PROPOSAL FOR SPECIMEN
PLANT STOCK NURSERY
BEECHES ROAD, BATTLESBRIDGE
ESSEX
for
P DRAKE TREE SERVICES

CONTENTS:

1.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

1.1 Aims

1.1.1 The primary aim of the proposal is to create a 'trade-only' nursery facility for the supply of specimen trees and shrubs.

1.1.2 A subsidiary aim is to provide a small storage facility for the re-cycling of timber waste materials (logs and mulch) for use on the adjacent horse-riding and stable facility as well as within the new nursery area.

1.1.3 The facility will also aim to enable employment opportunities in the local area.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 The primary objective of the facility is to compliment the existing tree surgery business that has been successful over the past twelve years; re-cycling waste products that arise from these operations (logs and mulch) and complimenting the service offered by the business with the ability to provide specimen tree and shrub stock to replace (or enhance) stock removed (or worked upon) during tree surgery operations.

1.2.2 A secondary objective would include the provision of a trade-only service for the selective supply of specimen trees and shrubs that currently are not available in the local area. Whereas most local nursery suppliers carry a range of plant stock suitable only for the domestic market, the provision here would be aimed towards the commercial market and local landscape contractors requiring larger specimen trees and shrubs.

1.2.3 The waste products produced from the existing tree surgery operations (timber logs and bark mulch) would be used to help maintain the adjacent horse riding facility via a purpose-built storage facility constructed in conjunction with the new nursery area.

1.2.4 The nursery will employ a small number of staff to complete the day to day tasks and running of the business. The objective will be that the nursery provides employment opportunities for individuals within the local area; either full or part-time.

1.2.5 The underlying objective is to ensure that this overall operation works in conjunction with the existing tree surgery operations and compliments and expands the current range of services as yet unavailable to existing and future clients in the local market place.

2.0 ACCESS:

2.1 Existing Access

2.1.1 The proposal allows for the existing access point in the south-west corner of the site to be permanently closed. The fence line would be re-constructed and the existing hedge re-planted with species of appropriate size and mix to blend with the existing established hedgerow.

2.1.2 It is felt that the proximity of the existing access to the neighbouring property (to the west) might not allow a sufficiently safe distance for a sight-splay to be established for access and egress to the site.

2.1.3 Widening the existing access point would not maintain an approved sight-splay to the west of the site along Beeches Road.

2.2 Re-Opening of Alternative Access Point

2.2.1 It is the intention of this proposal to apply for the re-opening of an existing access point situated in the centre (approximately) of the boundary line adjacent Beeches Road.

2.2.2 The opening of this access point would allow for greater security to the whole site and ensure that the safety sight-splay could be more readily maintained for access and egress.

2.2.3 Currently, the access point remains closed but the proposal would require it to be widened (to allow for delivery access), the surface would need to be strengthened, and additional culverts would need to be added to the line of the existing ditch below (all to comply with current Highway's legislation & guidelines).

2.2.4 The central access point would, thereafter, provide access to the horse-riding facilities and the nursery area.

3.0 STRUCTURES:

3.1 Existing Structures:

3.1.1 Currently on site there is a permanent, low-level, single-storey, timber structure which facilitates six stables. This is situated in the south-west corner of the site within eight metres of the existing, mature boundary hedge (well-disguised from the roadside and the adjacent properties).

3.1.2 There are also a number of small sheds within a short distance of the permanent structure that are used for storage of tools and equipment for the stables. (These can be re-sited in more appropriate areas when the nursery proposal has been given approval.)

3.1.3 Health and Safety regulations will demand the establishment of toilet and wash station facilities which can easily be incorporated within the existing physical structure without adding to the 'footprint' of the building.

3.2 Proposed Structures:

3.2.1 It is proposed that three, co-joined, low-level (max. height 2.5m), open-ended storage bunkers be constructed in close proximity to the existing stable block. Each would comprise a 'U' shaped structure (5m x 5m max.), running in parallel, set atop a reinforced, poured concrete foundation. Secured steel supports would retain railway sleepers that would comprise the rear and side walls. Each of these would be used to store logs from the tree surgery operations (for re-use on the horse-riding facility and nursery to define pathways etc.); waste product from the stable facility (for re-use in the nursery facility and in planting operations on site); and bark mulch from the tree surgery operations (for re-use in the horse riding ménage and pathways and mulch on the nursery stock areas and pathways). At no time will the storage facilities be allowed to hold more than the capacity for which they have been built and it is not the intention that these storage facilities will provide any financial capacity for the site operations. These storage facilities will not be visible from the adjacent properties.

