

Beech Hedge Planting and Maintenance Specification

1. Scope

This specification covers the supply, planting, and maintenance of a new beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) hedge to provide a permanent, living privacy screen between Cotswold Gate and The Annexe, Cotswold Gate.

2. Materials

2.1 Plant Material

Species: *Fagus sylvatica* (Common Beech)

Form: Bare-root whips (preferred) Size: 60–90 cm high whips.

Age: 2+1 transplants.

Stock Quality: Nursery-grown, true to name, well-rooted, healthy, disease-free, and conforming to BS 3936-1:1992.

Provenance: UK-grown, preferably UK-native seed source.

3. Planting Details

3.1 Timing

Season:

November to March (dormant season, frost-free conditions).

3.2 Site Preparation

Remove all weeds and grass from a minimum 500 mm wide strip along the planting line.

Loosen soil to 300 mm depth; incorporate well-rotted organic matter (e.g., composted bark or garden compost) at 50 mm depth over the trench and mix into the topsoil. Ensure free drainage; improve with grit or sand if necessary.

3.3 Planting Layout

Spacing: 5 plants per linear metre (double staggered row, 300 mm apart between rows).

Alignment: Straight and uniform, with consistent spacing.

Planting depth: Roots covered to the same depth as grown in nursery.

Backfill: Native topsoil, free from stones >50 mm, lightly firmed to remove air pockets.

3.4 Mulching

Apply 75 mm depth organic mulch (e.g., composted bark or woodchip) over a 600 mm-wide strip along hedge base, avoiding contact with stems.

3.5 Protection

Install biodegradable spiral guards or mesh shelters where rabbit or deer damage is possible. Support each plant with canes if necessary for stability.

3.6 Watering

Thoroughly water immediately after planting to field capacity. Maintain consistent soil moisture during establishment period (first 2 years).

4. Maintenance

4.1 Establishment Period (Years 1–3)

Watering: As required to maintain moist but not waterlogged soil.

Weed control: Maintain a 600 mm weed-free strip using mulch and hand weeding or approved herbicide.

Mulch renewal: Reapply to maintain 75 mm depth annually.

Formative pruning: Lightly trim sides after first season to encourage dense basal growth.

Avoid cutting the top until desired height is approached (usually 1.5–2.0 m).

Inspection: Check regularly for pest, disease, or damage; replace any dead or dying plants in next planting season.

Replacement: Any failures (more than 5% loss) to be replaced with identical species and specification.

4.2 Long-Term Maintenance (Years 4+)

Trimming: Annually in late summer (August) to retain leaf coverage through winter and maintain desired shape.

Height Control: Maintain at agreed screen height (typically 1.8–2.0 m for privacy).

Feeding: Optional light application of balanced slow-release fertilizer in spring if growth is weak.

5. Completion

Hedge to be established with full survival of plants, even growth, and a continuous dense screen within 3–5 years from planting. Final inspection and approval to ensure uniform height, density, and health.

6. References

BS 3936-1:1992 – Nursery Stock: Specification for Trees and Shrubs

BS 4428:1989 – Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations

BS 8545:2014 – Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape (as applicable)