

43A Church Road, Caversham

Supporting document for the discharge of
Condition 4 of planning application no. 230247.
Decision notice dated 30th June 2023
- UPDATED 16th September 2024

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1. Planning Background

Consent was granted for “Proposed 2 storey rear extension, single storey link, replacement garage, fenestration alterations to listed building, conservation roof lights and internal amendments under planning Application No. 230247 which was approved by a Decision Notice Dated 30th June 2023.

The consent has subsequently been implemented, with work commencing at the end of 2023.

First occupation of the extension is subject to the following condition

4. Prior to first use of the extension and garage hereby approved, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall specify means of treatment for hard surfaced areas, means of enclosure including mammal gaps where appropriate, specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted (including replacement trees and tree pit specifications where appropriate, details of the proposed hornbeam hedge and must include a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s) or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

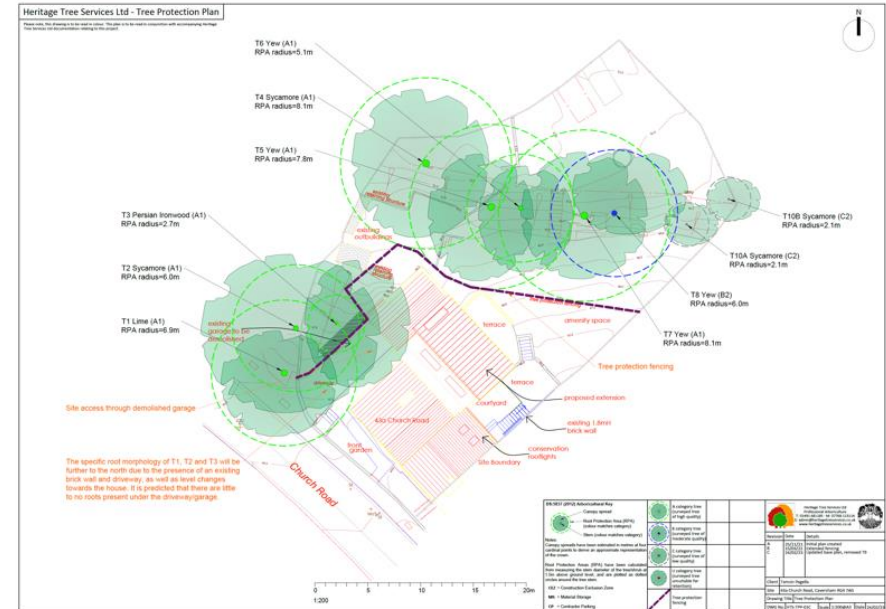
The approved Design and Access Statement by CDP (February 2023 v1) included details of:

“A new native hornbeam hedge shall be planted above the retaining wall to aid in ground stability and the provide a natural barrier against falling from height. The hornbeam is a hardy drought resistant hardwood.”

The hedge will keep its leaves all year round, providing shelter, roosting, nesting and foraging opportunities for birds and small mammals. Hornbeam is the food plant for caterpillars of a number of moth species, including the nut tree tussock. Finches and tits and small mammals eats the seeds in autumn.

The hedge will run in front of a picket fence for safety, which will include mammal gaps on either side.

The plans (top right) also noted the inclusion of a brick and flint retaining wall with native top edge planting to help soften its visual impact from street level (Climbing Rose, Pyracantha and Hedera Helix)



2. Condition 4 Considerations and Site Appraisal

The principal reason for the condition, discussed between the applicant and officers at the time and reflected in the condition wording, was the visual impact on the “visual local environment” (a Conservation Area), despite the poor quality of landscaping in place at the time.

The front garden has two main elements:

1. The Bank:

Comprising a large bank to the left of the garage (shown bottom right) which largely consists of ground cover planting (ivy) with a Persian Ironwood tree in the centre.

