

Ecological Appraisal and Proposed Landscaping Scheme

for

The Tipi Wedding Venue

At

**Hawkshaw Farm
Longsight Road
Clayton Le Dale
Blackburn
BB2 7JA**

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Introduction

This ecological appraisal and landscaping proposal is in support of a planning application to develop a summer tipi wedding venue at Hawkshaw Farm, Clayton le Dale. The development will take place in a parcel of improved grassland to the north west of the farm holding as marked on the enclosed plans.

The proposal includes permanent bases for the tipis, toilet facility and catering facility with all structures being removed throughout the winter months. The project proposal also includes an extension to the existing car parking area, the installation of a packaged treatment plant and the creation of a garden and landscaped area for guests and for wedding photography.

A service access track will be created around the western perimeter of the wedding site to allow vehicular access to take down the tipis at the end of September and for the catering unit and toilet unit to be removed for storage.

The proposed location for the tipi wedding venue is already well screened along the boundary with Longsight Road by a mature three metre tall hedge. The landscaping will aim to ameliorate any potential noise generated within the site and to reduce any visual impact of the proposal.

The proposed landscaping will aim to enhance the biodiversity of the site whilst reducing the visual impact for neighbours and enhancing the site for users. The location of the proposed planting is illustrated on the map enclosed with this document.

It is proposed to create an earth bund to the north of the tipis which will be planted to ensure any sound will be dissipated so as not to impact on the properties further north on Longsight Road.

The proposal also includes an extension to the existing visitor car park to cater for wedding guests. This will be alongside the north western edge of the car park and will involve some hard landscaping as described below.

Each area of planting and hard landscaping works is described separately below with a plan of the site shown at Annex 1.

Site ecology assessment

The parcel of land has been farmed intensively for many years as part of the dairy unit at Hawkshaw Farm. In recent years the land has been used to grow grass which has been cut three times annually for as part of the silage crop. The grassland was reseeded in 2017 with a highly productive grass mixture made up of six species of diploid and tetraploid rye grasses which were selected for their ease of establishment and highly productive qualities. The land has received large applications of artificial fertiliser and several applications of cattle slurry over the last year. A survey of the field parcel was carried out on 15th July to confirm that there were no species of ecological value present on the proposed development site. In addition to the perennial rye grass species the following were found to be present; *Rumex obtusifolius* L. (Broad-leaved Dock), *Ranunculus* (buttercups), *Taraxacum* (dandelion) and *Cerastium vulgatum* (Mouse eared chickweed).

The intensive management of the site in recent years has greatly reduced the number of species present. The physical inspection of the site confirms that there are no important species of flora which would be damaged by the proposal.

Landscaping proposals

Area 1 – car parking and hard landscaping

The car park extension and the access track will be created by removing 25 cm of soil, laying a permeable membrane and then filling with hardcore. The surface will then be coated with road planings to match the existing car park. This will ensure that the area is permeable to rainwater.

A vehicle access track will also be created around the western perimeter of the site to enable the tipis, the catering unit and the toilet block to be physically removed for the winter months, leaving only the concrete pads on site.

The soil removed will be used to create a 1.5 metre tall earth bund to the north of the site. The bund will assist in screening the site to reduce the visual impact and it will also act to deflect sound upwards, away from the neighbouring properties.

A native species hedgerow will be planting along the car park boundary and a wire livestock fence will be erected alongside the hedge.

The pedestrian entrance into the Tipis will be made up using a grasscrete type product so that it can be walked across in all weathers. The area to either side of the entrance will be planted with *Buxus sempervirens* to create a box hedge.

Area 2 – landscaping around the perimeter of the tipi site including the soil bund

The soil bund along the north east perimeter will be planted with native shrubs to create a dense wall of foliage which will serve to screen the tipis and minimise the visual impact as well as acting to deflect any noise back into the site to protect the dwellings to the north from noise nuisance.

The proposed species include:

Ilex aquafolium – holly

Cytisus scoparius – broom

Rosa arvensis – field rose

Salix purpurea – purple willow

Rosa canina – dog rose

Some smaller growing trees will also be interspersed within the planting to give height and variation. Again these will be native species such as:

Acer campestre – field maple

Malus sylvestris – crab apple

Prunus padus – bird cherry

Salix caprea – goat willow

The suggested list of species above offers a mixture of native species which will also be beneficial for wildlife.

The planting scheme also proposes the planting of a band of native broad leaved species of trees around the north and west perimeters of the tipi site. The trees will screen the site and will improve the biodiversity by the appropriate selection of species to attract birds and other wildlife.

