



LANDSCAPE SPECIFICATION

Site Address: 23 Church End Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4XA

Drawing Reference: PL/A724/07C – Proposed Site Plan Hard & Soft Landscape Layout

Document Reference: PL/A724/D03B – Landscape Specifications REV B

Application Type: Approval of details reserved by condition (APP. REF. PL/25/0273)

1. Project Information

This Landscape Specification has been prepared to discharge Condition 7 (Hard & Soft Landscaping) and Condition 8 (Boundary Treatments) of planning approval PL/25/0273. It incorporates all comments received from the Natural Environment / Ecology Team and the Tree Officer.

The scheme provides a native, wildlife-friendly landscape, ensures long-term retention of existing trees, and delivers a clear and maintainable planting strategy.

2. Existing Trees & Retention Strategy

Two existing trees are located within the rear garden. Both trees are now confirmed for full retention, in accordance with the approved site plan.

The Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of both trees have been plotted on drawing PL/A724/07C. The approved layout results in tight working space around the patio and privacy screen, with a small section of the patio edge falling adjacent to the RPA.

Although this creates a minor construction interface, the trees can be retained safely with the following measures:

- All excavation adjacent to the RPA will be carried out using hand tools only.
- Minor roots may be encountered; where unavoidable, small roots may be trimmed cleanly using sharp tools.
- No significant structural roots will be removed.
- Tree protection fencing to BS5837:2012 will be installed prior to commencement and retained throughout the works.
- No machinery, storage, or ground compaction will occur within the RPA.

This approach ensures tree retention while acknowledging the practical constraints of working within a compact residential plot.

3. Preparation of Planting Areas and Soil Handling

All planting areas shall be prepared to support healthy establishment of the proposed native trees, hedging and soft landscaping. Preparation works shall be carried out carefully to avoid unnecessary disturbance to surrounding ground, existing boundaries and approved construction elements.



3.1 General Soil Preparation

Topsoil within proposed planting areas shall be lightly cultivated to a depth of approximately 150–200mm to break up compaction and create a suitable planting medium. No deep excavation is required or proposed within these areas.

All debris, rubble, construction waste and non-organic material shall be removed from planting zones prior to planting.

3.2 Existing Trees

Both trees will be retained. No excavation will occur within the RPA except for minor hand-digging adjacent to the patio edge as described in Section 2.

3.3 Topsoil Handling

Topsoil shall be retained on site wherever possible and reused within planting areas. Only minimal stripping of topsoil shall occur, limited to areas where new planting beds or the front garden tree pit are required.

Topsoil shall not be removed across the entire site, and no wholesale grading or re-profiling is proposed.

Any imported topsoil shall comply with BS 3882:2015.

3.4 Grading

Localised grading shall be undertaken only where necessary to achieve smooth, even falls within planting beds and lawn areas.

No significant changes to existing ground levels are proposed, and no grading will occur within the footprint of the existing retained trees RPAs.

3.5 Protection of Adjacent Areas

During preparation works, care shall be taken to avoid disturbance to:

- Existing boundary fences
- The approved dwelling footprint
- Drainage channels and permeable paving edges
- Neighbouring land

All works shall be carried out using hand tools where appropriate to minimise ground disturbance.

4. Tree Planting Specification front garden

Only one new tree is proposed as part of this landscape scheme. This tree is located in the front garden, away from all RPAs, and is selected specifically for its compact size, slow growth, and non-invasive root behaviour. Both existing rear garden trees are being retained, therefore no replacement trees are required



4.1 Proposed Small Ornamental Tree (Front Garden)

Species: *Betula pendula* ‘Youngii’ (Weeping Silver Birch – dwarf ornamental form)

Reason for selection:

- Small, compact, slow-growing tree
- Mature height typically 2.5–3.5m
- Non-aggressive root system suitable for small gardens
- High ornamental value
- Light canopy allowing sunlight to pass through
- Minimal maintenance requirements

This species provides visual interest without creating future conflicts with the dwelling, boundaries, or underground services.