2. The Garden

Comprising 43 sqm of hard landscaping (93 % paved and gravel covered) which runs between the driveway and the adjoining property. It is largely obscured from view by a brick wall and sits between 100 and 900 mm below road level as a result of the slope as the road passes the house.

Planting (supplemented by pots) is limited to a Kerria hedge along the front of the house, Ivy growing up the inner face of the brick wall and on the boundary with the neighbouring property, and a laurel bush growing up through the gravel.

The element with the greatest visual impact and scope for improvement through planting is the bank to the left of the driveway. This was also the element of principle concern to officers at the time of the application given its prominence from the road.

The applicants have appointed local Landscape Architect, Ingrid Leene to develop concept and planting plans which are set out over the following pages to support the discharge of condition 4



3. Site Context, Landscape Character and Design Brief

The application site is on Church Road at the foot of St Peter's Hill within the St Peters Conservation Area.

The 2018 Conservation Area Appraisal highlights that "St Peters church and its tower, together with Caversham Court, dominate the Conservation Area, both historically and in the present day. Caversham Court is included in the Historic England "Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England". Tree cover and green spaces, especially around St Peters and in Caversham Court, with specimen trees in the latter, are important. Individual street trees and those in gardens contribute strongly to the area." Other key elements of the conservation area that are identified as desirable include the use of brick and flint in the boundary walls together with the protection of tree cover.

Caversham Court Gardens is Grade II listed, comprising a public garden which once included a mansion located on the north bank of the River Thames. The gardens have been awarded a prestigious Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Site status each year since their refurbishment in 2009. The Green Flag award recognises high-quality maintenance and excellent wildlife and climate-friendly practices. Winners must demonstrate that standards are being maintained and continuous improvements are being achieved. Caversham Court Gardens is planted with nectar rich species together with winter flowering scented planting along the steps.

The applicants' brief, and the proposals within this document:

- Introduce a planting mix that will broaden the biodiversity of The Bank and Front Garden
- Reflect the exemplar planting style and species mix of Caversham Court Gardens by selecting nectar rich and winter flowering scented species appropriate to the shady setting of the proposal site.
- Retain and enhance the setting of the established specimen tree (Persian Ironwood) on The Bank
- Retain and enhance historic brick work through the addition of flint in the extension elevations and parapet wall.
- Enhance the street scene with the introduction of ornamental trees appropriate to shallow front garden.



4. Bank Appraisal and Design Rationale

The design of the slope uses key design elements employed within Caversham Court Gardens.

