

BLADE

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN

NIGRA HOUSE,
WOKINGHAM

ON BEHALF OF

INDURENT

JULY 2025

V1

BIODIVERSITY
LANDSCAPE
ARBORICULTURE
DESIGN
ECOLOGY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1. The following Landscape Management Plan has been drawn up by BLADE Landscape Architects Ltd on behalf of Indurent. It sets out the necessary prescriptions for the landscape management of the public open space areas of the existing and new planting associated with the commercial development at Nigra House, Wokingham.
- 1.2. The management plan covers the landscaping associated with the areas of open space within the ownership boundary of the development as detailed in the Soft Landscape Proposals drawing (included in Appendix 1).
- 1.3. Maintenance prescriptions have been formulated to maximise the landscape amenity of the site, maintain healthy plant growth, keep planting beds free from weeds/litter and ensure plant stock remains free from disease. This document is to be read in conjunction with the Soft Landscape Specification in the Soft Landscape Proposals drawing.
- 1.4. The following areas of maintenance are:
 - Existing trees and hedgerows.
 - Proposed tree, native structure, hedge and introduced shrub planting.
 - Grass areas.
 - Hard surfaces.
 - Ecological Management.
- 1.5. It is anticipated that following initial development of the site, the first twelve months maintenance will be the responsibility of the landscape contractor (BALI Registered), as appointed by the developer, and this period will run concurrently with the rectification period. Thereafter, an appropriate maintenance contractor should be employed.
- 1.6. It is proposed that the Management Plan will be reviewed annually allowing for minor variations in maintenance or timing of work. The Management Plan will be revised every 5 years to take on more major changes, such as exclusion of operations, for a period of no less than 30 years.
- 1.7. The annual review will take account of the following items:
 - Pedestrian routes.
 - Litter.
 - Success of proposed individual trees, hedgerows, shrub planting, and grass seeding.
 - Condition of existing trees and hedges.

- Condition and success of ecological habitats.
 - To maintain health and safety requirements for all users of the amenity space.
- 1.8. It is anticipated that following the review, any problems or changes that are impacting on the landscape will be accommodated with the agreement of the Local Authority.

Legal Considerations

- 1.9. Where trees are subject to tree preservation orders, Conservation Areas or tree planning conditions, suitable permission will be sought from the Local Authority, prior to works.
- 1.10. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes duties under section 89(1) and (2) on landowners and occupiers to keep specified land clear of litter and refuse.
- 1.11. All birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Site management must be aware of the need to avoid disturbance or harm to nesting birds either by avoiding the nesting season, mid February to end August inclusive and/ or by checking that no nests would be affected by works.
- 1.12. Health and Safety: All work undertaken on the site by contracts, volunteers or direct employees must comply with the appropriate legislation relating to health and safety and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).

Key Objectives

- 1.13. The establishment and future success of the landscape is largely dependent on the standard and frequency of the subsequent maintenance and management it receives.
- 1.14. Key objectives for management and maintenance include:
- To facilitate an efficient and sustainable landscape management and maintenance regime through the lifetime of the development;
 - To provide a safe, high quality external environment for all site users;
 - To ensure successful establishment and continued growth through to maturity of the planting areas as identified on the landscape proposals;
 - To retain and enhance the existing trees and hedgerows to maintain a range of different types and sizes of species, to support a wide variety of wildlife and provide a corridor to allow movement of wildlife.
 - To secure the long-term future for the new trees and shrubs with emphasis upon providing an attractive setting;
 - To manage the landscape in a manner which ensures the safety of site users, such as maintaining visibility splays, maintain good surveillance, removal of dead, dying or diseased trees and plants;
 - To maintain boundary habitats and create connective wildlife corridors to ensure flora and fauna continue to thrive;

- Contribute to the Green Infrastructure across the site and maintain and reinforce the landscape, amenity and ecology structure of the site; and
- To provide a diverse collection of native/insect attracting flora and fauna to enhance foraging opportunities;

