



FOXWOLD BOUNDARY FENCE DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

NOVEMBER 2023

Foxwold Estate comprises the main Foxwold House, the Coach House, and the Lodge, all in the ownership of the Conway Family. Foxwold House, The Coach House & Former Stables are Grade II Listed; the Lodge is not listed.

In August 2021, a retrospective planning application (Ref: PP-10132280) was submitted on the request of Michael Searle, Enforcement Officer (Ref: 20/00587/OPDEV), to validate the erection of the current closeboard fence, followed by a subsequent planning application (Ref. No: 22/01105/HOUSE) in April 2022.

This application was refused on three key grounds:

1. Harm to the openness of the Green Belt
2. Detriment to the setting of the adjacent listed building and historic estate
3. Adverse visual impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The fence's height, length and form were noted as unacceptable to the Council.

The client would like to propose an amended design taking into account the concerns about the impact on the green belt, listed buildings, AONB, street scene and public right of way, as outlined in Sevenoaks District Council's Pre-Application Advice Letter (Ref: PA/23/00196). The proposal replaces the previous closeboard fence with a shorter galvanised steel mesh fence and native hedge.

November 2023

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

FOXWOLD	3
SITE PLAN	4
THE COACH HOUSE & HISTORICAL BOUNDARY	5
EXISTING CLOSEBOARD FENCE (TO BE REPLACED)	6

PROPOSAL

PROPOSED NEW BOUNDARY FENCE	7
FENCE: EXISTING	8
FENCE: PROPOSED	9
REAR GATE DESIGN	10
BRICK WALL DESIGN	11
BRICK WALL AND FENCE CONNECTION	12
DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS	13
SECURITY	14
PLANTING	15
PLANTING LIST	16

Foxwold House, The Coach House and Stables have significant heritage as a result of their intricate vernacular revival detailing externally, which is generally still in good condition. Foxwold House, the main property on the Estate, the Coach House and Former Stables are Grade II listed. The Lodge at the south of the site is not listed.

The site sits within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is in the Kent Downs (AONB). The fencing would be located near the Great Wood area of Ancient Woodland and lies within the Greensand Heaths & Commons Biodiversity Opportunity Area.



SITE PLAN



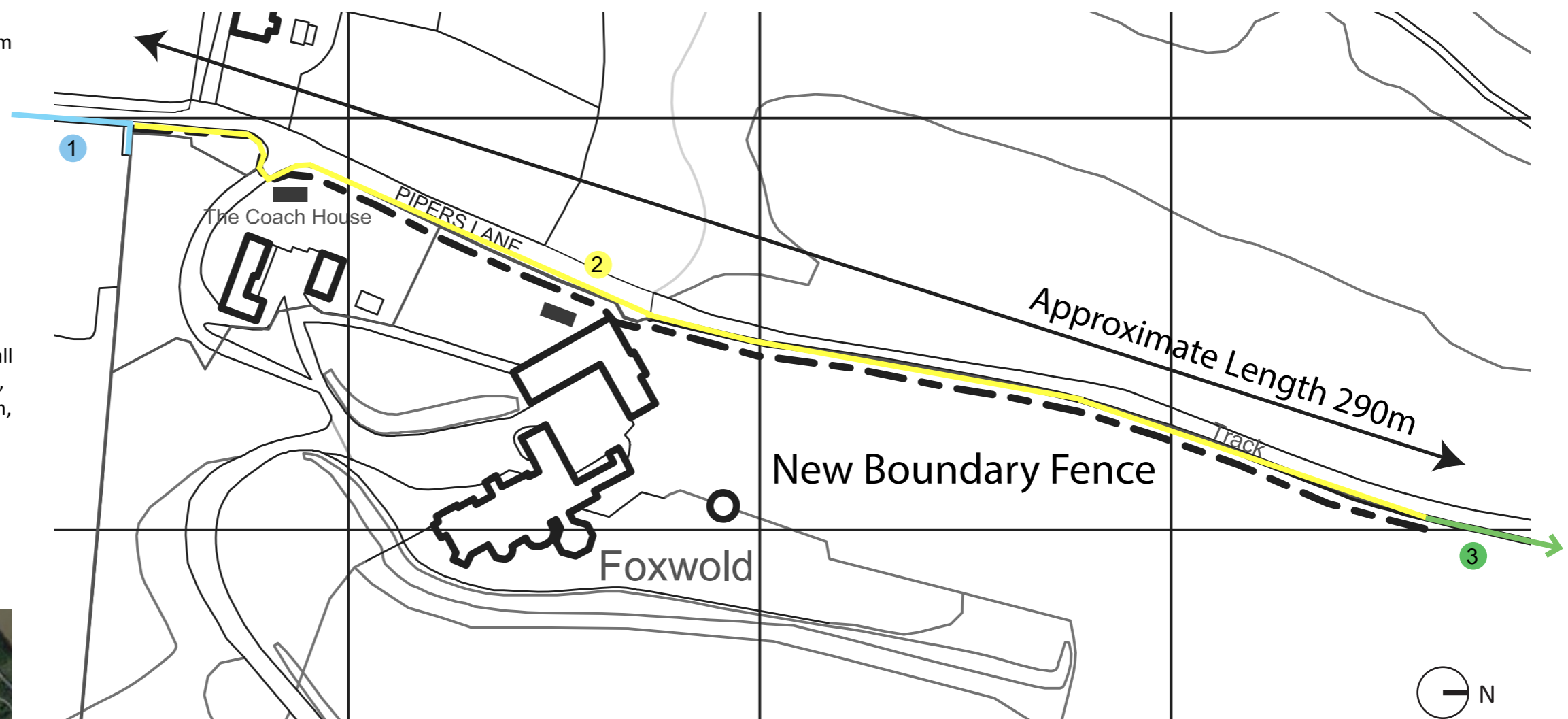
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THE COACH HOUSE & HISTORICAL BOUNDARY

The Coach House is situated on the southwest edge of Foxwold, with an entrance accessed from a driveway off Pipers Lane and an unmetalled road on its western border. This is used as a secondary entrance to the estate.