Planting species

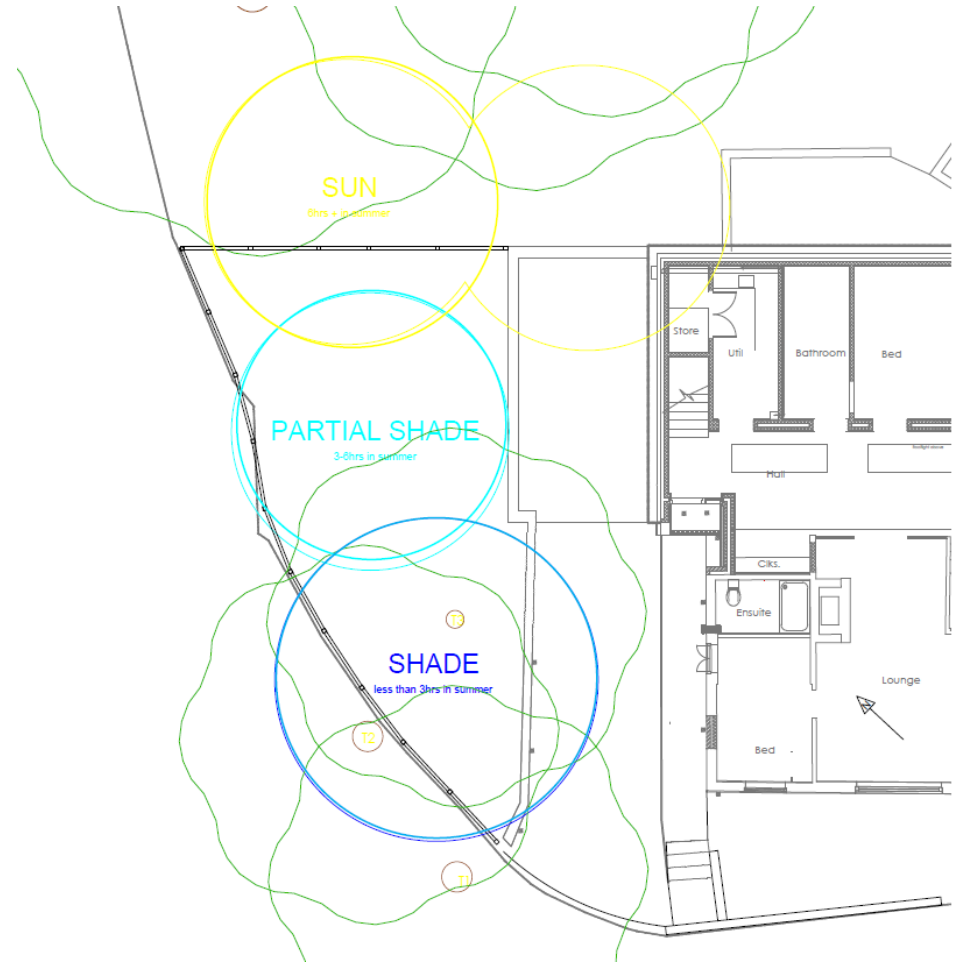
Planting species however are different due to the different aspect of The Bank. Caversham Court Gardens has a full sun aspect, where the planting gets a minimum of 6 hours of sun in the height of summer. The bottom half of The Bank at 43A Church Road is shaded, where the planting gets less than 3 hours in the summer. The top half is classed at partial shade, where planting will get 3 to 6 hours in the summer.

Colour pallet

Caversham Court Gardens' colour palette includes purple, green and silver-grey foliage together with yellow, purple and pink flowers. A similar colour palette has been adopted for 43A Church Road

Planting pattern

The main bank rising behind the stable block in Caversham Court Gardens is planted in swathes/drifts. The selected plants will be arranged in similarly large groups, creating swathes or drifts along the slope, like a flowing river. Weaving large groups in and out of rows. Planting will be mostly nectar rich.



5. Bank Plant Selection

Sources: www.crocus.co.uk – www.rhs.org



Berberis thunbergii f. atropurpurea
'Harlequin'



- Deciduous shrub
- Purple leaves
- Red/pale yellow flowers (spring)
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 1m x W 2.5m
- Great for low hedging
- Used at Caversham Crt
- This plant will provide nectar and pollen for bees and the many other types of pollinating insects.

Sarcococca confusa



- Evergreen shrub
- Dark green leaves
- White scented flowers (Dec-March)
- Full shade to partial shade
- H 2m x W 1m
- Common name: sweet box
- Used at Caversham Crt
- This plant will provide nectar and pollen for bees and the many other types of pollinating insects.

Brunnera macrophylla 'Jack Frost'

- Perennial
- Silver green leaves
- Small blue flowers (April-May)
- Partial shade
- H 0.4m x W 0.6m
- Good under canopy of deciduous trees

Pachysandra terminalis

- Evergreen spreading perennial
- Glossy dark green leaves
- White flowers (May-June)
- Any aspect
- H 0.2m x W 1m
- Groundcover, suppresses weeds
- Common name: spurge

Bergenia 'Abendglut'



- Evergreen perennial
- Large glossy leaves
- Maroon flowers (April-June)
- Any aspect
- H 0.3m x W 0.6m
- Plant in large groups for groundcover
- Common name: Elephant's ear
- Used at Caversham Crt
- This plant will provide nectar and pollen for bees and the many other types of pollinating insects.

Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Tom Thumb'

- Evergreen shrub
- Purple and green leaves
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 1m x W 0.6m
- Natural dome shape
- Used at Caversham Crt

• Planting approx. 3 per meter as hedge	• Plant spacing approx. 50cm apart	• Plant spacing approx. 45cm apart	• Plant spacing approx. 50cm apart	• Plant spacing approx. 35-45cm apart	• Plan spacing approx. 45-60cm apart
• Plant bare root specimens during October-April when dormant	• Best planted in autumn or spring	• No routine pruning required; tidy up dead leaves when needed	• No routine pruning required; tidy up dead leaves when needed	• Ideally plant in autumn to get established before flowering season	• No routine pruning required; prune to retain shape and size in spring
• No routine pruning required; prune to retain shape and size in winter when dormant	• No routine pruning required; prune in late winter of early spring to retain shape and size if needed	• In spring established clumps can be dug up and dived if needed	• In spring established clumps can be dug up and dived if needed	• Easy to grow and low maintenance • No routine pruning required; remove dead leaves and faded flower stems when needed	
• Protect eyes and skin when pruning, due to its spiny nature				• In autumn established clumps can be dug up and dived if needed	

6. Parapet Wall Planting (as noted on the approved plans)

Sources: www.crocus.co.uk – www.rhs.org



Hedera helix

Pyracantha

Climbing roses

Carpinus betulus – hornbeam hedge



- Evergreen climber
- Green leaves or variegated
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 3m x W 3m (fast growing)
- Common name: ivy

- This plant will provide nectar and pollen for bees and the many other types of pollinating insects.

- Evergreen shrub
- Dark green leaves
- White flowers (May)
- Orange or red berries (autumn)
- Full shade to partial shade
- H 3m x W 3m
- Grow against a wall or freestanding
- Common name: firethorn

- Used at Caversham Crt

- This plant will provide nectar and pollen for bees and the many other types of pollinating insects.

- Deciduous climber
- Green leaves
- Various colours: yellow, pink, orange, white
- Full sun to partial shade
- Climbing roses (Rosa) are usually vigorous, and often bear scented blooms. Many repeat-flower from early summer into autumn. They are great for bringing a vertical accent to the garden - covering walls and fences.

- Deciduous shrub
- Green leaves, orange/brown in autumn
- Vivid green catkins in March
- Clusters of green fruit in spring
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 10m x W 8m (fast growing)
- Holds on to autumn leaves until new growth in spring

- Spacing approx. 3 plants per meter
- Plant bare root if possible in late autumn/winter
- Prune to retain size and shape in late summer/early autumn after bird nesting season

