Parcel N
Arborfield Green
Wokingham

HEDGEROW MITIGATION STRATEGY

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (2nd Edition, December 2017).

The facts stated in this report are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, and any opinions expressed are held genuinely and in accordance with the accepted standards of the profession. ACD Environmental Ltd is a CIEEM Registered Practice.

Client:	Crest Nicolson
Site/job:	Parcel N, Arborfield Green, Wokingham
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. ACD Environmental Ltd have been commissioned to produce a Hedgerow Mitigation Strategy for Parcel N, Arborfield Green, Wokingham to address **Condition 19** of the outline planning consent for the Reserved Matters Application (RMA) report at Arborfield. Parcel N is undergoing an RMA under the outline planning consent for Arborfield Green (O/2014/2280, Wokingham Borough Council).

1.2. Previous hedgerow survey work was originally conduced in 2014 by AECOM Ltd[1].

1.3. This document also contains ongoing management prescriptions for the site, to ensure that the measures and habitats are protected and maintained in perpetuity.

1.4. Implementing all of the practices, techniques, and prescriptions in this document will help to ensure that there will be no impacts on important hedgerows, and the development will be in conformity with relevant legislation and planning policy.

[1] AECOM (2014) *Arborfield Garrison – Hedgerow Survey Report and Strategy*

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 ACD Environmental Ltd was instructed by Crest Nicolson in Feburary 2025 to produce a Hedgerow Mitigation Strategy for Parcel N, Arborfield, Wokingham. This land is hereafter referred to as the 'Approved Development Site'.

2.2 Outline permission for: Demolition of buildings and phased redevelopment of Arborfield Garrison and adjoining land for: Up to 2,000 new dwellings (including up to 80 units of extra care housing). District centre comprising a food store up to 4,000 sq m gross with up to a further 3,500 sq m (gross) floor space within Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2 (with residential above - Class C3), and transport interchange, village square, car parking, servicing and drop off area. Up to a further 1,500sq m (gross) floor space within Classes D1 and D2. Neighbourhood centre to provide up to 300 sq m (gross) floor space within Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2, with parking/servicing area. Secondary school for up to 1,500 pupils (Class D1) including sports pitches, floodlit all-weather pitch, and indoor swimming pool and parking areas. Up to three-form primary school (Class D1) with sports pitch and parking areas. Associated phased provision of: car parking; public open space including sports pitches, informal/incidental open space, children's play areas including multi-use games area (MUGA), skate park, community gardens/allotments; landscaping/buffer areas; boundary treatments; new roads, footpaths, cycleways and bridleways; sustainable urban drainage systems, including flood alleviation works.

2.3 PART 2 - FULL PERMISSION FOR phased development of: Creation of two new areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) (In the north-eastern part of the application site ("Northern SANGS") and at West Court ("West Court SANGS") including car parking areas, path/walkways, fencing and associated landscaping; re-use of existing MoD gymnasium for sports/community uses/centre (Classes D1/D2; new roundabout junction to A327 Reading Road; junction improvements to Langley Common Road, Baird Road and Biggs Lane; junction improvements and new access at Biggs Lane/Princess Marina Drive; re-use and improvements to existing site accesses from Biggs Lane was granted by Wokingham Borough Council on 1st April 2015 (planning ref: **O/2014/2280**).

2.4 This report has been produced to address **Condition 19** of the planning permission. **Condition 19** states:

"The reserved matters for any phase of the development shall include a detailed hedgerow mitigation and compensation strategy. Each detailed hedgerow mitigation and compensation strategy shall be in accordance with the submitted Arborfield Garrison – Hedgerow Survey Report and Strategy (AECOM Environment, Sept 2014) and shall include.

a. Details of any buffer zones required to protected the retained important and/or species rich hedgerows, such buffer zones to be a minimum of 5m from the Root Protection Area unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

b. The buffer zones required to protect the retained hedgerows should be free from any development including residential gardens.

c. Details of measures to ensure that removal of any hedgerow does not adversely affect the ecological permeability of the site.

d. A detailed method statement for the translocation of any important and/or species rich hedgerows to be removed as a result of the sub phase of the - 14 Application No: O/2014/2280 development, unless mitigation could be better achieved in ecological terms through new hedgerow creation.

e. A detailed hedgerow compensation strategy to address all other significant negative impacts on the local hedgerow network as a result of the sub phase of the development.

f. Management arrangements for the receptor site that will secure the long term future of the translocated habitats and species.

