



BLAIRVADACH NEW BUILD PHASE 1

Landscape Plan including Tree Replacement Plan and Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme

Introduction

CONTEXT

Uptown Tree Solutions was commissioned by Callum Williamson to provide a Landscape and Biodiversity and Enhancement plan for the development of 30 houses as shown on the site plan provided in order to fulfil the conditions 14 and 16 of the planning consent. The Phase 1 site is around 3.75Ha and lies on the south facing hillside near Shandon, Helensburgh.

INITIAL CONSULTATION

On 9th September 2025 Ronnie Park CMLI (RP) met with Kirsty Sweeney (KS) of Argyle and Bute Planning Authority by an online portal. The purpose of this meeting was to ascertain the key issues as far as the Planners and local population were concerned in order to feed these into the proposals.

HISTORY

In the conditions for the approval the Planners wished the Historical context to be addressed in the landscape scheme. RP addressed the issue of the estate history and from research produced early maps of the original layout going back to 1843-82 (see Appendix 1) This map shows the original estate has essentially been replaced by later building and landscape changes. The building and estate landscape by Sir James Anderson is all but non-existent except for the remaining older trees (Giant Redwoods).

TREE REMOVAL & COMPENSATION REPLACEMENT

In terms of requirements from the Planning Authority the planning officer provided the following guidance, "In terms of compensatory planting, I have attached a list of the trees that were removed that were subject to TPO and need to be replaced and in turn will become subject to TPO protection.(see table 1) Generally, we will be looking for a like for like replacement but if you are struggling for space to replace all the Wellingtonia then we can look at reducing the number of them and coming up with an appropriate alternative. There was also 6 x additional trees removed after the storm which still need replaced – see attached report."

The landscape proposals seek to have a link with the past by 'echoing' the original winding entrance tree-lined avenue in the zigzag pedestrian footpath in Area 4 and replanting the felled Giant Redwood trees in this area to emphasise the corner points of the stepped footpath.

We have re-planted 8 specimen trees at the new pedestrian 'zigzag' steep pathway entrance. The placement at the turning points on the path will have some resonance with the original plan of the estate.

The records show that 69 individual trees and 6 groups of mixed trees and scrub have been removed between the initial felling and a subsequent storm emergency event. I have created a table to record these trees and whether they were native or non-native. (see attached table) Of the 75 individual trees 37 were native species and 38 were non-native.

KS initiated to RP at their meeting that a potential breach had been committed regarding the over-removal of trees, especially on the exposed west edge of the site and to the north. The landscape scheme addresses these concerns by planting dense woodland to the West edge to help provide screening between the Kings Point housing area and Blairvadach. The northern edge has been mapped to show some of the trees still remain at the opposite west and east boundaries and these existing trees that lie within designated garden ground, and all new planted trees will be protected under the ongoing TPO. The proposal shows substantial blocks of woodland planted on the northeast, southwest and northwest corners of the site to supplement the existing woodland. There are also new native trees planted as new staked half-standard specimens as shown in area 14. There are 43 specimen trees shown.

In terms of replacement trees calculations, there are another circa 74 staked specimen trees proposed across the site in various areas. These are a mix of native and non-native to suit the location. The woodland area in terms of volumes of young trees planted will be substantially more than the total 75 individual trees removed and should also compensate heavily for the 6 groups that were also removed.

In summary, the replacement planting; with indigenous planting concentrated around the edges of the site and ornamental (some non-native) within the curtilage of the housing areas, is substantial and will more than compensate for the volume and area of trees that have been removed.

Landscape Plan Format

The Landscape Plan is in the form of a 1:500 Master Plan UTS/BNB/001. This plan describes the scheme in terms of 15 distinct area. Where these areas require additional

detailed explanation, this information is contained on one of the eight Detailed Landscape drawings: UTS/BNB/ 02,03,04,05,06, 07 and 08.

Some minor have been made since the initial submission of the draft master plan alterations to accord with the client's requirements. The Biodiversity Enhancement scheme as part of the Landscape Plan is developed in the remaining part of this supporting report.