7. Bank Planting Scheme

Planting Principles

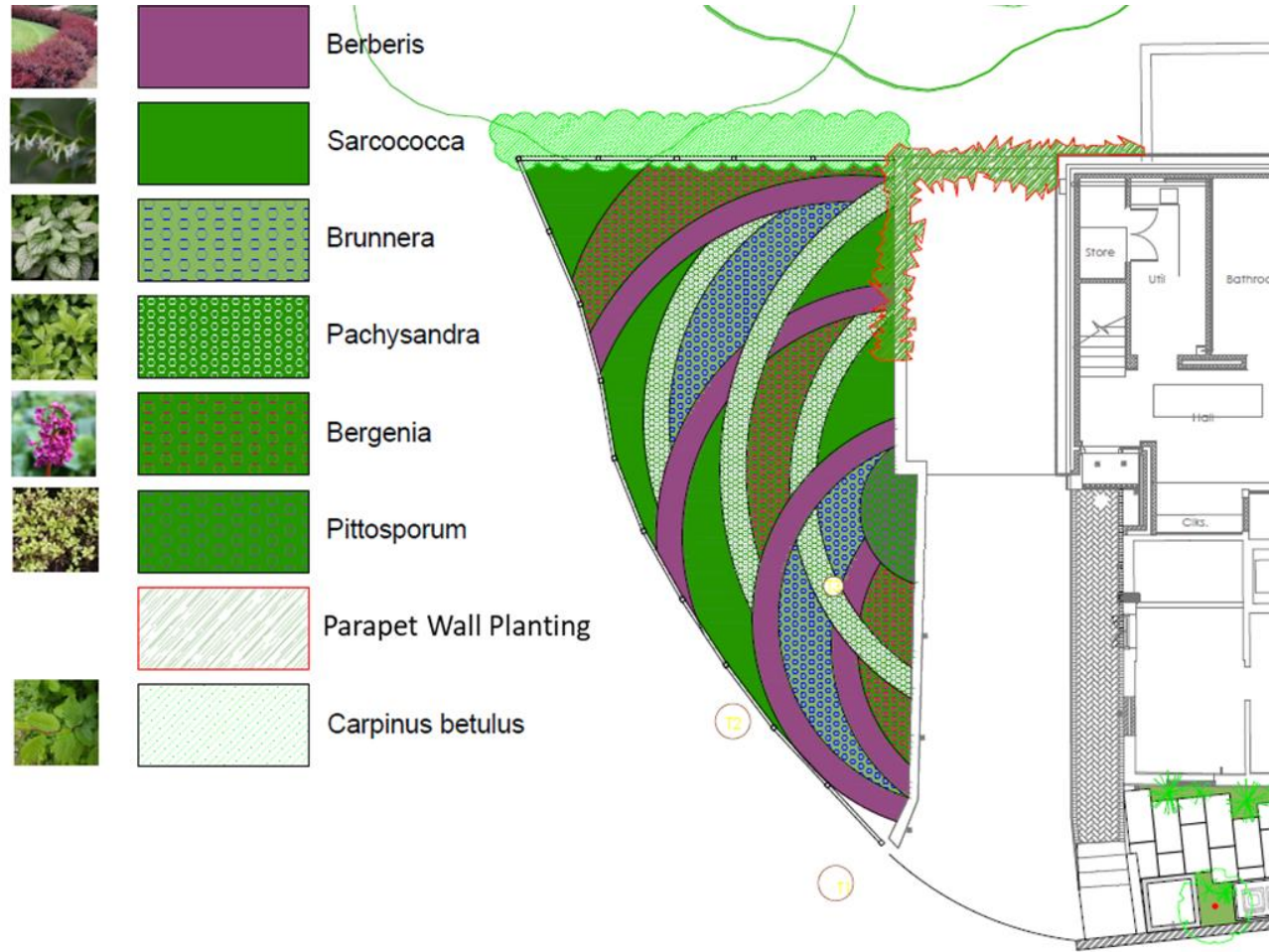
The plants will be arranged in large groups, creating swathes or drifts along the slope, like a flowing river.

Each species will be planted at centres appropriate to its natural spread as identified in the following pages, to achieve full cover within 18 months of planting. Any plants that fail within the first 18 months will be replaced to ensure full coverage.

The hornbeam hedge will be trimmed out of bird nesting season to maintain a height of 1.5m.

Provision for mammals

The boundary fencing to the slope will be reinstated using post and rail fencing, giving complete permeability to the boundary for mammals. The picket fence identified in the approved plans at the top of the slope will include gaps of 30 cm to provide routes through the garden for badgers and smaller mammals.



