



St Columba's Close

Landscape DAS

26 October 2022



ME Landscape Studio are a London-based landscape architectural studio, working throughout the UK on a wide range of residential and education schemes.

Our aim is to create high quality designs that are buildable, stand the test of time and are enjoyed by all. We have extensive experience of high-profile masterplanning and landscape design projects. We have proven ability to work as part of a multidisciplinary team to deliver integrated landscape solutions.

We work hard to achieve sustainable landscapes that provide benefits to each project and its users as well as to the environment as a whole.

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1.0 Introduction

Gravesham Borough Council

1.0 Introduction

Purpose of the Document

This Landscape Design and Access Statement has been prepared by ME Landscape Studio on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council to support a full planning application for the site known as St. Columba's Close.

This document provides an analysis of the wider context, and considers the constraints and opportunities of the site. The document is structured to demonstrate how these have been taken into account and illustrates the design principles for the landscape and public realm proposals.

This document outlines the landscape approach to improving the landscape of the wider public realm masterplan and the three development sites. This approach allows to produce an holistic design, knitting the wider estate together with the development sites.

Description of Development

Demolition of 3no. existing buildings and the associated caretakers' facilities and erection of 2no. 2 storey buildings, 1 no. 3 storey building and 1no. part3/part4 storey building to provide 46 residential dwellings (Class C3 residential use), with associated vehicle and pedestrian access, amenity space with hard and soft landscaping, car and cycle parking, refuse and recycling storage provision, and other associated works.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the DAS prepared by BPTW.

2.0 Wider Context

Gravesham Borough Council

2.1 Existing Site

The site is to the south of Gravesend town centre, along Valley Drive. The site is bounded to the south by St. Patrick's Gardens.

It is a generally sloping area, sloping westwards to the valley that extends northwards to the river Thames. The level change is approximately 9.6 metres from a high point in the south-east (33.35m AOD) to the lowest point in the north-west (23.73m AOD).

There is a centrally-located open space, surrounded by three blocks; this is a poor quality space providing limited facilities, with one cherry tree towards its northern edge. There are rear gardens with high close-boarded timber fences backing on to this space and a couple of separately located leaseholder gardens.

The upper three blocks surround an access road and informal parking area. There is one existing tree, the remainder of the landscape being amenity grass.

Significant areas of the site are grassed, which is gang mown. There is minimal planting.

There are a number of existing trees within the site, although there are some stumps where older trees have failed and been removed. A tree survey has been carried out, and will inform their retention and compensatory planting required, including suitable species.



1. Eastern residential blocks and parking area



2. Existing open space



3. Passageway



4. Eastern boundary condition

2.2 Existing Trees

A survey of the existing trees has been carried out by PJC (Document ref: PJC/6115/22-01-Rev-; dated 28th July 2022). There are approximately 35 trees and 7 groups identified. Please refer to the the PJC document and the diagram to the right.

Of the 35 trees identified, 11 trees (1 category B and 10 category C) and 2 groups are proposed to be removed to facilitate the development, with the remaining trees retained and protected to BS5837: 2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations' within landscape areas.

Based on the current site layout, we are proposing approximately 48 new trees (refer to the Landscape Proposals section). This represents an approximate ratio of 5 new trees to 1 tree removed.