4.2 Tree Stock Quality

All trees shall be:

- 10–12cm girth, **approximately 2.0–2.5m height at time of planting**, container grown
- Nursery-grown to BS 3936-1
- Free from pests, diseases, wounds, or structural defects
- Supplied with a well-formed central leader and balanced crown

4.3 Tree Pit Construction

Tree pit design shall be in accordance with BS8545:2014+A1:2026 ‘Trees from nursery to independence in the landscape – Code of practice’. The pit has been designed specifically for a 10–12cm girth tree. Each tree shall be planted in a prepared pit measuring:

- 0.8m × 0.8m × 0.5m deep minimum
- Base of pit loosened to 150mm depth
- Sides of pit scarified to prevent glazing

Backfill shall consist of:

- 50% site-won topsoil (where suitable)
- 50% PAS100 compost or approved organic soil improver

A 75–100mm mulch layer of bark chips shall be applied over the pit surface, keeping mulch clear of the stem.

4.4 Staking and Support

Newly planted tree shall be supported using:

- One round softwood stakes, 1.5m long, 75mm diameter
- Stake positioned outside the rootball
- Adjustable rubber tree tie with spacer to prevent chafing

Stake shall be removed after 2–3 years, once the tree is established.

4.5 Irrigation

An irrigation system shall be installed for new tree:

- Perforated irrigation pipe loop (50mm diameter)
- Pipe end brought to surface with a protective cap
- Watering frequency:
 - 20 litres per week during April–October for the first three growing seasons; additional water during drought periods
 - As required thereafter

4.6 Planting Procedure

- Tree shall be planted during the November–March planting season.
- Planting shall not take place during periods of frost, waterlogging, or drought.
- Tree shall be planted at the same depth as their nursery container.
- Soil shall be gently firmed around the rootball to eliminate air pockets.
- Water thoroughly immediately after planting.

4.7 Establishment and Replacement

If Newly planted tree:

- fails to establish,
- dies,
- becomes diseased, or
- suffers significant damage

within the first five years shall be replaced in the next planting season with a tree of the same species and specification.

5. Native Mixed Hedge Planting

Mixed native hedge planting is proposed along the frontage of the site as shown on drawing PL/A724/07C. The total hedge length is 9.637m (comprising sections of 5.219m, 2.064m and 2.354m as dimensioned on the plan). The hedge provides biodiversity enhancement, softens the frontage, and remains entirely outside the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of the retained trees.

No hedge planting is proposed within the rear garden. The rear garden hedge previously shown on earlier drawings has been omitted because its installation would require a continuous excavated trench approximately 300mm deep along the north and east boundaries, which fall directly within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of both retained trees. This would cause unacceptable root disturbance and is incompatible with the BS5837:2012 tree retention strategy. The omission of the rear hedge is therefore a direct consequence of retaining both trees in full.



A shallow decorative planting bed (maximum depth 150mm) shall be formed around the new front garden ornamental tree using low ornamental grasses (*Stipa tenuissima*) and low native perennials including *Primula vulgaris* (Primrose), *Ajuga reptans* (Bugle) and *Viola riviniana* (Common Dog-violet). The planting bed shall not interfere with the tree pit, shall avoid the manhole cover, and shall require no excavation deeper than 150mm.

5.1 Hedge Species Mix (Native)

The hedge shall consist of the following species, planted as bare-root whips:

- 40% *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn) – 23 plants
- 20% *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn) – 12 plants
- 20% *Corylus avellana* (Hazel) – 12 plants
- 10% *Cornus sanguinea* (Dogwood) – 6 plants
- 10% *Acer campestre* (Field Maple) – 6 plants. Total: 59 plants (6 plants per linear metre, double staggered row over 9.637m).

This mix provides seasonal interest, nectar, berries, and habitat value for birds, insects and small mammals.

5.2 Planting Specification

All hedge plants shall be:

- 60–80cm bare-root whips
- Nursery-grown to BS 3936
- Supplied with healthy root systems and free from defects

Plants shall be stored and handled carefully to prevent drying of roots.

5.3 Planting Arrangement

The hedge shall be planted in a double staggered row as follows:

- 300mm spacing between plants within each row
- 450mm spacing between rows
- Plants offset to create a dense, interlocking structure
- Rows aligned to match the short hedge section shown on the landscape plan.

This arrangement ensures rapid establishment and effective screening.

5.4 Soil Preparation

Planting trenches shall be:

- 300mm wide
- 300mm deep
- Lightly cultivated to break compaction
- Backfilled with site-won topsoil where suitable, supplemented with organic compost as required

No deep excavation or grading is proposed.