7. Bank Planting Scheme – quantities plan



7. Bank Planting Scheme = Plant quantities, pot sizes, details and maintenance schedule

qty	Botanical name	Common name	type	aspect	pot size	height	spread	flower colour	Flowering months												Maintenance			
									JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN
75	Berberis thunbergii f. atropurpurea 'Harlequin'	purple Japanese barberry	deciduous shrub	full sun or partial shade	bare root	1m	2.5m	red/pale yellow					x	x							prune to retain shape/size			prune to retain shape/size
75	Sarcococca confusa	sweet box	evergreen shrub	partial to full shade	2L	2m	1m	white	x	x	x											only prune to shape if needed		
55	Brunnera macrophylla 'Jack Frost'	Siberian bugloss	perennial	partial shade		0.4m	0.6m	blue				x	x								remove dead foliage	lift & divide in spring if congested		
51	Pachysandra terminalis	spurge	evergreen groundcover	any		0.2m	1m	white					x	x								lift & divide in spring if congested		
83	Bergenia 'Abendglut'	elephant's ears	evergreen perennial	any		0.3m	0.6m	magenta				x	x	x								remove dead foliage	cut back spend flowers	
6	Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Tom Thumb'	tawhiwhi 'Tom Thumb'	evergreen shrub	partial to full shade		1m	0.6m	dark purple					x	x								prune to retain shape/size		
29	Carpinus betulus	common hornbeam hedging	deciduous shrub	full sun or partial shade	bare root	10m	8m	green catkins															prune to retain shape/size (after bird nesting)	
5	Photinia fraseri 'Red Robin'	red robin	multistem evergreen tree	full sun or partial shade	1-1.25m	4m	4m	white				x	x											

379 total of plants

pot sizes maybe vary depending on availability

Notes:

all plants require (moderately) fertile, moist and well drained soil

free draining under soil

use peat free grown plants were possible

mulch plants after planting with approx 8cm layer of dense mulch

mulch borders in spring after tidy up

dig in plenty of organic matter before planting to give soil extra nourishment

plants will need to be watered in properly for several weeks/months for the roots to establish, especially in warmer weather

planting will take time to establish and grow to ultimate size, this can take 3-5 years

create a maintenance schedule

leave grasses and seedheads after flowering for winter interest and food/shelter for wildlife

8. Front Garden Appraisal

The front garden is 93% paving (blue on the plan, right) and gravel (orange on the plan, right), providing a highly functional space that accommodates the following:

- Pedestrian access via two gates from the driveway (down four steps to garden level) and main footpath in the middle of the garden (down a single step)
- Hardstanding for bins
- A small storage shed.

It is largely obscured from view, sitting between a 100 and 900 mm below road level with a brick wall extending above – reaching 1.7m above garden height at its peak.

Planting is limited to a Kerria hedge along the front of the house (shown in green on the plan and visible in the photo) with a laurel bush and ivy growing up through the gravel and covering the inner face of the brick wall.



9. Front Garden General Arrangement

Design Rationale

The design brief seeks to:

- Preserve the utility and function of the space,
- Reduce the proportion of hard surfaces,
- Increase the diversity of planting,
- Introduce ornamental tree planting to enhance the street scene.



10. Hard Surface Material Selection



Path to front door:
London Stone - Tumbled Black
Sandstone Pavers
200 x 50 x 40mm



Driveway:
Sandstone setts – light grey



Front garden pavers:
Norgestone – dark grey
1200 x 600mm



Large pavers with Erigeron overspilling the edges



Large pavers with dense groundcover



Evergreen ferns, Hakonechloa, gravel and large pavers



Paving will be a mix of brick and pavers, with brick on the path towards the front door, laid in a herringbone pattern. Large pavers will be laid to the front garden in a staggered pattern, avoiding straight lines in a narrow space and creating natural pockets for planting. This will soften the hard landscaping and improving permeability.

For ease of use, the area in front of the bin store and dog wash will be fully paved with a clear way toward to gate for the bins to go to the road.



A complimentary shade of gravel will be used to fill the French drain that has been introduced to improve ventilation and reduce the risk of damp at the base of the house walls.

11. Ornamental Tree Selection

Multi-stem Photinia trees have been selected for planting along the wall to provide privacy from the road, year-round interest and add to the street scene which is characterized by mature street trees.



