

Architecture • Planning

**SOFT LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT &
BIODIVERSITY PLANTING SPECIFICATION**

Proposed SEND Modular Building

Boorley Park Primary School

Nairn Road
Botley
Southampton
SO32 2SH

Prepared for:

Raise Education Trust

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Prepared with reference to submitted site layout drawing showing proposed modular SEND building, associated enclosed external learning garden and perimeter landscaping proposals.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been prepared by **ACM Architects Ltd** on behalf of **Raise Education Trust** in support of the proposed development comprising a new modular building intended to provide dedicated educational accommodation for **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)** provision at **Boorley Park Primary School, Botley, Southampton**.

The report provides a comprehensive soft landscaping, ecological enhancement and biodiversity planting specification associated with the proposed development.

The purpose of the proposed landscape scheme is to:

- Provide a secure and visually attractive external environment for SEND pupils.
- Deliver ecological enhancement through habitat creation and biodiversity sensitive planting.
- Create sensory-rich external spaces appropriate for specialist educational use.
- Provide screening to boundaries adjacent to existing school operational areas.
- Improve visual amenity associated with the introduction of the proposed modular building.
- Ensure compliance with current planning policy relating to biodiversity enhancement and sustainable development principles.

The proposed scheme incorporates a combination of:

- Native and ornamental tree planting
- Mixed evergreen hedgerow planting
- Sensory planting beds
- Pollinator-friendly perennial planting
- Heathland scrub habitat creation
- Secure boundary landscape screening
- Biodiversity enhancement measures designed to improve ecological value across the site

The proposed landscape design has been prepared with reference to current British Standards and current planning policy guidance.

2. INTRODUCTION

ACM Architects Ltd has been instructed by Raise Education Trust to prepare a comprehensive landscape and ecological enhancement strategy associated with the proposed development of a new modular educational building within the grounds of Boorley Park Primary School.

The proposed building is intended to provide specialist SEND educational accommodation together with associated secure external learning space immediately adjacent to the proposed building.

The development incorporates enclosed external amenity space intended to provide:

- Outdoor teaching opportunities
- Quiet recreational space
- Sensory learning opportunities
- Safe supervised outdoor access for pupils with specialist educational requirements

The landscaping proposals accompanying the development are therefore required to address both conventional planning objectives together with the specialist environmental needs associated with SEND educational provision.

This document has been prepared to support planning approval and to demonstrate that the development provides measurable ecological and environmental benefit in accordance with current planning policy objectives.

3. SITE CONTEXT APPRAISAL

The application site is located within the operational grounds of **Boorley Park Primary School**, situated on **Nairn Road, Botley, Southampton**.

The site forms part of the existing developed school campus and currently comprises open landscaped educational grounds associated with the wider school estate.

The proposed modular building is located adjacent to existing operational school facilities and incorporates associated enclosed external amenity space positioned on the eastern side of the building.

The submitted drawing indicates the development occupies an area bounded by existing educational operational areas including playground and circulation space.

The proposed building footprint includes:

- Two classrooms
- Two meeting rooms
- Ancillary storage accommodation
- Accessible WC facilities
- Plant and mechanical service areas
- External enclosed garden and teaching space

The development incorporates a secure fenced external garden area which forms an integral part of the SEND educational environment.

The submitted site plan identifies boundary treatments requiring associated planting and ecological enhancement works.

4. EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

The proposed development site currently forms part of an operational educational campus and consists primarily of maintained grassed landscape areas and associated hard surfaced pedestrian circulation areas.

The submitted development drawing identifies several key boundary interfaces requiring landscape treatment.

Western Boundary

The western boundary forms the principal interface with the adjacent school playground.

The submitted drawing indicates a requirement for:

- No physical boundary fence
- Boundary planting to provide visual screening from playground areas

The western boundary therefore requires planting capable of providing immediate and long-term screening whilst remaining manageable within an educational setting.

Northern Boundary

The northern boundary adjoins open school grounds and the submitted proposal identifies an area designated specifically for ecological enhancement.

The drawing identifies:

- The Eastern section has a secure perimeter fence to enclose the rear garden
- 20 square metre heathland mixed scrub habitat zone
- Additional screen planting adjacent to external outdoor area

This area presents an opportunity to significantly improve biodiversity value associated with the site.

Eastern Boundary

The eastern boundary contains the principal external garden area associated with the proposed SEND building.

This area comprises:

- Grassed learning area
- Paved external teaching space
- Secure fenced perimeter

This space is considered particularly important in landscape design terms due to its role supporting specialist SEND educational activity.