3.2.2 For the main area of the nursery to function correctly as a specimen tree and shrub stock facility the proposal requires the erection of two-span, multi-link, poly-tunnel structure to enable the re-potting, growing-on and bedding-in capability to be carried out. The overall dimensions of this structure will be 12.8m (width) by 34.2m (length) by 3.3m (maximum central height of dome). (*see Appendix 1*)

3.2.6 The base of the polythene covered tunnel will be excavated to a depth of 150mm (shuttered to its full extent to define the boundaries) and back-filled with compacted hardcore (MOT Type 1). A 'Mypex' or 'Terram' semi-permeable membrane will be maintained across the surface of the poly-tunnel in order to avoid weed infestation and encroachment. A central pathway will be defined using log edging to align from end to end and back-filled with 150mm bark mulch. (A 'Mypex' or 'Terram' sheet will be laid below the level of the bark path and the mulch will be regularly 'topped-up' with the supplies stored on site from the tree surgery operations).

3.2.7 The base surface of the 'netted' poly-tunnel will be stripped of all existing vegetative material and lightly compacted. This will then be covered to its fullest extent with a 'Mypex' or 'Terram' semi-permeable membrane as in the polythene tunnel to avoid weed regeneration. A central path defined by timber logging and constructed with 150mm bark mulch will similarly be constructed and aligned from end to end. (It will be maintained as mentioned above.)

3.2.8 The polythene tunnel will be used as the stabilisation and potting-on base for the specimen tree and shrub stock. It will also serve to protect those varieties of potted specimens that will not survive a UK winter whilst containerised. The shrubs will be potted-on from 5-10 litre pots into 20-25 litre pots and allowed to settle and establish before being transferred into the netting poly-tunnel for 'hardening-off' before final

transference to the open storage ground before planting out on site to the clients or trade. The additional warmth of the poly-tunnel will ensure survival in the first instance and allow for accelerated growth patterns to produce the desired specimen plants. To allow for adequate and appropriate growth patterns the storage capacity will be a maximum of 2.5 pots per square metre. Emphasis within the facility is based upon quality and size, not bulk-handling. The shaded netting facility will allow for the plant stock to become accustomed to more standard climatic exposure whilst maintaining some protection from frost and wind damage before transference to the open-ground storage area. (It is not the intention that any of the tree stock will be 'grown-on' within the poly-tunnel facility. Trees will be purchased as bare- root stock at the start of the horticultural planting season (November) as either heavy standard (14-16cm) or extra heavy standards specimens (16-18/18-20cm). These will then be potted into 25-45 litre containers (as appropriate) and set directly into the open field storage area. (It is not anticipated that any of the trees potted in this manner will be ready for re-sale or planting out for at least two years.)

4.0 STORAGE:

4.1 Materials

4.1.1 *Logged Timber* will be stored in one of the purpose-built containers for use on the horse riding facility and within the nursery. The logs will be used to define the edges of bridleways, the ménage and areas of access pathway within the nursery area. These will be monitored and replaced to keep the defined margins in constantly good order. There may be some additional commercial benefit gained from the sale of logs to clients of the existing tree surgery operations but this will be on a 'load-delivery' basis only and not from direct site sales.

4.1.2 *Bark Mulch* will be stored in the second of the purpose built containers for again use on the horse riding facility and within the nursery. The paths, bridleways and ménage within the horse riding areas will be constructed using a bark mulch base and this will require constant topping-up in order for the areas to remain safe. Pathways within the nursery area will also be constructed using bark mulch surfacing atop a semi-permeable membrane such as 'Mypex' or 'Terram'. It is desired that additional planting services will become an added feature of the current tree surgery operations and if this is to work successfully then it will be recommended that the planted beds receive a finished mulch layer to assist with surface water retention and weed suppression. It is

likely, therefore, that a small additional income will be raised from the wholesale distribution of this item. Again, it will not be a retail service offered from site storage.