Photinia x fraseri 'Red Robin'

- Evergreen multi stem tree
- Glossy green leaves
- New leaves are red
- Full sun or partial shade

Tree planting

- To be done between October and April, avoiding waterlogged or frozen soil
- The "tree pit" will be no deeper than the roots, but ideally at least three times the diameter of the root system.
- The trees will be placed in the planting hole and positioned to ensure that the first flare of roots are level with the soil surface when planting is complete. The top layers of compost will be scraped away to reveal the flare of roots if necessary.
- Deep planting will be avoided to ensure the lower trunk isn't left vulnerable to disease leading to poor establishment.
- As multistem trees, staking won't be required.
- The planting hole will be refilled carefully, placing soil between and around all the roots to eliminate air pockets.
- The soil will be gently firmed, and the plants watered in well
- They will be kept well watered, especially in dry warm weather to ensure they become fully established.



12. Plant Selection

The plants below have been selected to provide visual interest, improve species mix and soften the impact of the hard surfaces required.

Ferns and shade tolerant plants will be planted close to the boundary walls and hedge, with grasses and sun loving pollinators used against the outside wall of the house.



Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Golf Ball'

- Evergreen shrub
- Light green leaves
- Small brown/purple flowers (May-June)
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 1m x W 1.2m (average growing)
- Great for structure



Verbena bonariensis

- Perennial
- Tall, stiff stems
- Purple flowers (Dec-March)
- Full sun
- H 1.8m x W 0.45m (fast growing, self seed)
- Transparent height



Erigeron karvinskianus

- Perennial
- Green leaves
- Daisy-like pink, white flowers (June-Oct)
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 0.3m x W 1m (fast growing, self seed)
- Long flowering, great for planting pockets



Stipa tenuissima

- Semi-evergreen grass
- Pale yellow-green leaves
- Silver-green flowers (June-Oct)
- Full sun
- H 0.6m x W 0.3m (average growing)
- Softens and provides movement



Thymus serpyllum 'Snowdrift'

- Evergreen fragrant groundcover
- Green leaves
- Small white flowers
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 0.2m x W 0.45m (fast growing)
- Great for paths and edges



- Full sun
- H 0.2m x W 0.45m (average growing)
- Groundcover, texture and silver colour



Anemone x hybrida 'Königin Charlotte'

- Perennial
- Large vine-like green leaves
- Large pink flowers (Aug-Oct)
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 1m x W 1.2m (average growing)
- Spring/summer leaves and autumn flowers
- Tall and transparent flower stems



Hakonechloa macra

- Perennial
- Bright green flat leaves
- Lime green flowers (June-July)
- Partial shade
- H 0.35m x W 0.4m (slow growing)
- Shaded wall side of path



Asplenium scolopendrium

- Evergreen fern
- Green leaves
- Partial shade
- H 0.6m x W 0.6m
- Evergreen texture on wall side



Polystichum setiferum

- Evergreen native fern
- Green leaves
- Partial to full shade
- H 0.5m x W 0.9m
- Evergreen texture on wall side



Alchemilla mollis

- Perennial
- Green velvet leaves
- Chartreuse yellow flowers (June-Sept)
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 0.5m x W 0.5m (fast growing, self seed)
- Great for paths and edges



Fatsia japonica

- Evergreen architectural shrub
- Large glossy green leaves
- Cream white flowers (Sept-Oct)
- Full sun to partial shade
- H 4m x W 4m (slow growing)
- Focal point area

13. Bin Storage



A new timber bin store will be added to reduce the visual impact of the wheelie bins, incorporating a sedum roof to improve biodiversity and rainwater permeability. It will be largely obscured from view, standing behind a wall that is the same height as the bin store at its lowest point, rising to 100mm higher.

Pre-grown rolls of 12-14 species of sedum will be laid on a specialist substrate laid to a depth of 50mm and lightweight drainage layer will be used. It will sit on an EPDM rubber liner and filter fleece. The substrate will be held in place with a timber retaining strip with any excess water percolating into the soil via a gutter and downpipe.

Once established it will require little maintenance, only needing one cut in the autumn. Following installation it will need watering for 2-3 weeks, while the plants get established. In dry periods, the roof will turn red or yellow but will return to green.

