

Soft Landscaping Specification

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87 Balmore Drive, Reading, RG4 8NN

Application 231854

Planning requirements

This document provides specifications for the soft landscaping drawing 24026_4a to meet the Reading Borough Council planning requirements granted 28 March 2024 for 87 Balmore Road, Reading RG4 8NN, in line with the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Hard and Soft Landscaping Provision

87 Balmore Drive, sits in a residential road of 1930s semi-detached properties. The road has a mix of styles in respect to driveways and garden design. Within these are the use of gravel, tarmac and paving for driveways and paths. Planting is domestic in nature with a range of trees, shrubs and herbaceous borders. The hard and soft landscaping plans for 87 Balmore Drive fit within this landscaping style. The front and rear gardens retain the majority of the original mature plant borders.

Where shrubs or trees have been removed these are now being replaced, from original stock or cuttings, or added to. This enhances the overall green coverage of the plot.

Site Analysis

The site is a residential property facing 15° N to the rear. The site is sheltered and not subject to adverse weather or flooding¹. The soil has a pH of 7.7 and is free draining, loamy soil^{2,3}. The site slopes naturally from west to east, and north to south, in line with the local topography. No noted frost pockets or areas of concern.

Planning Documents Associated with this Specification

Existing Documents

- Planning Permission 231845
- 3915-400B Foundation Layout
- 3915 401B -ground Layout
- 3915 407B Elevations
- Delegated Report_231854/HOU

¹ <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/risk#>

² Site analysis

³ <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>



- Location Plan_231854
- Site Plan

New Documents

- 24026_3.3a Landscape Plan
- 24026_3.3b Landscape Plan labelled
- 24026_3.3c Landscape Base plan
- 24026_4.2a Planting Plan
- 24026_4.2b Plant Selection
- 24026_4.2c Plant List

Details below provide detail on soil preparation, plant selection and rational, plant lists , tree planting together with care & maintenance specifications.

Soft Landscaping Specification

All planting beds to be prepared to receive new plants in the best possible conditions

Overall Soil Preparation

1. To prepare new landscaped areas strip all existing turf and remove unwanted roots, annual and perennial weeds and large stones >30mm and builders' rubble from areas to be. Care to be taken around existing trees preserving root structure.
2. Where appropriate existing top soil to be removed or regraded. Keep free of compaction and store in heaps less than 1m high for reuse
3. All spoil to be removed to licenced, off-site recycling centres as appropriate
4. Work in chunky compost to a depth of 100mm c. existing soil to depth of 100mm
5. Add a 200 mm layer of multi-purpose top soil meeting BS 3882 with a pH of 5.7- 7.5
6. Topsoil edges to 50mm above bordering hard surfaces to allow for settlement
7. Finished level must be at least 150mm below top of any damp course

Herb Planters

Planters to be prepared for herbs. Free drainage should be maintained through the base with weep holes covered with permeable material such as crocks or 2cm layer of gravel. Loam based compost (neutral to alkaline pH) with the addition of 10% horticultural grit.

Wisteria Bed

The soil should be prepared as for the general beds with the addition of compost as this will be the growing medium for a long time to come. Tensioned wires to be positioned horizontally on the wall. The first wire to be placed 30cm above ground and further wires spaced evenly 30-45cm above.

Plant List

Plants have been selected to suit the local growing conditions, local environment and existing planting schemes in the garden and the road. The current garden has a mix of herbaceous plants and shrubs. There are a number of roses already in situ. The colour scheme is mixed with no single theme. This allows for the development of the predominant colours without restricting plant choice.

The existing borders have been extended to the front to increase plant diversity for the owners and the local neighbourhood.

Rear borders have been reshaped to allow for enhanced planting and diversity

The trees selected allow for

- Replacement of apple tree that was removed for the build and was rotten
- Relocation of tree to promote healthy growth in better conditions
- Addition of colour and diversity of trees in the garden
- Wildlife & interest

The shrubs have been selected to

- Enhance the current scheme
- Bring diversity of planting into the gardens, front and rear
- Bring additional winter colour, interest, fragrance and wildlife to the gardens
- Replant cutting from the original Wisteria back onto the front of the house
- Colour synergy with existing scheme

The perennials and herbs have been selected to

- Enhance the current scheme
- Re use divisions from existing planting for new areas
- Offer a range of colour, scent and wildlife opportunities
- Offer a choice of culinary herbs to the benefit of the owners and wildlife

