Reading Market Quarter

Soft Landscape Management & Maintenance Plan

Prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Blue Collar
February 2023 | P20-0271_04B

-	15.02.2022	AMS
A	14.09.2022	LAB - updated to latest Landscape Masterplan
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Landscape and Management and Maintenance Plan (LMMP) will be undertaken by the management company instructed by the client.

1.2 This LMMP is designed for the operational phase of the development and will commence from the handover date from the landscape contractor to the client.

1.3 The LMMP aims to uphold the original design, vision and qualities of the soft landscape proposals for the Reading Market Quarter. This management plan will instruct and guide the management company to present a safe, attractive and high quality environment, ensure that newly planted areas become established and thrive, and achieve the long-term goals and aspirations of the design.

1.4 This LMMP is for soft landscape only, areas of hard landscaping, including paving/decking, balustrade, lighting and containers to be dealt with separately.

Purpose of the Management Plan

1.5 The purpose of this Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan (LMMP) is:

- To ensure the original design intent and vision for the areas of landscaping at the new Reading Market Quarter is realised and maintained;
- To ensure that clear objectives for the management and maintenance of the landscaped areas are established;
- To set clear standards for the performance of landscape maintenance work following handover from the landscape contractor at the beginning of the operational phase;
- To establish work programmes and schedules for landscape maintenance staff;
- To help in the allocation of financial resources for landscape maintenance;
- To help monitor success and progress against management targets.

Planning Background

1.6 This Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan is a supporting document to be submitted as part of planning application ref: 1210540.

Landscape Management Aims

1.7 The main aims for this landscape management plan are:

- To uphold the original design intent, vision and qualities for the landscape;
- To present an attractive and safe environment for the users;
- To ensure that hard and soft landscape areas are fit for purpose and do not pose a health and safety hazard to users;
- To ensure that newly planted areas become established and thrive;
- To keep the landscape areas in good condition and provide an appropriate level of management intervention;
- To carry out maintenance work according to best practice using sustainable techniques and materials.

Implementation Programme & Scope

1.8 It is anticipated that the planting will be implemented within the Autumn/ Winter 2023 planting season.

1.9 This LMMP covers landscape management and maintenance followivng the handover from the landscape contractor to the client. It does not cover works associated with site clearance and construction works.

Review

1.10 This document should be seen as an operational guide, subject to change and improvement as the different landscape features mature and develop.

1.11 An annual monitoring report will be issued to the client and management company for the first 5 years, recommending any necessary changes to the LMMP. Where necessary the LMMP will be revised after a review, with the management prescriptions amended to suit.

Detailed Landscape Masterplan
(NTS)

Extract from drawing P20-0271_02 Landscape Masterplan - Sheet 1 of 2

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The design intention of the soft landscape at the Reading Market Place is to deliver a greening of the urban character and provide year round interest in the form of textures and colours.

2.2 Hedgerow planting within trough containers run along part of the northern boundary and around the bin/ storage area, will provide a screening function, allowing a sense of privacy in the form of a living fence.

2.3 Planting within individual square containers will provide bursts of colour and interest, with small tree planting providing vertical interest, linking and uniting the two levels.

2.4 Artificial vegetation will cover the 'pergola' style frame, helping to form a cohesive impression of a green space.

Long Term Design Objectives

2.5 The long term design objectives for the space are:

- To create and maintain planting to create an attractive setting;
- Use appropriate management methods to ensure the landscape establishes and thrives in line with the original design intentions for the site;
- To ensure the planting within the living fence thrives to allow continued screening of the seating area/ storage area;
- To maintain the variety of plant species to ensure year round interest along with seasonal variety.

3.0 Environmental Considerations

3.1 This section details the environmental considerations that need to be examined to enable a thorough landscaping and environmental management strategy for the site.

Horticultural Peat

3.2 Horticultural peat is not to be used within planting compost, as a mulch or as a soil conditioner. Plants grown without peat will be used rather than those grown using peat.

Recycled Materials

3.3 Where appropriate use should be made of materials made from recycled components e.g. wood chip mulch.

Pesticides/Herbicides

3.4 A minimal intervention and organic approach will be used in terms of weed control. In areas of tree and ornamental planting this is to be achieved by using hand weeding as far as is practical. Weed killer and other chemicals will be used as little as possible on site.

Water Management

3.5 Where necessary maintenance staff are to water plants at appropriate times of the day to ensure minimum water evaporation. If appropriate and available, recycled water should be used e.g. from rainwater harvesting from roofs of containers.

4.0 General Maintenance Requirements

4.1 No pruning works to trees to be undertaken during the general bird nesting season of 1st March to 31st August inclusive. Works outside of this time period should be subject to checks by an ecologist to ensure there are no nesting birds present.