Southern Boundary

The southern boundary incorporates the path to join onto the existing playground.

The submitted drawing requires:

- Secure access gates
- 2.0 metre boundary fencing along the area enclosing the rear garden
- Associated screening planting in front of the building and behind the fencing line

The landscape scheme must therefore soften the appearance of the secure boundary infrastructure whilst maintaining operational security requirements.

5. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The proposed soft landscaping and ecological enhancement strategy has been prepared having regard to current national and local planning policy requirements relating to biodiversity enhancement, sustainable development and educational infrastructure design.

The landscaping proposals have specifically been developed in accordance with the following guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework places significant emphasis upon the delivery of sustainable development and the enhancement of biodiversity as part of all development proposals.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to minimise impacts upon biodiversity and wherever possible secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The proposed landscape scheme contributes positively through:

- Introduction of native and pollinator-friendly planting species
- Creation of habitat zones through heathland scrub planting
- Additional tree planting across the site
- Provision of invertebrate and bird habitat opportunities
- Increased planting diversity across the educational site

Biodiversity Net Gain Principles

Whilst the scale of the proposed development does not trigger formal biodiversity metric calculation requirements, the development has been designed in accordance with the general principles of Biodiversity Net Gain legislation introduced under the Environment Act.

The proposals incorporate ecological enhancement measures designed to improve the biodiversity value of the application site beyond existing baseline conditions.

These include:

- Native scrub habitat creation
- Pollinator-supporting perennial planting
- Mixed evergreen screening hedgerows
- Bird nesting opportunities
- Habitat diversity through varied planting typologies

The development therefore delivers positive ecological gain in planning policy terms.

Local Planning Policy Objectives

The development proposals have additionally been prepared having regard to local planning authority objectives relating to:

- Enhancement of visual amenity
- Sustainable educational development
- Ecological enhancement within developed sites
- Improved landscape quality associated with educational infrastructure
- Climate resilience through increased planting provision

The proposed landscaping strategy is considered fully consistent with current local authority policy objectives.

6. LANDSCAPE DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The external landscape design has been prepared to satisfy both conventional planning objectives together with specialist educational design requirements associated with SEND provision.

The landscape proposals are intended to achieve the following primary objectives.

Objective 1 — Creation of Secure External Learning Environment

The proposed development includes a dedicated enclosed external learning area immediately adjacent to the proposed building.

The landscape design must support supervised outdoor activity whilst maintaining secure boundary control.

This is achieved through:

- Secure perimeter fencing
- Boundary screening planting
- Controlled access points
- Low maintenance planting forms

Objective 2 — Sensory Learning Environment

SEND educational provision benefits significantly from carefully designed external environments capable of supporting sensory engagement.

The proposed planting design therefore incorporates species selected specifically for:

- Fragrance
- Tactile variation
- Seasonal colour variation
- Movement in wind conditions
- Pollinator attraction and wildlife interaction

In addition to the areas of planting the secure garden will provide a number of stimulating and accessible opportunities for learning including

- Trim Trail



- Role play panel



- Sand Pit



- Mud Kitchen and Water Station



- Bench seating and interaction areas

- Multi surface path and paved areas



Objective 3 — Biodiversity Enhancement

The scheme seeks to improve ecological value through species selection designed to attract wildlife and provide habitat opportunity.

This objective is achieved through:

- Heathland scrub planting
 - Pollinator-friendly flowering species
 - Native species incorporation
 - Seasonal nectar sources
 - Structural planting diversity
-

Objective 4 — Visual Screening

The modular building introduces new built form within the operational school grounds.

Boundary planting is therefore designed to soften visual impact and improve integration with surrounding landscape.

Measures include:

- Evergreen boundary hedging
 - Small ornamental specimen trees
 - Mixed shrub planting
 - Year-round visual softening of fencing infrastructure
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7. SEND LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provision requires particular consideration in landscape design.

The proposed external environment has therefore been designed specifically to create a calm, safe and sensory-rich environment appropriate for specialist educational use.

Sensory Planting Strategy

Plant species have been selected to provide positive sensory interaction opportunities.

Planting selection criteria include:

Fragrance

Species selected to provide scent stimulation.

Examples:

- Lavender
- Rosemary
- Salvia
- Nepeta

These species provide gentle fragrance without excessive allergenic risk.

Tactile Engagement

Several species have been selected specifically for tactile interaction.

