

ALDI Store Neath Abbey Road, Neath (Planning Application Reference P2019/5304)

12740_R02_Scheme of Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This scheme of biodiversity enhancement measures has been prepared by Tyler Grange on behalf of ALDI Stores Ltd in respect of a proposed new store off Neath Abbey Road, Neath, herein referred to as the 'site'.
- 1.2 A detailed planning application for the demolition of an existing building and construction of a new ALDI store with associated infrastructure and landscaping at the site was submitted to Neath Port Talbot Council (planning ref: P2019/5304). Comments have subsequently been received by the Biodiversity Implementation Officer dated 27th January 2020 which have recommended that further information is required as follows:
- "Details of biodiversity enhancement measures in line with Planning Policy Wales 10 and section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016."*
- 1.3 This scheme therefore sets out measures which will be implemented at the site to provide ecological and biodiversity benefit. As the site was previously predominantly built form the application was supported by a Bat Survey and Assessment (Tyler Grange, 2019).
- 1.4 Measures to create new areas of biodiversity importance within the scheme include the provision of wildflower grassland, native shrub and native tree planting. Furthermore, specific management prescriptions will be implemented to enhance the ecological importance of the newly created habitats and to maximise opportunities for wildlife.

2.0 Existing Baseline

Habitats

- 2.1 The site is dominated by hardstanding, close-mown grassland and a single, small building. Along the western boundary of the site are a line of cypress trees and birch. Outside of the site, there are industrial buildings to the south and west, with residential housing to the east.



Figure 1: Aerial photograph.

Protected Species

- 2.2 The site offers limited potential for protected and notable species. The conclusions of the bat report were that no evidence or potential for bats was identified within the current building on site. It was concluded that demolition would not affect bats and due to the sub-optimal nature of the habitats and surroundings for bats, along with the ambient light levels at night, no enhancements (e.g. bat boxes) were recommended.

3.0 Enhancement Strategy

- 3.1 The proposed development has been designed to include opportunities for wildlife and retain and protect the mature trees, which are the only important feature present. The enhancement measures which have been incorporated into the soft landscaping of the site include native shrub, trees and new native wildflower meadow. In addition, the proposed ornamental planting would provide food sources for a variety of invertebrates and birds.
- 3.2 The creation of habitats at the site will mitigate for the loss of amenity grassland, providing a habitat which is more botanically diverse than existing and increasing biodiversity (see **Table 3.1** for species mix). This habitat will be managed to provide a habitat with a diverse structure that will benefit a range of species including invertebrates and birds.

Emorsgate EH1 – Hedgerow meadow mixture		
%	Latin name	Common name
0.5	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
1.2	<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony
2.5	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard
1	<i>Betonica officinalis</i> - (<i>Stachys officinalis</i>)	Betony
2	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed
0.4	<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	Wild Basil
0.6	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove
1	<i>Galium album</i> - (<i>Galium mollugo</i>)	Hedge Bedstraw
1.5	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens
1	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St John's Wort
0.5	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy
1	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
1	<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip
1	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal
2	<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion
2	<i>Torilis japonica</i>	Upright Hedge-parsley
0.4	<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch
0.4	<i>Vicia sativa ssp. segetalis</i>	Common Vetch
20		
Grasses		
%	Latin name	Common name
10	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent
2	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass (w)
7	<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome (w)
20	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dogstail
1	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted Hair-grass (w)
28	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Slender-creeping Red-fescue
12	<i>Poa nemoralis</i>	Wood Meadow-grass
80		

Table 3.1. Emorsgate EH1 – ‘Hedgerow Meadow Mixture’.

- 3.3 The new native scrub planting be managed to create dense vegetation to benefit wildlife, such as invertebrates and nesting birds (see **Appendix 1** for species mix). This habitat is being created along the eastern boundary of the site and links to the wildflower grassland that is also being created.
- 3.4 New tree planting, including native species and those of known wildlife benefit, will be provided along the boundaries of the site and within the central areas of the car park creating a net gain in trees, increasing species diversity, and therefore providing enhanced opportunities for wildlife, such as invertebrates and birds (see **Appendix 1** for species mix).
- 3.5 In addition to the above, areas of amenity planting (shrub and grassland), some of which will include species which produce berries providing additional food sources for birds, will also take place across the site (see **Appendix 1**). This new planting will further assist with increasing biodiversity and providing additional benefits for wildlife including invertebrates.
- 3.6 Newly created and retained habitats will be managed to maximise the biodiversity value of the habitats and opportunities for wildlife. Further detail is provided in the work schedule provided in Section 4 and include:

- Trees and scrub managed annually as necessary and outside of the breeding bird season to prevent encroachment of this habitat; and
- Wildflower grassland managed as per the requirements set out on the landscape specifications in **Appendix 1**.