4.2 All tree surgery work is to be carried out to BS 3998:2010 Tree Work–Recommendations, and should be undertaken by a suitably qualified operative. Any trees with bat potential to be inspected by a qualified bat specialist prior to any tree works commencing.

4.3 Hygiene works will be avoided, for example fungal fruiting bodies should not be removed nor trees felled because they have bracket fungi on them unless classified as dangerous by an arboriculturist. Where a tree poses a health and safety hazard, advice will be sought from an arboriculturist.

4.4 Maintenance operations are to be carried out with regard to BS 4428: Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations. Maintenance of soft landscaping (other than amenity turf) to have regard to BS 7370-4: Grounds Maintenance. Recommendations for Maintenance of Soft Landscape.

4.5 All new trees and shrubs shall be checked at each maintenance visit for damage, security, firmness, fixing and support.

4.6 All arisings from landscape works will be removed from site and disposed of at a registered facility, recycling or composting of arisings should be prioritised.

4.7 Any shrubs, ferns, ornamental plants or trees which fail to thrive in the first five years shall be replaced with the same species and variety at the size specified on the original landscape planting plans. Trees and other plants should be checked in September and marked with paint, or noted on a plan, as necessary. Replacements will be planted during the following planting season.

4.8 If a particular species fails to establish successfully then an alternative, comparable species should be considered as replacement, in agreement with the landscape consultant and client. Replacement planting of container plants to be undertaken as required, root-ball/

bare root planting to be undertaken November to March. Planting of new trees to have regard to Section 10 of BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape. All plants to conform to BS 3936 and be in accordance with the National Plant Specification.

4.9 Amenity bark mulch shall be topped up annually to a depth of 50mm where there is bare soil in planted areas. To avoid accidentally damaging plants herbicides will not be used to control weeds once foliage covers 75% of the ground surface.

4.10 Litter and debris shall be cleared by hand from all planting areas and removed from site on a monthly basis.

Watering

4.11 Due to the nature of the planting within containers, watering will be a key maintenance requirement to ensure plants thrive.

4.12 Care should be taken not to over-water plants. Containers should be checked for water daily during warm or windy weather, or once weekly in other weathers, even if it has rained the soil water content should be assessed and watering undertaken as necessary. Allow the soil to dry out between watering. Do not let plants reach wilting stage.

4.13 Water should be applied slowly to ensure that the water permeates/ absorbs into the root zone and does not run off the surface. I.e. fill container to rim then allow to drain into the compost, then fill a second time.

4.14 Planting areas are to be brought up to field capacity at each visit and each tree is to receive 40 litres or as required. If trees are showing signs of drought stress the watering regime should be reviewed and increase as required.

4.15 If water appears to not be draining freely, check any drainage holes for blockage and remedy as necessary.

Soil replenishment

4.16 Compost within containers loses structure over time, therefore it will be required for at broadly a third of the compost in each container to be replaced every other year. One-third of existing compost should be carefully removed by hand, where possible plants could be slid from the container with roots teased out and trimmed if necessary, existing compost should be replaced with fresh compost suitable for containers.

4.17 In the alternate years to re-potting, each container shall be top-dressed by removing 5cm of old compost from the top and replacing with fresh compost. Remove any mulching and place to one side before top dressing. Carefully return mulch once top dressing is complete.

5.2 Tree Planting

Management Aims and Objectives

- To successfully establish tree planting;
- To present and maintain high quality visual appearance of tree planting;
- To maintain newly planted trees to ensure good health, survival rate and development;
- To minimise competition from weeds from around newly planted trees;
- To maintain appropriate forms of trees for future growth;
- To ensure trees do not present a hazard to site users.

An establishment survey of all trees will be carried out by a qualified arboriculturist annually for the first five years, making recommendations to assist with establishment. Any necessary remedial works will be carried out as soon as possible.

Trees establish anchor roots better, increase stem girth and form a better stem taper if allowed to move in the wind, whilst remaining secured at ground level. Therefore either underground anchors will be used.

Tree guards will be regularly checked during the establishment period and adjusted as necessary to ensure that the developing trees are not damaged. Any guards will be removed by the landscape maintenance contractor at the earliest opportunity (typically between year 3 and year 5) when it is considered that the trees are self supporting.

There will be a minimal pruning policy for trees as pruning wounds can provide a source of infection. Formative pruning of new trees will only be carried out to remove dead and diseased wood and to create a well balanced tree with a single leader.

Clear stems of 2 metres will be maintained by rubbing off any shoots and when the trees reach 5 to 6 metres high lower branches will be removed to give a canopy height of approximately 2.4 metres.

