Construction Skills Centre & Site Accommodation at Former Maria Fidelis School Site



Landscape Report

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This report has been prepared by:

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Executive Summary

We have been commissioned by the Mace Dragados Joint Venture (MDjv) to review the previous landscape design we produced as part of the wider Maria Fidelis scheme, and to update this in light of the revised site layout for the Construction Skills Centre ('CSC') and the Site Accommodation facility.

This report provides an overview of the existing landscape context and the previously consented scheme (2019/3091/P), together with the updated approach to the landscape.

In general the landscape proposals are similar to the previously consented scheme, and include the ecology area. Additional landscape elements not included within the previous scheme are climbing plants to the southern facade of the building and brown roof areas to the eastern end.

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1 Introduction

This report has been produced by the Mace Dragados Joint Venture (MDjv), to support a full planning application for a Construction Skills Centre and Site Accommodation at the former Maria Fidelis School site (the 'Proposed Development').

The Proposed Development would provide:

• a Construction Skills Centre ('CSC') on behalf of London Borough of Camden ('LBC'), for which a similar scheme was previously granted planning permission under LBC application reference 2019/3091/P; and

• a Site Accommodation facility to accommodate approximately 2,500 site operatives and management staff, including office space, ancillary rooms, WCs, showers and changing rooms, and on-site catering. This is required as part of the High Speed Two ('HS2') railway project and will facilitate the construction of HS2 Euston Station.

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The Proposed Development is required for a temporary period of 10 years from occupation and will be removed following the construction of HS2 Euston Station.

A summary of the application and how this report fits into the suite of documents can be found in the Planning Statement.

2 Context

2.1 Site character

The key characteristics of the site are:

- Generally flat site; significant areas of hard surfacing, predominantly tarmac around the existing buildings and to the playground areas;
- Minimal areas of planting and soft landscape within the site; minimal tree cover within the site, focussed on the schools' Wildlife Garden;
- Boundaries -Northern boundary: this area is currently undetermined due to the archaeological and exhumation works;

Photographs on the following page illustrate some of the points above.

An ecological assessment was carried on the site by ASW Ecology in December 2018 (ref: ASW/MELS/093/22/2018), and a subsequent bat emergence visit made. The key findings were that the site has low ecological value with the scope for protected species being present on site being low. The site, however, provides opportunities for improving the ecological value of the site:

- Pond restoration restore the pond so as to increase it's ecological value;
- Installation of bird nesting boxes and bat boxes;
- Incorporation of wildlife friendly planting where possible.

An arboricultural survey was carried out by GHA trees. The findings were:

- Category B trees 3 trees within the Ecology Area;
- Category C trees 1 tree group within the ecology area.



Aerial photograph of the site in context



Oblique aerial photograph of the wider site

2 Context

Site Photographs 2.2





North Gower Street - existing trees



Existing Ecology Garden

Edge of the Wildlife Garden - North Gower St.



planting within the Ecology Garden



View along Starcross Street looking east



Gym equipment and tree within the school grounds





Main playground area

View to the school building from the corner of Starcross Street and North Gower Street



3.1 Landscape Plan



3.2 Consented scheme compared to the Proposed scheme

In 2019, Camden Council submitted a planning application (2019/3091/P) and gained approval for a scheme which included a standalone Construction Skills Centre in the playground of the former Maria Fidelis school site.

This approved application also included a publicly accessible multi-use hall and courtyard, change of use of the existing red-brick school building to provide office workspace, and a new green space for the local community.

The key landscape differences are:

- Brown roof areas have been incorporated on to the second, third, fifth and roof levels, which were not included in the consented scheme;
- The consented ecology area on North Gower Street to the west of the site is slightly smaller in overall size, although the pond is retained along with the additional planting.

The proposed scheme has encountered a stand of Japanese Knotweed (Fallopia japonica) which is currently being treated in line with DEFRA guidance.



Consented scheme



Proposed scheme

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3.3 Planting Proposals

Trees

Additional tree planting is proposed for the Ecology Area.

The Ecology Area is to have only native species to enhance the existing retained trees. The species are:

- Ilex aquifolim native holly
- Prunus avium native edible cherry
- Sorbus aucuparia Mountain Ash

The proposed trees are as per the previously granted planning permission under LBC application reference 2019/3091/P .