4.1.3 *Composted Manure Waste* will be a by-product from the existing horse riding operations on site. The well-rotted manure will be available to assist with soil mixing operations for the potting-on of tree and shrubs (strictly limited) but will be more readily advertised for use with planting operations on site to avoid having to use peat-based compost materials so detrimental to the environment. This will, again, be based upon small-scale, wholesale delivery operations on specific planting commissions won as a by-product of the tree surgery practice.

4.1.4 *Soil Mixes* will be specifically imported for immediate use in potting-on operations for the specimen trees and shrubs and will not, generally, be stored for any length of time on-site. A hard-standing area will be constructed adjacent the other three storage containers but this will just be for the ease of handling and removal.

4.1.5 *Specimen Shrubs* will initially be purchased in bulk quantity to get the operations up and running. These will be stored before sale and use on designated areas adjacent the tree storage areas shown on the drawing. This will be the long-term storage facility for all future specimen shrub production. (Prior to storage the existing surface vegetation will be stripped and the beds lightly compacted before being covered with an industrial

and spacer for additional stability. There will be a minimum distance of 2.5m between each tree in each row with a 0.75m walkway between the rows.

4.1.7 *Waste Material By-Product* (green-waste operations) that will be produced by the nursery operations will be re-cycled within the plant production areas. Additional soil material will be utilised within the on-site planting beds whilst all other green-waste will be shredded and used as valuable mulch material for beds and pathways.

(NB: It should be noted that all plant stock introduced to the site will be in accordance with EC regulations and certification schemes)

5.0 PLANT STOCK:

5.1 Trees

5.1.1 It is the intention of this proposal that all initial plant stock purchased to get this enterprise up and running be purchased from reputable nursery stock traders within the UK whose plant stock provenance can be proven. (Ideally, all plant stock will have been produced and grown-on in the UK.) Initial discussions are being had with James Coles & Sons (Nurseries) Ltd of Leicester; Johnson's Nurseries of Whixley; Hillier's Nurseries of Southampton; and Belwood Trees of Scotland.

5.1.2 As already mentioned, an initial stock catalogue will be compiled using specimen tree stock purchased from one (or some) of the nurseries listed above. These will be purchased in limited numbers as extra heavy or heavy standard stock (or slightly larger) in containers for plunging into the pre-prepared storage area adjacent the poly-tunnels. The majority of the trees can be man-handled into position but those requiring mechanical lifting will be moved via in-house machinery currently in operation with the tree surgery business. (*see Appendix 3*)

5.1.3 The species selection will have a core base centred around standard stock requirement specimens known to grow well locally and thus, be required on a regular

basis. The majority of the stock will be deciduous rather than coniferous; the latter will be ordered more frequently upon specific demand. Standard stock will comprise the more common varieties of Ash (*Fraxinus spp.*); Beech (*Fagus spp.*); Birch (*Betulus spp.*); Cherry (*Prunus spp.*); Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus spp.*); Hornbeam (*Carpinus spp.*); Lime (*Tilia spp.*); Maple (*Acer spp.*) and Oak (*Quercus spp.*). One or two more 'exotic' specimens [such as Walnut (*Juglans spp.*); False Acacia (*Robinia spp.*) etc.] may be considered when the business has become more established and if demand is sufficiently robust. (The size of the stock has already been mentioned above).

5.2 Shrubs

5.2.1 As with the initial tree stock, the specimen shrub stock will be purchased with a known provenance from within the UK. In addition to the nurseries mentioned above discussion has also been had with Tendercare Nurseries in Hertfordshire; a specialist nursery supplier to the trade (and general public) for specimen shrubs of all kinds.

5.2.2 Plant stock for the longer term period will be purchased as 3-10 litre specimens (depending upon species and varieties) which will then be potted-on into 25-50 litre pots (again depending upon species and varieties).