It is proposed to plant a mixed species belt of trees around the edge of the site. The strip will be between 10 and 15 metres wide and the trees will be planted in a random pattern with 3 metres spacings. The mixture of proposed species below is indicative of the proposal but the trees to be included can be agreed with the landscaping officer.

<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder	90cm	20%
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pendunculate Oak	90cm	20%
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	90cm	15%
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow	90cm	10%
<i>Sorbus aukuraria</i>	Rowan	90cm	10%
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry	90cm	5%
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple	90cm	5%
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	45-60cm	5%
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	45-60cm	5%
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	45-60cm	5%

Area 3 – venue entrance and garden area

As already described a box hedge will be planted at either side of the pedestrian entrance. The walkway will then open out into an area which will be planted using species found in a country cottage garden which will offer an area for wedding photographs before guests enter the tipis.

The species to be planted will be selected to include a range of flowering plants which offer nectar and pollen for insects to enhance the biodiversity of the site. The planting could include any of the list below, all recommended by the RHS for a cottage garden.

- Hollyhock
- Foxglove
- Catmint (nepeta)
- Rambling roses
- Delphinium
- Phlox
- Hardy Geranium
- Lavender
- Peonies
- Mock Orange

LANDSCAPING

GENERAL

The works shall comply with B.S.4428 (1989) General Landscape Operations. Plants should be ordered to suit site requirements and only in accordance with the schedule spacings.

PLANTING

General

All trees and shrubs shall conform to the relevant parts of B.S. 3936

Rejection of Plants

Any plant material, which in the opinion of the Landscape Architect does not meet the requirements of the specification, or is unsuitable, or defective in any way, will be rejected. The minimum specified sizes in the plant schedule will be strictly enforced.

Planting

All planting material shall generally be planted between November and March in open cool weather. Planting shall not take place in frosty, snowy or waterlogged conditions. Where approved, pot or container grown plants may be planted outside the described season, but adequate watering shall be supplied. Torn or damaged roots and branches shall be clearly pruned prior to planting.

Planting of Transplants or Shrubs

The nature of the material to be planted is variable and the contractor shall allow for planting to be properly carried out in all cases as described in B.S. 4428: 1989 5.8 Woodland, 5.9 Shrubs. All plants shall be planted at the same depth, or very slightly deeper, as they were grown. Roots shall not be bent, broken or forced into inadequate pits or notches. Plants shall be upright, firmed in and wind resistant, with no air pockets around the roots. All pots and root wrappings shall be carefully removed prior to planting. All pots and wrappings arising shall immediately be picked up and stored ready for removal to tip. Plants shall be planted at the specified centres.

Tree Planting

Trees shall conform to BS 3936 and be planted in tree pits of appropriate sizes unless directed otherwise. The bottom 250mm of the pit shall be dug and broken up. Backfill shall be retained topsoil as specified unless directed otherwise. Where footpaths or services are closer than 2 metres to tree pits they shall be protected by an approved root barrier. 'Reroot' barrier systems are approved.

Compost for Planting Pits

Compost shall be a proprietary product, bark based incorporating fertilisers and improving additives. Compost shall be added to and mixed with topsoil backfill at a rate of 20% by volume. The type of compost shall be approved before its delivery on site, and the details of the product shall be supplied. Cambark planting compost is approved.

Tree Ties and Stakes

Trees shall be twin staked with cross bar. Ties shall be approved nail-on type with cushioned spacer such as Toms, or other equal and approved. Nails shall be flat headed galvanised and shall hold the ties securely into the stake. Ties shall not be over tight on the tree stems. The following ties available from J Toms Ltd are approved: Feathered Type 04, Select standards Type L1, Extra heavy Standards Type L3.

Planting of Trees

The tree shall be set upright and the same depth as grown in the nursery, the roots shall be spread out and the topsoil, or compost/topsoil mixture, backfilled. Backfilling should be done to ensure close contact between roots and by firming in layers. The soil shall be left level and tidy, any subsoil clods, bricks or stones over 500mm arising, collected and carted off site.

MAINTENANCE

All dead, diseased, damaged plants must be replaced for up to 7 years.

Weeding

All beds to be kept weed free by cultivating and/or by using approved herbicides. Beds to be forked over as necessary to keep soil loose to approved cambers with no hollows.

Pruning

At appropriate time, prune plants to remove dead, dying or diseased wood and suckers to promote healthy growth and natural shape. Dress cut ends exceeding 25mm diameter with fungicidal sealant.

Watering

Sufficient water is applied to maintain healthy growth.

Litter

Site to be kept free of litter