Native trees



Native Holly - Ilex aquifolium

Mountain Ash - Sorbus aucuparia



Edible Cherry - Prunus avium

Native planting to the Ecology Area

The planting to the Ecology Area includes a range of different habitats, including:

- 1. Marginal and aquatic plants associated with the reprovided pond;
- 2. Native shrub and groundcover plants;
- 3. A 'Tapestry' hedge with a range of native shrub species to provide nectarrich flowers and berries.

Marginal plants



Sweet Flag - Acorus calamus

Flowering Rush - Butomus umbellatus Purple Loosestrife - Lythrum salicaria

Tapestry hedge



Hazel - Corylus avellana

Field Rose - Rosa arvensis

Guelder Rose - Viburnum opulus

Hornbeam - Carpinus betulus

Blackthorn - Prunus spinosa

unus spinosa Spind

Spindle - Euonymus europaea Holly - Ilex aquifolium

Yellow Flag - Iris pseudacorus

Marsh Marigold - Caltha palustris

The northern boundary to the Ecology Area is to have a 'Tapestry' hedge of native shrub species, complementing the native species found in the area. These include:

> Hazel - Corylus avellana Holly - Ilex aquifolium Field Rose - Rosa arvensis Guelder Rose - Viburnum opulus Hornbeam - Carpinus betulus Hawthorn - Crataegus monogyna Blackthorn - Prunus spinosa Spindle - Euonymus europaea.

Climbing plants to the CSC southern facade

A range of evergreen and deciduous climbers to be grown in metal planters attached to the southern facade. The planters are to have an automatic irrigation system together with suitable lightweight soil volume to support plant growth.

The species are typically self-twining, and will clamber across the wire netting.









Typical view and section of planting areas integrated with the facade

Clematis 'Arabella'

CSC

Clematis armandii

Clematis 'Polish Spirit'

Brown roofs

plants.



Crushed materials

Log pile





Lonicera periclymenum

Passion Flower - Passiflora caerulea

A range of inert substrates (recycled crushed brick, crushed concrete and gravel), planted with a range of native wildflowers and sedum species as plug





Substrate and wildflower plants

3.4 Hard Materials Proposals

The proposed surface material is permeable macadam, which extends across the site as indicated.

This is in line with section 4.2 Climate Change Adaptation of the Sustainability Statement (document 1CP01-MDS_ARP-EV-REP-SS08_SL23-990009) which mentions the incorporation of SuDs such as permeable paving.



3.5 Ecological Enhancements

The proposed landscape design provides opportunities to enhance the ecology in the following ways:

- **Improved pond in the Ecology Area** existing pond to be desilted and relined, with a varied profile to the edges. Marginal aquatic planting to be incorporated, together with floating plants;
- **Bird boxes** both Garden Bird boxes (32mm hole) and Open-Fronted Bird boxes; bird boxes to be wall-integrated and/or fixed to proposed semimature trees (minimum 10 No. - to be confirmed with the ecologist);
- **Bat boxes** to be located where appropriate, typically as wall-integrated boxes and/or to proposed semi-mature trees (minimum 10 No. to be confirmed with the ecologist);
- Lacewing/Mason Bee/Invertebrate Boxes a range of suitable habitats to encourage nesting of invertebrates fixed to mature trees;
- Herbaceous Perennials the planting proposals will include a range of wildlife-friendly herbaceous species, and natives where appropriate;
- 'Tapestry' Hedges containing a range of native shrubs;
- Native and flower-rich perennials incorporated into the planting proposals, to attract butterflies, birds and other wildlife and to provide sources of nectar. We are aiming to provide at least 50% native species or non-native species with a known benefit to wildlife such as flower-rich perennial plants;
- **Deadwood habitat** some of the timber from trees felled or maintained on-site could be retained as deadwood habitat in discreet locations to the planting areas.

These enhancements to the ecology of the site above are in line with the 'No Net Loss' of Biodiversity commitment from HS2.

Nine of the 13 points available are being targeted under the BREEAM 2018 checklist (refer to the Sustainability Statement (document 1CP01-MDS_ARP-EV-REP-SS08_SL23-990009)).