Historic Fences

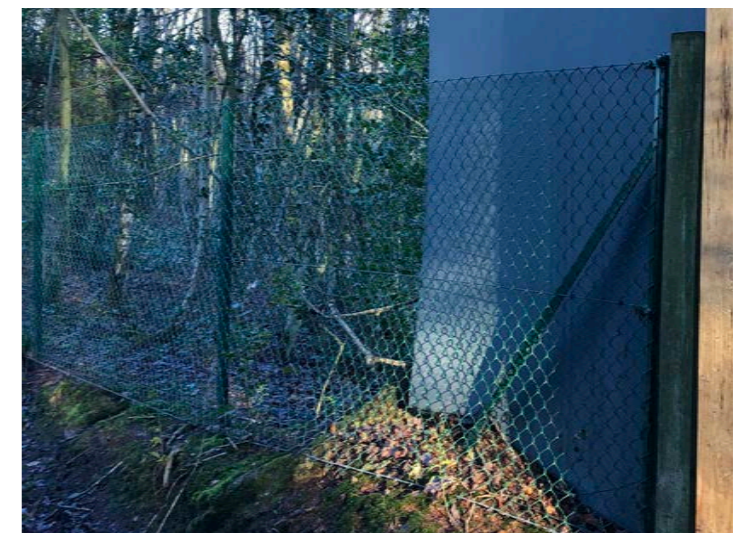
When the estate was purchased there were a previously installed picket fence and chain link fence, of twentieth, or possibly early twenty-first, century origin along the southwestern site boundary of the Foxwold Estate. It was approx. 1.8m tall. The picket fence ran from the brick wall of the adjacent property to the south of the site, past the Coach House gate and for approx. 200m, where the chain link fence started.



1 Historic Brick Wall on Southern Boundary



2 Historic Picket Fence

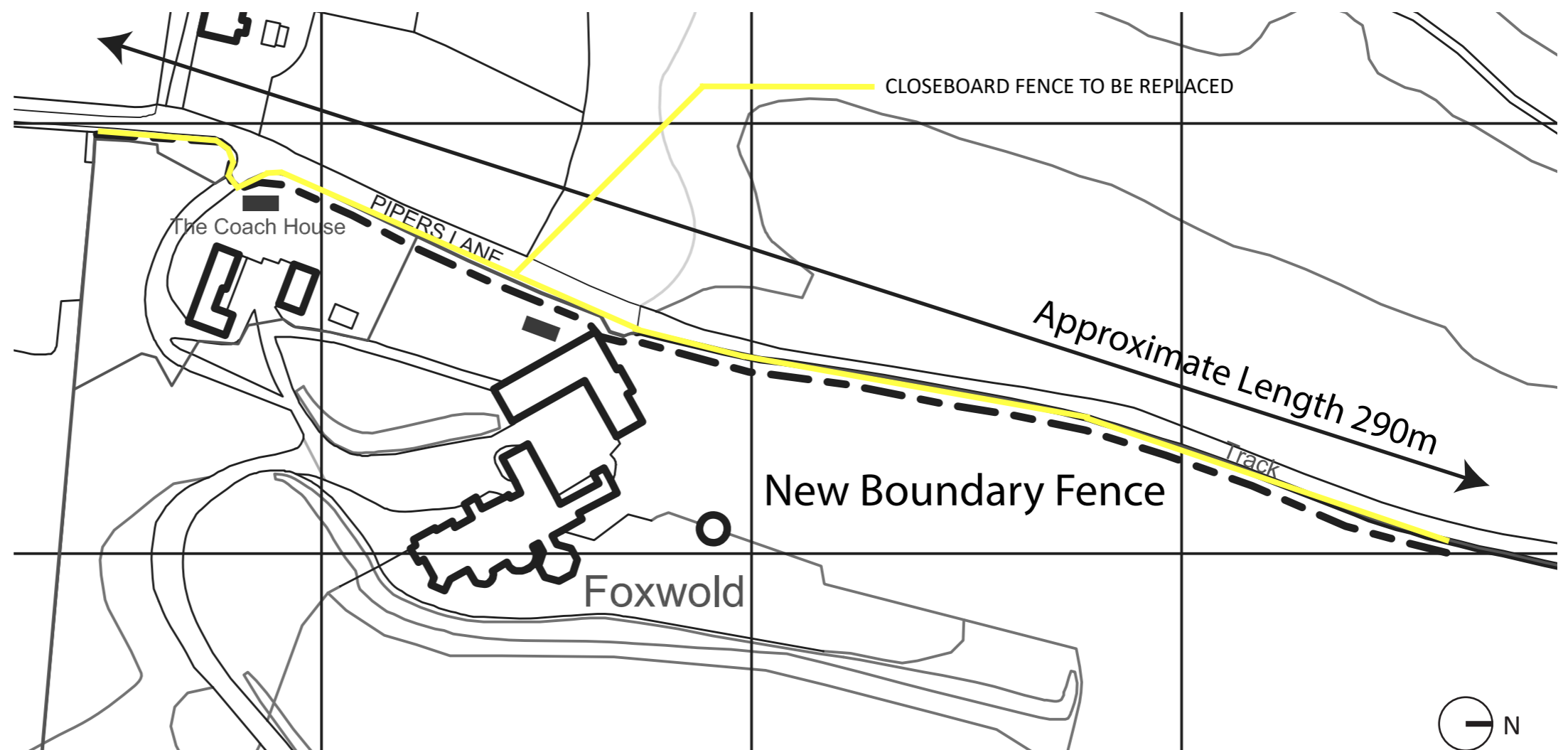


3 Historic Chain Link Fence

EXISTING CLOSEBOARD FENCE (TO BE REPLACED)

A modern closeboard timber fence was placed in front of the picket fence, in order to increase security and privacy on the property. It is a maximum of 2.4m high, although lower in places due to undulating ground. The new fence is prudent to the protection and security of two existing fuel tanks on site, disguising their location and limiting access.

The closeboard fence was placed among trees and bushes so it would not be readily seen from the Listed Buildings, and was intended to be of relatively low impact on its settings. The intention was that the visual impact of the boundary fence would be softened as vegetation grew around it and the timber weathered.