Examples:

- Stachys byzantina (Lamb's Ear)
- Ornamental grasses
- Soft foliage perennial planting

These species allow safe supervised tactile engagement by pupils.

Seasonal Visual Interest

Seasonal variation assists sensory engagement and provides educational opportunities.

Selected planting provides:

- Spring flowering interest
- Summer pollinator attraction
- Autumn colour change
- Winter evergreen structure

This supports year-round educational use of external spaces.

Low Risk Species Selection

All proposed planting species have been selected to minimise risk within educational environments.

Species have been screened to avoid:

- Toxic berries
- Thorn-bearing plants adjacent circulation routes
- Highly allergenic planting
- Aggressive root systems close to building foundations

This ensures long-term suitability within the school environment.

8. DESIGN STRATEGY FOR EXTERNAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

The submitted site plan identifies four distinct landscape zones requiring individual planting strategies.

Zone A — Western Boundary

The western boundary interfaces directly with adjacent school playground areas.

Landscape objectives:

- Immediate visual screening
- Low maintenance planting

Proposed planting:

- Viburnum hedging
 - Small specimen trees adjacent at each end
-

Zone B — Northern Ecological Enhancement Zone

The northern boundary includes a dedicated ecological enhancement area.

Landscape objectives:

- Habitat creation
- Biodiversity enhancement
- Pollinator support
- Ecological diversity

Proposed planting:

- Heathland scrub planting
 - Native grass mix
 - Pollinator supporting wildflower species
-

Zone C — Eastern SEND Garden Area

The eastern side of the building forms the principal external learning environment.

Landscape objectives:

- Sensory engagement
- Outdoor teaching space
- Safe supervised learning environment

Proposed planting:

- Sensory perennial planting beds
 - Pollinator planting
 - Seasonal flowering species
 - Low height planting for supervision visibility
-

Zone D — Southern Entrance Boundary

The southern boundary contains secure access infrastructure.

Landscape objectives:

- Boundary screening
- Security integration
- Softening of entrance infrastructure

Proposed planting:

- Hedge planting
- Specimen trees

9. DETAILED SOFT LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

The proposed landscape scheme has been developed in direct response to the submitted site layout and boundary conditions associated with the proposed SEND modular building.

The planting scheme has been designed to provide a balance between ecological enhancement, visual amenity improvement, educational functionality and long-term maintenance efficiency.

The proposed planting schedule is set out below.

10. TREE PLANTING SCHEDULE

All tree planting shall be undertaken in accordance with **BS8545:2014 Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape**.

Trees shall be supplied from approved nurseries and shall be free from defects, disease, damage and poor formative structure.

All trees shall be container grown or rootballed depending upon planting season.

Ref	Botanical name	Common name	Size	Qty	Plan location / purpose
T1, T8,	Amelanchier lamarckii	Juneberry	10–12cm girth	1	North & South boundary – seasonal screening / wildlife
T2	Amelanchier 'Robin Hill'	Robin Hill Juneberry	10–12cm girth	1	North boundary – seasonal flowering / screening
T3, T9	Betula utilis var. jacquemontii	Himalayan Birch	10–12cm girth	1	West boundary – vertical structure / light canopy
T4	Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	10–12cm girth	1	East garden – native fruiting tree / wildlife
T5	Malus 'Sugar Tyme'	Crab Apple	10–12cm girth	1	East garden – flowering / fruit / educational interest
T6, T7	Prunus avium	Wild Cherry	10–12cm girth	1	South-east garden – flowering / wildlife / seasonal interest

Tree Planting Specification

All trees shall be planted within excavated pits measuring minimum:

900mm x 900mm x 600mm depth

Tree pits shall include:

- Approved BS3882 topsoil
- 75mm bark mulch layer
- Twin stake support system
- Underground irrigation pipe
- Rootball anchoring where required
- Minimum 600mm clear root flare

Trees shall be watered immediately after planting.

11. HEDGEROW PLANTING SCHEDULE

Boundary hedging has been selected to provide year-round visual screening whilst remaining manageable within educational operational environments.

All hedge planting shall be double staggered rows unless otherwise agreed.