Key



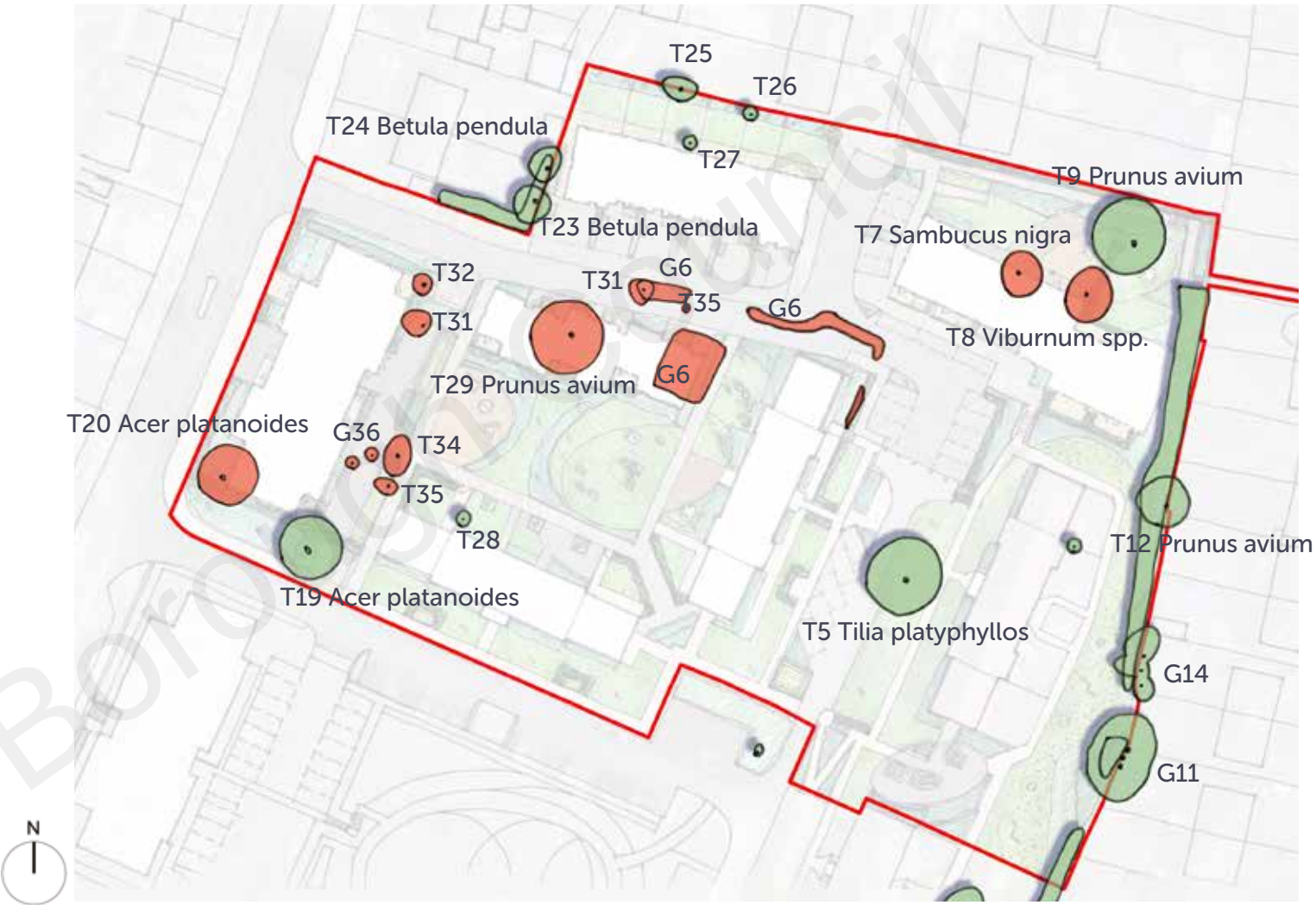
Existing trees - to be retained



Existing trees - to be removed



Planting Groups - to be removed



T5 Lime tree (Tilia platyphyllos)



T29 Native Cherry (Prunus avium)



Trees/ tree groups to Eastern boundary



T19 & T20 Acer platanoides - at the junction of Valley drive/ St. Patrick's Gardens



T9 and T10 - Native Cherries

2.3 Resident Consultation

A Resident Consultation event took place on site on the 4th February 2022; this included a board on landscape ideas that could be incorporated in the scheme, to see which ideas residents would support.