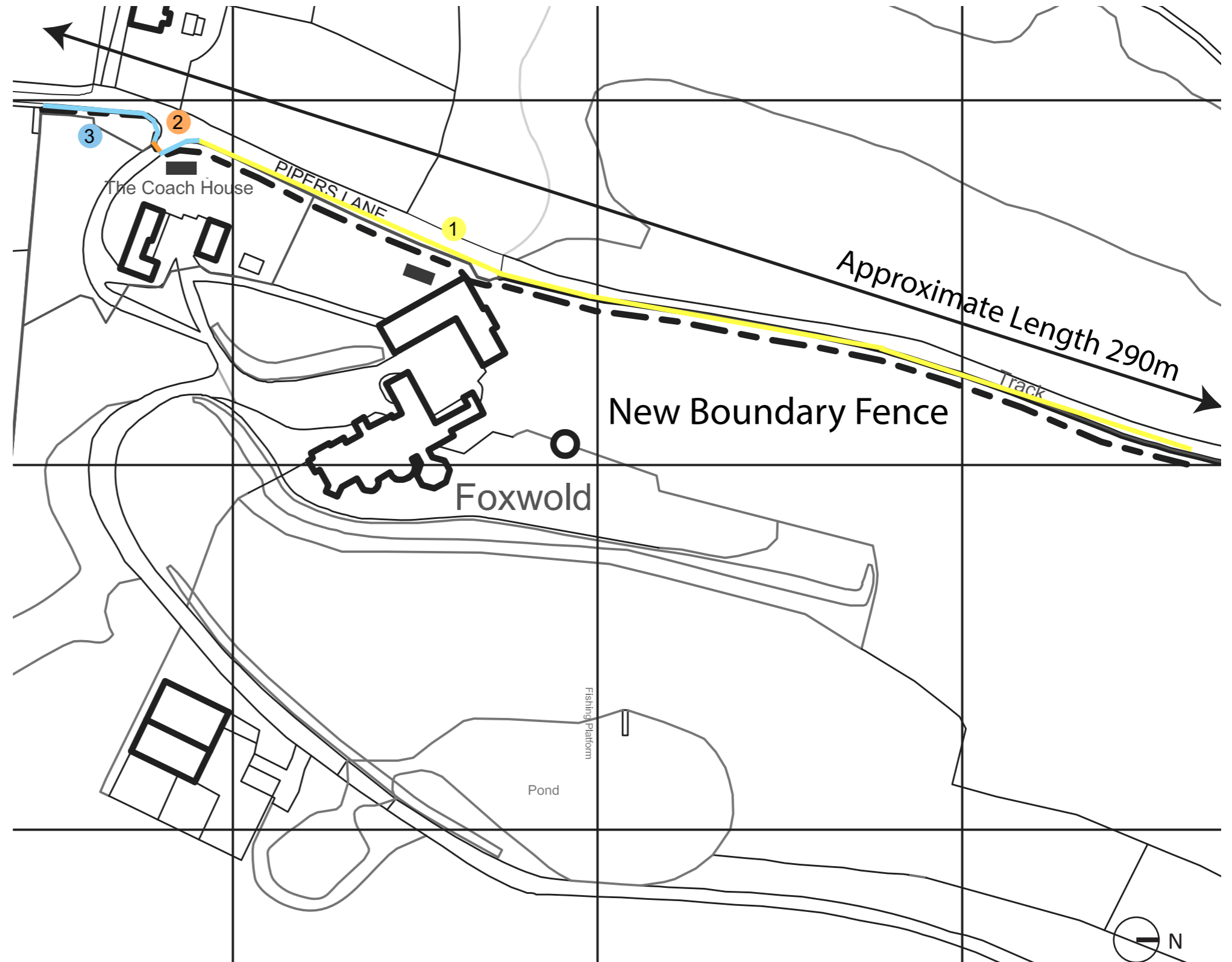


1. Gate to the Coach House
2. View to muddy track past drive
3. Closeboard fence and existing brick wall



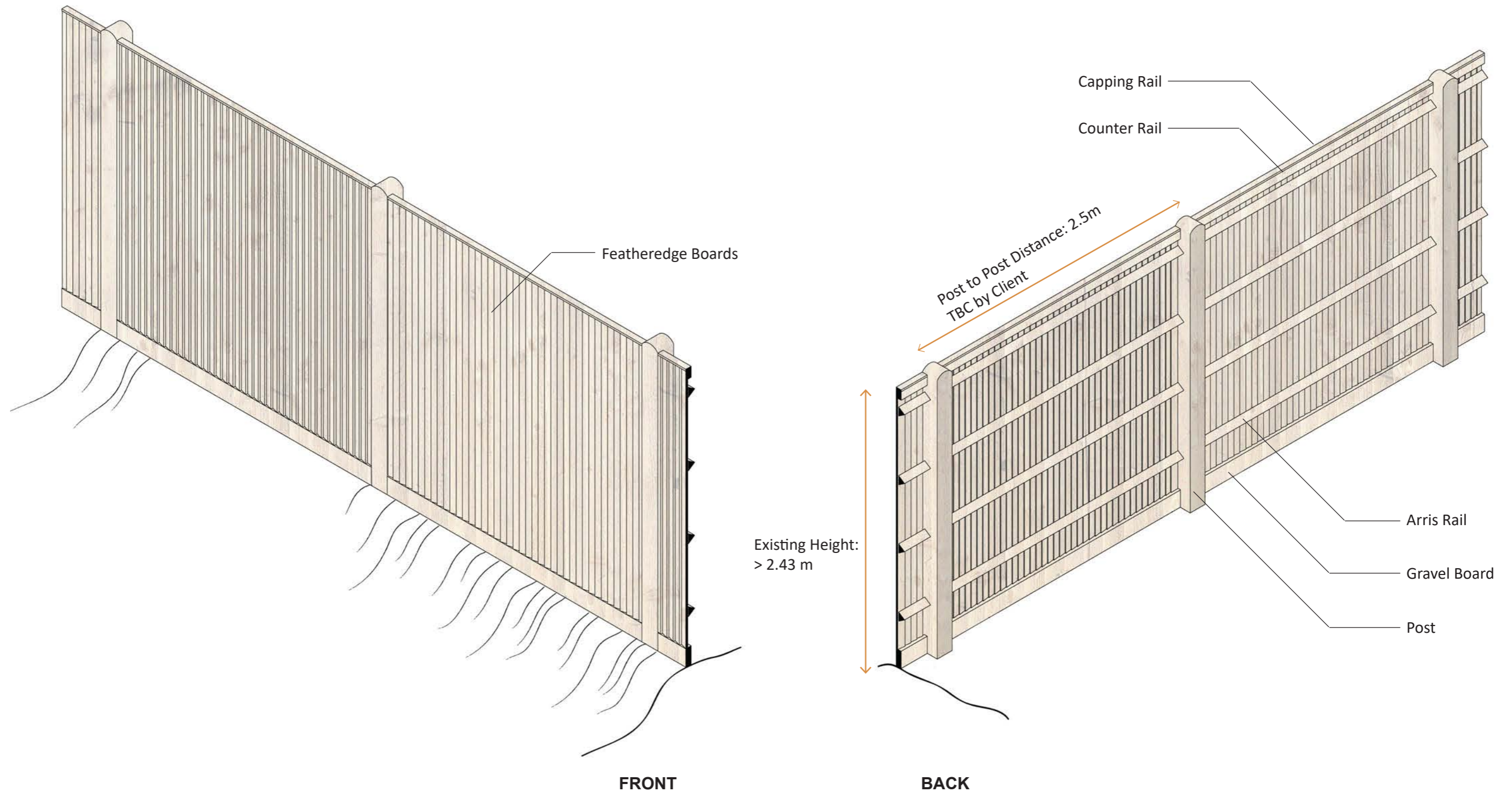
PROPOSED NEW BOUNDARY FENCE

The proposal replaces the previous closeboard fence with a shorter galvanised steel mesh fence and native