SMD/ 2018/0224- Gorsty Hill Cattery Landscaping Scheme

Site Survey

The area surrounding the cattery building is of varying gradients and soil types:

The land between the site boundary and the North and East elevations of the new building is very steep in gradient approximately 3 metre height differential and narrow in width (currently 2 to 3 metres). The property owners have advised that retaining walls and access paths will be required, which will further reduce the width of these areas. The subsoil in these two areas is sandstone rock and the topsoil is a thin poor quality sand/grit. These areas would be dangerous to maintain and a hedge is unlikely to thrive in the soil even if improved. Furthermore, the owners have advised that Defra regulations relating to catteries would not permit the hedges to be cut by tractor due to the level of noise disturbance for the cats.

The land adjacent to the West elevation of the building is primarily a gravel access track to the building and adjacent field. To the rear the track is a grassed area containing two young trees.

The land adjacent to the South elevation comprises a 4 to 8 metre width of poor sandy soil. The topsoil in the remaining 2 metres to the boundary of Gorsty Hill Cottage garden is a well-drained, neutral, sandy loam of at least 30cm depth. There is also an area of the same quality of soil of approximately 4 square metres, in the Southeast corner of the site.

The West, East and South sides of the building will have wire mesh walls to form the cat pens and there will be a 1-metre wide block paved access path around the whole building. **It will therefore not be possible to plant against the building**, apart from possibly a small area next to the pedestrian access door but this is again only has a thin covering of poor quality sand/grit on a sandstone base.

Existing trees to be retained include: a mature Quercus robur, two mature Crataegus monogyna, a two-year old Magnolia and a three-year-old Pyrus communis ‘Conference’.

The main garden to Gorsty Hill Cottage that is only 2 metres from the proposed new hedge, has an established 20-metre border containing a wide mix of climbers, shrubs and herbaceous plants. Most of these plants were selected to attract beneficial insects. The climbing plants are been grown against a retaining wall made of wooden sleepers and include: Ivies, Honeysuckles, climbing Roses, Clematis and Solanum.

Design Statement

The new planting areas are considered the most suitable for following reasons: the topsoil is a good quality, well-drained, sandy loam that needs little improvement; the aspect will provide part-shade in the mixed shrub/plant area and full sun conditions for the new sections of hedge (conditions which should maximise the initial growth and long term survival of the plants); ease of long term maintenance, compliance with Defra regulations.

The shrubs and herbaceous plants on the enclosed list have been selected for the following reasons: native UK shrubs and plants (in the main); attract a wide variety of pollinating insects, birds and bats; provide a variety of additional habitat on the site for insects and birds; are suitable for the aspect and soil type in the selected planting areas; relatively low maintenance.

The native hedge plants are those specified by the Ecological Advice Officer, Mark Preece.

Further information enclosed:
Landscape scheme site plan.
Planting details and schedule.
Plant List.

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