5.5 Mulching

A 75mm mulch layer of bark chips shall be applied along the full length of the hedge to:

- Suppress weeds
- Retain moisture
- Improve soil structure

Mulch shall be kept clear of plant stems.

5.6 Hedgehog Access

In response to the ecologist's comments, hedgehog access gaps shall be incorporated into the boundary fencing as part of this landscape scheme. The northern boundary fence is new. The eastern and southern boundary fences are existing and retained. The following access points shall be provided:

- One hedgehog gap (13cm × 13cm) on the northern boundary fence.
- One hedgehog gap (13cm × 13cm) on the eastern boundary fence.
- One hedgehog gap (13cm × 13cm) on the southern boundary fence.

These three access points ensure permeability for small mammals between adjoining gardens and are proportionate to the scale of the site. The gaps shall be positioned at ground level and kept free from obstruction.

5.7 Establishment and Replacement

During the first five years:

- Watering shall be carried out during dry periods
- Weeds shall be removed manually
- Mulch shall be topped up annually
- Any failed plants shall be replaced in the next planting season with the same species mix

The hedge shall be lightly trimmed in late winter once established to encourage dense growth.

6. Hard Landscaping

The hard landscaping elements have been designed to complement the approved dwelling while ensuring permeability, durability, and minimal ecological impact. All materials and construction methods have been selected to support sustainable drainage and to avoid unnecessary ground disturbance.

6.1 Patio Areas

The patio shall be constructed using:

- Edale Eco permeable concrete paving slabs (450 × 450mm)
- Laid on a shallow permeable MOT Type 3 sub-base



- Joints filled with permeable grit or fine aggregate
- No cement mortar or impermeable bedding layers

This system allows surface water to infiltrate naturally and avoids the need for deep excavation.

Where the patio edge lies adjacent to the RPA, the following additional measures apply:

- Excavation shall be carried out using hand tools only
- Only minimal excavation will occur to achieve the required levels
- Any minor roots encountered may be trimmed cleanly where unavoidable
- No significant structural roots will be removed

A perimeter linear drain with pea shingle shall be installed around the building and patio edges to manage runoff and maintain SUDS compliance, without requiring deep trenching.

6.2 Driveway and Parking Area

The driveway and parking space shall be constructed using:

- Permeable block paving (Woburn Rumbled or equivalent)
- MOT Type 3 sub-base
- Permeable bedding layer
- Permeable jointing material

This ensures compliance with sustainable drainage requirements and avoids surface water discharge onto the highway.

The parking area accommodates one vehicle, as shown on the approved site layout.

6.3 Paths and Access Routes

All pedestrian paths shall be surfaced with permeable materials consistent with the patio and driveway. No impermeable surfacing is proposed within the site.

6.4 Bicycle Store

The bicycle store is located partially within the Root Protection Area (RPA) of the southeastern retained tree. To minimise ground disturbance, the following measures shall be applied:

2. The store shall be constructed above ground level using screw pile or ground pad foundations. No concrete shall be poured into the ground within the RPA.
3. A gap shall be maintained between the base of the structure and the ground to allow water permeability and gaseous exchange within the soil.
4. Any minimal excavation required shall follow the methodology set out in Section 2 (hand tools only, roots cut cleanly, no significant structural roots removed).

6.5 Boundary Treatments

Boundary treatments are retained and supplemented as part of this landscape scheme as follows:

To improve permeability for small mammals, the following hedgehog access gaps shall be incorporated into the boundary fencing. The northern boundary fence is new. Eastern and southern boundary fences are existing and retained:

- **Northern boundary:**
 - New 1.8m close-boarded timber fence to be erected (no existing fence present on this boundary). One hedgehog access gap (13cm x 13cm) to be formed at ground level. Posts to be hand-augered to minimise ground disturbance; any roots encountered to be cut cleanly. Fence posts will be outside the RPA.
- **Eastern boundary:**
 - Existing close-boarded fence retained (minimum 1.8m high as shown on approved drawing P22-042 Rev C). One hedgehog access gap (13cm x 13cm) to be formed at ground level.
- **Southern boundary:**
 - Existing close-boarded fence retained (2m high as shown on approved drawing P22-042 Rev C) with proposed privacy screen formed with 25 x 150mm treated softwood uprights at 75mm centres fixed to supporting framework. One hedgehog access gap (13cm x 13cm) to be formed at ground level.
- **Western boundary (front):**
 - Existing brick wall retained with a section opened to form the driveway access. No gate is proposed; the driveway entrance is left open. Existing close-boarded fence retained where present. Mixed native hedge planting proposed along this boundary as shown on drawing PL/A724/07C.