The key findings in relation to landscape were:

1. Provision of a play area(s) within the site; residents liked the ideas of at-grade trampoline, natural play and the inclusion of timber play equipment
2. Many residents were keen to see outdoor gym equipment located within the landscape
3. Some residents liked the idea of including a communal garden, with raised planters as allotment areas
4. Existing ground floor residents wanted to see low level defensible planting around the existing blocks
5. More seating, including a range of seat and bench types, were favourable
6. Residents wanted to see dog poo bins included around the site, as dog fouling is a significant problem
7. Residents were keen to see a landscape that encourages wildlife, including wildflower meadows, more tree planting and bug hotels.

A second Resident Consultation event took place on site on the 7th of October 2022.

The key landscape comments were:

1. Landscape improvement to existing amenity was well received; especially the play space and outdoor gym
2. Residents raised queries regarding trees. As part of the proposal, the number of trees is to be increased across the site.



ST PATRICK'S GARDENS & ST COLUMBA'S CLOSE

Welcome to our event

'Gravesham Borough Council – Delivering a Gravesham to be proud of'

Meet the team





Project Timeline

WE ARE HERE

December 2021 Door to door visit

February 2022 1st Residents event

March/April 2022 2nd Residents event

Late Spring 2022 Feedback to residents

Summer 2022 Next steps following residents consultation

Next in line stages

Our Estate

The site



St Patrick's Gardens

Pankhurst Place

Boards from the 4th February event



ST PATRICK'S GARDENS & ST COLUMBA'S CLOSE

Private amenity and Public Realm Improvements

Play Space

Accessible by all

What age range?

What would be good for young people?

Trees

Proposal for more trees to provide shade and improve mental wellbeing

Where should these be planted?

What type of trees do you like?

Planting

Structured or naturalistic?

Sensory planting?

Seasonal planting?

Car Parking, Access and Servicing

What kind of transport improvement would you like to see?

Improved cycle links and cycle parking, car clubs, electrical vehicles charging points

Biodiversity

What would you like to see?

Do you like wildflower garden?

Surface materials and Seating

What types do you like?

Space for Post-Its

Growing Space

Would this be a good idea?

Accordia Housing Cambridge (Guest Associates)

This is an alternative where the raised platform and fruit trees are located near to the building, as a centrally located resource for a neighbourhood.

Space for Local People to learn skills and share

Boxen Orchard

The local team has been a registered provider of green space on the corner of one of London's busiest and most polluted junctions. It is currently a green space and has been used for many years. It is currently being used by the local community for many years. It is currently being used by the local community for many years. It is currently being used by the local community for many years.

3.0 Landscape Proposals

Gravesham Borough Council

3.1 Overall Landscape Concepts



Following on from the Resident Consultation we have developed landscape proposals that reflect the types of landscape and facilities that residents requested, as well as helping to knit together the existing residential blocks with the proposed dwellings, and with the wider urban fabric.

The diagram illustrates the key open spaces together with improvements to the frontages and to retained buildings and buffer planting to site boundaries.

3.2 Landscape Plan



Key

- 1 Play space for younger children
- 2 New Communal Garden
- 3 'Grow Your Own' garden
- 4 Communal Gardens for individual blocks
- 5 Shared Surface
- 6 Possible Rain Garden locations
- 7 Private residents gardens
- 8 Bin/ Bike stores with green roof
- 9 Outdoor Gym Trail
- 10 Existing PROW



3.3 Precedents

Grow Your Own area



Hedges to rear of bays and top of walls



Rain garden



Outdoor Gym



Wildflower meadow



Shared surface



Natural play



3.4 Communal Garden

The key elements of the space are:

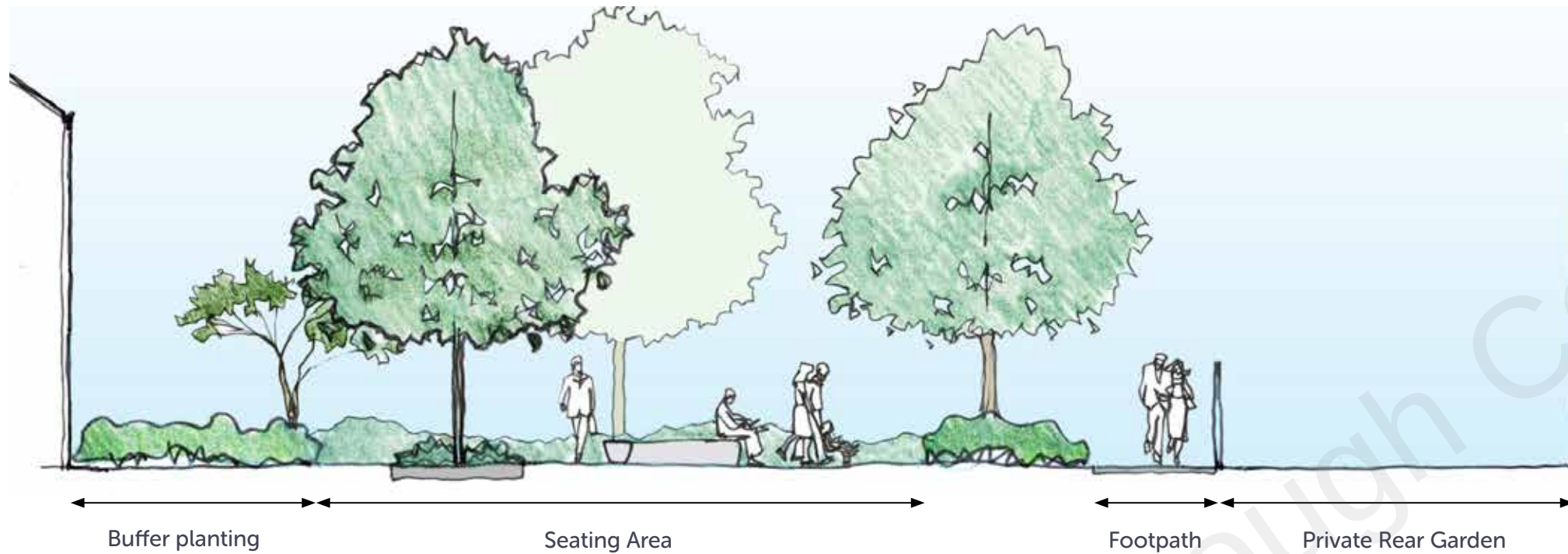
- An updated Communal Landscape space that provides a range of passive and active amenity
- A range of seating areas and seat types for residents and parents/ carers
- Play spaces for younger children are provided, including a play space with timber play equipment and natural play elements (play boulders and climbing logs) integrated with the planting
- Planting is used to define the various spaces and separate ground floor dwellings and rear gardens for privacy. Some planting will be in raised planters, which could be used as Grow Your Own areas
- Extensive tree planting of suitable urban species to provide shade and define main routes
- Where feasible, integration of Rain Gardens within the planting as part of the overall SuDs scheme for the site.



Key

- 1 Equipped Play Space for younger children
- 2 'Grow Your Own' raised planters
- 3 Seating areas
- 4 Possible Rain Garden location
- 5 Planting and Natural Play elements
- 6 Private residents gardens