Pond improvements





Bat Box

Deadwood habitat



Teasel - Dipsacus fullonum

Bird Box - on trees



Purple Loosestrife - Lythrum salicaria



Planting to attract Butterflies



Invertebrate Box



Common Valerian - Valeriana officinalis

Landscape Management & Maintenance 3.6

The principal aims of the Landscape Maintenance is to secure a co-ordinated and high standard of landscape management for the landscape areas within the site, to ensure the successful integration of the Site Accommodation & Construction Skills Centre into the wider landscape and to enhance the longer term nature conservation interests of the ecology area in accordance with the design objectives contained in this document. This will include the appropriate maintenance of existing retained, and proposed landscape components.

The proposed development is required for a temporary period of 10 years from occupation and will be removed following the construction of HS2 Euston Station. As such the maintemenace of the landscape and external hard spaces will be carried out by the building facilities management contractor.

After the 10 years period, consideration will be given to the reuse of the plants; this will be a discussion between the landowner and poossibly LB Camden.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Landscape Management Plan are as follows:

- 1. To maintain landscape character: To protect and conserve the existing landscape character, to provide an attractive and robust landscape setting for the building and reinforce local distinctiveness;
- 2. The sustainable management of existing vegetation: To retain existing trees and other vegetation that are worthy of retention, and to enhance their character, composition and age structure through positive management with consideration to long-term viability and health and safety;
- 3. To achieve a high standard of maintenance: To take measures to ensure the successful establishment and growth of new structural and incidental planting and to take appropriate long-term management measures to ensure the satisfactory appearance and sustainability of vegetation. To ensure that landscape components are replaced, augmented and/or improved over time as appropriate;
- 4. To maintain and enhance biodiversity: To protect and enhance the nature conservation interest of both existing and new landscape

areas and to ensure the adoption of management practices that enhance the biodiversity value of the site. To fulfil all legal requirements in relation to the protection and management of ecological features and the protection and management of target species including bats and birds;

- 5. To ensure health and safety: To uphold the duty of care that all landscape components are safe and that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise risk of injury and damage to people and property; and
- 6. To provide a mechanism or monitoring and review: To ensure that management practices are monitored and where necessary reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with changing site circumstances and the views of key stakeholders (Adopting Authority, residents representatives and the LPA).

Landscape Areas and Landscape Components

The landscape areas subject to Landscape Management and Maintenance include the following components:

- Existing trees (to the existing ecology garden);
- Proposed new tree planting;
- Proposed shrubs and groundcover planting;
- Proposed climbing plants to the southern facade;
- Proposed native whip, shrub and buffer planting;
- Proposed pond to ecology garden;
- Street Furniture/ Cycle parking; •
- Structures, walls, railings, fencing and gates; and
- Hard Landscape Areas.

The following text describes the general maintenance of each of the above landscape areas.

Existing Trees

Existing trees are to be checked by a suitably gualified arboriculturist/ tree surgeon for any crown dieback or other issues. Remedial work will need to be carried out as advised. Standards: To BS 3998, Appendix A and Health & Safety Executive (HSE)/ Arboricultural and Forestry Advisory Group Safety Leaflets.

Proposed new tree planting Key activities are:

application.

Stakes and tree ties - Inspect all trees three times during the year. Adjust fixing to suit stem growth and provide correct and uniform tension. If growth is sufficient for tree to be self-supporting, remove fixing and fill holes with lightly compacted soil. Check stakes for looseness, breaks and decay and replace as necessary.

Bark Damage Wounds:

- - Bark: Remove ragged edges using a sharp knife.

Proposed shrubs and groundcover planting

Key activities are:

Watering - All planting to receive watering during the year. Always to take account of published meteorological data on rainfall for any periods, in particular in periods of spring drought (April, May and June) and late-summer drought (September).

Fertiliser - Slow release fertiliser (rate: 40g/m2) to be spread over planted areas in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Fertiliser to be in a granular form. Carry out a single application in March.

Weeding - All beds or borders should be maintained in a clean and weed-free condition at all times. Following the clearance of litter, leaves and any debris from the bed or border, weeds shall be removed by hand taking care to dig out perennial weeds by the roots. On completion of each weeding exercise, the entire bed or border shall be clean, litter and weed-free.