Condition 16. Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme

Draft NPF4 Universal Policy 3(e) requires proposals for development to deliver appropriate measures to enhance biodiversity, in proportion to the nature and scale of development.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP),(if available) identifies the priority species and habitats for action in its area. There were no protected species located in the baseline wildlife study.

In an email from Kirsty Sweeny she suggested "it is worth looking at the Nature Scot guidance - Consultation - Developing with Nature guidance NatureScot." These recommendations have been taken onboard as far as we can.

A Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme must meet the requirements of policy NPF4 Policy 3 in order to be suitable for submission to the planning authority. This plan relies on the baseline Phase 1 survey work carried out by Wild Surveys, the site Ecological Survey consultant to understand the original condition of the site. On 28th September 2022.

Points of note from the baseline Survey

"The site contains a mix of woodland, scrub, grassland, and introduced shrub and amenity planted forming a designed landscape surrounding the house. There are also two small unnamed watercourses running through the site. The site has suitability for bats, red squirrel, pine martin, water vole, otter, reptiles, badger and nesting birds. No field signs of protected species were noted within the site."

Recommendations regarding Biodiversity and Landscape design from the Survey

1.No licence is currently required but may be required following further survey work.

2."Trees within the site should be retained where possible within the development context and protected in line with BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction where possible within the design. Argyll and Bute Council recommended retaining the woodland within the design. "-

The Landscape Plan and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan retain all of the remaining trees within the relative schemes.

3. Non-native plants should be removed from the site and new planting should focus on native species-

The Landscape Plan concentrates on native planting in the areas outwith the housing curtilage

4. Fencing can be over planted with hedgerow species or climbing plants to soften its appearance and provide a vegetated feature which bats can use for navigation or foraging-

The Landscape plan allows for hedgerow planting on the exposed west boundary and for climbers on the north retaining wall.

5. Natural environment and details how new developments can enhance habitats/biodiversity including through creating, enhancing and better linking habitats and ecosystems-

The landscape Plan and Biodiversity Enhancement scheme sets out to improve linkage at both the west and east sides of the site with new supplementary woodland and understorey planting. The creation of the West Burn Nature Zone will make a protected habitat rich space and allow safe passage for wildlife through the site.

6. Enhancement measures should be committed to and managed through a Habitat Management Plan to ensure the maximum biodiversity value is reached. Examples of enhancement measures can be found below:

Planting for Wildlife

Planting schemes should consider connectivity of habitats to maximise these areas for wildlife, with the use of native or other species beneficial for wildlife-

(see above linkages)

The incorporation of a variety of nectar rich plants and shrubs which flower at different times of the year. In areas where there is little space, climber can be used on the walls and fences to provide shelter and a food source-

(see planting plans in particular Area 8)

Generic Enhancements for Birds

Rainwater could be harvested to be used to water the landscaped areas or create natural water features which will benefit birds-

New ponding feature in West Burn Nature Zone will help with this

Incorporation of nest boxes: Nest boxes for different bird species could be incorporated into the development. Particular attention should be given to nesting boxes for LBAP bird species appropriate to the survey area habitats-

New nest boxes for different species to be placed within the existing south woodland areas and the Nature Zone

Generic Enhancements for Bats

Incorporation of bat bricks: Bat boxes and bat bricks could be incorporated, providing roosting habitat for bat species-

Particular trees are to be identified in the densely planted and existing south woodland of Area 7 which can be used to attract roosting bats.

Habitat Diversity

Retain or increase natural variation in vegetation. Habitat diversity can often be achieved simply through allowing growth of taller vegetation-

The site will provide different types of habitats in either the new planted or existing woodland. Area 8 is to be a place for longer self-seeded grasses and native wildflower species protected from human intrusion.

Generic Enhancement for insects/Amphibians/Hedgehogs

Retain woodland / hedges – fill gaps in hedges to increase connectivity of habitats. Enhancement for Other Species-

Consider the use of other features such as hedgehog boxes, ladybird houses and insect hibernaculas to complement the landscape design-

Dead wood and log piles are to be carefully placed in the Area 8 Nature Zone and Area 7 existing woodland. This will provide habitat for a number of species including hibernation sites for hedgehogs.