Planting

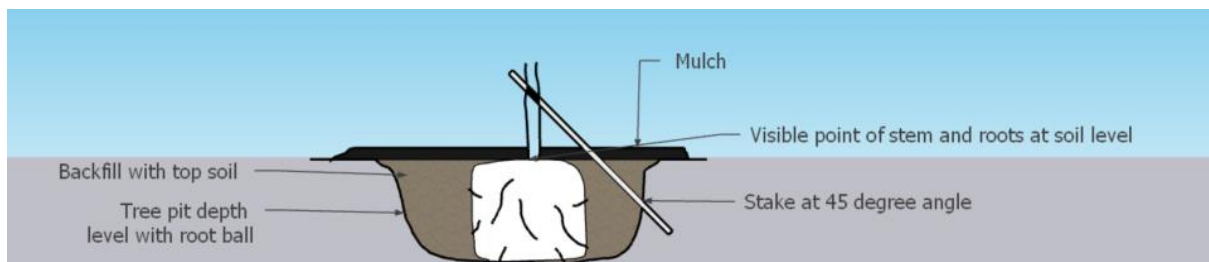
- All plants to be planted into prepared soil to a size of hole same depth and 2-3 times as wide.
- Bare rooted trees and hedging should be planted in the dormant period between November and February. Frosts should be avoided both before and forecast after planting. If warm weather extends into the early winter then planting should be delayed.
- Shrubs should be planted in autumn or spring. Autumn allows for the plants to establish over the winter but can risk damage due to frost. Tender plants should be protected with mulch. Spring planting can commence once the risk of frosts is over.
- Perennials can be planted in autumn or spring depending upon availability and condition
- Herbs are best planted in spring when risks of frost is over. Tender herbs need to be treated as annuals in the UK and replaced annually as required.
- All plants must be in good, healthy condition for planting. Pot bound plants or those recently planted up by a nursery into larger pots, and hence not established should be avoided.
- Nursery instructions should be followed where provided.



Type	Title	Quantity	Size	Notes
Tree	Amelanchier lamarckii	1	150-180cm	Multi stem
Tree	Malus domestica 'Discovery'	1	150-175cm	on M106 rootstock
Tree	Prunus 'Spire'	1	2.5m, 6-8cmg	Standard
Tree	Sorbus aria 'Lutescens'	1	2.5-3m, 8-10cmg	Standard
Hedging	Prunus laurocerasus	3	150-200cm, min 10L	Hedging
Shrub	Daphne odora	1	5L	
Shrub	Hebe 'Midsummer Beauty'	2	5L	
Shrub	Hydrangea arborescens 'Strong Annabelle'	1	5L	Reuse existing stock
Shrub	Hydrangea 'Bluebird'	1	5L	
Shrub	Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote'	1	2L	
Shrub	Philadelphus 'Belle Etoile'	1	5L	
Shrub	Rosa 'Susan William Ellis'	1	bare root / 6L	
Shrub	Rosa 'Lady of Shalott'	2	bare root / 6L	
Shrub	Rosmarinus officinalis	1	2L	
Shrub	Sarcococca hookeriana var. humilis	3	5L	
Shrub	Wisteria sinensis	1	cutting	
Perennial	Alchemilla mollis	6	1.5L	
Perennial	Epimedium x warleyense	3	1.5L	
Perennial	Erysimum 'Bowles's Mauve'	6	1.5L	
Perennial	Hemerocallis fulva	13	2L	divide existing garden stock
Perennial	Nepeta racemosa 'Walker's Low'	6	1.5L	
Perennial	Verbena bonariensis	7	9cm	
Herb	Allium schoenoprasum	3	9cm	
Herb	Allium schoenoprasum 'Fine Leaved'	3	9cm	
Herb	Artemisia dracunculus Russian	1	9cm	
Herb	Mentha x piperita f. citrata	2	9cm	
Herb	Ocimum basilicum	1	9cm	
Herb	Origanum vulgare	3	9cm	
Herb	Petroselinum crispum var. neapolitanum	3	9cm	
Herb	Salvia officinalis	1	9cm	
Herb	Thymus citriodorus	6	9cm	