Mulching - Apply shredded bark mulch to all beds and borders. The mulch shall be added to the beds twice a year, to obtain a 75mm depth of mulch. This depth of mulch shall be maintained throughout the year. Mulch shall be applied following forking and weeding when the ground

Watering - As required to ensure success of tree planting. All trees to receive watering for the growing season; Quantity: 25 litres per tree per

- Do not attempt to stop sap bleeding.

- Wood: Remove splintered wood from deep wounds.
- Size: Keep wounds as small as possible.

is not frozen. Beds should be have been thoroughly weeded before applying mulch. The mulching material shall be graded at the edges to form a neat slope avoiding spillage onto surrounding areas.

Mulch spill on adjacent surfaces: Remove weeds and debris and return to planted areas.

Pruning - At the end of the growing season, check all shrubs and remove all dead foliage, dead wood and broken damaged branches and stems. Large branches resulted from pruning to be retained on site and either composted or to be utilized in the creation of habitat piles in unobtrusive areas.

Proposed climbing plants to the southern facade Key activities are:

Inspect for pests and problems. Look for leaves with holes or ragged edges; sticky, discoloured or spotted leaves; chewed or abnormally growing flowers or buds; or damaged stems. If you discover a problem, take samples of the damaged advise the Client to agree a suitable course of action (separate identification and advice from a horticultural specialist may be required).

Watering - All planters to have an automatic irrigation system; this system is to be checked at regular intervals to ensure it is operating as per the agreed timings. Any faults are to be rectified.

Attaching climbing plants to the wire framework - Inspect the wire framework for issues relating to wire tension and review the growth of the plants to ensure successful twining and attachment of the plants (note: climbing plants have been chosen to be self-twining on to wires).

Fertiliser and mulching - Early in the spring, fertilise with a granular, slow-release fertiliser formulated for perennial gardens. Follow manufacturers recommendations for the correct application rates. Replace or renew organic mulch as required, such as shredded bark or leaves.

Proposed native whip, shrub and buffer planting Key activities are:

Watering - watering is to be carried out during the establishment period

only.

Weeding - All beds or borders should be maintained in a clean and weed-free condition at all times. Following the clearance of litter, leaves and any debris from the bed or border, weeds shall be removed by hand taking care to dig out perennial weeds by the roots. On completion of each weeding exercise, the entire bed or border shall be clean, litter and weed-free.

Mulching - Apply shredded bark mulch to all beds and borders. The mulch shall be added to the beds twice a year, to obtain a 75mm depth of mulch. This depth of mulch shall be maintained throughout the year. Mulch shall be applied following forking and weeding when the ground is not frozen. Beds should be have been thoroughly weeded before applying mulch. The mulching material shall be graded at the edges to form a neat slope avoiding spillage onto surrounding areas.

Mulch spill on adjacent surfaces: Remove weeds and debris and return to planted areas.

Pruning - At the end of the growing season, check all shrubs and remove all dead foliage, dead wood and broken damaged branches and stems. Large branches resulted from pruning to be retained on site and either composted or to be utilized in the creation of habitat piles in unobtrusive areas.

Proposed pond to ecology garden Key activities are:

Management of the pond - The pond should be inspected three times a year for signs of any erosion damage to the sides/ liner, build up of silt deposits and poor vegetation growth. Inspect after storms to ensure the pond level is within the freeboard levels and that the overflow is working effectively.

Removal of Woody Species – any woody species that start to encroach on the pond should be cleared each year. Woody plants should be removed by hand and removed off site.

Hard Landscape areas/ Street furniture/ Walls and boundaries Key activities are:

Management Objectives - To ensure that hard landscape surfaces are safe and comfortable to use and are clean from litter and other debris.

To ensure that all street furniture items are in working order. To ensure that all boundaries walls/ fences are in good repair.

General cleanliness: All paved surfaces shall be swept regularly to ensure that they are clean, tidy and free from dust, litter and debris (removing all arisings off site). Increase sweeping in autumn when leaves are falling.

Condition of paved surfaces: All hard landscape surfaces and edgings shall be inspected weekly, checking for mechanical damage, vandalism, settlement, frost heave, staining, litter and debris or any other defect. Any such defects shall be documented and corrective methodology agreed with the Client and implemented as appropriate by the building facilities management contractor.

Condition of street furniture items: All items to be inspected on a regular basis to ensure items are in working order and are fit for purpose. Any damaged items are to be repaired if possible, or removed and replaced on a like-for-like basis.