Key Proposed Biodiversity Measures By Area

AREA 8-WEST BURN VALLEY NATURE ZONE

The existing burn area is to be re-established as close to how it was prior to construction. The upper section presents a good example of the arrangement of natural rocks, boulders and gravel to form the sides and the bed of the burn. Some more natural variations from a straight-line form are required.

Having re-created the natural shape of the burn the remaining ground and slopes are to be graded and shaped to form a more natural hillside formation. A thin topsoil layer is required to be spread to allow the self-seeding of natural plants as well as those to be planted.

A section of the burn as shown is to be graded to be flatter and create a small shallow ponding effect for an area of still water 'with water rills' created from rocks. The water will still flow down hill but will provide a valuable source of drinking water and habitat for amphibians in particular.

To aid the habitat for birdlife attracted to the water's edge some dry non-builders' sand is to be used to mix with the soil at the steeper sections close to the water where birds may seek to nest or forage.

This large area on steep slopes shall be planted with grassland biodiversity mix (GBM type 1) and open scrubland mix Type 1 and 2

Nearest the water's edge a wildflower mix of (WF Type 1) is to be planted

The whole of this valley area is to be protected from human access by dense gorse plantings at the sides of the valley.

AREA 9- SOUTHWEST EDGE WOODLAND

A large, exposed area to the southwest of the site is to be planted with a dense native woodland mix –(W M type 2)

The purpose of the woodland planting is to provide mutual screening between Kings Point housing area and the site.

The other purpose is to provide linkage for wildlife from the lower woodland of the southwest and the upper existing and new woodland to the northwest corner of the site

AREA 10- WEST BOUNDARY PLANTING

To provide screening but not block views to the hills and sea from the upper tier houses, native scrubland is proposed for this area. This is woodland edge type mix (SM Type 3)

AREA 12- LOWER TIER HOUSING INTERNAL LANDSCAPING

Ornamental shrubs (SP Type 1) and smaller flowering trees (SFT type 1)

The large retaining wall (construction details as supplied by the architects)

Climbing plants(CP type 1) to be planted along the length of the upper retaining wall to soften the appearance and make it more amenable to birdlife and insects

Climbing plants(CP type 1) to be planted along the east length where shown on the lower tier retaining wall to soften the appearance and make it more amenable to birdlife and insects

AREA 13- NORTHWEST CORNER WOODLAND

Woodland mix (WM Type 2) to match AREAS 9 and 15

This woodland mix is to emulate much of the constituents of the tree/scrub existing planting on the north boundary.

AREA 14 – NORTH BOUNDARY SUPPLEMENTARY SPECIMEN TREE PLANTING

Approximately 40 native specimen trees (NT type 1)are to be planted in a random manner as indicated to blend in with the existing tree and scrub remaining on the boundary edge.

These trees will become part of the TPO protection going forward as replacement trees for those felled.

AREA 15- NORTHEAST CORNER WOODLAND

Woodland mix (WM Type 2) to match AREAS 9 and 13

Native woodland mix to enhance and join onto the existing large woodland to the north east edge of the site reinforcing the linkage for wildlife across the site.

PLANTING AND BIODIVERSITY MEASURES SUMMARY

Woodland Tree mixes

WM Type T1 Area 7)

WM Type 2 (Areas 9,13, 15)

Woodland Edge mixes

Type E1(Area 7

Understorey/scrubland mix

SM Type 1

SM Type 2

SM Type 3 (Area 10)

Specimen Native Trees

NT Type 1 (Area 14)

Small Flowering Trees

SFT Type 1 (Area 11 ,12)

Ornamental Shrubs

SP Type 1 (Area 11, 12)

Climbing Plants

CP Type 1 (Area 12)

Woodland biodiversity measures

WBM Type 1 Area 7

Grassland Biodiversity Measures

GBM Type 1 (Area 8)

Wildflower Biodiversity Measures

WF Type 1 (Area 8)

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT SCHEME- Summary

The proposed Landscape Master Plan(1:500) is a summary plan incorporating measures to comply with the above conditions. The detailed plans (1:500 and 1:200) show the detailed planting and Biodiversity enhancement measures per area.

