
From: Tracey Merrett <tracey@merrettandco.com>

Sent: 20 May 2019 13:10

To: A303 Stonehenge <A303Stonehenge@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down (TR010025) *Correction Notice*

Dear Richard

I enclose the planting notes which include visual representations of the view from Amesbury Abbey Park of the flyover. This was referred to in my representations as “to follow” and I hope that it can be taken into account. I would like to refer to it in my speech at the open floor session on the 22nd and I would be grateful if it could be accepted as an examination document.

Kind regards

Tracey

Amesbury Abbey

**Visual appraisal and mitigation planting note in
relation to proposed A303 works**

17 May 2019

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1.0 EXISTING SITUATION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Amesbury Abbey Nursey Home is located to the north-west of Amesbury and to the south of the A303. Amesbury Abbey is a Grade I listed building, and the grounds, Amesbury Park, are Grade II* listed on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.
- 1.1.2 As part of the Highways England A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down scheme, a flyover is proposed for the A303 over the A345 at Countess Junction. These proposals would affect the section of the A303 to the north of Amesbury Abbey, and there would be views of the flyover available from the north of Amesbury Park.
- 1.1.3 The River Avon runs through Amesbury Park on a meandering course. Within the northern part of the park the river broadly runs to the west, south of the A303 and north of Amesbury Abbey. Along this stretch of the river, there are mown lawns along the southern bank, with deciduous woodland from the northern bank up to the embankment of the A303. The distance between the river and the A303 is approximately 40m at the narrowest point, where there is a northward meander. It is the views looking north from the southern bank of the river, in proximity to the meander, which are the concern of this note.
- 1.1.4 A site visit was undertaken in early May 2019 to assess the current situation. At this time the trees were at varying stages of coming into leaf.

1.2 Visual context

- 1.2.1 The southern lawns along the river form part of the grounds used by residents and visitors for walks. A bench provides a place to sit, with views of the river.
- 1.2.2 Currently, looking north to north-east there are some filtered views towards the A303 available from the southern bank of the river. There are filtered views through the woodland of the traffic travelling along the road; however due to the existing shrub level vegetation, this is mostly views of larger vans and lorries, see Image 1. The woodland has a seasonal effect on visibility, with clear views of all types of traffic available in the winter when branches are bare, and views being filtered by leaves during the summer.

Image 1 – View from southern bank of River Avon, adjacent to bench within Amesbury Abbey, looking north. Blue lorry is partially visible travelling along A303.



1.3 Woodland

- 1.3.1 A mixed species deciduous woodland is present to the north of the River Avon. The southern and eastern woodland is within ownership of Amesbury Abbey, with a northern section with ownership of Bowles Hatches.
- 1.3.2 The woodland contains some mature tree species, in particular alder, ash, crack willow and sycamore. An indication of the heights of these are provided in The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) undertaken as part of the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Environmental Statement (Highways England, October 2018, Appendix 7.10). The AIA includes trees along the northern edge of the woodland, categorises these trees as B or C category, and gives estimated heights of up to 16m.
- 1.3.3 There is some understory growth of hawthorn and hazel. However, this has fairly limited and patchy coverage giving a clear view of the A303 and traffic using it. Ground layer vegetation, at the time of the site visit, was predominantly nettles. A photograph of the woodland is provided at Image 2.
- 1.3.4 The ground conditions are generally wet, influenced by the proximity to the river and a number of ditches through the area.

Image 2 – View from the woodland, looking north towards A303.