All hedgehog gaps shall be kept unobstructed and positioned to allow movement between adjoining gardens.

7. Planting Season

All soft landscaping works, including tree planting, hedge planting, shrub planting and turfing, shall be carried out during the appropriate planting season to ensure successful establishment and long-term growth.

7.1 General Planting Season

Planting shall take place during the **November to March** period, which is the recognised dormant season for native trees and hedging species in the UK. This ensures:

- Reduced transplant shock
- Improved root establishment
- Lower watering demand

- Higher survival rates

7.2 Weather Conditions

Planting shall not be undertaken during:

- Frozen ground
- Waterlogged ground
- Heavy snowfall
- Prolonged drought
- High winds

If adverse weather occurs during the planting period, works shall be postponed until conditions improve.

7.3 Turf Laying

Turf shall be laid:

- Between September and April, avoiding frost
- On prepared topsoil as specified in Section 3
- With joints staggered and well-watered after laying

7.4 Replacement Planting

Any replacement trees or hedge plants required under the 5-year establishment period (Section 8) shall also be planted during the November–March season.

8. Maintenance (First 5 Years)

A structured maintenance programme is essential to ensure successful establishment of the new native trees, hedging and soft landscaping. The following measures shall be implemented for a minimum period of five years from the completion of planting.

8.1 Watering

Trees

- Apply 20 litres of water per week during the growing season (April–October) for the first three growing seasons.
- Additional water to be applied during drought periods throughout the establishment period. Reduce frequency after Year 3 as the tree becomes established.
- Apply water directly into the irrigation pipe loop to encourage deep rooting.

Hedge and Shrubs

- Apply 20 litres of water per week during the growing season (April–October) for the first two growing seasons. Additional water during drought periods.
- Reduce frequency thereafter as plants become established.

8.2 Mulching

- Maintain a **75–100mm mulch layer** around each tree and along hedge lines.
- Keep mulch clear of stems to prevent rot.
- Top up mulch annually in early spring.

8.3 Weed Control

- Remove weeds manually within all planting areas.
- No herbicides shall be used within 1 metre of new trees or hedging.
- Maintain planting beds free from competitive vegetation.

8.4 Tree Support and Stability

- Inspect tree stakes and ties twice per year (spring and autumn).
- Adjust ties to prevent rubbing and ensure the tree remains upright.
- Remove stakes and ties after 2–3 years, once the tree is self-supporting.

8.5 Hedge Establishment

- Light formative trimming in late winter once plants have established.
- Avoid trimming during the bird nesting season (March–August).
- Replace any failed plants during the next planting season.

8.6 Lawn Maintenance

- Mow turf regularly during the growing season, avoiding cutting too short.
- Water during prolonged dry periods.
- Repair any worn or bare patches as required.

8.7 Replacement of Failed Plants

Any tree, hedge plant, shrub or turf area that:

- dies,
- fails to establish,
- becomes diseased, or
- suffers significant damage

within the first five years shall be replaced during the next planting season with the same species and specification.

8.8 Hedgehog Access

- Ensure hedgehog gaps remain unobstructed at all times.
- Do not block or cover access points with stored materials, planting, or hard landscaping.

9. Summary of Planting

Plant Type	Species	Notes
Tree (Front Garden)	<i>Betula pendula</i> 'Youngii'	Compact ornamental feature tree
Existing trees (Rear Garden)	<i>Retained</i>	Protected with BS5837 fencing; minor hand-digging only adjacent to RPA
Native Hedge	Mixed native species (Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Dogwood, Field Maple)	Short hedge section at front corner; double staggered row
Ornamental Grass	<i>Stipa tenuissima</i>	Gravel/rock border
Ornamental Grass / Native Perennials	<i>Stipa tenuissima</i> and low native perennials (<i>Primula vulgaris</i> , <i>Ajuga reptans</i> , <i>Viola riviniana</i>)	Shallow (max 150mm) decorative bed; safe near manhole; no interference with tree pit
Turf	Fine Rye Turf	All lawn areas