

REPORT: LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE and PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.

PROJECT: JACOBS ISLAND, CORK. SHD APPLICATION.

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1.0: Landscape Maintenance and Performance Standards

The regular care and maintenance of any area of landscape has a profound effect on its appearance, its value as an amenity and, even in the longer term, its plant structure and overall nature. The right levels of maintenance, and the methods to be used, will vary considerably from site to site and as well as being influenced by the layout and use, will also reflect the soil types, topography, exposure to the elements and local climatic variations.

Matching the maintenance regimes to the needs of a site is a major part of landscape management and it is not possible to give any absolute prescription or standard specification that can be applied for a particular type of landscape. However, this chapter attempts to describe and define the main operations that go into routine maintenance. Under the heading of each main type of landscape feature there are performance specifications and objectives for the various operations.

Type	Description	Maintenance Objective	Maintenance Operations
Amenity Grassland	Amenity grassland describes all natural and semi-natural grassland used for recreation purposes as distinct from that used for productive agriculture. It forms the major part of the landscape and its maintenance requires more time during the summer growing season than any other activity.	To provide an even stand of vegetation of uniform height and colour comprising predominantly grass species, although a small percentage of dicotyledenous plants - no more than 5 per cent - will be accepted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mowing shall be carried out using a cylinder mower to maintain the vegetation length within the limits of 30 mm and 35mm during April to August inclusive and between 35 mm and 50 mm during the rest of the year. (This will normally require mowing at up to once a week in the peak of the season and up to, 20 times per year). The 'arisings' shall be collected and discarded appropriately off site by the Landscape Contractor. At no stage must arisings come to rest on paved or planted areas. All edges of grass areas, against buildings, footpaths, roadways, trees, posts, and any other obstruction shall be kept neat, trimmed, and tidy. Mowing strips against walls, etc. shall be 100 mm wide and may be maintained using an appropriate approved herbicide. Border edges shall be clipped and not be allowed to exceed 75mm length. Grass areas may be sprayed overall with a suitable approved selective herbicide in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Alternatively, spot weeding of isolated weed infestation may be carried out. Fertilisers to be applied in the period of March to April and in period September to October as noted above. Provisional item Reinstatement by re-turfing or re-seeding of worn areas may be undertaken as necessary.
Planting Areas (Shrubs/Herbaceous)	The borders must be kept weed free, particularly of perennial weeds, to allow planting to give early cover. However, the plants may be required to be thinned so that the shrubs that are retained are able to achieve an attractive form. This may involve removing the intermediate plants soon after shoots are touching.	Maintain shrub growth to cover as much as possible of the border area and allowing the individual plants to achieve as nearly as possible their natural form. Maintain the borders free of visible weeds and shape and prune the shrubs to avoid obstructing pathways or blocking light to or adhering to windows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After planting, if appropriate and in season for the species involved, prune shrubs to develop their desirable ornamental characteristics. At the same time remove intermediate plants that are restricting the natural and attractive development of their neighbours. Remove all arisings from site. If plants have become over mature, rejuvenation by a once over complete coppice is recommended; however, this should be reviewed with the Employer in the first instance. Lightly cultivate the surface soil, to a depth of approximately 50 mm, remove or bury all annual weed or natural litter and break any surface capping. Take special care to avoid unnecessary damage to the shrub plants and ensure that all the shrubs are firmly bedded in the soil. Leave the surface with a fine and even tilth with soil crumbs of less than 50 mm in diameter. Once a year operation (in early winter). Note: This operation is only essential where the soil is compacted or as a means of incorporating mulch. Not required where the areas are mulched. Maintain the soil surface substantially free of weeds (less than 10 per cent weed cover) by hand removal and spot treating with Glyphosate, or approved equivalent. Spot treatment at approximately four-weekly intervals in the main growing season, to a total of five times per season.