2.0 DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE RESULTING FROM PROPOSED WORKS AT COUNTESS JUNCTION

- 2.1.1 The Highways England proposals for Countess Junction comprise the creation of a new flyover east-west over the existing Countess Roundabout, containing a new alignment of the A303 dual carriageway. The proposed flyover is up to 7m (8.8m with the noise barriers) higher at the apex than the existing ground level, to the north-east of Amesbury Abbey, and grades down to meet the existing ground level to the north-west of Amesbury Abbey. The section of the flyover nearest to, and visible when looking north from Amesbury Park, is at proposed height of 3.7m (5.5m with the noise barriers), illustrated on Section A-A', drawing NPA-11083-401. There would also be seasonal views of other lengths of the flyover, up to the height of 7m (8.8m with the noise barrier), when looking north-east from the park.
- 2.1.2 The existing carriageways of the A303 would be partially retained and tied into the scheme, as slip roads to the roundabout. These will broadly remain at the existing level. Consequently, there will be two layers of traffic visible.
- 2.1.3 There will be a deterioration in views from the northern part of Amesbury Park as a result of the proposed scheme, as the flyover structure and (in part) traffic crossing it will be clearly visible set above and variously in combination with that traffic on the existing road. The flyover and associated traffic will be locally prominent in these views above the existing scattered shrub layer within the woodland, and clearly visible in winter months. Given the poorly formed tree canopy, it is likely that, even when such vegetation is in full leaf, there will be views gained of the structure and traffic.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1.1 In order to mitigate the adverse impacts upon views from Amesbury Abbey, the following planting and management actions are suggested for the woodland area to the north of the River Avon. The aims of this are to:
- Create a more diverse woodland structure, through plantings of various heights. When looking north from the river, these will be seen together as overlapping layers of vegetation, which would provide greater filtering of views. This would also be more effective in winter than the current situation;
 - Promote the development of a denser mid-level vegetation – i.e. shrubs and small trees at a height of 1-6m, as the vertical zone through which views of the proposed road scheme are most likely to be seen;

- Provide some mitigation during construction and to provide a long-term solution.

3.1.2 Construction of the A303 scheme is anticipated to begin in 2021. It would be most beneficial to implement the woodland planting and management work as early as possible prior to this i.e. autumn 2019, such that planting may be undertaken in winter 2019, all prior to construction works commencing. It is recommended that a specialist arboriculturalist is appointed to advise on the detail of the tree management works.

3.1.3 The following actions are recommended. These are illustrated on section shown on drawing NPA-11083-401.

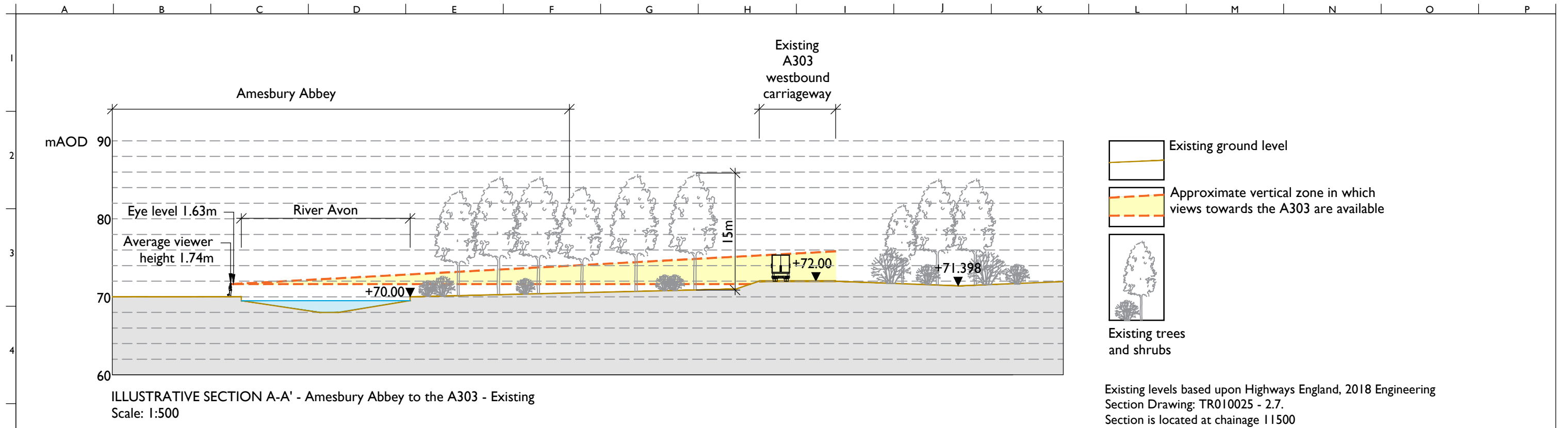
- 1) Existing healthy mature trees retained;
- 2) Based on the advice of the specialist arboriculturalist, selective removal of unhealthy, dead, and some of the older tree specimens to allow more light to penetrate to the woodland floor, and encourage understorey growth;
- 3) Selected existing mature willows to be pollarded, to reduce the canopy height and encourage growth at a lower level;
- 4) Planting of standard and multi-stem trees – Schedule 1; and
- 5) Planting of understorey shrubs – Schedule 2.