The mitigation and compensation strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure appropriate mitigation for the biodiversity impact of the development in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP."

Competence

2.5 This report has been written by Prue Hilditch. Prue is an Assistant Ecologist and has been involved in a wide range of protected species surveys and Extended UK Habitat Classification Surveys. Prue has experience undertaking Biodiversity Net Gain assessments, Ecological Impact Assessments (ECIAs), Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEAs), and is a Qualifying member of CIEEM.

2.5 A Technical Review of this report has been undertaken in line with ACD Environmental Ltd's Quality Assurance procedures by John Constable. John is the managing director of ACD Environmental Ltd.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Approved Development Site comprises approximately 2.4 hectares of land. The Ordnance Survey Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is: SU770653.

3.2 The Approved Development Site is situated in a suburban location surrounded by semi improved neutral grassland and to the north and the west there is a line of trees. The Approved Development Site is 4.85 km to Wokingham train station **Image 1**.

Image 1: Approximate boundary of the Approved Development Site. Source: QGIS 2025.

Hedgerow Surveys

3.3 A suite of hedgerow surveys was conducted between 28th-30th July and 6th August 2014 by AECOM Ltd to identify species-rich and important hedgerows within Arborfield Garrison and West Court SANGS. Full details of these surveys are provided within the Hedgerow Survey Report and Strategy produced by AECOM in 2014.

4. RESULTS AND EVALUATION

4.1. A total of 31 significant hedgerows have been identified across the whole scheme area, with 16 classified as 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997) and 24 considered species-rich, containing five or more native woody species (Defra, 2007). Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* was the most frequently occurring and dominant woody species, present in 38% of the surveyed hedgerows, followed by blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* as the second most common. Some hedgerows also contain non-native invasive species, including cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and *Rhododendron* sp., which may require management as part of the enhancement process.

4.2. A total of 11 hedgerows will be impacted by the proposed development across the whole scheme, 7 of which are 'important' and all of which are species rich. Details of these hedgerows can be found in Figure 1.

4.3. Two of the hedgerows will need to be partially removed or shortened to accommodate the SUDS infrastructure, while nine others will require partial fragmentation to allow for the construction of the new road network. In total, approximately 408 metres of hedgerow—representing about 5% of the 7,486.5 metres present on site—will be lost as a result of the full development.

Ref no.	Hedgerow Designation (Important/Species Rich/Species Poor)	Reason for Removal	Approximate Length of Removal (m)
3	Important (species rich)	Hedgerow will be fragmented with a section of hedgerow being removed to facilitate the new road network	11
4	Important (species rich)	Hedgerow length will be shortened with a section of hedgerow being removed in the construction of SUDS.	68
12	Important (species rich)	Hedgerow will be fragmented with a section of hedgerow being removed to facilitate the new road network	10
13	Species rich	Hedgerow will be fragmented with a section of hedgerow being removed to facilitate the new road network	36
14	Important (species rich)	Hedgerow will be fragmented with a section of hedgerow being removed to facilitate the new road network	10
15	Species rich	Hedgerow will be fragmented with a section of hedgerow being removed to facilitate the new road network	10
16	Important (species rich)	Hedgerow will be fragmented with a section of hedgerow being removed to facilitate the new road network	20
17	Important (species rich)	Hedgerow will be fragmented with a section of hedgerow being removed to facilitate the new road network	72
18	Species rich	Hedgerow length will be shortened with a section of hedgerow being removed in the construction of SUDS / Village Green. N.B. This loss of hedgerow is to facilitate the creation of the 'Village Green' and Linear Park and nearby SUDs. Hedgerow is to be replaced with planting and features of ecological value.	150
18	Species rich	Hedgerow will be fragmented with a section of hedgerow being removed to facilitate the new road network	11
19	Important (species rich)	Hedgerow will be fragmented with a section of hedgerow being removed to facilitate the new road network	10
Total			**408**