In summary the Landscape Master Plan includes for the creation of a number of very positive biodiversity enhancement measures across the large 3.75 Ha site.

To address the enhancement of the biodiversity of the entire site a significant contributor to this enhancement will be the creation of the Burn Valley Nature Zone in Area 8.

WEST BURN VALLEY NATURE ZONE

This area has the benefit of being furthest away from the housing areas and linked to the woodland to the north and south. Flora, fauna and wildlife habitats will be enhanced once the landscape and biodiversity additional measures have been implemented.

This area is to be treated as a no-go area for pedestrians by the use of barrier type planting to restrict easy access. The reinstatement of the burn floor and creating of a natural banked landform with rocks, gravel and sand will be central to attracting back wildlife and birds.

This detached burn valley area can be used to create a well-covered linkage gateway for small animals between the upper land and lower more developed areas. The proposal is to create a defined space shown on the plan as a space rich in native small understorey plants with the running water of the burn encouraging amphibians such as frogs and newts. New native planting will create natural covered habitats to encourage small mammals such as hedgehogs, moles and shrews. The burn will provide drinking water for larger mammals such as foxes and also for songbirds like thrush, great tit, house sparrow, chaffinch and blackbird.

The concept would be to create a refuge for small wildlife and birds. The following components will require to be created to allow new habitats to be formed:

Water, natural nutrients (ie no pesticides), Shelter (such as brash wood piles and low dense undergrowth, availability of nesting materials such as long grass, flowering plants for bees such as viola, food in the form of berries from a diversity of species like Guelder rose, dead wood to attract insects.

REPLACEMENT WOODLAND

Where extensive felling has been undergone in the south, west and north boundaries extensive re-planting of native woodland is proposed. Species such as Rowan, Downy birch, Hazel, Oak, Scots pine, Gean Cherry, Beech and Alder will be planted at 1.5-2 metre spacings on the inner main body with edge mixes of species such as Gean, Field Maple, Guelder Rose and Blackthorn planted at 1-1.5 spacings. Two woodland mixes and an edge mix will be detailed later.

The creation of new structured woodlands will provide cover for larger wildlife when it is mature and in the initial stages create extensive wildlife linkages between the other new plantings plus the untouched edges of the site.

EXISTING WOODLANDS

The remaining trees to the south are to be placed under a woodland maintenance contract by David Neill Forestry and Arboriculture consultants. Ongoing biodiversity measures should be incorporated into this long-term plan.

As part of the Biodiversity Enhancement Plan contained within the Landscape Master Plan measures such as the careful placement of bird boxes within existing woodlands such as Areas 6 and 7 (WMB Type 1) will be essential to attract birds back into the area post-development.

Another biodiversity measure is to ensure the woodland areas are carefully cleared of all felled timber, whilst selecting good samples to be kept for insect and bird habitat enhancement. At the same time suitable twigs are to be retained and placed as 'brash' piles to create improved habitats for hedgehogs, voles etc.

A new woodland edge will be created using edge species such as Gean, Field Maple, Blackthorn, Hazel , Elder and Guilder Rose. This will enclose the open woodland on steep slopes and encourage, in time, larger wildlife such as deer or foxes to gain shelter and safe cover.

BLAIRVARDACH- ANALYSIS OF TREES REMOVED AND
REQUIRING TO BE REPLACED

INDIVIDUAL TREES	AIA	storm	Total			GROUPS
				Native	Non-Native	
Cherry (Gean)	1		1	*recent addition		388 ?
						395 willow/birch/sycamore
Beech	8	3	11			397 self seeded ash
Sycamore	5		5			398 Portugese laurel
Oak	10	1	11			415 sycamore/birch
Ash	4		4			440 birch/willow
Rowan	1		1			990 ?
Yew	1		1			999 ?
Hiba	1		1			
Lime	10	1	11			
Scots Pine	1	1	2			
Black Pine	1		1			
Birch	5		5			
Wellingtonia	8		8			
Leylandii	1		1			
Apple (Malus sylvestris - crab only)	1		1			
Lawsons Cypress	2		2			
Horse Chesnut	6		6			
Larch	1		1			
Holly	1		1			
Sweet Chestnut	1		1			
	69	6	75			