Schedule 1 – Proposed trees

Ref	Botanical Name	Common Name	Form	Girth (cm)	Overall Height (cm)	Root Condition	Specification
Agl	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Common alder	Multi-stem	-	250-300	Rootball	3x transplanted; bushy; 3 stems minimum
Cav	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Common hazel	Multi-stem	-	200-250	45L Container	Bushy; 5 stems minimum
Sfr	<i>Salix fragilis</i>	Crack willow	Heavy standard	12-14	350-425	Rootball	3x transplanted; clear stem 175-200cm; 5 breaks

Schedule 2 – Understorey shrubs

Botanical Name	Common Name	Overall Height (cm)	Root Condition	Specification	Planting Density Number per m ²	Percentage of mix
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	60-80	Bare root	1+2; Transplant; Branched; 3 breaks	3	20
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	60-80	Bare root	1+1; Transplant; Branched	3	40
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	40-60	2L Container	Leader with laterals	3	20
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat willow	60-80	Bare root	0/1; Cutting; Branched; 2 breaks	3	20
Notes	To be planted in groups of 3, 5 or 7 where gaps are present within the existing woodland shrub layer. Maximum density of 3 plants per m ² . 75mm bark mulch layer.					



- Land within ownership of Amesbury Abbey *
- Highways England planning boundary *
- Land within ownership of Bowles Hatches - TBC
- Area of woodland for proposed planting and management within ownership of Amesbury Abbey
- Additional area of woodland for proposed planting and management, subject to landowner agreement

* Boundaries are as shown on WSP drawing, 19 January 2018 'Land owned by D Cornelius-Reid in relation to the Consultation Plan'.

101	RJ	NP	NP	Issued for information	17.05.2019
Rev	Drawn	Checked	Approved	Description	Date

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Client **Amesbury Abbey**

Project **Mitigation planting in relation to proposed A303 works**

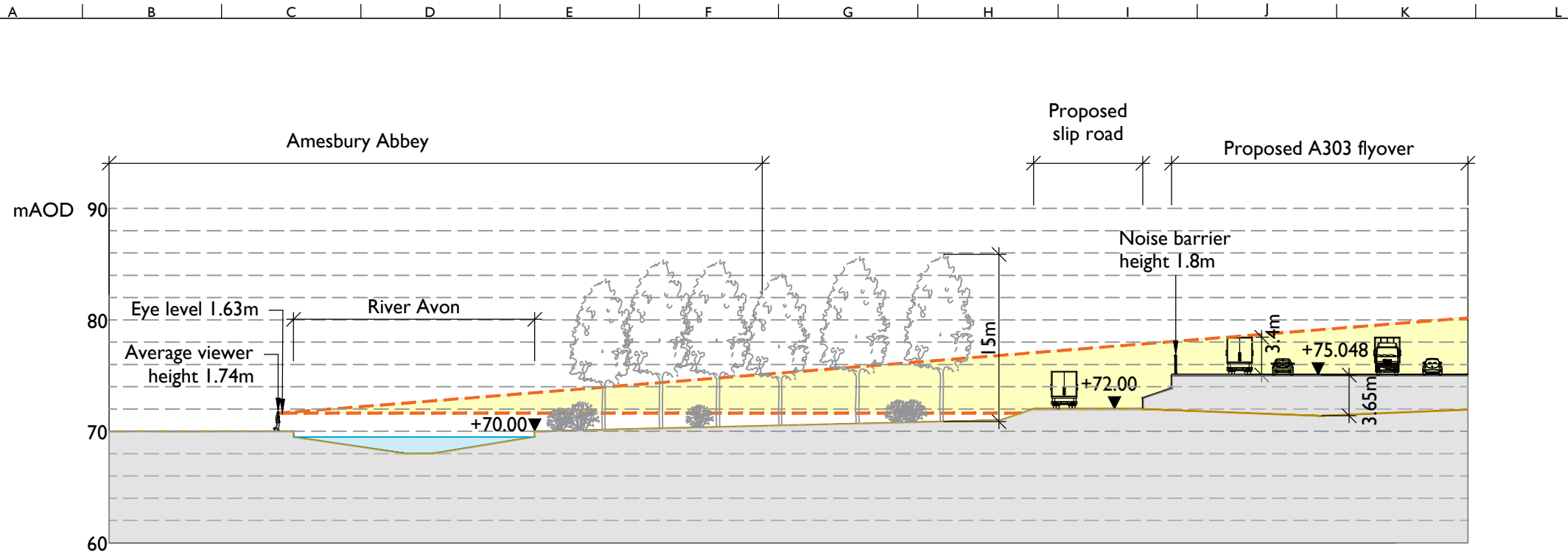
Drawing **Illustrative sections**
Sheet 1 of 2
Existing