Figure 1: Hedgerow removal and fragmentation (Source: Arborfield Garrison - Hedgerow Survey Report and Strategy - AECOM 2014)

4.4. There were no ‘important’ or species-rich hedgerows identified within the boundaries of Parcel N, however a species rich hedgerow (hedgerow reference #18) was located outside of the south-east boundary. This hedgerow appears to have already undergone some removal to facilitate the new road access between Parcel N and Parcel RE. There is potential for the proposed development within Parcel N to damage this off-site hedgerow during the construction phase, therefore the following avoidance and mitigation measures should be followed.

5. MITIGATION STRATEGY

5.1. The retained hedgerow will be protected during construction through their inclusion within Biodiversity Protection Zones (BPZs). The BPZs, as a minimum, would extend 5m from their root protection areas (RPAs) as defined within the Tree Protection Plan (Appendix 13.7, SJA, 2015). They will also be subject to minimal management in order to benefit wildlife that uses this habitat.

5.2. No clearance or pruning work is anticipated on the off-site hedgerow, however, should this occur works must be undertaken with due regard for nesting birds. Ideally works should take place between September to February avoid the bird nesting season; however, where this is not feasible works between March to August can proceed on the condition that a nesting bird check is undertaken by an ecologist within 48 hours prior to the works starting. If the ecologist discovers an active nest during this check, works must stop, and an appropriate buffer zone (as determined by the ecologist, usually 5m) must be established around the nest. The buffer must be left in place until the ecologist confirms that the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

5.3. All operations will be carried out in a sensitive manner, taking care not to unnecessarily damage the hedgerows that are being worked on, or any other neighbouring vegetation.

6. ENHANCEMENT, MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Retained hedgerow management

6.1. Native species-rich hedgerows are to be cut on a rotational basis whereby one side of the hedgerow is cut alternatively each year (i.e. year 1 one side, year 2 hedgerow top, year 3 remaining side). Native species-rich hedgerows will be maintained at a minimum height of 2m and minimum width of 1.5m to maximise opportunities for biodiversity. At this size or larger, a hedgerow will provide shelter for nesting birds and foraging habitat for insects, bats and birds.

6.2. Trimming operations should be timed to avoid the breeding bird season, which runs from February-August inclusive. However, where this is not feasible works between February to August can proceed on the condition that a nesting bird check is undertaken by an ecologist within 24 hours prior to the works starting. If the ecologist discovers an active nest during this check, works must stop, and an appropriate buffer zone (as determined by the ecologist, usually 5m) must be established around the nest. The buffer must be left in place until the ecologist confirms that the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

6.3. All hedgerows will be checked annually for signs of damage, deterioration or distress. If hedgerows are in poor condition, growing conditions will be amended as necessary. If the hedgerow does not recover it will be replaced in the next available planting season.

Hedgerow planting/enhancement

6.4. To compensate for the loss of the small section in hedgerow #18 to facilitate site access, enhancement and/or additional planting will occur in identified locations within the SANGs sites. These will be determined through liaison with relevant stakeholders by ‘on the ground’ conditions’ to ensure the selected locations hold suitability for hedgerow planting and will maximise biodiversity and recreational value in the area.

6.5. Enhancement efforts will involve supplementary planting to fill gaps in existing hedgerows, as well as the creation of new hedgerows to connect existing habitats across the site, such as ponds and historic hedgerow features. Overall, this will lead to a net increase in hedgerow length. The total length of enhanced hedgerow will be at least 1.5 times greater than any hedgerow removed, ensuring the scheme delivers a measurable net gain.

6.6. For hedgerows identified as species-rich and possessing a mature structure, consideration should be given to carefully removing and storing mature hedge plants for potential reinstatement following construction. While the survival of translocated material cannot be guaranteed, it may still offer structural benefits to the replanted hedgerow. This could support hedgerow-dwelling wildlife and promote the long-term development of the hedgerow through encouraging new growth.

