

*Land adjacent Sonning Golf Club,
Pound Lane, Sonning*

For Alfred Homes Ltd

landscape maintenance plan

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1. Introduction

The site is located to the east of Sonning along Pound Lane and forms part of Sonning Gold Club.

The Clubhouse is situated to the east of the site. The Members Car Park lies immediately adjacent the site with a healthy Cypress hedge forming an effective screen between the site and the Clubhouse.

The core of the site is currently an open rough grassed area and the northern boundary to the Golf Course Driving Range is bounded by a recently planted, laid, 1.5m high native mix hedge.

The frontage of the site is screened by a deciduous tree belt of limited value with some scrubby understorey growth. The western boundary is more open, although there are a number of deciduous trees here that soften this edge. The land is generally level and there are no existing watercourses on, or adjacent, the site.

The proposal is to construct 13 dwellings, being a mix of detached and terraced houses, together with drives and parking areas.

The existing boundary vegetation is largely retained, with some minor scrub clearance along the frontage to allow new native planting to bolster this landscape screen in the long term.

New tree and hedge planting is concentrated within the core of the site to soften views and enclose garden boundaries. The central open space has a feature Pine tree in the middle, with Holly trees planted around the edges to filter views year round across this space.

There is some ornamental planting to soften the base of the new buildings and to improve the setting of the new dwellings.

The new native mix hedging will create additional wildlife habitats and the areas of wildflower grass will further bolster ecological enrichment of the site.

This document covers all new planting and hard landscape elements.

The soft landscape contract incorporates a 12-month maintenance period, which includes the replacement of any shrubs, groundcover, climbers or trees that fail to establish.

Following on from this, it is anticipated that maintenance responsibilities will be taken over by a private landscape contractor to be appointed by the clients with defects covered for a minimum of 5 years.

(Note: This document to be read with TGD Landscape Ltd Planting Plan Drawing No. 220 – 0101).

2. Overall Objectives

The overall objectives for the management works are as follows:

- To ensure the successful establishment and long-term health of all soft landscape elements.
- To maintain a neat and tidy finish to all elements so creating a high quality environment.
- To maintain the existing deciduous woodland along the frontage in a safe and healthy condition
- To continue improvements into the future by thorough and creative management.
- To ensure best Health and Safety practice at all times.

3. Management Specification

3.1 GENERALLY

All materials and workmanship are to be to the highest possible standards in accordance with relevant good practice.

All operatives must be appropriately skilled and experienced for the type and quality of work.

Operatives shall have the appropriate qualifications and Certification for application of herbicides and pesticides. All chemicals will be non-residual in the soil and non-toxic to humans and animals and shall be applied in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Chemicals shall be approved under 'The Control of Pesticides Regulations (as amended) 1986'.

Note: as of 1st March 2009 herbicides containing dichlobenil have been withdrawn from the market and products such as Casoron G, Casoron G4, Midstream GSR, etc should not be used.

Carry out work while soil and weather conditions are suitable.

Use only machinery and tools suitable for site conditions and the work carried out. Use hand tools around existing trees and in confined places.

All arisings are to be carted offsite.

Remove soil and arisings from hard surfaces and leave area in clean and tidy condition after maintenance operations are complete.

Collect litter from all soft and hard landscape areas and cart offsite.

3.2 NEW TREES (*note: No Ash tree planting proposed due to on-going Ash dieback threat*)

Management objective:

Establish a stable and healthily growing tree within three years from planting with a well-shaped framework for future healthy growth. Keep overall appearance neat and tidy including the base of the trees.

Management operations:

- a) Maintain a 1.2 metre diameter circle of weed-free soil around the base of the tree using approved herbicide. Allow for herbicide treatment once in the winter or spring to maintain a weed-free mulch.
- b) In the first two years following planting, new trees are to be closely monitored on a monthly basis to ensure upright, firm and stable and in good health. Heavy watering shall be undertaken in dry periods.

In further years water the newly planted trees throughout the summer months (May to August) at fortnightly intervals after any period of four weeks without significant rainfall (less than 5 mm).

Notwithstanding any prevailing restrictions by the Statutory Undertakers on the use of water for watering any plants, the Contractor shall be deemed totally responsible for making any special arrangements which may be necessary to ensure regular and adequate watering of plant material to ensure successful establishment. Lack of availability of water will not release the contractor from his obligation to water the works and to replace all dead or dying plants which have suffered visually from lack of water.

Water shall be kept free from any impurities at all times.

All drainage points and vertical inspection tubes shall be regularly checked. Any plants lost due to waterlogging or drought shall be replaced at no additional cost to the Contract.

- c) Check any underground guying, stakes, ties & rabbit guards for firmness and support and adjust as necessary. Allow for checking once a year preferably in late spring.