Drawing No. NPA-11083-400	Date 17.05.2019	Scale 1:500		
Rev 101	Drawn RJ	Checked NP	Approved NP	Status INFORMATION

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Dwg Ref: N:\Projects\11083 MC\Work\400 Sections And Elevations\NPA-11083-400 Illustrative Section.dwg



ILLUSTRATIVE SECTION A-A' - Amesbury Abbey to the A303 - Proposed flyover
Scale: 1:500

Existing ground level

Proposed levels

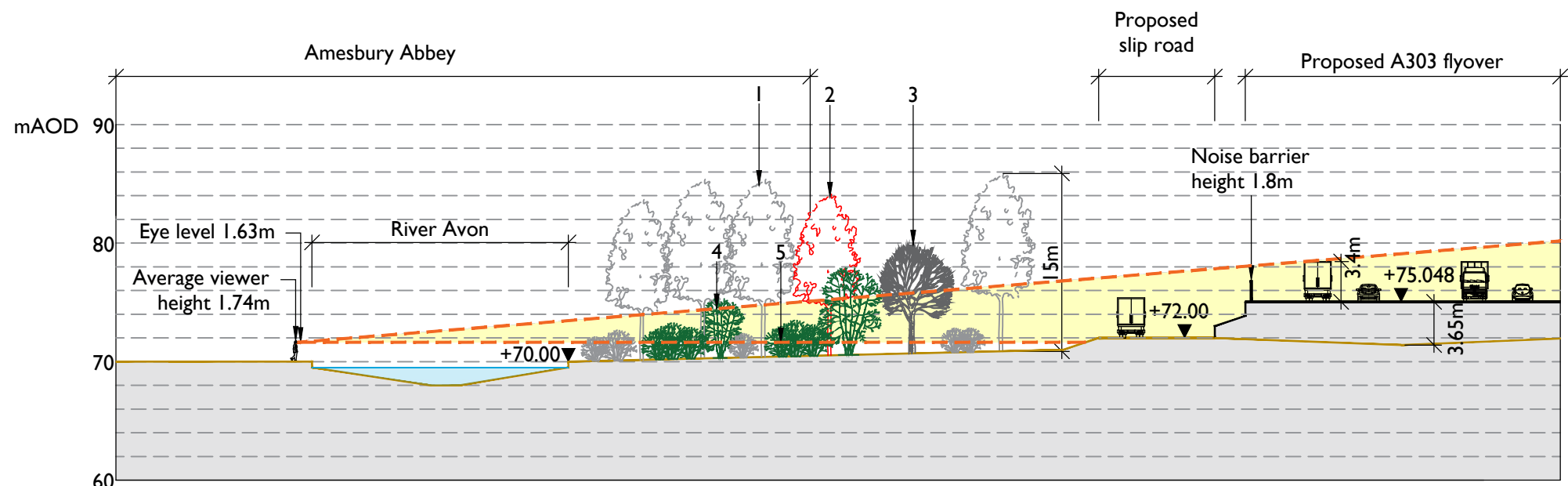
Approximate vertical zone in which views towards the A303 are available

Existing trees and shrubs

Existing trees removed

Proposed trees and shrubs

Proposed and existing levels based upon Highways England, 2018 Engineering Section Drawing: TR010025 - 2.7. Section is located at chainage 11500



ILLUSTRATIVE SECTION A-A' - Amesbury Abbey to the A303 - Proposed flyover and woodland planting
Scale: 1:500

- 1) Existing healthy mature trees retained;
- 2) Selective removal of unhealthy, dead, and some of the older tree specimens to allow more light to penetrate to the woodland floor, and encourage understorey growth;
- 3) Selected existing mature willows to be pollarded, to reduce the canopy height and encourage growth at a lower level;
- 4) Planting of standard and multi-stem trees - Schedule 1; and
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Project **Mitigation planting in relation to proposed A303 works**

Drawing **Illustrative sections**
Sheet 2 of 2
Proposed

Drawing No. NPA-11083-401	Date 17.05.2019	Scale 1:500 @ A3
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Dwg Ref: N:\Projects\11083 MC\Work\400 Sections And Elevations\NPA-11083-400 Illustrative Section.dwg
Plotted on 5/17/2019 by Rosie James. Plotscale: 1:1. Paper Size ISO full bleed A3 (297.00 x 420.00 MM). Plot style: NPA_ISO.ctb