5.2.3 The range of species and varieties will vary enormously depending upon availability and demand but the initial selection will be based upon the quality of stock currently available at the supply nurseries at the time of setting up the business. The individual specimen shrubs [such as Bay (*Laurus spp.*) or Laurel (*Prunus spp.*) that can be manicured or topiaried] often required as 'architectural' plants within a scheme will most often be supplied as individual orders for specific sites and not necessarily grown or trained on site as this is a specialist art. A substantial amount of the shrub stock, unlike the trees, is likely to be conifers or evergreen.

8.0 BIO-DIVERSITY STATEMENT

8.1 The introduction to the site of alternative species in the form of semi-mature plant stock of trees and shrubs will significantly increase the bio-diversity of the current site.

8.2 The selection and introduction of additional tree species and hedgerow specimens as permanent features within the site will also enhance the range of flora and fauna currently present on site in both micro and macro-biotic characteristics.

8.3 Additional on-site management of the existing hedgerow features and the one single mature Oak (*Quercus robur*) specimen tree along the roadside boundary will mean that this wildlife habitat will be maintained and retained as a rich wildlife habitat for the foreseeable future.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

9.1 The government led initiatives for sustainable development is based around the following, widely acknowledged definition:

'...development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs...'

9.2 The nature of this proposal complies fully with the desired outcomes of this definition and the proposed nursery and re-cycling facility compliments the existing successful arboricultural operations in exemplary manner.

10.0 FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 This assessment has been prepared at the request of Rochford District Council officers to support the planning application.

10.1.2 This assessment has been prepared with information from Rochford District Council's engineering section and the Environment Agency's (EA) office based in Ipswich.

10.2 Development and flood risk

10.2.1 Appendix 'F' of Planning Policy Guidance note 25 (PPG 25) states that ***"F2 flood risk assessments may be of a relatively minor nature evaluating a small development on a low risk site with minimal secondary effects. Or may comprise major basin wide studies for significant infrastructure developments".***

10.2.2 Appendix 11.4 depicts a location plan of the development site in relation to the assessed flood risk area. The river Crouch lies to the north of the site with the defining character of the part of the river closest to the application site being tidal in nature.

10.2.3 The river is separated from the application site by a flood defence embankment and the EA's Indicative Floodplain map shows the application site to be at risk from tidal flooding during a 0.5% (i.e. 1 in 200 year cycle) annual probability flood event in the river Crouch. The catchment area of the river Crouch is strictly limited to the extent that fluvial flooding (i.e. from surface/land water run-off) can be regarded as a material risk only.

10.2.4 The flood risk identified relates only to tidal effects leading to elevated sea water levels within the river. The flood defence embankment is designed to provide adequate protection against a 2% (i.e. 1 in 50 years) annual probability flood event. Only extreme events would result in the river rising to a sufficient level to breach the levels of the flood defence embankment.

10.2.5 PPG 25 states that areas of low to medium risk (i.e. river flooding of 0.1 to 1.0% and tidal flooding of 0.1 to 0.5%) are suitable for most types of development. Even in areas of high risk, where the area is undeveloped and sparse, although general purpose housing or other development comprising residential or institutional accommodation should not normally be permitted, development for agricultural (*or in this case horticultural*) purposes can be acceptable.

10.2.6 **The horticultural operations proposed on this site would appear to fall within not only the medium risk parameters but also the high risk margins considering the restricted level of development proposed.**

10.3 *Historical Records*

10.3.1 The application site lies within an area which was subject to flooding in the 1953 North Sea floods. Such an occurrence cannot be ruled out in the future but the proposals submitted present little or no risk to personal safety due to the nature of the development.

10.4 *Mitigation Measures*

10.4.1 No special measures are required due to the nature of the proposed development however, the applicant will ensure that he is fully conversant with all of the usual flood risk warning arrangements and adhere to these if a flood risk is imminent within the application area.

10.5 *Flood Risk Assessment Conclusions*

10.5.1 The application site is in an area of medium flood risk where most types of development are acceptable under the guidance given in government policy PPG25. The proposals fall clearly within a category of development that is acceptable under this policy guidance.

11.0 APPENDICES

11.1 Polytunnel Details

11.2 Drawing Number 24-019-01

11.3 Tree Stock Examples & Details

11.4 Location Plan in relation to local flood risk area