3.7 In addition to the habitat enhancement measures detailed above, to provide a further enhancement for birds, four nesting boxes including four woodstone Alicante boxes (Vivaro Pro) or similar suitable for robins, blackbirds, wrens and similar garden species. These would be installed on retained trees along the western boundary of the site.

4.0 Work Schedule

4.1 The prescribed management actions, including implementation timetable and responsibilities, are set out in table form over the page.

Ecology Management Prescriptions and Timetable				
Prescription	Rationale for Habitat Creation/ Management	Management Tasks	Timing	Responsibility
New tree and scrub planting	Trees and scrub to be planted, increasing biodiversity, as well as nesting and foraging habitat creating a further ecological enhancement.	New trees to be planted, including native species and those species of known value to wildlife (as illustrated in Appendix 1).	Prior to the occupation of the store where practicable or in the next planting season following occupation.	Landscape Contractor
		All new trees within the site will be monitored for 12 months with any trees that die, become seriously damaged or diseased to be replaced.	Allow for the use of container grown stock during the period 1 April to 31 October, and field grown stock from 1 November to 31 March.	
		Management of new trees will be undertaken as required with trees allowed to grow naturally to maximise their landscape screening.	If necessary, between March and August, checks for nesting birds by an ecologist required.	
Wildflower Hedgerow grassland creation	Creation of native hedgerow meadow will increase biodiversity, compensate for the loss of grassland and increase foraging opportunities for wildlife such as birds and invertebrates.	<u>Topsoil stripping / deposition.</u> Imported subsoil to be certified in accordance with BS8601:2013. Storage, handling and placement of topsoil should comply with BS8601:2013 and BS3882:2015. Subsoil and topsoil to be loose filled in layers of 300mm and lightly consolidated.	Prior to the occupation of the store where practicable or in the next planting season following occupation.	Landscape Contractor to sow seed – thereafter Landscape Contractor

Ecology Management Prescriptions and Timetable				
Prescription	Rationale for Habitat Creation/ Management	Management Tasks	Timing	Responsibility
		<u>Sowing</u> Sow the Emorsgate EH1 – Hedgerow meadow mixture (see Appendix 1).	Autumn or spring but can be sown at other times of the year if there is sufficient warmth and moisture.	
		<u>Cutting (First Year)</u> Cut to 40-60mm if there is sufficient material.	Regularly throughout the first year	
		<u>Maintenance thereafter:</u> Single annual cut to 50mm to remove excess grass. Leave the hay to dry for 1-7 days then remove.	July/August	
Provision of bird nesting opportunities.	To provide additional nesting opportunities and to create an ecological enhancement post-development and to attract species not currently identified as nesting on site.	Four bird nesting boxes will be installed on retained trees along the western boundary of the site within suitable habitat.	During construction phase.	Developer, advised as necessary by Ecologist.
Monitor new planting	To ensure the success of the new planting and associated ecological benefits.	All new planting within the site will be monitored for a 12 month period following completion of the development and any trees or plants that die, become seriously damaged or diseased will be removed and replaced in the next planting season with	At monthly intervals throughout the first year.	Landscape Contractor to undertake works – advised as necessary by Ecologist and Arboriculturalist.

Ecology Management Prescriptions and Timetable				
Prescription	Rationale for Habitat Creation/ Management	Management Tasks	Timing	Responsibility
		other trees or plants of a similar size and species as those originally planted.		