hedge. The portion of the fence adjacent to the existing brick wall to the south is replaced with a new brick wall to match the existing, and the rear gate with a more simple steel gate.

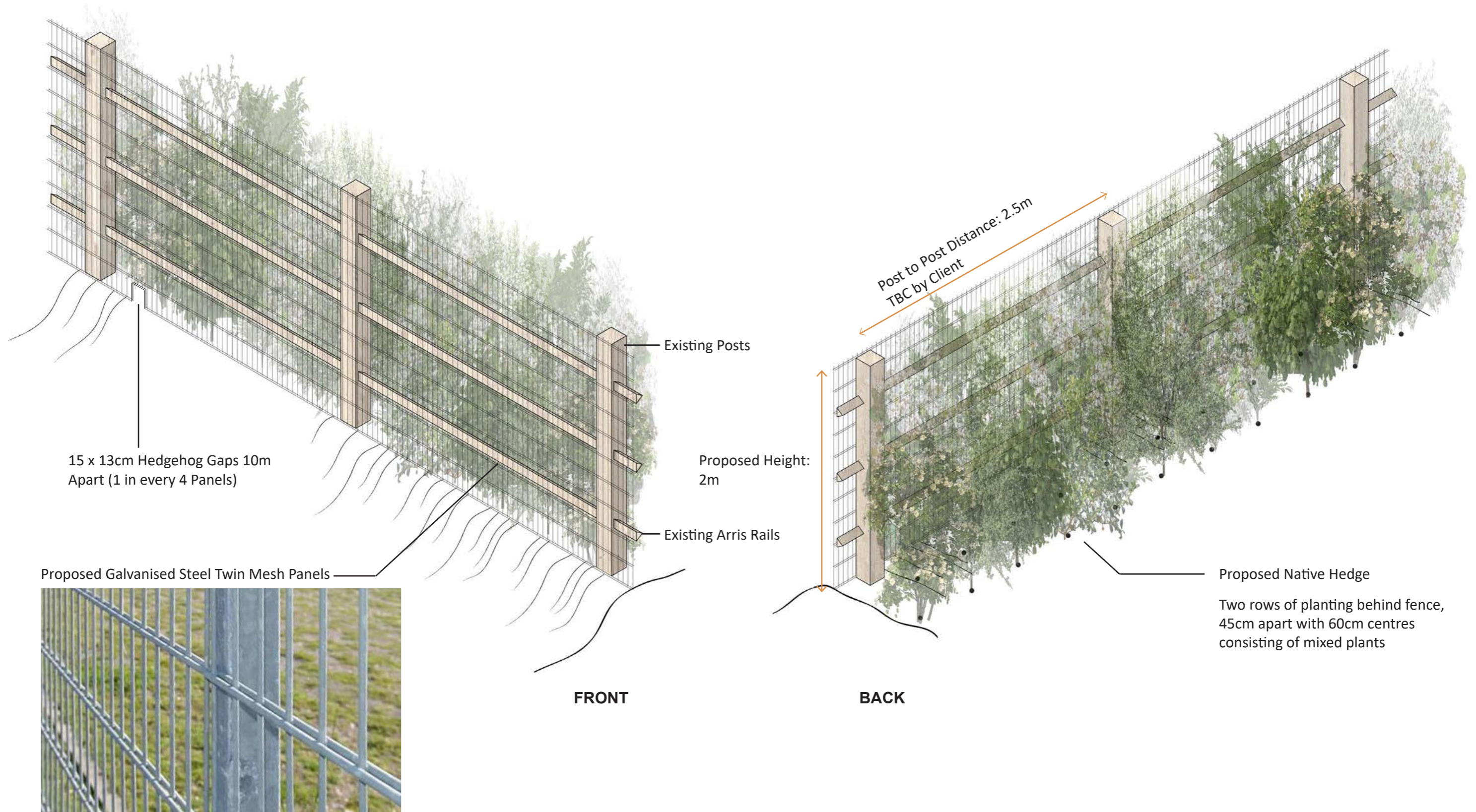


- 1 Proposed Steel Mesh Fence
- 2 Proposed Steel Rear Gate
- 3 Proposed Brick Wall to Match Existing

