward is dry.

Use a strimmer with a blade attachment or a finger/sickle bar mower.

With Tractor driven machinery cut a meadow after mid-day when the grass gets stiffer.

Use metal blades, not plastic.

Start the cutting of the meadow from the middle outwards to allow wildlife to escape

b Gap creation

Similar to scarifying a lawn, gap creation is required to scrape open soil each autumn to allow new seedlings to replace plants that have died off.

Use a Chain harrow turned upside down or a rake to pull away the dead hay that is left after cutting. As most plants have stopped growing above the soil no harm will be done to them, but clump or rosette forming flowers like an ox-eye daisy can spread over areas of soil that other plants could be germinating on.

Rake these plants or cut them hard back with a grass strimmer (use blade). Remove the dead thatch of grass covering the soil, it kills seedlings and causes mould. Spot weed killing of grasses and weeds may be done at this time. Remove the hay every year.

After gap creation spray off or root out any creeping White Clover or creeping Buttercup, they ruin most meadows. Do not kill the larger leaved non-creeping Red Clover as we include it in the mixtures. Red Clover has a single non-spreading taproot, White Clover spreads or creeps very fast on certain soils.

c Long-term Meadow Maintenance

By the third year the meadow will settle down and does not require much maintenance. The general rule is to cut a meadow and remove cuttings once in late July or in the autumn. The meadow can be mown or topped between October and April during mild winters if growth exceeds 25cm.

d Spring meadows

To encourage spring flowering species cut spring meadows and all low growing areas once in spring, no later than 15th April and again when they have finished flowering after 21st June. Remove all cuttings & rake.

e Summer meadows

Cut a summer meadow before 21st May at the very latest and again when the meadow has finished flowering after 21st August again at the latest.

f Late summer meadows

Cut late summer meadows and tall growing meadows up to July 1st and cut back flowers after October 21st or leave it until early springtime the following year. Always remove 'cut' materials. Most wildflowers will die if grass cuttings are not removed.

g Where paths are required through meadow areas they should be mown regularly and kept at least 2m wide to prevent surrounding vegetation from obscuring the path.

3. PLANTING AREAS

3.1 Shrub Areas - General

Shrub areas must be kept weed free, particularly of perennial weeds, to allow planting to give early cover. However, the plants may be required to be thinned so that the shrubs that are retained are able to achieve an attractive form. This may involve removing the intermediate plants soon after shoots are touching.

3.1.1 Maintenance Objective

Maintain shrub growth to cover as much as possible of the border area and allowing the individual plants to achieve as nearly as possible their natural form. Maintain the borders free of visible weeds and shape and prune the shrubs to avoid obstructing pathways or blocking light to, or adhering to windows.

3.1.2 Maintenance Operations

a) After planting, if appropriate and in season for the species involved, prune shrubs to develop their desirable ornamental characteristics. At the same time remove intermediate plants that are restricting the natural and attractive development of their neighbours. Remove all arisings from site.

b) Lightly cultivate the surface soil, to a depth of approximately 50 mm, remove or bury all annual weed or natural litter and break any surface capping. Take special care to avoid unnecessary damage to the shrub plants and ensure that all the shrubs are firmly bedded in the soil. Leave the surface with a fine and even tilth with soil crumbs of less than 50 mm in diameter. Once a year operation in early winter.

Note: This operation is only essential where the soil is compacted or as a means of incorporating mulch. Not required where the areas are mulched.

c) Maintain the soil surface substantially free of weeds (less than 10 per cent weed cover) by hand removal and spot treating with Glyphosate, or approved equivalent. Spot treatment at approximately four-weekly intervals in the main growing season, to a total of five times per season.

Note: As an alternative the borders can be regularly hand-hoed at up to two-weekly intervals in the main growing season, to 6 times per year. This procedure is recommended for the first year after planting when the plants may be more sensitive to contact herbicide damage and residual herbicides may not be used.

d) Immediately after planting or, when and where subsequently directed, mulch the surface of the border with a 50 mm layer of pulverised bark (maximum particle size 40 mm), or other approved equivalent. Thereafter, top dress the mulch as necessary and at least once a year to maintain effective cover. Spot treat or remove any emergent weeds as specified in c) above but do not cultivate or incorporate the mulch into the soil.

e) Replacement of plants at end of natural life or dead/damaged/vandalised plants:

Use pits and plants to original specification or to match the size of the adjacent or nearby plants of the same species, whichever is the greater.

f) Removal of dead plant material

At the end of the growing season, check all shrubs and remove dead foliage, dead wood, and broken or damaged branches and stems.

g) Pruning ornamental shrubs

General: prune to encourage healthy and bushy growth and desirable ornamental features, eg flowers, fruit, autumn colour, stem colour.

