

# Public scrutiny of the proposal to replace the existing conifer hedge at the Jesus Green Lido

Works item ref: 1614 – Jesus Green

A brief outline of the proposed works which we wish to be publicly scrutinised can be found below. It will be available for comment for twenty days following the date of publication.

## The proposal

1. Tree works
  - a. To remove 34 of the 36 leylandii trees that form a high hedge. The hedge is situated immediately within the southern, western and eastern boundaries of the Lido facility.
  - b. To formatively prune the existing hawthorn hedge that is situated immediately outside the southern, western and eastern boundaries of the Lido facility.
2. Landscaping works
  - a. To plant a new hornbeam hedge immediately within the southern, western and eastern boundaries of the Lido facility, in order to replace the existing leylandii hedge.
  - b. To plant up the gaps, and restore the integrity of the existing hawthorn hedge.
  - c. To erect a reed screen (or similar) along the green steel palisade security fencing, to maintain privacy for pool users while the hedge matures.
3. Timing of proposed works
  - a. Remove leylandii trees by the mid-January 2021.
  - b. Ground preparations for planting by the beginning of February.
  - c. Formative pruning, reed screen placement and hedge plantings by the end of March.

Please see the attached plan for more details of this proposal.

Note – the 10 mature lime trees that grow within the line of leylandii hedge, and the 6 small ornamental crab apples and cherries growing behind it and in the facility grounds, are to remain.

## Background

This proposal has been resubmitted for scrutiny following objections received after a similar proposal was scrutinised last year (Works ref: 1464).

The objections fell into 3 board categories:

1. Lack of clarity about the reasons for undertaking the works.
2. Lack of clarity about the works to mitigate the loss of the trees.
3. Concerns about the impacts on wildlife.

These objections have been considered in the drafting of this follow up proposal.

## Considerations

### Reasons for undertaking the works

The Leylandii trees were originally planted as a hedge around the pool to act as a screen. These trees are fast growing and have in the past been significantly reduced in height when they became too tall. They are now very dense, and in some areas are in poor condition.

They are obstructing a large part of the natural sunlight to the internal areas of the facility including nearly all the grass areas and parts of the pool itself. Whilst the natural shade is welcome in some parts around the pool, the overshadowing now accounts for over 60% of the space available for sunbathing and relaxing. As the pool is not heated it relies on the natural sunlight to help heat the water. Temperatures in the past have been recorded at 24c during the height of summer but have only been reaching around 21-22c over last few seasons because of the amount of tree shade cast over the pool.

Requests have been received from the Friends of Jesus Green Swimming Pool, to have the conifers removed. This is high on their agenda as they feel that this will make a great improvement to the enjoyment of the pool, enable the pool surrounds to be used more widely, rather than overcrowding of spaces that are not affected by the shade created by the Leylandii, and will help naturally heat the pool water to higher temperatures.

These requests to remove the hedge align with the recommendations of the 1998 arboricultural plan for Jesus Green that the Leylandii around Jesus Green Lido be managed to point where they were fully removed and replaced with a natural hedgerow. Considering the current condition of the hedge, and the opportunity of

landscape renewal created by the availability of suitable funding for mitigation, the Tree Team consider this point has now been reached.

### **How we will mitigate the loss of the trees.**

The proposal specifies the removal of 34 of the 36 leylandii trees; 2 will remain at the north-western end of the hedge to provide roosting opportunities for birds.

A natural screen (reed or similar) will be attached green steel palisade fence that runs along the western, southern, and eastern boundaries to the full height of the fence. This will provide privacy to pool users whilst the new hedge develops. It will be allowed to naturally decay in situ.

A new hornbeam hedge will be planted inside the facility and adjacent the palisade fence. Hornbeam is a native species that creates a dense hedge retaining its leaves over the winter period and thereby providing year-round screening.

The existing hawthorn hedge will be pruned to form a new framework from which it will be maintained. Gaps in this hedge will be planted up to re-establish its integrity.

Both the new hornbeam hedge and the hawthorn hedge will be managed as a single unit to just above the height of the existing palisade fence, with the existing palisade fence sandwiched in the middle.

This native mixed species hedge will provide screening for the pool, habitat for wildlife and an attractive backdrop for users of Jesus Green.

### **Wildlife considerations**

The River Cam and associated riparian habitats, including mature trees, buildings and cattle grazed grassland provide for a good range of bat species, the most regular being Daubenton's, Soprano and Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long Eared, Noctule and Serotine. An independent specialist bat survey, undertaken earlier this year, did not find any bat roost features in the leylandii or in the immediate vicinity of the Lido however bats can cover considerable distances when foraging and may be seen in the locality. Leylandii are not considered high value species for roosting bats. Bats tend to like clear flight paths to tree cavities which Leylandii seldom offer. The upward growth form of the branches does not promote bat roost features. These trees have had their tops removed which can result in rainwater running down the branches and into any potential roost cavities. Bats also appear to be deterred by the strong odour and sticky resin imparted from these trees.