FENCE DESIGN: EXISTING

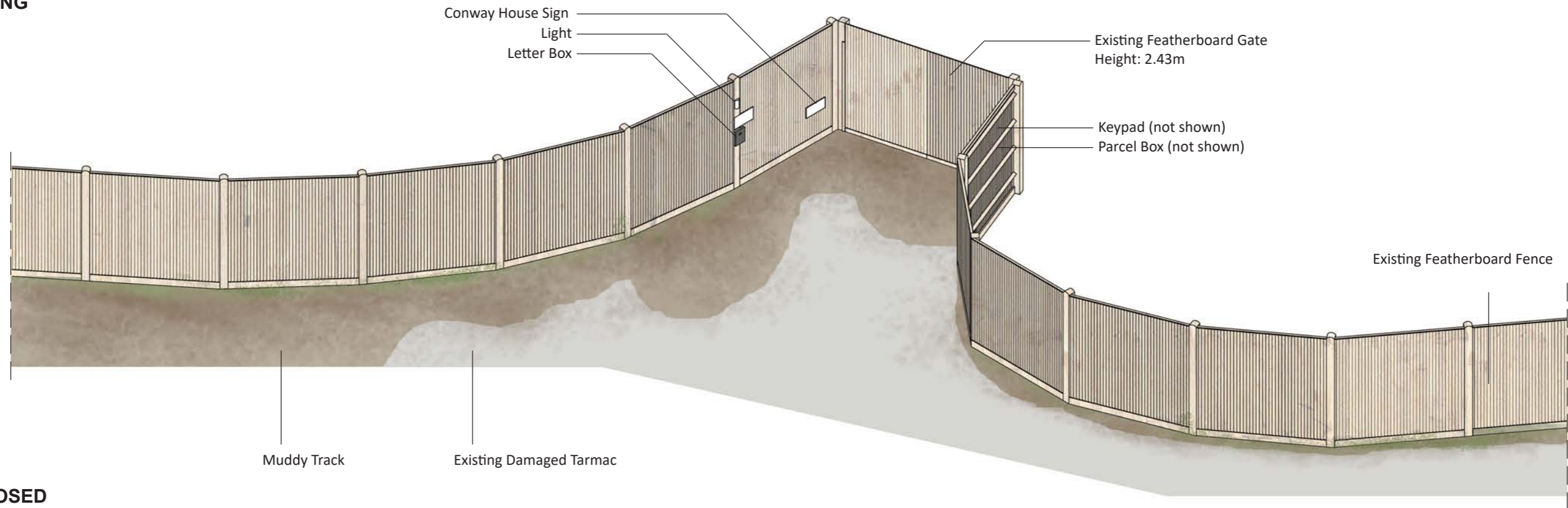


FENCE DESIGN: PROPOSED

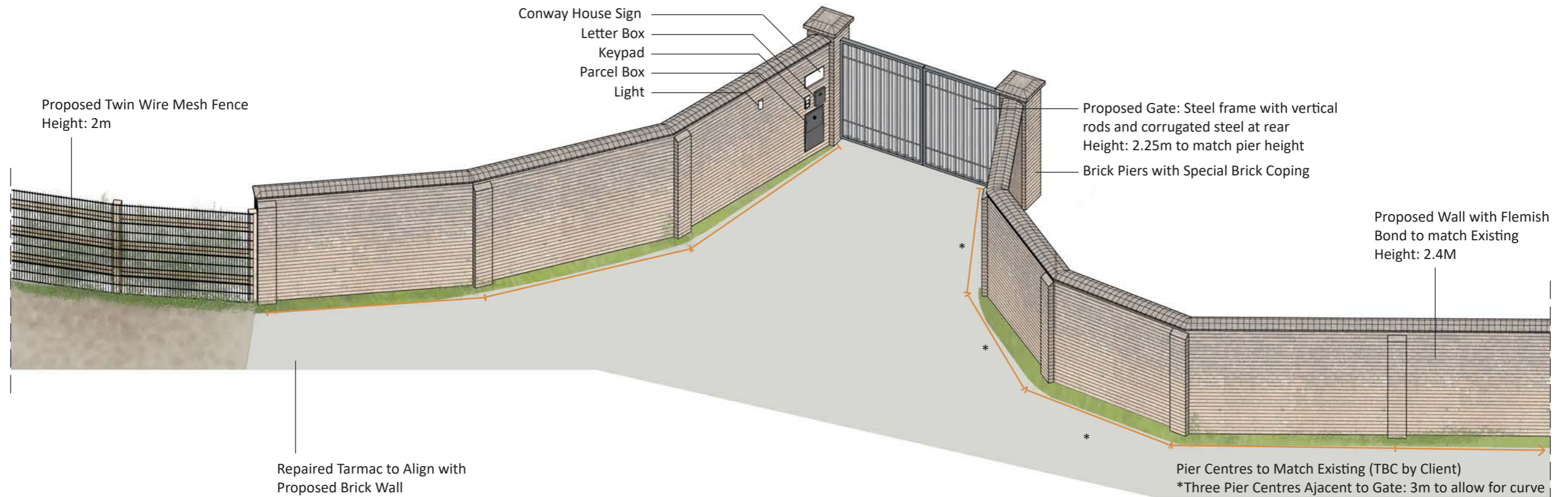


REAR GATE DESIGN

EXISTING

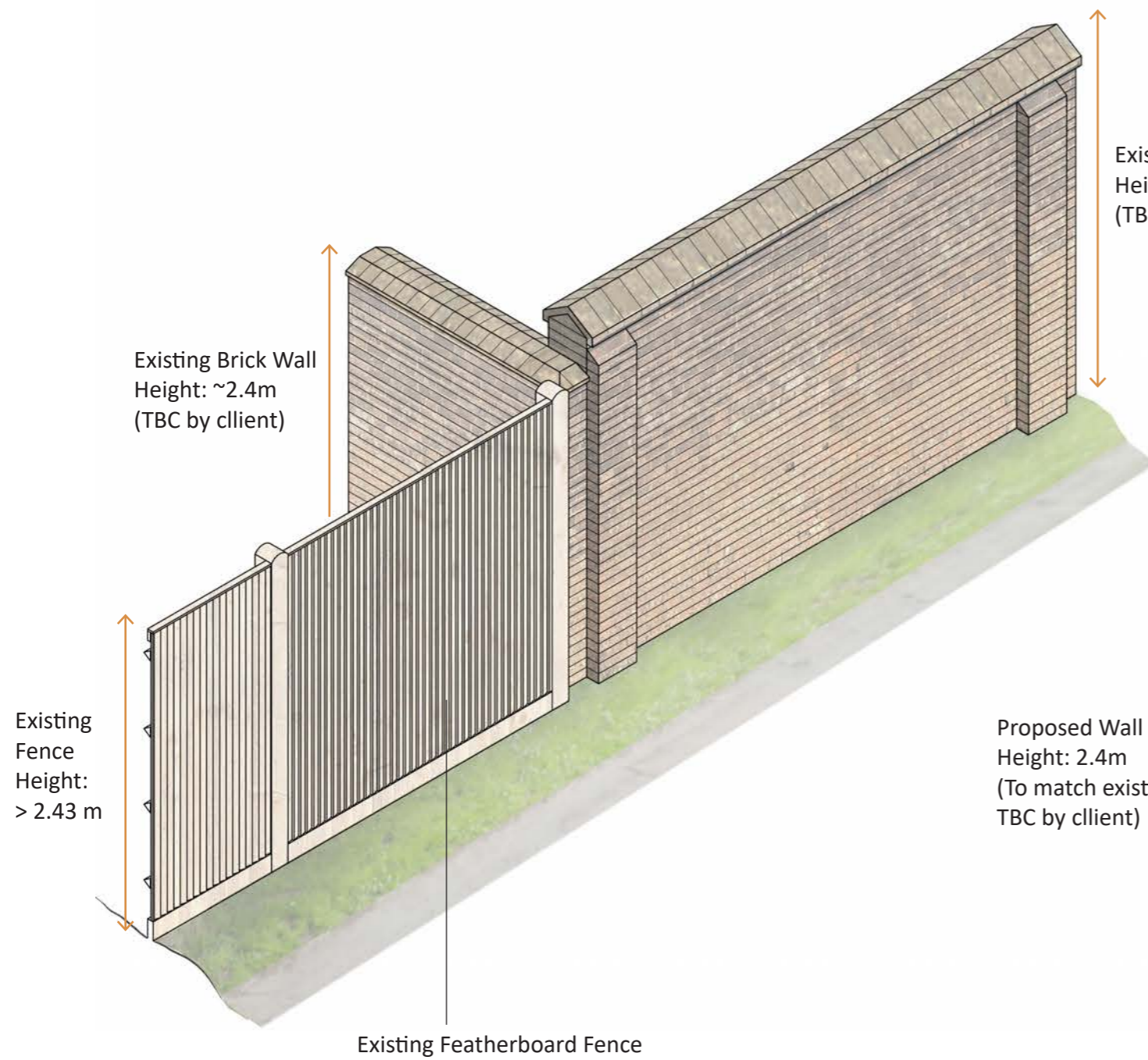


PROPOSED

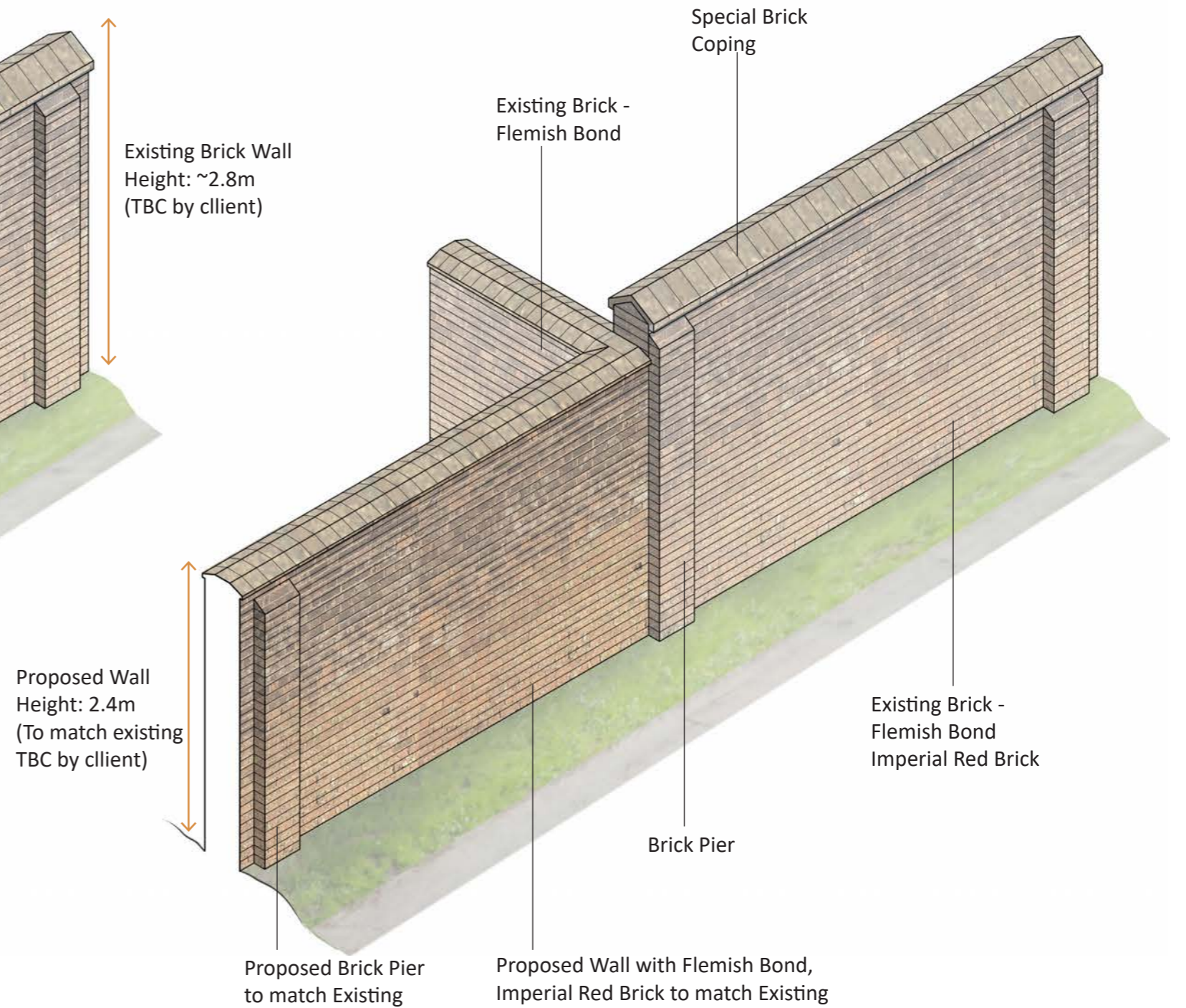


BRICK WALL DESIGN

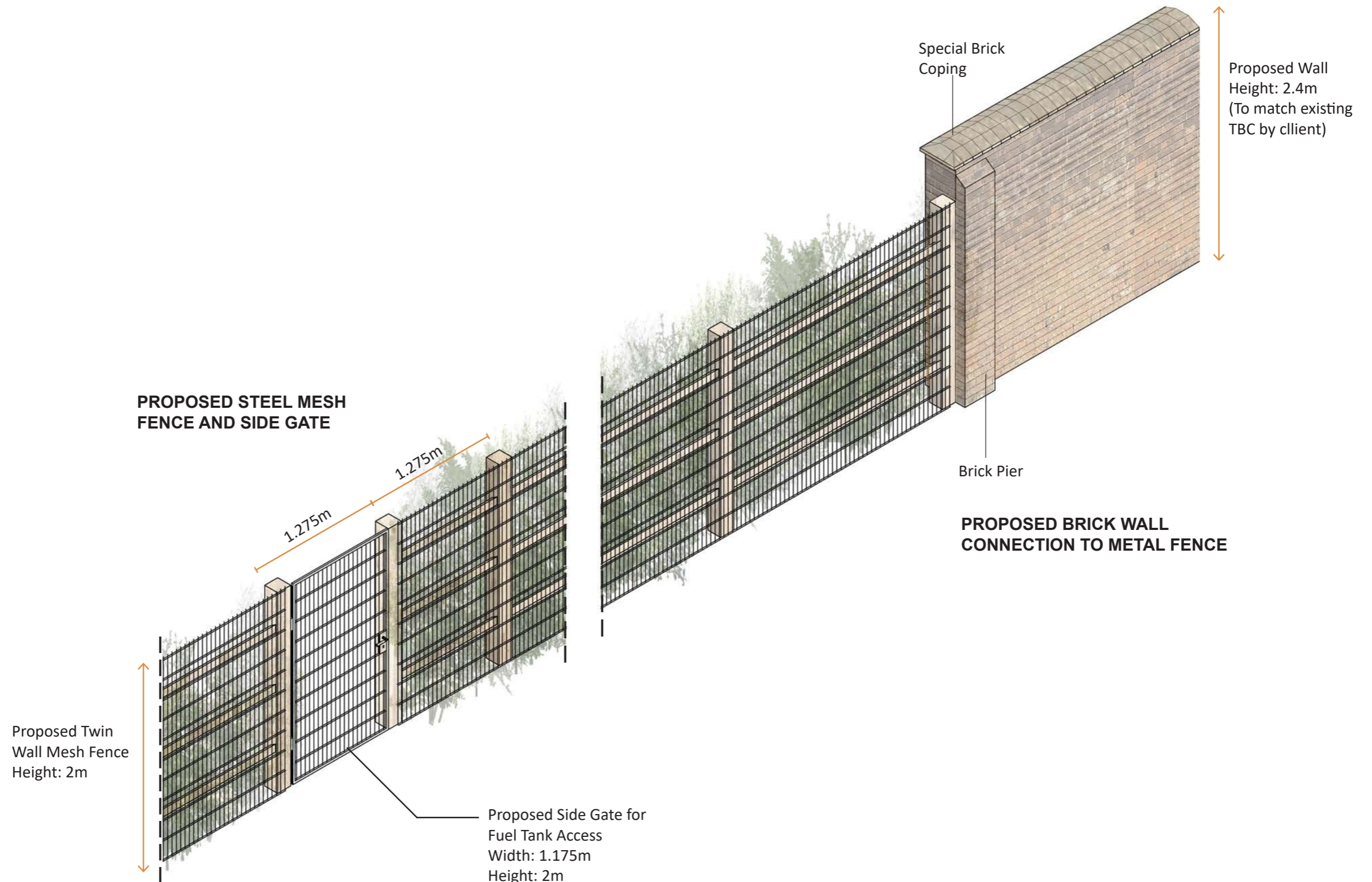
EXISTING - FRONT



PROPOSED - FRONT



BRICK WALL AND FENCE CONNECTION



NPPF and Impact on Green Belt

The proposed wire mesh fence is designed to have a more permeable appearance than the existing, with hedging to soften the visual impact of the fence and help it blend into its surroundings. The proposal seeks to reduce harm to the openness of the Green Belt caused by the existing boundary fences and is supported by a case for very special circumstances causing the need for added security to the estate.

The new development would contribute to creating a safe environment, meeting the needs of users, incorporating principles of sustainable development and will maintain and enhance biodiversity.

The location of the proposed fence on the western boundary of the estate, among bushes and trees, means that it will not be readily seen from the Listed Buildings and will have little impact on the heritage assets. A detailed assessment of the significance of the heritage asset and the proposal's impacts is provided in a Heritage Statement submitted alongside this document.

AONB Guidance