Tree Pits & Planting

- Trees to be container grown or bare root ball specimen trees planted in November to January when soils are frost free and moist.
- For container grown specimens excavate to the same depth as the container to prevent settlement. For root ball specimens excavate to a depth of 90% of the root ball depth.
- Set aside topsoil for back fill if meeting soil preparation quality above
- Width of planting pit to be 3 times the width of the root ball.
- Soak the root ball prior to planting
- Loosen all roots prior to planting to encourage outward growth
- Place in the hole so the point where the root meets the trunk is level with the level of the soil surface. Use a cane or level as a guide. If the base of the hole has been loosened allow for settlement by raising just above surface and raise the soil level by 150mm.
- Rotate the tree to the desired aspect.
- Insert a stake at a 45 degree angle, avoiding roots and attach to tree with flexible tree tie. Use a collar between the tree stake and trunk to prevent damage.
- Backfill with soil with removed and, if necessary, new top soil. Firm down
- Apply a tree guard to prevent damage from mammals
- Apply a layer of mulch over the surface to a depth of 100mm



Tree care

- Check tree tie annually and loosen as the tree grows. Allowing for the tree to flex and strengthen for 2-3 years before removal.
- Re-straighten any trees leaning within their first three years
- Side shoots can be removed in June or October to establish a clear stem
- Check for damaged or crossing sideshoots to be removed in dormant period (see maintenance table)
- Maintain a 50cm free circle of weeds and mulch annually
- Water regularly for a minimum of 3 years after planting

Wildlife

Wildlife has been accommodated through gate heights specified to allow for small animal, eg hedgehog, access. The owners do not own the boundary fence adjacent to the extension so modifications could not be made here. A bird bath has also been added to include water in the garden in a format safe for small children. Plant selection provides a variety of plants and herbs to support wildlife in a domestic setting.

Plant Maintenance Schedule

Plant /Component	Task	Time of Year	Frequency
Trees & Hedges	Inspect young and mature trees	March-Sept	Annually
	Prune for shape, disease or damage	Oct - February	Annually as required
	Adjustment /removal of stakes & ties		Remove stakes at the end of the 3 rd year
	Water as necessary depending on drought conditions, particularly in the summer for a minimum of 3 years		
	Trim hedges You must not disturb or remove nesting birds. In the UK this is normally between March and August. (UK Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981)	Late winter Early spring Autumn	Bi annually as required
Ornamental Shrubs	Weeding of pernicious weeds to maintain healthy base	All year	As required
	Pruning to promote best display depending on flowering season Winter flowering Spring flowering Summer flowering	Spring After flowering Prune back old wood in winter	Annually
	Note Daphne, Hebe, Sarcococca Limit pruning required for health and access around the plant. Otherwise this is not required		
	Mulch Note Do not mulch base of Mediterranean shrubs such as rosemary or lavender	Autumn	Annually
	Organic fertiliser	Spring Summer if required	Annually
	Water young plants in first spring and summer season dependent on weather conditions	1 st 3 months Spring /Summer	As required
	Water in drought conditions	Spring/Summer	As required
	Dead head roses for repeat flowering	Spring/Summer	As required

Perennials & Herbs	Weed as for ornamental shrubs above		
	Deadhead faded perennial flowers to extend flowering season	Spring/Summer	As required
	Stake perennials if required to maintain shape and protect against the wind	Spring/Summer/Autumn	As required
	Cut back perennials after flowering and foliage has died back Mulch over died back perennials	After flowering and die back Autumn	As required
	Water as for perennials above		Annually

Specific considerations

- Apple
 - Pruning: between November & early March. Summer maintenance to remove any dead or diseased branches
 - Harvest fruit in the summer
 - Control for pests in the most organic and environmentally manner available. Avoid synthetic pesticides which harm beneficial insects
- Hydrangea Strong Annabelle
 - Ensure sufficient watering in dry summer month
 - Stake if required
 - Retain flower heads over winter and prune to 2/3 stem length in spring
- Lavendar
 - Prune flower heads after flowering cutting back to 2-4 shoots of new growth
 - Additional pruning can be used to shape in early spring
- Roses
 - Prune late winter
 - Wind rock prune (removing long whippy growth) in autumn
- Wisteria
 - Carry out selective pruning for first three years to establish shape and form of the climber
 - Summer prune whippy long growth to five or six shoots
 - Winter prune summer pruned shoots to 2-3 shoots
 - Remove any unwanted shoots to maintain shape and habit.