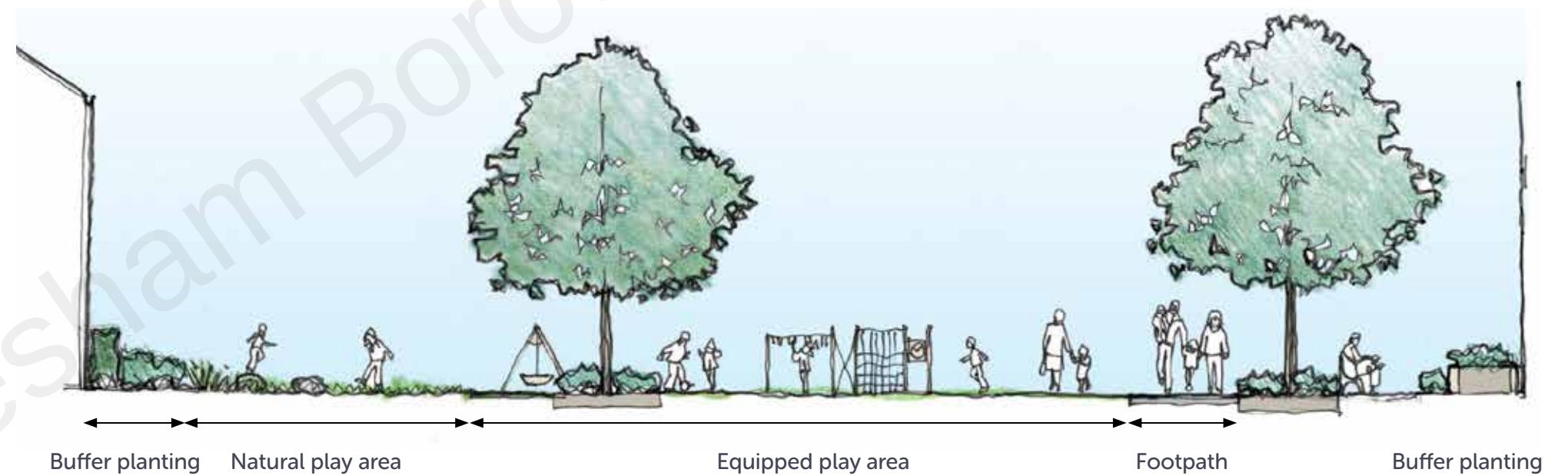
3.4 Communal Garden



Section A



Timber play equipment



Section B



Natural play



Sensory play



Traditional adults and children benches

3.5 Hard Materials Strategy



We have outlined the approach to the hard materials for the site. This has been co-ordinated with the SuDs strategy.

We have incorporated permeable materials where achievable, given the constraints of below ground services.

A hierarchy of materials are used across the site to highlight different areas and also the public and private spaces.

Improvements to the PROW to be discussed with KCC and Gravesham Borough Council.

Key

-  Shared Surface Carriageway
- Tegula-type blocks; 104 x 173mm; 173 x 173mm; 208 x 173mm; Colour: Slate
-  Parking Bays/ Crossovers
- Tegula-type blocks; 104 x 173mm; 173 x 173mm; Colour: Cedar
-  Pedestrian Main Routes
- 'Fusion' units; 600 x 300 x 50mm thickness; Colour: Silver
-  Communal Spaces
- 'Textured Flags'; 450 x 450 x 50mm thickness; Colour: Natural
-  Seating Areas/ Grow Your Own
- 'Terrabase Rustic' resin-bound gravel with timber edging
-  Private Terraces
- 'Textured Flags'; 600 x 600 x 50mm thickness; Colour: Natural
-  Reinforced Grass
- 'Turfmesh' grass reinforcement system



3.6 Proposed Boundary Treatments

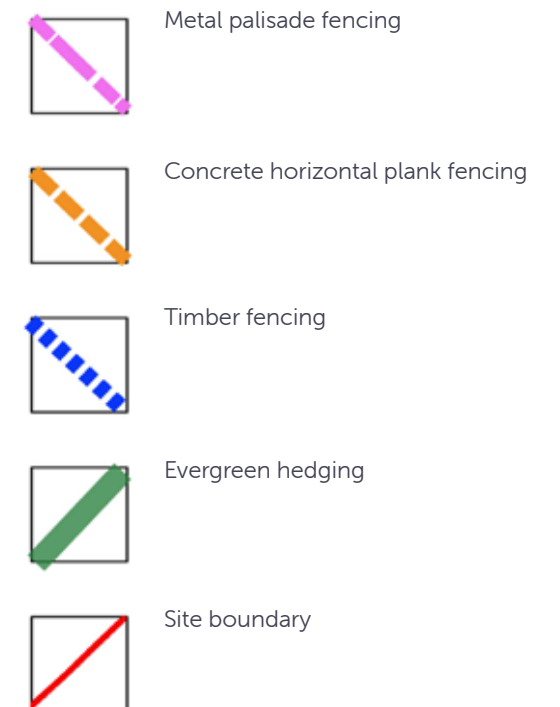


A range of boundary treatments are proposed, to provide physical separation to private gardens/ terraces and to control access to resident areas for safety and security.

