



Landscape Design Scheme and Tree & Plant Implementation and Maintenance Specification – GTO House, Hare Hatch

Ref - 2608/11

April 2026

1. Overview

This document outlines the proposed tree and plant management strategy for the new soft landscaping scheme for GTO House, Hare Hatch. It details the additional hard and soft landscaping elements to be added as part of the proposal, the replacement strategy, maintenance schedule, and biodiversity enhancements.

2. Additional Soft Landscaping Elements and increased biodiversity

As part of the new soft landscape scheme the following elements will be added. Each element will add to the biodiversity of the site, creating new and usable habitats for different forms of wildlife. All elements will also add colour and seasonal interest, and some will also increase privacy for GTO staff, visitors and for neighbouring properties.

- **Hedging:** 118 metres of Mixed Native Hedging, 120 metres of Portuguese, 60 metres of low Lavender hedging and 17 metres of Pyracantha hedging.
- **Trees:** 14 standards/multistems trees and 12 pleached Photinia to be added in various locations. Again, these will aid with screening and increase the diversity of the trees on site, adding more spring blossom and autumn berries.
- **Shrubs:** a variety of evergreen and deciduous shrubs and herbaceous plants will be added in numerous new planting areas as a result of the project. These will add some height, structure and ornamental interest and provide a middle level of cover for visiting birds and insects.
- **Wildflower borders:** A mixture of perennial wildflower seeds to be added in both open and woodland areas around the property, provide roughly 950m² of highly biodiverse wildflowers meadow.
- **Water Features:** The addition of a new large pond in the western meadow will create a new and diverse habitat for wildlife. This is enhanced by the addition of a new Bog Garden feature. The existing formal pond will also be enlarged and planted with marginals.

For details of trees, hedging and plants see Planting Plans Ref: **2608/03 to 2608/09**

Areas of new Soft and Hard landscaping are displayed on the layout reference plan **2608/10**

3. New Hard Landscaping Features

There are only a few new hard landscaping elements being added within this Landscape Design Scheme, as displayed on the Outline Plan 2608/01 and layout plan 2608/10. The majority of the new hard landscaping involves simply replacing existing paving with new paving slabs and some of the existing tarmac driveways being edged with setts.

There is a small sections of new tarmac being added to the driveway that crosses to the north of the tennis courts. This equates to roughly 40m² of new tarmac.

4. Future Tree Replacement Strategy

- If any of the new are removed due to die back or becoming unsafe (see decision criteria below) they will be replaced with new trees of the same species. If any of the retained trees are removed for similar reasons they will be replaced native species (from the list below), chosen for biodiversity benefits and suitability to the local environment.
- **Species Selection:** Future replacements may include:
 - Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*)
 - Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
 - Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*)
 - Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)
 - Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
 - Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
 - Scotch Pine (*Pinus sylvestrus*)

Planting will occur in the next appropriate season after a tree is removed. Thought will be given to the limitation of fungal infection and tree specific diseases with the correct choice of alternative tree at each site, dependent on the infection and likely repetition in a similar species.

5. Tree Monitoring & Maintenance

A. Monitoring Plan

- **Visual Inspections:** Conducted twice a year (Spring & Autumn) by the property owner or a landscape professional, to assess tree health.
- **Arboricultural Assessments:** Every 3-5 years by a qualified tree specialist.
- **Storm Damage Inspections:** Carried out by the property owner or a landscape professional after any extreme weather events, to assess potential hazards.

B. Decision Criteria for Replanting

A tree will be replaced if any of the following are confirmed by a landscape professional or qualified tree specialist.

- **More than 50% canopy dieback** is observed.
- **Root decay, fungal infection, or structural failure** is confirmed.
- **The tree poses a safety risk** due to leaning, instability, or breakage.

C. Tree Maintenance Plan

- **Watering:** Once the trees are all well established, watering is only required in extreme periods of warm dry weather. (see below for more details on watering requirements).
- **Mulching:** Annual application of well rotted woodchip or bark mulch to retain moisture and suppress weeds. Mulch to be laid in Autumn.
- **Crown thinning and canopy lifting:** as and when required and/or guided by a landscape professional or qualified tree specialist.

6. Maintenance of Soft Landscaping

In addition to the maintenance of the trees (detailed above) all new planting will need to be maintained to aid the establishment of each plant and promote health of the planting element/habitat. Below is a list of maintenance requirements for the new areas of planting.

This section initially refers to the maintenance of the shrubs and hedging plants. Wildflower meadow maintenance is dealt with separately, below.