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The Site is located with Mulberry Business Park, Wokingham, RG41 2GY and is centred on OS Grid Reference SU 80217 67737. The site is accessed off Fishponds Road. The site lies adjacent to further commercial development in all directions besides to the south-east where residential development off Reeves Way abuts the Site.
- 2.2. The site features an existing commercial building within the centre of the Site with hard surfacing around its perimeter. The north-western boundary of the Site features a line of trees including sycamore, cherry plum and ash and scrub vegetation. The south-western boundary features hedgerow to the north and a line of sycamore trees to the south with shrubs at the edge of the parking area of the adjacent unit to the west. The south-eastern boundary features tree planting across an embankment which forms a dense tree group of predominately ash with occasional willow and birch. The north-eastern boundary features scattered tree planting (ash, alder and maple) with some areas of ornamental planting and grass verge.
- 2.3. The proposals are for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a new building for employment purposes (Use Classes E(g), (iii), B2 and B8) with new vehicular access and associated infrastructure works including service yard, car parking, boundary treatments and landscaping.

3.0 EXISTING TREES AND HEDGES

Existing Trees

- 3.1. Existing trees will be subject to regular inspection and the contractor should be satisfied that tree preservation orders have not been notified for the site during the maintenance period; if TPOs are applicable the contractor must comply with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations (Amendment) 2008.
- 3.2. Any specified tree surgery works will be carried out in accordance with BS 3998:2010 'Tree Works Recommendations', Health and Safety legislation and relevant best practice. Prior to commencement of any works the contractor must provide valid proof of required Public Liability Insurance and a full working method statement and risk assessment. Operatives must hold a certificate of competence for chain saw work.
- 3.3. Prior to any works to trees and hedgerows, they should be inspected for nesting birds and bats by an approved Ecologist and if possible, works should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season. The main nesting season is between March – August (inclusive).
- 3.4. A visual inspection will be carried out of individual trees and woodland edges within 10m of public paths at every visit. Existing trees to be inspected on a regular basis, at least once a year to ensure they remain in a safe and healthy condition, free of disease, damaged or broken stems/branches and dead wood. Trimming back of growth overhanging adjacent footpaths or windows when required. Any damaged, diseased or dangerous timber shall be reported, and a schedule of appropriate operations agreed.
- 3.5. Replace dead or dying specimens with a similar suitable species as agreed.

Existing Hedgerow

- 3.6. Existing hedgerow to the north-west of the site shall be maintained at a uniform height of up to 2m.
- 3.7. The basic principles for appropriate hedgerow trimming are as follows (Natural England, 2008, RSPB, 2008);
 - All cutting regimes will be carried out on a two- or three-year rotation. This ensures that thick nesting cover is available annually for birds and also to boost the berry crop that often develops on second year growth;
 - Trimming will be undertaken during the months of January or February to prevent disturbance to nesting birds during the months of March to August. Cutting at this time of the year also allows the berry crop to be used by over-wintering birds which is a vital part of their diet when food is scarce;
 - Any gaps in the boundary hedgerows (over 0.5m in width) will be planted up with appropriate native species, to ensure a corridor is maintained and encourage dispersal of wildlife around the site, post-development. All new hedgerow planting will take place over the winter period (October – March);

- Newly planted specimens within the hedgerow gaps will be protected from animal damage by the use of rabbit-proof fencing, netting or individual tree guards;
- Specimens that fail in the first three years will be replaced to prevent gaps forming;
- Weeds will be controlled to prevent competition with the hedgerow plants. Weed control will be undertaken via mulch (applied immediately after planting) or cutting/pulling. The use of herbicides is not recommended.

3.8. The main objective for management is to maintain a varied age, condition and size of hedgerow in order to support a variety of wildlife. Allow to reach planned dimensions only by gradual degrees, depending on growth rate and habit.