If trees die the reason for death shall be investigated and addressed before replanting a replacement. If death is due to the planting conditions these shall be ameliorated. If death is due to pests or disease and likely to be present in the future a resistant species of an alternative similar tree shall be selected.

Where trees have become moribund due to compaction or lack of nutrients, soil aeration techniques and the use of inoculants shall be considered.

5.3 Ornamental Planting

Management Aims and Objectives

- To successfully establish areas of new ornamental planting;
- To present and maintain high quality visual appearance of planting;
- To maintain newly planted shrubs and herbaceous plants to ensure a good survival rate and development;
- To minimise competition from weeds.

Formative pruning will be kept to a minimum, where necessary diseased and damaged plant material will be removed. Plants will be allowed to overhang containers until they are considered to be obstructing the pedestrian routes. When required plants are to be neatly cut back, pruned to suit the plant type and shape.

Planting will be checked regularly throughout the growing season for pests and diseases and treated as necessary. Plant losses should be monitored and recorded. If a particular plant becomes subject to a fatal pest or disease it shall be replaced by an alternative resistant plant with a similar form and habit, or as agreed by the client.

Species shall be pruned in accordance with best horticultural practise and as per the following guidance notes:

- General pruning to be carried out to remove straggling stems, or over vigorous shoots, suckers and dead, misshapen, broken or otherwise unhealthy branches.
- Ground cover / low growing planting beneath trees to be monitored and pruned in single species groups to ensure that swamping of less vigorous species does not occur.
- Herbaceous planting to be dead headed after flowering, with flower stems cut to the ground, with the exception of plants which display decorative seed heads. These are to be kept tidy and seeds heads to be removed in autumn.
- Clump forming herbaceous perennials and grasses to be divided every few years or as necessary to prevent congestion.
- Ornamental grasses/ferns to be kept in a tidy condition with dead foliage and flower heads cut back in early spring.
- Where necessary to maintain a tidy appearance and in accordance with good horticultural practice, herbaceous plants to have leaves cut back to ground level in autumn. Those species, which retain attractive winter leaves to be retained un-pruned but tatty leaves to be cut on a regular basis.
- Bulb species will be dead headed after flowering.

6.0 Table of Management and Maintenance

6.1 Establishment Years 0-5

The below table sets out how the maintenance tasks for the management aims and objectives will be achieved for the establishment period of years 0-5:

Establishment Years 0-5			
Ref	**Management Categories**	**Timing**	**Maintenance Task and Method**
6.1.1	All planting areas	Every Visit	• Ensure continued health of all landscaping - water and fertilise as required to ensure that the planting continues to establish successfully. Investigate any failed growth and take remedial action as necessary. • Care should be taken not to over-water plants. Containers should be checked for water daily during warm or windy weather, or once weekly in other weathers, even if it has rained the soil water content should be assessed and watering undertaken as necessary. Allow the soil to dry out between watering. Do not let plants reach wilting stage. • Water should be applied slowly to ensure that the water permeates/absorbs into the root zone and does not run off the surface. I.e. fill container to rim then allow to drain into the compost, then fill a second time. • Planting areas are to be brought up to field capacity at each visit and each tree is to receive 40 litres or as required. If trees are showing signs of drought stress the watering regime should be reviewed and increase as required. • If water appears to not be draining freely, check any drainage holes for blockage and remedy as necessary.
		Monthly	• Removal of rubbish and debris - clear litter and fly-tipped rubbish by hand and remove from site. • Inspect for vandalism - visual inspection of all landscaping for vandalism, report to client. On instruction from client replace any landscaping damaged by vandalism.
		Annually	• Monitor and record any plant losses and report to client - on instruction from client remove dead plant and replace as per original approved specification, unless otherwise agreed to plant alternative species. Maintain to ensure survival. Re-planting to be undertaken in November/December. • Remove exotic and / or invasive plant species that do not belong in the general environment - check all landscaped areas for exotic / invasive species, clear by hand and remove from site • Control vigorous plant species that are out competing less vigorous species - check all landscaped areas for invasive species e.g. self seeded sycamore, brambles, ground ivy and nettles. Reduce/clear by hand and remove from site.

Establishment Years 0-5			
Ref	Management Categories	Timing	Maintenance Task and Method
		Biannually	• Soil replenishment, Compost within containers loses structure over time, therefore it will be required for at broadly a third of the compost in each container to be replaced every other year. One-third of existing compost should be carefully removed by hand, where possible plants could be slid from the container with roots teased out and trimmed if necessary, existing compost should be replaced with fresh compost suitable for containers. • In the alternate years to re-potting, each container shall be top-dressed by removing 5cm of old compost from the top and replacing with fresh compost. Remove any mulching and place to one side before top dressing. Carefully return mulch once top dressing is complete.

