

Tritax Symmetry Merseyside 1 Limited, Former Cronton Colliery, Merseyside, Units 02 and 03

Landscape Design Approach

The landscape design approach for the site combines several strategies including:

- Create a structure of native woodland planting to complement the existing woodland habitats on adjacent land and to provide screening/softening of views toward the development;
- Retention and protection of existing trees such as those in the northeast corner adjacent to the listed building, also provision of enhanced tree planting for screening adjacent to the listed building;
- Establishing green infrastructure through development of an interconnected network of different habitats that are linked as far as practical;
- Provide amenity/ornamental planting for year-round interest to the internal parts of the development with a high percentage of native species trees and shrubs included in planting mixes where practical and space allows.

An overarching principle throughout has been to design proposals which respect the local environment and reflect the local flora, associated habitats and to deliver benefits to landscape character, visual amenity and biodiversity. This involves a design response which carefully sites and specifies a range of soft landscaping and habitat types for year-round interest. A variety of other measures [which are described below] are also proposed for each habitat type and specific locations on the site to suit conditions.

Soft landscaping may be selected for a variety of reasons such as to provide enhanced tree cover/long term greenery, changes in foliage colour/form, inclusion of evergreen plants for winter cover, flowers for visual interest and for attracting pollinator insects, choosing fruiting plants for winter interest and to provide food for wildlife. Planting is also chosen for practical reasons such as form, robustness and ease of maintenance.

The soft landscaping elements proposed include:

- Retained trees (N/NE of Unit 02);
- Woodland structure planting;
- Hedgerows, individual trees and tree groups;

- Grassland and wildflowers;
- Amenity and ornamental planting; and
- Damp grassland, marginal/aquatic planting (to attenuation pond).

Retained Trees

The NE part of the site will not be disturbed during ground modelling forming part of the initial stage of development and trees will be retained and protected during construction. This area is west/southwest of a listed building, Old Halsnead. Existing trees will be supplemented with new individual tree planting and new groups of trees, to provide screening of the proposed development from the listed building whilst retaining a more open aspect to fields on the west side and to establish long term woodland in this part of the site.

Woodland Structure Planting

This will comprise mainly mixed native trees and understorey shrubs planted at regular spacings throughout the areas indicated on the landscape plan. These areas include:

- The northern site boundary adjacent to the motorway;
- Slopes adjacent to the Old Wood (TPO ancient and semi-natural woodland to the west of the site);
- Woodland planting and semi-natural mixed shrub planting between units; and
- South of the site entrance, and on land east of units 02 and 03, adjacent to the central access road.

Hedgerows and Trees

New mixed native hedgerows will be established throughout the site including to the southern boundary, the north of the site, north of the access road and around car parking areas. A mix of plants will be selected which reflects those typically found in the local area and evergreen species such as holly may be incorporated to provide evergreen cover and screening benefit. The proposals seek to re-establish hedges in response to the former historic field pattern of the area where possible.

Trees will be included where practical in hedgerows and in locations throughout the site where there is suitable space and the operational requirements of the development and their future growth will not conflict. A range of tree species and varieties are specified to be attractive, suit the location and to enhance biodiversity, these will be a mix of native and ornamental varieties but will be mainly UK native species.

Grassland and Wildflora

Grassland and wildflora areas will be established in areas of the site including on woodland edges in the areas between/beneath tree groups, below overhead lines in the northern part of the site and to attenuation pond slopes. It is intended that these will be managed for biodiversity as long grass and meadow type habitats which are typically mown twice a year. Areas will be seeded or overseeded as appropriate with a mix of native grasses and wildflora species. Existing grassland areas will be overseeded in patches and supplemented with plug plants which will be selected in consultation with project ecologists. Similarly seeded areas may also be supplemented with plug plants in certain areas to increase diversity. The conditions will be reviewed and management of these areas may be altered in future years as deemed appropriate by project ecologists and site managers.

Amenity and Ornamental Planting

Ornamental and 'amenity' type planting will be included in and around car parks and other internal parts of the site that are suitable. Planting in these areas will typically be a mix of evergreen and deciduous ornamental shrubs and trees with some grasses and herbaceous material. The planting will be selected for a combination of aesthetic qualities and size and suitability to the location. Plants will include flowering and fruiting species to attract insects and to provide food and cover for wildlife.

Marginal and Aquatic Planting

The proposed stormwater attenuation pond to the eastern side of the site will be designed to retain standing water at the base with areas of different water depths. These will be planted with suitable native marginal and aquatic plants. The pond will be subject to varying water levels throughout the year and will be slopes will be sown with a suitable mix of wild flora and grass species that are tolerant of damp conditions.