- **Pruning:** The hedges and pleached trees will require regular pruning. For a very simple approach, the general advice with shrubs and herbaceous plants is that they should be pruned after flowering. Particularly for any flowers that grow on specific stems, as a basic principal, these stems should be pruned back to the main body of the plant. For both hedging and pleached trees pruning is required to maintain the density of the feature while keeping each plant neat and under control.

- **Mulching:** Mulching helps to retain water around a plant rootball, prevents the growth of detrimental weeds and helps feed the plant with nutrients. It is suggested that an annual mulch is laid, or more often where necessary. Usually, the best time is before the winter or early spring. The general mulch should be a 3 to 6cm layer of mushroom compost or well rotten bark laid around the any areas of planting (not wildflower) trying not to smother the base or each plant. It is important that the bark is well rotted and not fresh, as pale wood chip would reduce the nutrients available.
- **Feeding.** It is suggested that a general fertilizer is applied at least two times a year, prior to the growth season and again halfway through (March and July). As a general rule, it suggested that a natural fertiliser like 'Blood, Fish Bone' is used. This provides a good balance of nutrients and is not chemically manufactured. However, sometimes there may be the need for a specific nutrient to aid an ailing or unsuccessful plant. These can be purchased in different forms so it is worth looking at the main nutrient ingredient. As a rough guide:
 - For plant and leaf growth – A nitrogen heavy feed (symbol = N)
 - For Flower/fruit growth – A phosphate heavy feed (symbol = P)
 - For root growth and early establishment – A potassium heavy feed (symbol K)
- **Watering:** This is generally a fairly common sense aspect of plant maintenance. All plants need a varying degree of water. Here are some general rules:
 - During the first year and particularly in the summer months, watering is most important as the plants establish. After that they will be more resilient.
 - Trees - the bigger they are the more water they need while establishing
 - If the weather is hot and dry more watering is needed, however, dry wind is also a big factor – especially for trees (it not all about the sun).
 - Think about what the plant is like or where it might be originally from. Eg Mediterranean plants such as Portuguese Laurel need less water, than some other plants.
 - Plants should always be watered at the base rather than be sprayed from above. Plants should be watered in the morning or evening, as afternoon sun can damage the wet leaves.
 - Otherwise, plants should be watered by eye – if the plant looks droopy or dry.
 - Finally – plants should not be overwatered – this can also damage the plant.
- **Replacement:** Where an evergreen plant has turned brown or black and where a deciduous plant fails to re-grow in the growing season, the plant may be dying or dead. Again, this is largely a commonsense decision. It should be noted that deciduous herbaceous plants may die back to the ground in autumn/winter, returning to above ground growth in the spring.

Where it is clear that a plant has died, it should be replaced with the same species of plant at a similar size, or at least to the original size as listed on the Plant Schedule 2543 03.

7. The Implementation and Maintenance of a Wildflower Woodland Area

The creation of a wildflower meadow is an effective and environmentally beneficial way to enhance biodiversity, support pollinators, and introduce natural beauty to a landscape. However, achieving a thriving meadow requires careful planning, appropriate site preparation, and consistent long-term management. The process can be divided into two main phases: implementation and maintenance.

- **Implementation:** begins with site selection and preparation. The ideal site has poor unfertile soil—conditions that favour wildflowers over aggressive grasses and weeds. Before sowing, the ground must be cleared of existing vegetation, typically by removing the top layer of nutrient-rich soil or using a combination of mechanical cultivation and natural depletion methods. Once the site is prepared, a seed mix appropriate to the local soil and climate should be chosen, prioritizing native species to maximize ecological value. The mix should balance perennial and annual species to ensure both quick colour and long-term stability. Sowing is best done in early autumn or spring, when soil moisture is adequate and temperatures are mild. Seeds are usually broadcast evenly across the surface and lightly raked in to ensure good soil contact without burying them too deeply.
- **Maintenance:** is crucial for the long-term success of a wildflower meadow. In the first year, regular weeding and cutting help control fast-growing grasses and annual weeds that could outcompete young wildflowers. Once established, the meadow should be cut once or twice a year—typically after flowering and seed set, around mid- to late summer. The wildflower area must never be mown, but chopped with either a strimmer or scythe. This allows the seeds to spread. However, the cuttings must be removed to prevent nutrient buildup, which would favour coarse grasses over wildflowers. Occasional scarification or reseeding may be needed to maintain diversity and fill in bare patches. Monitoring the meadow annually ensures that unwanted species do not dominate and that the ecological balance is maintained.

In conclusion, the implementation and maintenance of a wildflower meadow require patience, planning, and ongoing care. While the process may take several years to reach maturity, the result—a vibrant, self-sustaining habitat rich in colour, wildlife, and ecological value—makes the effort profoundly worthwhile.