Table 1 – Maintenance Schedule – Existing Trees and Hedges

Maintenance Operation	Visits	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Removal of litter	12												
Inspection for deadwood/ structural defects	1												
Trunks to be kept clear of sucker growth to a height of 4m	1												
Selective/formative pruning of existing boundary hedgerows	1												

4.0 PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL TREE PLANTING

4.1. To ensure their survival and optimal development, new trees will be subject to intensive establishment maintenance.

- Base of each tree be kept free from weeds, including a 1m diameter ring of mulch;
- Watering to ensure moisture levels are maintained appropriate for optimum growth during establishment period only. Newly planted trees should be watered a minimum of 13 times in the first year after planting, though more if the weather requires. The trees should be watered a minimum of 7 times in years 2 and 3, and then as required in the following years.
- Application of a slow release fertiliser around the base of each tree to ensure soil fertility is maintained.
- Remove any vandalised, unhealthy or dead specimens as soon as possible and replace with trees of the same size to those adjacent, during next available planting season.
- Inspection, adjustment and maintenance of anchors, stakes and ties; spiral guards and removal of items that have been attached to trees. Replace loose, broken or decayed stakes to original specification. Adjust, refix or replace loose or defective ties, allowing for growth and to prevent chafing.
- Re-firming of trees after strong winds, frost heave or other disturbances.
- Pruning to remove dead, dying or diseased wood; remove suckers and formatively prune if necessary, to achieve natural shape, healthy growth and to favour a single leader, (except for multi-stem trees, where several leaders will be favoured).
- Pruning of excessive overhang: Remove growth encroaching onto grassed areas, paths, roads, signs, sightlines and road lighting luminaires.
- Supply and apply selective herbicide to manufacturers recommendations;
- Top up of mulch to ring around base of tree to a minimum diameter of 1m or the surface of the original planting pit.

Table 2 – Maintenance Schedule – Proposed Trees

Maintenance Operation	Visits	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Weed control	12												
Watering as required	13												
Slow release fertiliser	1												
Replacement of vandalised, unhealthy or dead trees	1												

Maintenance Operation	Visits	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inspection of anchors, stake and ties; spiral guards, pests and diseases,	-	As required											
Re-firming of trees	-	As required											
Supply and apply selective herbicide	1												
Selective/formative pruning	1												
Top up mulch	1												

5.0 PROPOSED NATIVE SCRUB MIX

- 5.1. A native shrub and tree mix will be used within the south-east of the Site to strengthen the buffering effect. Ongoing management of these areas should seek to maintain their visual and physical screening properties as well as contribute to a strong ecological network.

Management Objectives

- To create a strong landscape buffer providing a linked ecological network;
- To create dense low level structure to provide connectivity throughout the understory layer and between the canopy and understory to provide good bird nesting habitat and shelter for wildlife;
- To maintain species diversity of trees and shrubs ensuring constant supply of food for wildlife;
- To provide a range of microhabitats providing cover and foraging for a range of wildlife.

Management Prescription

- 5.2. Establishment maintenance (Years 1-5)
- Check tree and shrub guards at each maintenance visit and replace as necessary; remove guards once plants established;
 - Maintain in a weed free condition and top up mulch as required;
 - Irrigation/watering as required to ensure establishment;
 - Replacement of losses to ensure 100% establishment by Year 5.

6.0 PROPOSED INTRODUCED SHRUB PLANTING

6.1. To ensure successful establishment of introduced shrub planting areas, the following maintenance operations will need to be adhered to:

- Control and removal of weeds; thoroughly hand-weed and lighting hoe to cultivate the ground, taking care not to cause undue disturbance to plants.
- Watering to ensure moisture levels are maintained appropriate for optimum growth during establishment period only.
- Application of a slow release fertiliser to ensure soil fertility is maintained.
- Remove any vandalised, unhealthy or dead specimens as soon as possible and replace with the same size to those adjacent, during next available planting season.
- Removal of litter, redundant plant supports, debris and arisings.
- Pruning of species to ensure correct form to promote flowering/berry production/retention where appropriate and pruning of shrubs for floral, foliage and stem colour to remove weak, damaged or diseased branches.
- Trim older flowering stems of herbaceous perennials at the end of the growing season: prune flowering shrubs and roses as follows:
 - Winter flowering shrubs: Spring
 - Shrubs flowering between March and July: Immediately after the 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
- Inspection for pests and diseases with remedial action taken swiftly.
- Thinning of beds to be monitored and remove as required, in stages, to retain character.
- Supply and apply selective herbicide to manufacturers recommendations;
- Top up of mulch to planting areas.