Ref	Hedge type	Botanical name / mix	Size	Density	Plan location
H1	Native mixed hedge	Crataegus monogyna; Corylus avellana; Cornus sanguinea; Acer campestre; Viburnum opulus	600–900mm	5 plants/m	North / selected external boundary sections
H2	Flowering evergreen hedge	Viburnum tinus	600–800mm	3 plants/m	West boundary and garden screening where shown
H3	Single-species evergreen hedge	Taxus baccata	400–600mm	4 plants/m	South boundary – single-species run
H4	Single-species evergreen hedge	Ilex aquifolium	400–600mm	4 plants/m	South-east boundary – separate single-species run

12. SHRUB AND PERENNIAL PLANTING SCHEDULE

Shrub planting within the external garden area has been designed specifically to support sensory engagement and biodiversity enhancement.

Planting beds shall provide seasonal flowering variation throughout the year.

Sensory Garden Planting Schedule

Ref	Botanical name	Common name	Pot size	Density	Use / location
S1	Lavandula angustifolia	English Lavender	2L	5/m ²	Fragrant / pollinator bed adjacent garden
S2	Nepeta faassenii	Catmint	2L	5/m ²	Fragrant / pollinator bed
S3	Salvia nemorosa	Woodland Sage	2L	5/m ²	Pollinator / seasonal colour
S4	Stachys byzantina	Lamb's Ear	2L	5/m ²	Tactile sensory planting
S5	Rosmarinus officinalis (Salvia rosmarinus)	Rosemary	2L	4/m ²	Herb / fragrant garden
S6	Thymus vulgaris	Common Thyme	2L	6/m ²	Herb / tactile / pollinator planting

Sensory Design Function

The species above have been selected for the following sensory qualities.

Lavender

Provides:

- Fragrance stimulation
 - Pollinator support
 - Seasonal colour
-

Rosemary

Provides:

- Fragrance interaction
 - Culinary educational opportunity
 - Evergreen structure
-

Lamb's Ear

Provides:

- Soft tactile sensory engagement
 - Safe physical interaction for pupils
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Catmint and Salvia

Provides:

- Pollinator attraction
 - Long flowering season
 - Visual seasonal interest
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13. HEATHLAND SCRUB ECOLOGICAL PLANTING SCHEDULE

The submitted site plan identifies approximately 20 square metres of ecological enhancement planting to the northern boundary.

This area shall provide ecological habitat opportunity and biodiversity enhancement.

The habitat shall reflect lowland heath and mixed scrub species appropriate to Hampshire conditions.

Heathland Habitat Mix Schedule

Reference	Botanical Name	Common Name	Density	Quantity
E1	Calluna vulgaris	Common Heather	5/m ²	25
E2	Erica cinerea	Bell Heather	5/m ²	20
E3	Cytisus scoparius	Scotch Broom	2/m ²	6
E4	Ulex europaeus	Common Gorse	2/m ²	4
E5	Festuca ovina	Sheep’s Fescue	Broadcast	As required
E6	Agrostis capillaris	Common Bent Grass	Broadcast	As required

Ecological Function

The habitat zone shall provide:

- Pollinator support
 - Structural habitat variation
 - Seasonal nectar availability
 - Shelter habitat for invertebrates
 - Improved ecological diversity within school grounds
-

14. TECHNICAL PLANTING SPECIFICATION

All planting operations shall be undertaken in accordance with recognised British Standards and accepted landscape construction practice.

The following standards shall apply to all soft landscape works.

Applicable Standards

All landscape works shall comply with:

- BS 8545:2014 – Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape
- BS 3882:2015 – Specification for Topsoil
- BS 4428:1989 – Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations
- National Planning Policy Framework (England)
- Current Biodiversity Net Gain legislation and principles

Any deviation from specification shall require prior written approval from ACM Architects Ltd.

15. SOIL SPECIFICATION

All imported topsoil shall comply fully with **BS3882:2015 Specification for Topsoil**.

The soil shall be:

- Free draining
- Free from invasive weeds
- Free from building rubble or contamination
- Suitable for ornamental planting
- Minimum organic matter content 5%

Subsoil compaction caused by construction activity shall be relieved by cultivation prior to planting operations.

Where construction traffic has compacted existing soils, ground shall be broken up to a minimum depth of: **450mm** prior to topsoil placement.

Soil Depth Requirements

The following minimum soil depths shall apply.

Tree Planting Areas - Minimum soil depth: **900mm**

Shrub Planting Areas - Minimum soil depth: **450mm**

Ecological Heathland Areas - Minimum soil depth: **300mm**

Low fertility conditions should be maintained to support heathland species establishment.

16. TREE PLANTING INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS

All trees shall be planted in accordance with BS8545:2014.

Tree Pit Construction

Each tree pit shall be excavated to minimum dimensions:

900mm x 900mm x 600mm deep

Pit sides shall be loosened prior to backfilling.