Check guying and ties to pleached trees and adjust/ re-fix as required.

Underground guying & tree stakes shall be maintained tight at all times, re-tensioned periodically to prevent excessive windrock and to compensate for settlement. Allow for removing tree stakes and ties once trees are established (Years 3 - 5).

- d) Firm the soil around the roots to ensure that the plant is securely planted in the ground and upright. All plant material shall be re-firmed in the spring period following planting. Ensure that all trees remain firm in the ground, and any trees loosened due to late frosts, strong winds or surface water movement are firmed as required.
- e) Prune the tree to remove any dead, diseased or damaged shoots and create a balanced form for future growth. Allow for pruning once in the second or third year after planting. Shaped/clipped trees to be pruned as required to maintain desired shape. Trim pleached trees as required to maintain neat form and 'tie' side branches back into frame to ensure dense tracerwork of branches.
- f) Replace any dead, damaged or diseased trees with approved species.
- g) Top up mulch levels each spring to maintain specified 75 mm depth with new material to match.

3.3 ORNAMENTAL SHRUBS AND GROUNDCOVER

Management objectives:

Establish healthy thriving plants and encourage ornamental characteristics.

Management operations:

- a) Maintain the area substantially free of weeds (less than 5% of weed cover, with no unsightly weed growth even if less than 5% cover) by applying an annual dressing of an approved residual herbicide in the winter months and removing or spot treating any emergent weeds during the growing season with Glyphosate, or approved equivalent. Residual herbicide is not likely to be needed after the first two years after planting. (Spot treatment or weed removal at approximately 4-weekly intervals in the main growing season five times a year, - frequency to drop, as the plants establish, down to once a year).
- b) Prune shrubs as per schedule below to encourage healthy bushy growth. Remove all suckers by cutting back level with source stem or root.

Timing of pruning

Winter flowering shrubs	Spring
Shrubs flowering March - July	Immediately after flowering period
Shrubs flowering July - October	Cut back to old wood in winter

- c) Selectively thin shrubs to allow room for growth and avoid 'overcrowding'. Care to be taken to avoid overthinning and so creating obvious 'gaps' in shrub beds.
- d) Replace any dead or damaged plants with matching species.
- e) Top up mulch as required to maintain continuous 75mm deep cover.
- f) Allow for watering plant material during dry periods to ensure vigorous growth.
- g) Allow for re-firming soil around roots to ensure plants are securely planted and upright especially following periods of extreme winds.

3.4 CLIMBING PLANTS

Management objectives:

Establish healthy thriving plants and encourage wide cover.

Management operations:

- a) Maintain the area substantially free of weeds (less than 5% of weed cover, with no unsightly weed growth even if less than 5% cover) by applying an annual dressing of an approved residual herbicide in the winter months and removing or spot treating any emergent weeds during the growing season with Glyphosate, or approved equivalent. Residual herbicide is not likely to be needed after the first two years after planting. (Spot treatment or weed removal at approximately 4-weekly intervals in the main growing season five times a year, - frequency to drop, as the plants establish, down to once a year).
- b) Provide support where needed and prune only where necessary to restrict growth. Train up fences/timber slats to ensure wide and even cover so as to 'soften' hard vertical surfaces without causing substantial damage.
- c) Replace any dead or damaged plants with matching species.
- d) Top up mulch as required to maintain continuous 75mm deep cover.
- e) Allow for watering plant material during dry periods to ensure vigorous growth.

- f) Allow for re-firming soil around roots to ensure plants are securely planted and upright especially following periods of extreme winds.

3.5 GROUND COVER PLANTS

Management objectives

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.

Management operations

- a) Maintain the area substantially free of weeds (less than 5% of weed cover, with no unsightly weed growth even if less than 5% cover) by applying an annual dressing of an approved residual herbicide in the winter months and removing or spot treating any emergent weeds during the growing season with Glyphosate, or approved equivalent. Residual herbicide is not likely to be needed after the first two years after planting. (Spot treatment or weed removal at approximately 4-weekly intervals in the main growing season five times a year, - frequency to drop, as the plants establish, down to once a year).
- 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.
- c) Replace any dead or damaged plants with a matching species.
- d) Top up mulch as required to maintain a continuous 75mm deep cover.
- e) Water as necessary to ensure the continued thriving of all planting.
- f) Remove litter and fallen leaves to maintain neat appearance.

3.6 HEDGE PLANTING

Management objectives:

Establish healthy thriving plants and keep hedge cut to maintain neat shape at maximum agreed heights.