Leylandii can provide roosting sites for birds, particularly winter flocks of starlings and day roosting Tawny Owls. Also, early evergreen nesting cover for species such as Greenfinch, Goldcrest, Blackbird and Collard Dove. As non-native cultivars they support a relatively low diversity of invertebrates, living on the conifers themselves, however their dense form can provide sheltered areas where small flying invertebrates congregate and in turn attract foraging bats. Similarly, the dark canopy cover can be sought by bats when they emerge close to dusk when avian predators still pose a risk. As such 2 Leylandii at the north-west end of the hedge are proposed for retention.

The mature Lime trees, that are to be retained currently provide the greatest habitat value. Several good quality bat and bird boxes have been installed on the lime trees. By increasing sunlight levels to the boxes, they may become more suitable for bat maternity roosts which require warm cavities.

All the tree contractors on the City contract framework are aware of protected species issues / legislation and carry out associated risk assessment prior to and during works. If a bat roost or nesting bird is suspected, then works would cease immediately and Officers notified. Loss of the conifers from habitat perspective may alter local activity but given the retained limes and thorn hedge and links to other habitats of higher quality the effect is considered minimal and ultimately mitigated by the proposed additional native planting.

## Consultation protocols

The proposed works involve either removing healthy trees over 75mm in diameter as measured at 1.5m above ground level and tree work that will have a significant impact on the landscape character of an area as assessed by an arboricultural officer.

As such it meets the criteria for public scrutiny as set out in Policy GM5 of the Cambridge City Council [Citywide Tree Strategy 2016-2026 Part 2](#):

*“When considering tree works on City Council land, the Council will invite resident and stakeholder comment regarding the following kinds of work:*

- a) Any tree work which will have a significant impact on the character of an area.*
- b) Felling healthy trees of over 75mm diameter”*

If you wish to make a comment about any of the works proposed, please submit them via this link: [Comment on a tree work schedule](#). All unresolved objections to tree work subject to public scrutiny will be determined by the relevant Executive Councillor.



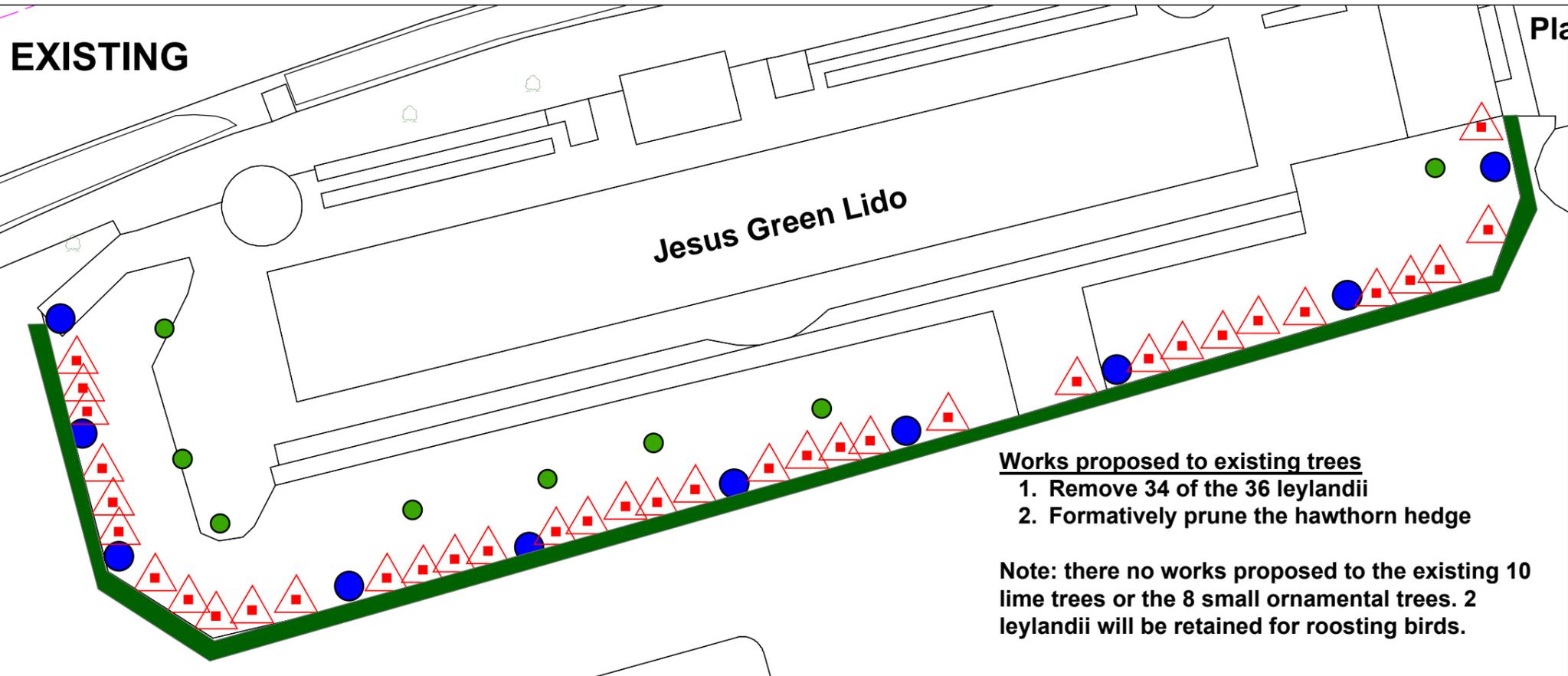
View of existing leylandii hedge overtopping the hawthorn hedge