Table 3 – Maintenance Schedule – Proposed Introduced Shrubs

Maintenance Operation	Visits	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Weed control	12												
Watering as required	-												
Slow release fertiliser	1												
Replacement of vandalised, unhealthy or dead trees	1												
Removal of litter	-												
Selective/formative pruning	1												
Supply and apply selective herbicide	1												
Inspection for pest and diseases	-	As required											
Top up mulch	1												

7.0 PROPOSED HEDGE PLANTING

7.1. To ensure successful establishment of newly planted hedges so that they can be suitably maintained for ornamental and amenity value.

- Control and removal of weeds from hedge trenches;
- Watering to ensure moisture levels are maintained appropriate for optimum growth during establishment period only.
- Application of a slow release fertiliser to ensure soil fertility is maintained.
- Remove any vandalised, unhealthy or dead specimens as soon as possible and replace with the same size to those adjacent, during next available planting season.
- Removal of litter.
- Pruning and re-shape hedge species to promote good growth and compact form, removing any dead and dying wood. Restock as necessary to fill gaps.
- Inspection for pests and diseases with remedial action taken swiftly.
- Allow new hedges to attain a planned height of 2m (native hedgerow), by trimming lateral growth once annually in mid-late summer.
- Supply and apply selective herbicide to manufacturers recommendations;
- Top up of mulch to planting areas.

Table 4 – Maintenance Schedule – Proposed Hedge Planting

Maintenance Operation	Visits	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Weed control	12												
Watering as required	-												
Slow release fertiliser	1												
Replacement of vandalised, unhealthy or dead trees	1												
Removal of litter	-												
Selective/formative pruning	1												
Supply and apply selective herbicide	1												

Maintenance Operation	Visits	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inspection for pest and diseases	-	As required											
Top up mulch	1												

8.0 PROPOSED GRASS AREAS

Wildflower Grass

- 8.1. Proposed grass areas are to be seeded with flowering lawn mixture (Emosgate EL1 or similar approved) which contain slow growing grasses with a selection of wild flowers which respond well to regular short mowing. To ensure flowering grass areas are suitably managed to maintain and encourage diverse flora for biodiversity and ecological enhancement.

- Prior to cutting all areas shall be cleared of litter and debris.
- The wild flower and grass species in this mix are perennial; they will be slow to germinate and grow and will not usually flower in their first growing season. There will often be a flush of annual weeds from the soil in the first growing season. This annual weed growth is easily controlled by repeated mowing.
- Mow newly sown flowering lawns regularly (every 7 -10 days during growing season) throughout the first year of establishment. Cut to a height of 40-60mm, removing cuttings if dense. This will gradually develop a good sward structure, help maintain balance between faster growing grasses and slower developing wild flowers, and control annual weeds. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.
- Mow regularly as a lawn but not too short (25-40mm). To permit flowering, mowing can be relaxed from late June. Cut again when the sward gets untidy (after 4-8 weeks). Mowing may be suspended earlier in the year to allow cowslips to flower. Heavy quantities of cuttings should be collected and removed from site.
- Areas should be monitored to assess the growth of any invasive species and spot treated with an approved herbicide if required.
- Worn or damaged areas are to be repaired by over seeding into a prepared seed bed at the next maintenance visit, dependant on seasonal limitations and subject to suitable weather and ground conditions in accordance with best practice.
- Monitor and remove some of the common nettle, to prevent encroachment into these areas.

9.0 MAINTENANCE OF HARD STANDING AND FURNITURE

- 9.1. To ensure that hard surfaces are maintained in a safe, debris-free state to facilitate all-year-round use of the site. Maintain all structures and furniture in a safe and serviceable condition fit for purpose.
- 9.2. Any fly tipping should be removed to an approved facility or reported to the Local Authority for removal.
- 9.3. As required, ensure all hard surfaces are maintained free from debris, litter and fallen leaves, through regular sweeping/ leaf clearance. Remove any arisings from site.
- 9.4. Undertake regular inspections to ensure areas of hard standing are sound and free from cracks and trip hazards; any degradation or puddling must be noted and made good at the following maintenance visit. Significant damage creating a hazard to pedestrians must be highlighted appropriately and repairs undertaken within an agreed timeframe.
- 9.5. Replacement of any furniture damaged beyond repair with identical specification, or similar as agreed with the client.

