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Planting specification and philosophy

The proposed new subterranean garage leaves little space for greenery apart from a strip of soil to the left of the upper parking area and to the right adjacent to the boundary. The right side has an existing stepped timber fence with a random selection of small shrubs and flowering plants.

The aim is here to tidy this area up and use the fence and topography to good effect. Therefore we are proposing a perennial tall grass, *Calamagrostis × acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' as a matrix plant up against the fence. This tall perennial upright grass grows to a height of 1.8m and will conceal the fence most of the year. The green blades turn pale brown in autumn and stay that way during winter providing almost year-long interest. The grass should be cut in late February to allow the new green shoots to emerge.

The main feature plant along the boundary that will conceal the top of the fence is a row of 10 pleached Hornbeam trees. Although they are deciduous, they retain their leaves for most of the winter until spring to form a screen and interest all year round.

The low wall at the top of the driveway over the new garage doors creates an opportunity to form a planter with a hedge to conceal parked cars at the top. We are proposing Wintergreen Barberry shrub. It is an evergreen shrub similar to Darwins Barberry with yellow and orange flowers in spring with purple berries in autumn.

At ground level we are proposing a low spreading grass type, *akonechloa macra* 'Nicolas' (PBR) as a contrast to the tall shoots of the Karl Foerster. Their gently arching mounds will spill over the stepped footpath creating a soft boundary edge. The green foliage of 'Nicolas' takes on beautiful autumn colour before it dies back, becoming flushed with flame orange and red as the temperatures start to dip. These plants look really effective, particularly when they are planted in big clumps or drifts as is the case here.

At the very bottom on the right, the planting will start off with evergreen ground cover in the form of *Muehlenbeckia axillaris* (Creeping Wire Vine) that will drape over the curving brick planter edge. This will be reflected on the right side as well as shown on the planting plan.

At the top on the right the planting will terminate in a cluster of *Polygala myrtifolia* (Sweet pea bush). This is a dense evergreen shrub that grows to about 1m high. It has leathery dark green leaves and produces racemes of purple pea like flowers from late spring through to late summer. This cluster of 3 shrubs is located at the top near the fence and nearest to the house with creeping wire vine around the bottom edge to give it protection from winter frost. The location also allows it to be a feature plant while also creating a visual connection with the right-hand side where there is a denser group of plants where the predominant flower colour will be purple and yellow which are complementary colours.

The left side will again start off with Creeping wire vine nearest to the road with 3 more repeating clusters further up along this section of planting. This provides ground cover for the two clusters of *Alchemilla mollis* which is a perennial that dies back in winter but shows off bright yellow flowers through summer and autumn.

There are 3 clusters of Lavender with silvery green leaves are dispersed along the planting strip that will form dense clusters of purple flowers in summer.

All the plants on the left produce flowers while the Lavender and *Pittosporum tenuifolium* produce scented flowers and Darwins' barberry also produces berries once the flowers fade. This selection of plants will attract various pollinators and birds while retaining year long interest. There are two clusters of Darwins' barberry with the second cluster being the focal point in this area together with the *Pittosporum Tom Thumb*. This New Zealand native is a compact evergreen shrub that grows into a dense mound, the light green young leaves turn dark glossy purple as they age and produces inconspicuous fragrant purplish flowers throughout spring.

The landscaping is intended to be low maintenance once established and to contribute to the ecology by attracting pollinators and other insects to maintain a balanced ecosystem which will prevent diseases and or pest invasions. Furthermore, the flowering plants and colour and texture of the plants together with the plant architecture will provide year long interest and variety.

Before the plants are introduced the soil must be dug out to a depth of 400-600mm depending on the area of planting and filled with a layer of decomposing log fragments, twigs and leaves. This will allow for carbon to be released over many years while the plant material decomposes and provide nutrients to the plants and soil bacteria and fungi. Thereafter, the trenches must be filled with well drained compost as well as soil which has been enhanced with the addition of endogenic and anaemic earth worms. Members of these two groups will aerate the soil vertically and horizontally as well as enrich the soil with their castings while feeding on dead plant litter.

After planting, any bare ground around the plants must be covered in suitable wood chippings to prevent loss of moisture from the soil.