Key boundary treatments are:

- Retention of existing timber fencing to the eastern and north-eastern edges of the site. Repairs to be made where required
- Retention of concrete horizontal plank fencing to the northern edges. Repairs to be made where required
- Areas of metal palisade fence to the edge of the PROW to be retained
- Evergreen hedges to the boundary along Valley Drive.

Boundary planting is typically to be spiky plants, including *Pyracantha* spp., *Rosa rugosa* (e.g. 'Blanc de Coubert'), *Ulex europaeus* and *Crataegus monogyna*.



3.7 Proposed Trees

We have indicated new tree planting, with a range of native and non-native trees, including small and medium-sized trees to suit the urban context.

We are proposing a total of approximately 48 new trees, which compensates for the trees to be felled as part of the works.

We have indicated a range of tree species, including native species, fastigate forms (so as not to overshadow dwellings) and ornamental tree species suitable for urban areas (which are typically small to medium size at maturity).

We have used the TDAG guidance on trees for urban areas to help select the species.

Key



Betula pubscens



Carpinus betulus 'Lucas'



Liquidambar styraciflua



Prunus 'Amanogawa'



Prunus avium



Prunus sargentii



Quercus robur 'Fastigiata Koster'



Sorbus aucuparia



Sorbus commixta 'Olympic Flame'



Tilia cordata



Carpinus betulus 'Lucas'



Prunus avium - Native cherry



Liquidambar styraciflua - Sweet Gum



Prunus sargentii - Ornamental cherry



Prunus 'Amanogawa'



Quercus robur 'Fastigiata Koster'



Mountain Ash - Sorbus aucuparia



Sorbus commixta 'Olympic Flame'

3.8 Planting Ideas



The key characteristics of the species are:

- Low-maintenance requirements
- Shade-tolerant species, particularly important underneath the tree canopies
- Evergreens/perennials - providing screening and 'greening' throughout the year
- Interest at different times of the year (flower colour in Spring/Summer; Autumn leaf colour; stem colour in Winter; scent)
- Native species where appropriate or species with known benefit to wildlife, to increase the nature conservation value of the landscape spaces and tie the site in to it's wider context. Target is to specify at least 60% of the above species (as advised in the Greenlink Ecology Limited report).

3.9 Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been carried out by Greenlink Ecology Limited (report dated 14 April 2022).

The key findings were:

Habitats

The site contains common/widespread habitat types that are not of conservation concern and impacts to these habitats are considered insignificant. On a precautionary basis, retained trees should be protected from potential impacts.

Protected/Notable Species

Bats

Although there was no evidence of bats recorded during the survey, it was not possible to access any roof voids and 'low' roosting potential was identified in relation to 2 no. of the buildings that are to be demolished.

Therefore, the demolition of these buildings could result in direct impacts to bats through disturbance, injury or mortality and the destruction of actual roost sites, all of which would be an offence against the legislation.

To address the partial constraint relating to a lack of access to roof voids and 'low' roosting potential associated with these buildings, further survey work is recommended in a subsequent section, to determine the need of mitigation measures.

The proposed works could actually have a positive impact for bats through the provision of wall-integrated bat boxes on the new buildings.

A subsequent Bat Survey was carried out by Greenlink Ecology (Ref: 22_1655_ReportX02_MF_PB), the findings being that there were no bats recorded emerging from the buildings during the dusk survey visit and as a result, should not be affected by the proposals.