10.0 GENERAL MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Years 1-5

Specimen Trees

- 10.1. Specimen trees will be allowed to develop without thinning out due to generous mature spacing. Apart from formative crown pruning after the first three years, some subsequent light trimming may be necessary such as crown lifting or dead wood removal. The ornamental trees within the development will require little maintenance/management.
- 10.2. An updated arboricultural survey should be commissioned in Year 5 to maintain species diversity, safety and screening capacity of the semi-natural broadleaved woodland to the south of the site.

Introduced Shrubs

- 10.3. Shrubs may require light formative pruning to maintain their shape. Trim back growth overhanging adjacent footpaths when required.
- 10.4. Shrubs will become established between 2-3 years after planting, when some of the more successful species may have to be thinned out. These plants will have joined canopies and be successfully suppressing weed growth. To maintain colourful stems or bushy form, annual pruning will need to be carried out. Ornamental shrubs may need to be replaced as they become over mature and cannot be rejuvenated by pruning or coppicing; in cases of severe weather, some species may require earlier replacement.

Native Planting

- 10.5. Hazel, Hawthorn and Dogwood in mix areas and native hedgerows will be maintained and managed through annual formative pruning for the first few years to promote bushy, healthy growth and reshape as necessary.
- 10.6. Native planting to be reviewed throughout the first three years, remove 30% of nurse species where they appear to be aggressive or hindering the development of climax species by selecting unhealthy, diseased or damaged specimens. Replace any dead trees as agreed.
- 10.7. Ties should be checked regularly for rubbing and adjusted if necessary. Constriction of the stem by ties happens very quickly, so fast growing trees need frequent checking. After bad weather, check for abrasion and snapped stakes or ties. Once tree whips are established remove rabbit guards as necessary.

Grass Areas

- 10.8. Annually review the natural succession of the flowering lawn areas to ensure no invasive or pernicious weeds have appeared in the area.

Years 6-10

- 10.9. Hazel, Hawthorn, and Dogwood species to be coppiced on an annual basis unless in a hedgerow. Extent of coppicing to be reviewed to ensure there are no significant breaks in

vegetation, so wildlife corridors/habitats are maintained. No greater than 25% of area to be coppiced in a single year.

- 10.10. Thinning of native understorey scrub planting is usually completed around year 10, or when trees are about 7m tall. This process is repeated on a 5-8 year cycle. Felling around 1 in 5 trees will reduce competition and allow the remaining trees and shrubs increased space to grow stronger and more resilient.
- 10.11. Selective coppicing maybe necessary to create a scalloped edge to the native buffer planting to enhance the ecological value (to be advised by Site Manager in consultation with suitably qualified ecologist, where necessary). Some selective thinning/coppicing mix may be required within ten years to maintain structural diversity: to be advised by Site Manager.
- 10.12. Annually review the need to selectively thin overcrowded amenity beds or hard prune species to maintain design intent. Re-stock areas of failed, poorly established or thinned shrubs with the same species.
- 10.13. Annually review the natural succession of the flowering lawn areas to ensure no invasive or pernicious weeds have appeared in the area.
- 10.14. Review all previously existing trees and hedgerows for future longevity and restock accordingly with same species to ensure continuity of the landscape features.
- 10.15. Long term management of the proposed and existing trees may include some felling of mature trees at the end of their life span to maintain healthy development. Any felled trees are to be replaced with suitable species to retain the character of the trees as agreed.
- 10.16. In years 5 and onwards remove staking if tree has established well and the stakes are no longer required.

Years 10 +

- 10.17. After year 10, continue with previously prescribed actions and agree the ongoing scope of the landscape management plan, for no less than 20 years going forward, with a qualified ecologist and arboriculturalist.

11.0 CONDITION MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

- 11.1. Annual ecological monitoring of the site will be undertaken by an experienced ecologist for a period of 5 years and a short report will be produced for the client and LPA with habitat condition assessment, species lists and recommendations for active management as required.
- 11.2. Records of wildlife should be sent to the local environmental / biological records centre.

APPENDIX 1

Detailed Soft Landscape Proposals



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