Suckers: Remove by cutting back level with the source stem or root.

- h) Pruning times of flowering species of shrubs or roses:-
Winter flowering shrubs: Spring
Shrubs flowering between March and July: Immediately after flowering period
Shrubs flowering between July and October: Back to old wood in winter
Rose bushes: Early spring to encourage basal growths and a balanced, compact habit.
- h) Thinning by removal / transplanting of surplus plants
Surplus plants should be removed during the winter period to prevent overcrowding.

3.2 Ground Cover - General

Described as dense, low-growing plants, which cover the ground and smother any weeds. Ground-cover needs careful establishment, to ensure that any perennial weeds are eliminated.

3.2.1 Maintenance Objective

Maintain a dense, weed free cover of healthy growth, clipped or pruned as necessary to give a neat and tidy finish and contained within the planted area.

3.2.2 Maintenance Operations

- a) Maintain the area substantially free of weeds (less than 10 per cent of weed cover at maximum) by hand removal or spot treating any emergent weeds during the growing season with Glyphosate, or approved equivalent. Spot treatment or weed removal at approximately four-weekly intervals in the main growing season, to 5 times per year in total. Frequency of sprays to drop, as the plants establish.
- b) Trim and tidy the plants once a year in the winter months, to remove dead vegetation or overgrowing branches. Remove all arisings from site. The amount of work will vary according to the species.

3.3 Hedges - General

3.3.1 Maintenance Objective

Regularly clip hedges to maintain a uniform and tidy appearance (according to the type of hedge and situation) and a well-developed cover of vegetation over the whole of the hedge surface. Control any weed or grass growth at the base of the hedge so that it does not detract from the overall appearance or adversely compete with the hedge.

3.3.2 Maintenance Operations

- a) Clip the top and sides of the hedge to maintain true and even levels, with the width at the top less than that at the base, removing current growth rather than old wood and using suitable mechanical cutters to maintain the shape and height. Remove any cuttings lodged in the surface of the hedge and rake up and remove all arisings.
- b) Trimming rapidly establishing hedges – Allow to reach planned height as rapidly as possible. Trim back lateral branches moderately to establish required shape
- c) Trimming slowly establishing hedges – cut back hard in June and September to encourage bushy growth down to ground level, allow to reach planned dimensions only by gradual degrees, depending on growth rate and habit

Allow for the operation to be carried out to suit the species and position of the hedge.

- Formal ornamental or Yew hedge - once every 8 weeks in the main growing season (2 cuts per year).
- Hawthorn hedges - once a year in the autumn or winter but with an additional cut in early June where it overhangs footpaths. To a specified height and profile using suitable mechanical cutters.
- Beech hedge - once a year in late summer and additionally in July if deemed necessary.
- b) Maintain weed free a 750 metre wide band at the base of the hedge (weeds at a maximum height of 100 mm and a maximum ground cover of 10%) by regular hand removal, hoeing or by the use of approved herbicide. Allow for control once every 6 weeks in the main growing season (4 times per year).

- c) Replacement of plants through damage – plants that have died or are damaged should be replaced as soon as possible. If it is necessary to wait until the planting season to replace such plants, the dead or damaged plant should be removed and the area kept tidied up until such time as it is appropriate to perform the replacement operations.

3.4 Care of Newly Planted Trees - General

Young trees will need regular attention to ensure establishment. The most important operation is to keep the soil around the base of the tree free from weeds or grass and to ensure secure and correct staking.

3.4.1 Maintenance Objective

Establish a stable and healthily growing tree with a well-shaped framework for future growth.

3.4.2 Maintenance Operations

- a) Maintain a 1 m diameter circle of plant-free soil around the base of each isolated tree by hoeing or the use of approved herbicide other than a residual.

Allow for hoeing up of soil once every 4 weeks in the growing season (5 times per year). Allow for herbicide treatment once in the winter or spring and 3 additional treatments.

- b) Cut back any tall vegetation that is threatening to shade or smother the young tree (i.e. taller vegetation growing from outside the 1 m weed free area). Allow for cutting back regularly (3/4 times a year).

- c) Water the newly planted trees throughout the summer months (May to August) as required after any period of 4 weeks without significant rainfall (less than 5 mm). Apply sufficient water to thoroughly wet the top 150 mm of soil around the tree roots. This will normally require approximately 10 litres for a seedling or whip and 20 litres for a standard tree. Supply/transport of water to be agreed with the client.

- d) Check stakes and ties for firmness and support and adjust as necessary. Allow for checking twice a year, preferably in late spring and late summer. Replace loose, broken or decayed stakes to original specification. Adjust, refix or replace defective ties, allowing for growth and to prevent chafing – where chafing has occurred, reposition or replace ties to prevent further chafing. Loose or defective guards Adjust, refix or replace to original specification and to prevent chafing

- e) Firm the soil around the roots to ensure that the plant is securely planted in the ground and upright. Allow for firming once in the spring after planting.