6.7. The species mix of the replanted hedgerows should be diverse, without dominance of any certain species in order to provide greater diversity of food sources and habitats. Rapid-growing species such as bramble and elder should be avoided, as they are likely to rapidly colonise new hedgerows and reduce biodiversity.

Planting and management

6.8. All new planting should ideally take place during the Autumn or Spring. Bare-root stock can be planted between the end of October and the end of March. Generally, it is best to plant early in the season, before January, to allow the plants more time to establish a network of feeder roots before the onset of spring. Never plant during freezing weather or if the ground is waterlogged. Ideally plant on a still, moist day, to minimise root drying and stress to the plants.

6.9. Unless there is a known problem with rabbits or hares, spiral guards may prove counterproductive, encouraging spindly growth and being difficult to remove as well as unsightly. Therefore, it is recommended that guards are not used unless considered necessary. However, during establishment, it is recommended that timber and wire fencing is installed along the edges of the new hedgerows, to prevent pedestrian access and trampling, and to discourage over-grazing.

6.10. Double staggered row hedgerows need to be planted at a width of at least 40cm between each row, with four to six plants to be planted per metre.

6.11. A bark mulch should be applied and maintained at an even spread, 75mm deep, of consistent thickness at the base of the new section of hedgerow to ensure that it is effective as a weed suppressant and moisture conserver.

6.12. Where hedgerows and informal native shrubs meet informal/public open space meadow/tussocky grassland, a scalloped edge should be maintained to provide a diversity of habitat niches suitable for use by invertebrate species and reptiles. Ruderal growth within this area should be encouraged by leaving a 1m margin of uncut grass where this meets scrub/hedgerow. However, if there is vigorous growth of undesirable species such as common nettle then selective removal should take place.

6.13. During the first three years of the new hedgerow planting, plants should be cut annually to ensure the development of bushy growth low down in the hedgerow. Dead plants should also be replaced in autumn, over the first few years.

6.14. Native species-rich hedgerows are to be cut on a rotational basis whereby one side of the hedgerow is cut alternatively each year (i.e. year 1 one side, year 2 hedgerow top, year 3 remaining side). Native species-rich hedgerows will be maintained at a minimum height of 2m and minimum width of 1.5m to maximise opportunities for biodiversity. At this size or larger, a hedgerow will provide shelter for nesting birds and foraging habitat for insects, bats and birds.

6.15. Trimming operations should be timed to avoid the breeding bird season, which runs from February-August inclusive. However, where this is not feasible works between February to August can proceed on the condition that a nesting bird check is undertaken by an ecologist within 24 hours prior to the works starting. If the ecologist discovers an active nest during this check, works must stop, and an appropriate buffer zone (as determined by the ecologist, usually 5m) must be established around the nest. The buffer must be left in place until the ecologist confirms that the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

6.16. All hedgerows will be checked annually for signs of damage, deterioration or distress. If hedgerows are in poor condition, growing conditions will be amended as necessary. If the hedgerow does not recover it will be replaced in the next available planting season.