Type	Description	Maintenance Objective	Maintenance Operations
Newly Planted Trees	Young trees will need regular attention to ensure establishment. Either guards or fencing have been used to protect the plant against rabbits, etc. The most important operation is to keep the soil around the base of the tree free from weeds or grass and to ensure secure and correct staking.	Establish a stable and healthily growing tree with a well-shaped framework for future growth.	<p>Note: As an alternative the borders can be regularly hand-hoed at up to two-weekly intervals in the main growing season, to 6 times per year. This procedure is recommended for the first year after planting when the plants may be more sensitive to contact herbicide damage and residual herbicides may not be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately after planting or, as required and where subsequently directed, mulch the surface of the border with a 50 mm layer of pulverised bark (maximum particle size 40 mm), or another approved equivalent. Thereafter, top dress the mulch as necessary and at least once a year to maintain effective cover. Spot treat or remove any emergent weeds as specified in c) above but do not cultivate or incorporate the mulch into the soil. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a 1 m diameter circle of plant-free soil around the base of each isolated tree by hoeing <i>or</i> the use of approved herbicide other than a residual. Avoid strimming around the base of standard trees which readily damages young bark. Allow for hoeing up of soil once every 4 weeks in the growing season (5 times per year). Allow for herbicide treatment once in the winter or spring and 3 additional treatments. Note: In some areas this operation may be replaced by the application of bark mulch as ground cover. Cut back any tall vegetation that is threatening to shade or smother the young tree (i.e., taller vegetation growing from outside the 1 m weed free area). Allow for cutting back regularly (3/4 times a year). If required, water the newly planted trees throughout the summer months (May to August) as required after any period of 4 weeks without significant rainfall (less than 5 mm). Apply sufficient water to thoroughly wet the top 150 mm of soil around the tree roots. This will normally require approximately 10 litres for a seedling or whip and 20 litres for a standard tree. Supply/transport of water to be the responsibility of the Landscape Contractor. Check stakes and ties for firmness and support and adjust as necessary. Allow for checking twice a year, preferably in late spring and late summer. Firm the soil around the roots to ensure that the plant is securely planted in the ground and upright. Allow for firming once in the spring after planting. Formative prune to remove any dead, diseased or damaged shoots and create a balanced form for future growth. Allow for pruning once in the season after planting. Where tree guards, stakes, ties, strimmer guards, rabbit guards and temporary fencing is no longer deemed necessary, the contractor shall allow for removing and discarding of these elements appropriately off site.
Hedging		Regularly clip hedges to maintain a uniform and tidy appearance (according to the type of hedge and situation) and a well-developed cover of vegetation over the whole of the hedge surface. Control any weed or grass growth at the base of the hedge so that it does not detract from the overall appearance or adversely compete with the hedge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clip the top and sides of the hedge to maintain true and even levels and using suitable mechanical cutters to maintain the shape and height. Remove any cuttings lodged in the surface of the hedge and rake up and remove all arisings. Allow for the operation to be carried out to suit the species and position of the hedge. Maintain weedfree 750mm wide band at the base of the hedge (weeds at a maximum height of 100mm and a maximum ground cover of 10%) by regular hand removal, hoeing or using approved herbicide. Allow for control once every 6 weeks in the main growing season (4 times per year).

Type	Description	Maintenance Objective	Maintenance Operations
Litter Clearance		Collect and remove from the site, all extraneous litter and rubbish on a regular basis so that its presence is not detrimental to the appearance of the site. (This means that the site should be free from litter after each visit to site).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and remove and dispose appropriately off site all extraneous rubbish, not arising from maintenance works, which is detrimental to the appearance of the site. This rubbish to include stones (over 50mm dia. which may be buried), bricks, debris, paper, confectionery and other wrappings, bottles, cans and plastic containers. Allow for this operation to be carried out at regular intervals based in conjunction with other maintenance visits and operations. Collect and removed and disposed of appropriately off site all extraneous matter which has deliberately been deposited on the site by persons known or unknown (fly-tipping). Such matter to include bricks, rubble, garden and household refuse, discarded domestic appliances, furniture and scrap metal. Priced per occasion based on an estimate of the volume of material to be collected.
Paved Areas		Regularly sweep or clean paved surfaces to keep it clear of litter or other debris that will detract from the appearance of the site. Keep the surface free from weed (including moss) growth and all associated drainage gullies in working order.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sweep all paved areas at regular intervals and remove all arisings from the site. Frequency may vary according to time of year or other maintenance operations. Hand or mechanical - sweeping may be used. Control all annual weed (moss) growth by the application of residual weed killer. A single application in March/April should normally be sufficient but follow-up spot treatment may be necessary in late summer. Clear silt and extraneous matter from the drainage gullies, including the lifting and replacement of the drain cover. Programme for once every six months but more frequently where silting up is a particular problem. Inspect and clear any leaves and other litter from drain gulley covers. Programme at up to once a week in the autumn when there is likely to be heavy leaf fall.

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