View of the existing leylandii hedge and mature lime trees

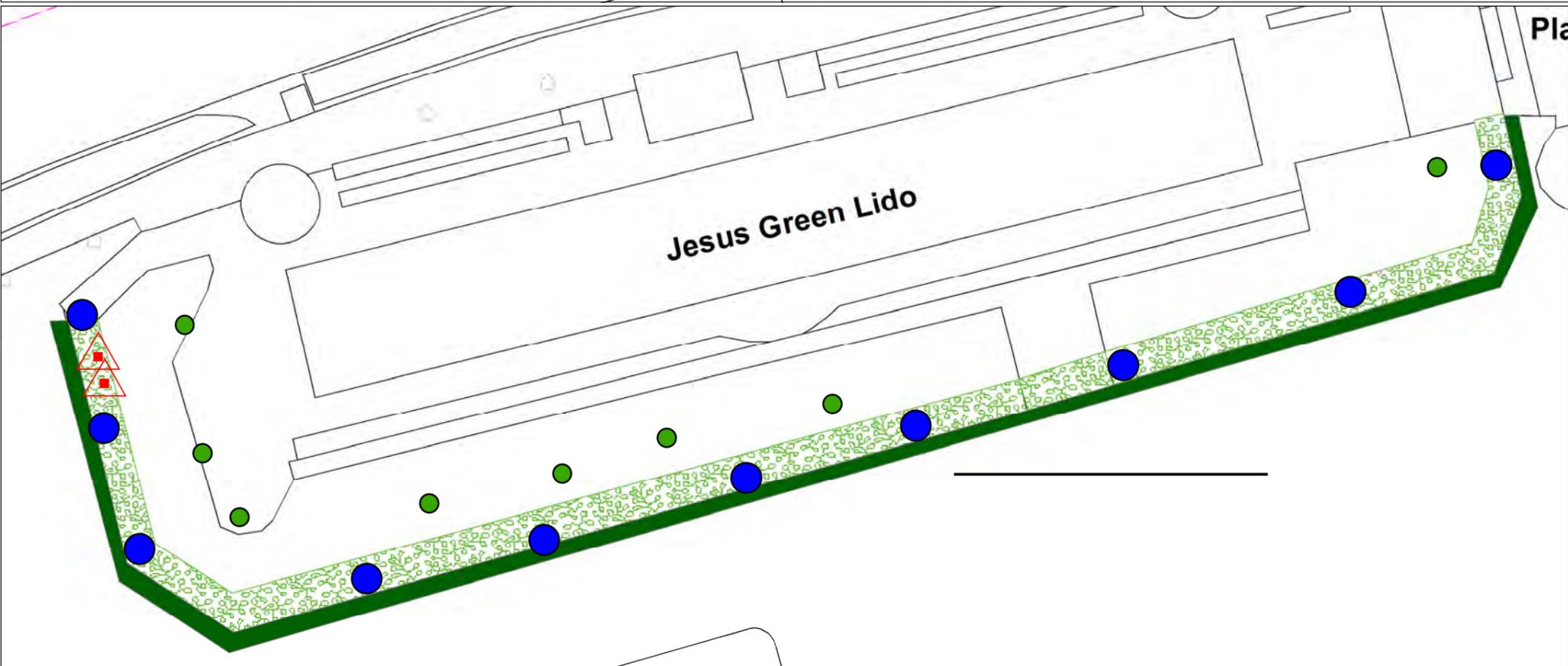


- Legend**
- Small ornamental
  - Lime
  - △ Leylandii hedge
  - Hawthorn hedge
  - New hornbeam hedge



- Works proposed to existing trees**
1. Remove 34 of the 36 leylandii
  2. Formatively prune the hawthorn hedge

Note: there no works proposed to the existing 10 lime trees or the 8 small ornamental trees. 2 leylandii will be retained for roosting birds.



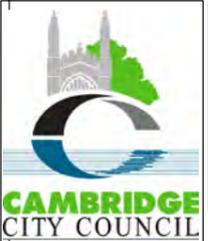
View of green steel palisade fencing that runs around the perimeter between the hawthorn and leylandii hedges



Example of the type of reed screen to be placed on the green palisade fencing to maintain privacy



Example of a tall hornbeam hedge. Its dense foliage, which is retained year round, will provide privacy to the users of the pool. It is a native species and will provide food and habitat for wildlife.



Ref: 1614 Jesus Green Lido - Hedge replacement

Date:	15 October 2020
Produced by:	Tree Team
Scale:	1:500 @A3

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