The proposed fence is designed to appear less suburban and visually intrusive in the street scene than the existing. The proposed brick wall to either side of the entrance gate is in keeping with the character of the neighbouring character and surrounding area, with its form and detailing considered to match and integrate with the existing. The metal gate is designed to be in keeping with the estate's main entrance gate, made more simple in design and materials to maintain the hierarchy between them.

The security fencing uses wooden fence posts and galvanized steel wire, screened with thorny hedges of native plants, as per AONB guidelines. The fence and hedge follows the existing landscape and boundary of the estate. The hedge will use a mix of species, with a large proportion of hawthorn for rigidity and strength, planted in a double staggered row at 60cm apart with rows 45cm apart.

Sevenoaks ADMP

The proposal responds to policy EN1 of the ADMP, responding to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area and respects the topography and character of the site and surrounding area. The design creates a safe and secure environment, incorporating adequate security measures and features to deter crime, fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, whilst avoiding and mitigating any potential harm to biodiversity and the landscape.

As per policy EN5, the proposal would conserve the character of the landscape and in accordance with the Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment SPD, conserve the isolation of the existing large property whilst using sympathetic building materials where possible.

The boundary of the estate along Pipers Lane attracts large numbers of ramblers and is currently used by a motorcycle group who use the track with up to 30 motorcycles at a time.

Trespass:

Before the current gates were installed, the current owners frequently found people walking on the private grounds. When questioned they would claim to be curious and wanted to look around. This issue has been resolved through the introduction of the gates at the Coach House.

Fly-tipping:

The current owners have frequently witnessed fly-tipping along Pipers Lane. This situation has been improved by the erection of the new closed fencing, as waste can no longer be tipped through the picket or chain-link fencing.

Fuel Storage:

The kerosene fuel tanks servicing both Foxwold and the Coach House are located along the inside of the fence along Pipers Lane. For the avoidance of issues with theft, vandalism or arson, the installed fencing ensures that these fuel tanks are not visible or accessible from the public highway.

Theft:

In 2021 a theft occurred at the estate between 17:00 21st September and 07:00am 22nd September. It was reported to the Kent Police and recorded with crime reference no. 46/185419/21.

