

TOPSOIL & EARTHWORKS

SPECIFICATION

For: **Topsoiling Works**

At: Scours Lane,
Reading

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Prepared for: Weybourne

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TOPSOIL AND EARTHWORKS

1.0 TOPSOIL STRIP AND STORAGE

The contractor shall strip existing topsoil during appropriate weather conditions (i.e. not waterlogged or wet) with appropriate machinery. The contractor is to ensure that the topsoil strip is carried out to the correct depth and avoids contamination or removal of subsoil.

The topsoil shall be placed in storage heaps, graded and capped by tracked machine to discharge surface water. The storage heap should not exceed 2.5m in height, to avoid the deterioration of the stored topsoil. The contractor is to carry out weed control during the period of storage to ensure that the soil is not contaminated with weed seed and perennial weeds. Following any partial re-topsoiling operations, the contractor will 'close' and re-cap the area of operation on the heap and maintain weatherproof conditions.

2.0 IMPORTED TOPSOIL: (If required)

To comply with the requirements of BS 3882: 2015: Topsoil is to be as-dug, clean uncontaminated friable soil of medium texture with adequate humus content excavated from previously cultivated land: pH value neutral to slightly acid. Free from un-rotted vegetable material or any material other than soil and maximum 20% content (by dry weight) of stones not exceeding 50mm. **'Screened topsoil' is not acceptable.**

2.1 Topsoil Sample:

Do not deliver topsoil until 5m³/load has been inspected and approved by the Landscape Architect. Keep the approved delivery on site as a standard of compliance.

3.0 SOIL TESTING

The contractor is to allow for the employment of an independent and approved soil testing company to satisfy the client's representative of the suitability and standard of any proposed imported material.

4.0 EXCAVATION GENERALLY:

The Contractor shall allow for working around, temporarily supporting, repairing, upholding and maintaining any permanent drains, water, gas or other service pipes or electric cables encountered during excavation pending the decision of the Landscape Architect as to their diversion or otherwise.

4.1 Levels:

Protect any bench marks and establish levels.

4.2 Site Clearance:

Before commencing alterations of levels clear site of rubbish, shrubs and general vegetation and remove.

4.3 Preservation of Existing Vegetation:

Protect all trees from damage. Do not excavate or store materials or plant within the area of root spread of any tree. If any of the proposed works requires the existing level of the ground within the protection circle to be altered or the roots to be cut then the supervising officer is to be notified prior to commencement.

5.0 OVERSITE STRIP AND GRADING

5.1 Mechanical Plant:

Machines for earth moving and other works to areas scheduled for landscape operations shall be low ground-pressure equipment that will not over-compact the soil or impair natural drainage.

5.2 Oversight Strip:

Excavate topsoil to its full depth if greater depth to be excavated but do not mix with subsoil: deposit on site in soil heaps. Grade to even contours and cop off to discharge rainfall.

5.3 Landscape Contours and Levels:

After removal of topsoil, form banks, excavations and mounds with even-flowing contours or grade to falls and levels as required and to the satisfaction of the Landscape Architect.

6.0 PREPARING SUB-SOIL:

The contractor will carry out the removal of any builder's rubble, rubbish or deleterious materials. Prepare the ground in a manner that ensures that there is not less than 450mm of topsoil for landscape areas. If this thickness cannot be achieved by movement of the existing layer, import approved quantities of additional soil to form the specified contours and levels.

The contractor shall loosen and aerate compacted or undisturbed subsoil with an approved ripper attached to a suitable machine or by other approved method that achieves the required de-compaction to a depth of 250mm.

7.0 SPREADING AND GRADING TOPSOIL:

The contractor will carry out the re-topsoiling in accordance with the depths specified:

Trees	900mm
Shrub areas	450mm
Grass areas	150mm

The grading of topsoil shall be carried out to even and flowing contours and the contractor is to ensure that finished topsoil depths are between 50 and 75mm above adjacent hard surface edges and features. This is to allow the correct levels to be achieved following settlement.

Soils generally lose strength and become less resistant to damage as they become wetter; therefore, it is essential that they are stripped, handled and trafficked only in the appropriate conditions of weather and soil moisture, and with suitable machinery. If sustained heavy rainfall (e.g. >10 mm in 24 h) occurs during soil stripping operations, work should be suspended etc., a detailed stripping plan showing soil units to be stripped, haul routes and the phasing of vehicle movements.

Topsoil and subsoil should be stripped separately and they should be kept separate. Topsoils of different quality should also be kept separate from each other.

The depth of topsoil spread should not normally exceed 300 mm. Suitable (loosened) subsoil should provide the remainder of the minimum rooting depth. The minimum rooting depth should be normally:

- 450 mm for grass,
- 600 mm for shrubs and
- 900 mm for trees.

(Subsoil in accordance with BS8601: 2013 specification subsoil.)

Prior to spreading topsoil, the receiving area should be de-compacted to increase permeability.

Note 1: The functioning of topsoil within a landscape depends not only on the quality of the topsoil but also on the care given to the preparation of the receiving area, which will often have been compacted by the passage of vehicles or storage of materials.

Note 2: It is particularly important that the topsoil is not over-compacted during spreading. Over compaction prevents plant root growth and function, and reduces water attenuation and the ability of excess water to drain away. It is one of the most common reasons for plant failures in landscape schemes, and it increases the risk of erosion and runoff.

Placement of soil by tracked hydraulic excavators working in strips from ground not yet loosened (the “loose-tipping” method) is a way to avoid this. This method is illustrated in Figure A.2 (in BS doc).

8.0 AREAS OF SETTLEMENT:

The contractor shall reinstate any areas of uneven settlement which occur during the maintenance and defects period with appropriate and approved topsoil. These operations will be carried out when directed by the Supervising Officer.