Establishment Years 0-5			
Ref	Management Categories	Timing	Maintenance Task and Method
6.1.2	Trees - newly planted	Monthly	• Ensure trees are stable - visually inspect tree guards/shelters to check for signs of bark damage or damage. Check that guards are not too loose, too tight or broken. Check underground anchors. On instruction from client, replace or upgrade guards/shelters as necessary. • Visual inspection for fungal activity (for trees this is to be performed by a qualified arboriculturist) - remove diseased wood or treat as appropriate. Keep use of pesticides to a minimum. Inspection to be undertaken March to October when trees/shrubs are still in leaf.
		3 times per annum	• Visually inspect bark mulch areas around trees and top up to 50mm depth, if required. Remove any weeds within the mulch by hand, do not use herbicides in these areas - April/June/August.
		Annually	• Establishment survey for new trees - to be undertaken by a qualified arboriculturist, any recommendations to assist with establishment must be undertaken as soon as possible. • Keep pedestrian movement areas clear from branches/vegetation - pruning/cut back any tree branches/vegetation encroaching. • Remove dead, damaged or dying branches as appropriate. • Formative pruning of new trees - to create a well balanced tree with a single leader and, by rubbing off any shoots, creating a clear stem of 2m. When the trees reach 5-6m in height, lower branches will be removed to give a canopy height of approximately 2.4m.
		Biennial (or as recommended)	• Check tree safety - identify hazards and carry out necessary maintenance works. A visual tree assessment is to be undertaken by a qualified arboriculturist of all new and existing tree planting, with instrumental back up where necessary. Any resulting tree works are to be carried out to BS 3998:2010. Keep records up to date.
		3 to 5 years after planting	• Confirm root growth is well established and remove guards/shelter from trees - to avoid damage cut shelters.

Establishment Years 0-5			
Ref	**Management Categories**	**Timing**	**Maintenance Task and Method**
6.1.3	Ornamental Planting/ Instant Hedgerow.	Monthly	• Keep planting beds free from weeds - visually inspect bark mulch areas around planting and top up to 50mm depth, if required. Remove any weeds within the mulch by hand, hoe or fork. Take care not to disturb shrub roots and excessive treading of bed surface. Do not use herbicides in these areas - March to October. • Keep ornamental planting/instant hedgerow in prime condition and appearance - qualified horticultural staff to inspect and check on condition of ornamental planting. Prune to remove straggling stems, or over vigorous shoots, suckers and dead, misshapen, broken or otherwise unhealthy branches and foliage as necessary. Formative and seasonal pruning to shrubs to create a natural shape - do not routinely clip shrubs. Ensure instant hedgerows are pruned to provide continued form and screening. • Perennials and bulbs to be dead headed after flowering, with flower stems cut to the ground, unless display decorative seed heads. These are to be kept tidy and seeds heads to be removed in autumn. • Ground cover / low growing planting below trees to be monitored and pruned in single species groups to ensure that swamping of less vigorous species does not occur. • Keep pedestrian areas clear from vegetation - prune back ornamental planting/ instant hedgerows which has encroached. As required from March to October. • Plants will be allowed to overhang container edges, until they are considered to be obstructing the path e.g. no more than 300mm overhang. When required plants are to be neatly cut back, pruned to suit the plant type and shape. • Divide perennials and grasses as necessary to prevent congestion. • Apply organic fertiliser if required. • Re-plant in an upright position and re-firm plants that suffer from wind-rock. • Check on health of ornamental planting - qualified horticultural staff to inspect planting and deal with individual problems as they arise. Keep pesticide use to a minimum - March to October.
		2 times per annum	• Removal of excessive leaf litter and fallen twigs and branches - use leaf blower and leaf litter collection equipment - November to December.
		Annually	• Ornamental grasses and ferns to have dead foliage / flower heads cut back in early spring. • Herbaceous plants to have leaves cut back to ground level in autumn. Those species, which retain attractive winter leaves to be retained un-pruned (but tatty leaves to be cut on a regular basis).

6.2 Monitoring and Review

The below table sets out how the monitoring and review processes:

Monitoring and Review			
Ref	**Management Categories**	**Timing**	**Maintenance Task and Method**
6.2.1	Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan	As necessary	• Monitor comments/suggestions from client / users and respond to comments from client and incorporate into LMMP as required.
6.2.2	LMMP Review	Every 5 years	• Suitably experienced professional to undertake a review of soft landscape establishment and quality, respond to review and incorporate into LMMP as required.

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