Breeding Birds

Although no evidence for actively breeding birds was recorded during the survey, which was undertaken outside the breeding season, potentially suitable habitats (including buildings at 28-34 and 36-42) were identified throughout the site, some of which will be removed/disturbed to facilitate the proposed works.

Therefore, breeding birds could be directly impacted on by the proposed works, if undertaken during the breeding season (March-July/August, as a guide). To avoid the seasonal risk of impacts to breeding birds, precautionary mitigation measures are recommended.

The proposed works could actually have a positive impact for birds through the provision of wall-integrated bird boxes on the new buildings.

Designated Sites

Since the closest statutory designated site is located circa 1.8 kilometres to the south-east of the proposed development site and buffered from it by substantial areas of land, it is considered that there is no perceived risk of potential impacts to designated sites as a result of the proposed works.

Enhancement Measures

To ecologically enhance the site in accordance with the principles of the NPPF (Section 4.3.3), the following guideline measures should be implemented:

- The soft landscaping scheme for the site should specify at least 60% native species of plant, or non-native species with a known benefit to wildlife. This should include a variety of flowering plants, shrubs, climbers, hedgerows and small trees, to provide a diversity of habitat type/structure and benefit local biodiversity;
- The new buildings should incorporate at least 5 no. wall-integrated bat boxes (<http://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/bat-box/>), which should ideally be installed at least four metres from ground level on the gable ends and not illuminated by artificial lighting; and

www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/bat-box/), which should ideally be installed at least four metres from ground level on the gable ends and not illuminated by artificial lighting; and

- The new buildings should incorporate at least 10 no. wall-integrated bird nesting boxes (<http://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/nesting-boxes/>), which should be installed at least three metres from ground level, although in the absence of shade, none of these boxes should be facing due south, to avoid over-heating during the summer months.



Integrated bat brick



Integrated bird brick

3.10 Landscape Maintenance & Management

The principal aims of the Landscape Maintenance text is to secure a co-ordinated and high standard of landscape management for the landscape areas within the site, to ensure the successful integration of the residential development and new play area with the surrounding landscape and to enhance the longer term nature conservation interests in accordance with the design objectives contained in this document. This will include the appropriate maintenance of existing retained, and proposed landscape components.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Landscape Management Plan are as follows:

1. To maintain landscape character: To protect and conserve the existing landscape character, to provide an attractive and robust landscape setting for the building and reinforce local distinctiveness
2. The sustainable management of existing vegetation: To retain existing trees and other vegetation that are worthy of retention, and to enhance their character, composition and age structure through positive management with consideration to long-term viability and health and safety
3. To achieve a high standard of maintenance: To take measures to ensure the successful establishment and growth of new structural and incidental planting and to take appropriate long-term management measures to ensure the satisfactory appearance and sustainability of vegetation. To ensure that landscape components are replaced, augmented and/or improved over time as appropriate
4. To maintain and enhance biodiversity: To protect and enhance the nature conservation interest of both existing and new landscape areas and to ensure the adoption of management practices that enhance the biodiversity value of the site. To fulfil all legal requirements in relation

to the protection and management of ecological features and the protection and management of target species including bats and birds

5. To ensure health and safety: To uphold the duty of care that all landscape components are safe and that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise risk of injury and damage to people and property
6. To provide a mechanism or monitoring and review: To ensure that management practices are monitored and where necessary reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with changing site circumstances and the views of key stakeholders (Adopting Authority, residents representatives and the LPA).

Landscape Areas and Landscape Components

The landscape areas subject to Landscape Management and Maintenance include the following components:

- Existing trees
- Proposed new tree planting
- Proposed shrubs and groundcover planting
- Proposed amenity grass/lawns
- Proposed wildflower meadow areas
- Proposed native whip, shrub and buffer planting
- Street Furniture
- Structures, walls, railings, fencing and gates
- Hard Landscape Areas.

A detailed Management & Maintenance Plan will be prepared as the landscape design is finalised at the next stage, and will be submitted as part of any landscape conditions requested by the LPA.