- f) Pruning:

- Formative prune to remove any dead, diseased or damaged shoots and create a balanced form for future growth. Allow for pruning once in the season after planting and again in the 3rd year.
- Do not prune during the late winter/early spring sap flow period.
- Young trees up to 4 metres high:
Crown prune by removing dead branches and reducing selected side branches by one third to preserve a balanced head and ensure the development of a single strong leader.
Remove duplicated branches and potentially weak or tight forks. In each case cut back to live wood
- Whips or feathered trees: do not prune in the first season after planting. Formative prune whips at the end of the second season after planting taking care to ensure that a strong leader is established.
- Pruning in accordance with good horticultural and arboricultural practice
- Removing branches: Do not damage or tear the stem
- Wounds: Keep as small as possible and cut cleanly back to sound wood
- Cutting: Make cuts above and sloping away from an outward facing healthy bud, angled so that water will not collect on cut area.
- Larger branches: Prune neither flush nor leaving a stub, but using the branch bark ridge or branch collar as a pruning guide.
- Appearance: Thin, trim and shape each specimen appropriately to species, location, season, and stage of growth, leaving a well-balanced natural appearance.
- Tools: use clean sharp secateurs, hand saws or other approved tools. Trim off ragged edges of bark or wood with a sharp knife.
- Disease or fungus: Give notice if detected.
- Growth retardants, fungicide or sealant: do not use unless instructed

- g) Removal of tree guards, stakes, ties, rabbit guards: Remove at the end of the second planting season. Fill stake holes with lightly compacted soil

- h) Replace trees that have died or are seriously damaged according to the original specification.

- i) Tree/hedge guy wires
Operations – Replace or secure loose or missing guy wires
Adjust to suit stem growth and to provide correct and uniform tension

3.5 Woodland Planting

3.5.1 Maintenance Objective

The developer will take responsibility for the aftercare of the landscape development. The developer will ensure that there are inspections of the planting every second year thereafter for the first ten years.

3.5.2 Maintenance Operations

Five years after practical completion, the planting will be inspected and assessed on the basis that it is growing well, is self-supporting and has had the stake removed. During the 5-10 year period after practical completion, the planting will be kept clear of noxious weeds such as bramble, nettles etc.

At the ten-year stage, a thinning programme will commence selectively removing weak or poor trees thus helping the more healthy and vigorous trees develop unimpeded.

Thereafter the planting will be examined at 10-year intervals with thinning and coppicing carried out as required together with underplanting and interplanting as required.

Progress reports will be produced following each site visit analysing the success rate, health, vigour and maintenance performance of the planting. These reports will set out any measures required to ensure the successful establishment of the planting.

4. OTHER

4.1 Litter Clearance - General

4.1.1 Maintenance Objective

Collect and dispose of offsite, all extraneous litter and rubbish on a regular basis so that its presence is not detrimental to the appearance of the site. (This means that the site should be free from litter after each visit to site).

4.1.2 Maintenance Operations

- a) Collect and dispose of offsite, all extraneous rubbish, not arising from maintenance works, which is detrimental to the appearance of the site. This rubbish to include stones (over 50mm dia. which may be buried), bricks, debris, paper, confectionery and other wrappings, bottles, cans and plastic containers.

This operation is to be carried out at regular intervals based in conjunction with other maintenance visits and operations.

- c) Collect and dispose of offsite, all extraneous matter which has deliberately been deposited on the site by persons known or unknown (fly-tipping). Such matter to include bricks, rubble, garden and household refuse, discarded domestic appliances, furniture and scrap metal. Priced per occasion based on an estimate of the volume of material to be collected.

4.2 Paved Areas - General

4.2.1 Maintenance Objective

Regularly sweep or clean paved surfaces to keep it clear of litter or other debris that will detract from the appearance of the site. Keep the surface free from weed (including moss) growth and all associated drainage gullies in working order.

4.2.2 Maintenance Operations

- a) Sweep all paved areas at regular intervals and remove all arisings from the site. Frequency may vary according to time of year or other maintenance operations. Hand or mechanical - sweeping may be used.
- b) Control all annual weed (moss) growth by the application of residual weedkiller. A single application in March/April should normally be sufficient but follow-up spot treatment may be necessary in late summer.
- c) Clear silt and extraneous matter from the drainage gullies, including the lifting and replacement of the drain cover. Programme for once every six months but more frequently where silting up is a particular problem.
- f) When instructed grit all paths with 2mm down angular grit. When paths have cleared of ice, the Contractor will sweep up all grit and remove all arisings off site.