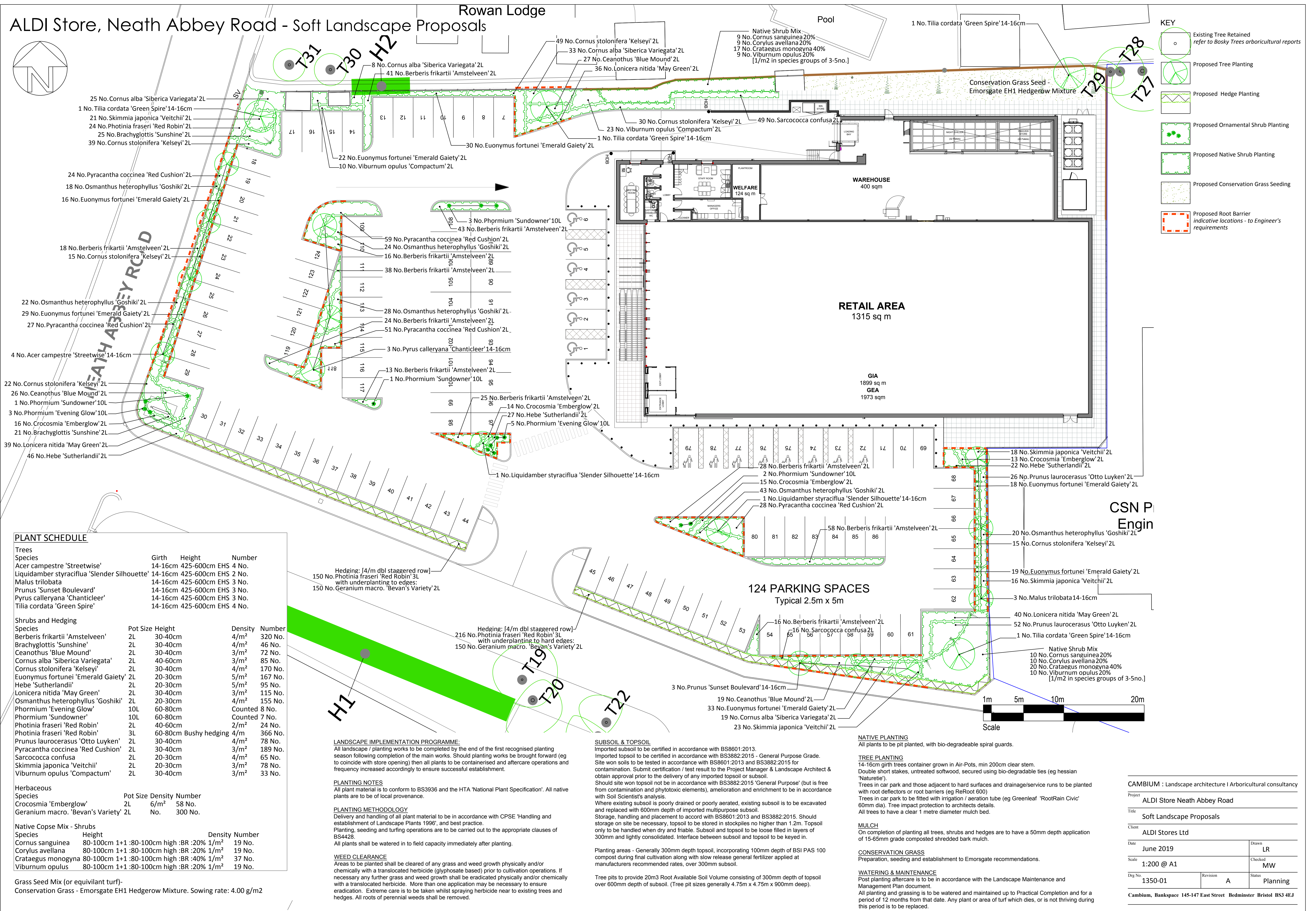
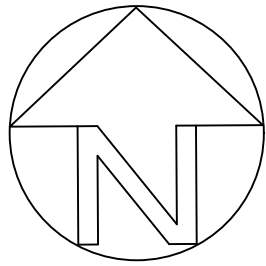
5.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1 The implementation of the new habitat creation, habitat enhancement and management prescriptions detailed above would provide new features which would deliver a biodiversity enhancement post-development. Overall these measures will provide additional habitats and foraging opportunities for wildlife, increase biodiversity and opportunities for a range of protected and priority species. As such, the above strategy would be in conformity with Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 and section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and could be controlled by a condition to the planning approval.

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6.0 Appendix 1: Landscape Plan

ALDI Store, Neath Abbey Road - Soft Landscape Proposals



CAMBIUM : Landscape architecture Arboricultural consultancy			
Project ALDI Store Neath Abbey Road			
Title Soft Landscape Proposals			
Client ALDI Stores Ltd			
Date June 2019		Drawn LR	
Scale 1:200 @ A1		Checked MW	
Dwg No. 1350-01	Revision A	Status Planning	
Cambium, Bankspace 145-147 East Street Bedminster Bristol BS3 4EJ			