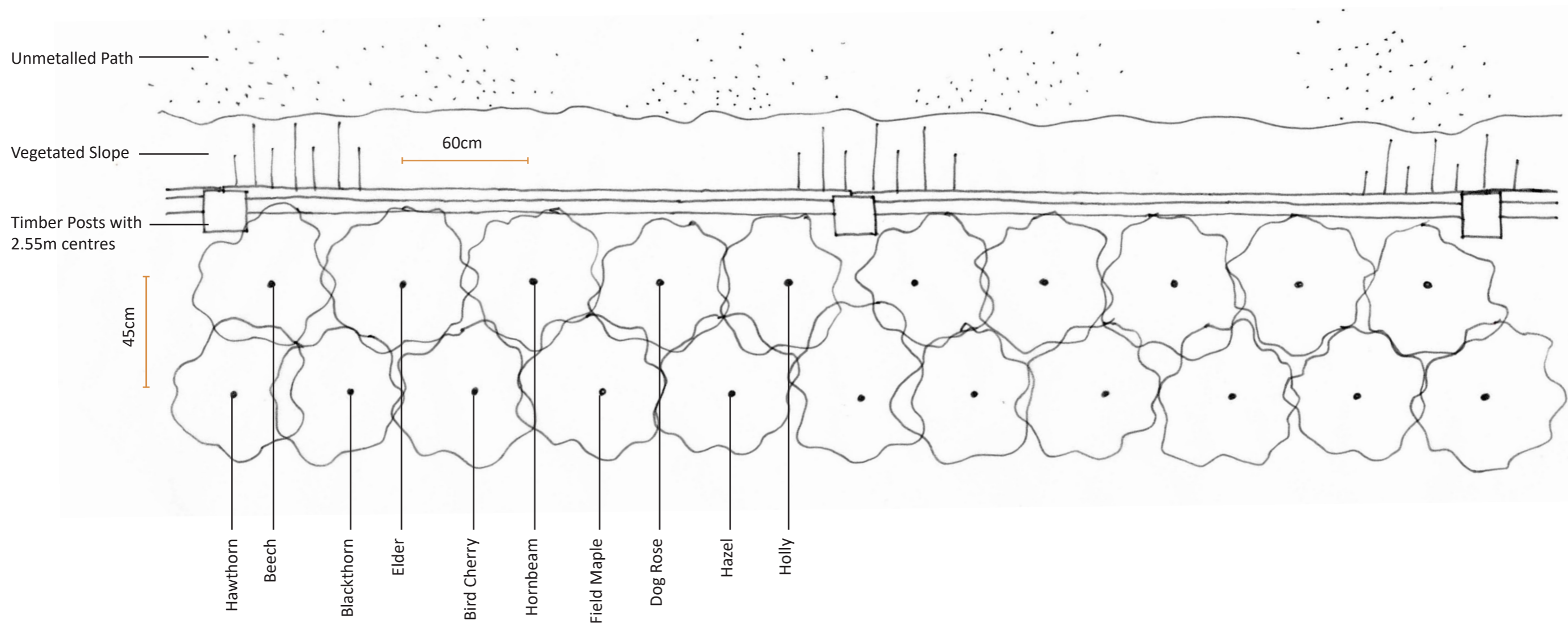
PLANTING

On the inside of the fence we are proposing a staggered double row of native hedgerow planting. We would suggest planting root ball plants (apx. 5 years old) with a height of apx. 150/200 cm to ensure immediate screening.

We propose a planting mix that provides a mix of colours and habitat, and a mix of deciduous, leaf retaining and evergreen.

Planting will follow the following principles for best practice:

- Planting in a double staggered row at 60cm apart with rows 45cm apart.
- Planting in a prepared and weed free trench a minimum 900mm wide.
- Provision for protection from mechanical (e.g. strimmer) or environmental (e.g. rabbit or deer) damage and weed control during establishment.
- Using a broad range of species planted in a random mix.
- Provision for regular pruning even during establishment to improve survival rates for new plants and encourage dense growth down to the base.
- Provide measures for weed control in the first three years through mulching using bark or felt mats. This also reduces soil water loss, another important issue in the care of new hedges.





HAWTHORN

In spring, Hawthorn bursts into life with an abundance of scented white blossoms and green leaves, before turning into red fruits, known as 'haws' during the autumn months. Hawthorn's sharp thorns makes it an effective protective barrier around gardens.

Growth: 40-60cm/year



BEECH

Although beech plants are deciduous, the striking winter leaves stay on the hedge until they are ready to make way for new growth in spring, making beech hedging a wonderful alternative to evergreen hedging that provides year-round interest.

Growth: 50-60cm/year



BLACKTHORN

Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) as a prickly, deciduous hedging plant that provides seasonal interest, producing white flowers in the spring and sloes in the autumn.

Growth: 40-60cm/year



ELDER

Elder flowers in June and July with large flat heads of creamy white followed by elderberries which are small black fruits high in Vitamin C. It comes into leaf early and the leaves fall late in sheltered sites.

Growth: 30-60cm/year



BIRD CHERRY

Bird Cherry is commonly used in mixed native hedgerows. Its small bitter fruits are relished by local wildlife. Bird Cherry's foliage turns golden-yellow in autumn for additional seasonal interest.

Growth: 30-60cm/year



HORNBEAM

A semi-evergreen species, Hornbeam hedging holds its leaves through the winter months - which turn into rich autumnal shades - and boasts lovely green catkins in late spring through to autumn, turning into fruits that are loved by wildlife.

Growth: 20-40cm/year



FIELD MAPLE

The fast-growing Field Maple, also known as *Acer campestre*, is the only maple native to the UK. Field Maple is a deciduous flowering plant, bearing winged fruit during autumn.

Growth: 30-60cm/year



DOG ROSE

Dog Rose is a hardy, native shrub that is notable for its vigorous and prickly growing habit. Due to its density, Dog Rose also makes a wonderful shelter for wildlife, who are quite partial to its vitamin C-rich fruits.

Growth: 40-60cm/year



HAZEL

Hazel is a native deciduous hedging plant. Hazel supports at least 70 species of insects plus moth caterpillars, dormice, deer and squirrels.

Growth: 40-60cm/year



HOLLY

English Holly is a versatile evergreen hedge. It is notable for its distinctive prickly leaves - deep green and glossy, its bright-red winter berries and attractive ornamental aesthetic. Its dense prickly habit also makes English Holly hedging an excellent security barrier and privacy screen.

Growth: 0-10cm/year