7. CONCLUSIONS

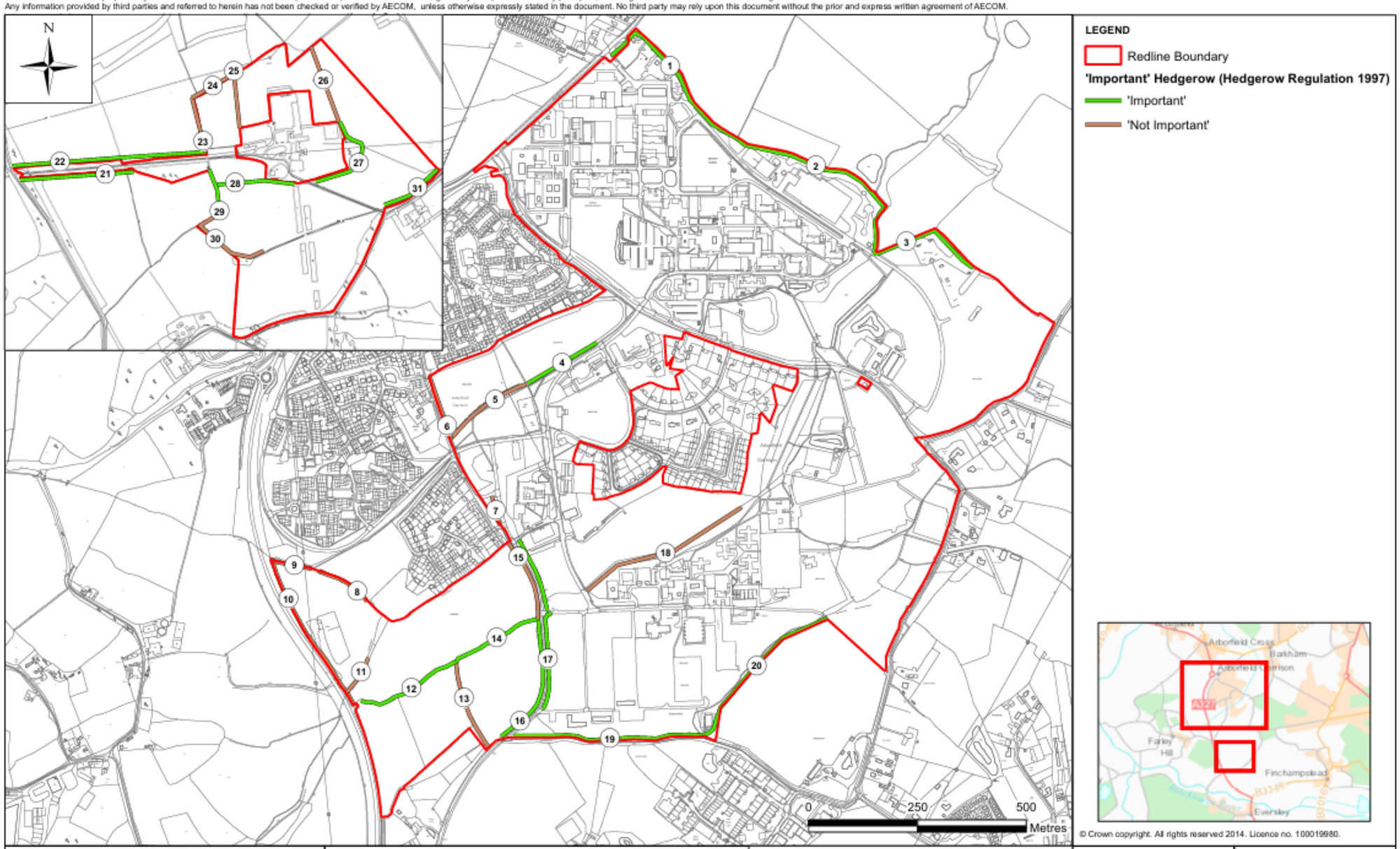
7.1. This Hedgerow Mitigation Strategy has been produced to fulfil **Condition 19** of the planning consent for the Approved Development Site (Wokingham Borough Council planning ref**: O/2014/2280**).

7.2. No 'important' or species rich hedgerows are located within the Approved Development Sites boundaries. One species-rich native hedgerow is situated outside of the south-east boundary that will be protected during the construction phase.

7.3. Additional planting and/or enhancement to existing hedgerows within the SANG will be required to compensate for the loss of a small section of the southern off-site native hedgerow, referred to as hedgerow #18 within AECOMs original hedgerow survey report, removed to facilitate site access.

7.4. With implementation of the measures outlined within this report, it is considered that there will be no impacts on hedgerows, and the Approved Development Site will be in conformity with relevant legislation and policy.

APPENDIX 1: ECOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT HEDGEROWS (AECOM, 2014)



Client: Crest Nicholson	Title: ECOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT HEDGEROWS
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Design:	ST	Drawn:	ST
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Date:	19/09/2014	Scale at A3:	1:8,000
Drawing Number:	FIGURE A		A3

APPENDIX 2: HEDGEROW MITIGATION PLAN

APPENDIX 3: SOFT LANDSCAPE PLANS

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