Management operations:

- a) Maintain planted areas substantially free of weeds (less than 5% of weed cover, with no unsightly weed growth even if less than 5% cover) by applying an annual dressing of an approved residual herbicide in the

winter months and removing or spot treating any emergent weeds during the growing season with Glyphosate, or approved equivalent.

Residual herbicide is not likely to be needed after the first two years after planting. (Spot treatment or weed removal at approximately 4-weekly intervals in the main growing season five times a year,- frequency to drop, as the plants establish, down to once a year).

- b) Replace any dead or damaged plants with matching species.
- c) Top up mulch as required to maintain continuous 75mm deep cover.
- d) Allow for watering plant material during dry periods to ensure vigorous growth.
- e) Allow for re-firming soil around roots to ensure plants are securely planted and upright especially following periods of extreme winds.
- f) Cut hedge min. twice a year to encourage healthy bushy growth and tidy shape.

Hedges to be trimmed to following maximum heights:

Native Mix hedge 2m high
Evergreen hedges - 2m high

Cut hedge to ensure base is left wider than top (to avoid gaps appearing in the base of the hedge).

3.7 MOWN GRASS AREAS

Management objective:

To provide an even stand of vegetation of uniform height and colour comprising predominantly grass species, although a small percentage of dicotyledenous plants – no more than 5% would be acceptable.

Management operations:

- a) Mowing shall be carried out using approved machinery to maintain the vegetation length within the limits of 20 mm and 40 mm during April to August inclusive and between 30 mm and 50 mm during the rest of the year. (This will normally require mowing at up to once a week in the peak of the season, say minimum 20 times per year total). The clippings shall be let fly but must be distributed evenly over the surface and at no time shall the layer of clippings be of such a depth that will affect the growth of vegetation. Clippings should not be left on paths or roads.

- b) All edges of grass areas, against footpaths, roadways, trees, posts, shrub borders and any other obstruction shall be kept neat and tidy. To include existing grass areas adjacent to all new plantings within 2m distance.
- c) Grass areas may be sprayed with a suitable approved selective herbicide in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Alternatively, spot weeding of isolated weed infestation may be carried out.
- d) Apply approved fertiliser at manufacturers recommended rate once a year in spring.
- e) Reinstatement by re-turfing or re-seeding of areas damaged by trampling, abrasion or scalping during mowing.
- f) Remove litter and fallen leaves to maintain neat appearance.

NOTE: Do not allow machinery closer than 100mm to any tree stem.
Avoid damage to stems by strimmers.

3.8 WILDFLOWER GRASS

Management objective:

To provide an even stand of vegetation comprising of a mixture of grass and wildflower species.

Management operations:

- a) Generally areas to be mown in the autumn in October (once seed has set) and all hay to be removed from site. Cutting of the site should be undertaken with a strimmer and the minimum height of the vegetation should be kept at 150mm. No cutting should take place between April to September as this is when GCNs and reptiles will be active. Cutting in Spring may be required in subsequent years if grass growth is strong. Clippings should not be left on paths or roads. All edges of grass areas, against footpaths, roadways and any other obstruction shall be kept neat and tidy
- b) Established grass areas must rely on natural soil moisture and will usually recover quickly after periods of drought. New areas of repair must be watered and kept moist until established
- c) Reinstatement by seeding of failed or damaged areas (by trampling, abrasion or scalping during mowing).
- d) Remove litter and fallen leaves to maintain neat appearance.

NOTE: Do not allow machinery closer than 100mm to any tree stem. Avoid damage to stems by strimmers.

3.9 EXISTING TREES

Management objective:

To ensure trees are in safe and healthy condition.

Management operations:

Survey trees at least every five years and produce a schedule of necessary tree surgery work and including removal of deadwood and thinning. Inform Local Authority of any work required prior to commencement. Inspect after storms, floods, and droughts etc. for any signs of stress or danger.

Monitor all Ash trees for Ash dieback and organise felling as required followed by planting of agreed native species.

NB: Any work to Trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order to be approved by the Local Authority before works commence.

3.10 HARD LANDSCAPE

PAVING / SURFACING

Management objective:

To ensure that the paving is kept clean and stable.

Management operations:

Check annually for stability/condition/trip edges and re-set or replace where necessary. Sweep paving at least monthly to remove leaves and litter.

EXTERNAL BOLLARD LIGHTS

Management objective:

To ensure that the lights are kept clean & in good repair.

Management operations:

Change bulbs as required. Check regularly for stability/condition and re-set where necessary. Clean lights regularly using water and detergent.

CLOSEBOARD FENCING AND CHAINLINK FENCING

Management objective:

To ensure that the fencing and railings are kept in good repair.

Management operations:

Check annually for stability/condition and re-firm or repair where necessary.
Re-paint or re-stain as required with matching colour.