Tree Support System

All trees shall receive:

- Twin timber stakes
- Adjustable rubber tree ties
- Minimum 75mm bark mulch
- Irrigation pipe system where practical

Stakes shall be pressure treated softwood.

Stake height shall not exceed one-third tree height.

Root Protection

Roots shall never be exposed to sunlight or drying winds during planting operations.

Trees delivered to site shall be planted within 24 hours of delivery.

Damaged nursery stock shall be rejected immediately.

17. SHRUB AND HEDGE PLANTING SPECIFICATION

All shrubs and hedging shall be container grown stock unless otherwise approved.

Planting Pits

Planting pits shall be excavated at least: **150mm wider than rootball diameter**

The rootball crown shall sit flush with surrounding finished ground levels.

Mulching

All shrub beds shall receive: **75mm depth composted bark mulch**

Mulch shall extend continuously across all planting beds.

Mulch shall be maintained throughout the defects liability period.

Fertiliser

Slow release fertiliser shall be incorporated at planting stage.

Application rate: **70 grams per plant**

or in accordance with manufacturer guidance.

18. CONTRACTOR INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS

The appointed contractor shall be responsible for:

- Setting out all planting locations accurately
- Verifying underground service locations
- Protecting all existing retained vegetation
- Protecting installed planting from construction damage
- Ensuring all nursery stock meets specification requirements
- Removing failed plant stock immediately

No substitutions shall be permitted without written approval.

Planting Season Restrictions

Planting operations shall normally occur between:

November and March

outside severe frost conditions.

Container grown stock may be planted outside this period subject to irrigation management.

19. BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

The proposed development incorporates several biodiversity enhancement measures designed to improve ecological value associated with the wider school site.

Pollinator Support

The proposed planting palette incorporates species specifically selected to support bees, butterflies and beneficial insects.

Pollinator-supporting species include:

- Lavender
- Salvia
- Catmint
- Heather species
- Ornamental grasses

These provide nectar resources throughout the growing season.

Bird Habitat Provision

The development shall incorporate:

Minimum 2 No. bird nesting boxes

installed on retained mature vegetation or suitable building elevations where appropriate.

Boxes shall be selected to support common local species.

Invertebrate Habitat

The development shall incorporate:

1 No. insect habitat structure

positioned within the ecological enhancement zone.

The habitat structure shall incorporate:

- Timber cavities
- Hollow stems
- Natural timber sections
- Pine cone habitat chambers

Log Habitat Feature

The ecological enhancement zone shall incorporate retained timber habitat.

Minimum requirement:

1 No. deadwood habitat pile

This is to be provided within area HZ1 and will provide shelter opportunity for invertebrates and ground fauna.

20. FIVE YEAR MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

All planting shall be maintained for a minimum period of five years following practical completion.

Year 1

- Weekly watering during dry periods
- Monthly inspection of all planting
- Replacement of failed plants
- Removal of weeds
- Monitoring establishment success

Year 2

- Continued watering as required
- Hedge formative pruning
- Mulch replenishment
- Replacement planting where necessary
- Tree tie adjustment inspection

Year 3

- Annual shrub pruning
- Tree health inspection
- Weed control programme
- Soil condition inspection
- Additional mulch application

Year 4

- Structural hedge trimming
- Removal of weak or failed stock
- Tree crown inspection
- Habitat monitoring

Year 5

- Final establishment review
 - Removal of tree stakes where appropriate
 - Replacement of any failed specimens
 - Long term management handover
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Replacement Requirements

Any failed planting during the maintenance period shall be replaced:

Like for like species

within the first available planting season.

21. PLANNING CONCLUSION

This landscape scheme has been prepared to accompany the proposed SEND modular educational building at Boorley Park Primary School on behalf of Raise Education Trust.

The proposals have been specifically designed to respond to the operational, educational and ecological requirements associated with the development.

The scheme provides measurable environmental and ecological benefit through:

- Increased tree planting
- Habitat creation
- Pollinator-friendly planting
- Native species incorporation
- Biodiversity enhancement measures
- Improved visual amenity
- Sensory-rich SEND educational environment

The landscape design has been prepared in accordance with current British Standards and national planning policy requirements.

It is considered that the proposed landscape scheme provides an appropriate, sustainable and policy compliant enhancement to the proposed educational development.

Prepared by:

ACM Architects Ltd

Architecture • Planning • Landscape Design

For: **Raise Education Trust**

June 2026