



Landscape strategy

3.20 Landscape strategy

Of key importance to any higher density urban development is ensuring a quality public realm to provide relief to the amount of development created. The strategy for the development is to create a series of linked streets and spaces, and provide clear definition of key transport corridors through the use of landscaping.

Within residential streets, planting should be more informal and should provide relief from on-street car parking and be used as part of the traffic calming system, including homezones. These should be robust urban trees.

A landscape and ecological design strategy for the development should comprise the following:

- extension of the existing A41(T) boundary planting to create a continuous woodland and wildlife corridor between Home Wood and the open and wooded margins of Shendish Manor. This reinforces the visual and physical separation of the site from countryside lying west of the A41(T) and ensures a wooded skyline in longer views from the eastern side of the Gade Valley
- retention of the important hedges within the south-west margin of the site, to sub-divide the housing; these hedges will be reinforced by new planting
- new planting designed to strengthen the existing visual buffer provided by Home Wood, thereby preserving the green character of the A414 corridor and enclosing views towards the site from further west
- arrangements for informal public access
- creation of an ecological corridor between Home Wood and the wider countryside.
- extension of Home Wood

- a strong, internal landscape framework including tree avenues along the principal street corridors, and more informal street planting within ‘home zone’ areas. Trees and shrubs should be planted through the development.
- public footpath 17 may be realigned if necessary provided the course remains convenient and connects with a network of new greenways
- protection of important existing ecological features, with appropriate buffer zones; and their enhancement through a programme of selective thinning and replanting of native species
- retention of more diverse areas of grassland within informal open space, which will be managed to enhance their species diversity
- inspection of trees with potential for supporting bat roosts by a licensed specialist prior to any trees being felled; for example dead or dangerous specimens.
- preservation of existing hedgerows and trees is required. Some reshaping may be needed where footpath and cycle links are located

A comprehensive plan, including TWA 20, explaining landscape design, ecological enhancements and future management of the areas must be prepared and its implementation secured.

3.21 Building services

The provision of gas meter boxes will be considered early in the design of buildings so as to avoid frontages to the public realm being disrupted by the addition of poorly detailed and visually intrusive boxes later on.

3.22 Open space

National guidance is contained within Planning Policy Guidance 17 and also within the National Playing Field Association’s (NPFA) “The six acre standard”. This document is primarily aimed at providing play provision and useable space in all new development, but provides a useful rule of thumb for the range of provision of useable play space. This range suggested by the NPFA includes:

- Local Areas for Play (LAP): which cater for children up to 6 years old and have a minimum activity zone of 100 square metres or can be incorporated in “Home zone” streets. These spaces should be well overlooked and be no more than 60 metres from the homes they serve.
- Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP): which caters for children aged 4-8 years and should have an activity zone of 400 metres or more.
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP): which are designed for children of adolescent age and should be located within a 15 minute walk of the homes they serve and have a minimum activity zone of 1000 square metres.

Key areas of open space should be dispersed throughout the development and incorporate safe and easy access for new and existing residents, whilst being well overlooked by adjoining houses to help provide a secure environment. An area of informal open space is to be created adjoining Home Wood.

Equipped areas of play will be incorporated:

- To the west of West Valley Road (LAP).
- To the east of the access point into the site from King Edward Street and adjoining the railway line (LAP).
- As part of the greenway pedestrian/ cycle route to the south of the site and incorporate more low key/ informal play.
- A new "village green" to the south-west of the site adjoining the A41T, which could provide for a number of play related uses, such as informal play, LEAP/ NEAP, or "kickabout" space, and be of sufficient size to at least accommodate a junior-sized football pitch and tree planting.

Developers will be required to adopt an imaginative approach to the design of the open space areas, reflecting the community desire for the use of natural materials and a sledging slope.

3.23 Ecology

The site contains some important ecological features including Home Wood and substantial hedgerows within and on the edges of the site.

The development will require some tree/hedgerow removal in order to achieve access to the site. Protecting and enhancing the remaining features on the site and their management are therefore important in achieving a satisfactory development. A management plan for the site's ecological features will be required, together with a detailed planting programme.

A habitat survey of the grassland should be undertaken to establish any opportunities for translocation of any quality grassland to other areas within the site including the area adjacent to Home Wood or elsewhere.

Home Wood is a semi-natural ancient woodland. Planting should particularly seek to enhance the hedgerows connecting to the woodland area and recognise the importance of the woodland/grassland boundary. Consideration must also be given to linking Home Wood with habitats to the south.

Further planting is required at the Featherbed Lane access point to the site to mitigate against the break in continuity of the hedgerow at this point. This should include tree and shrub planting, with the objective of achieving a line of trees that meet above the road to maintain a continuous wildlife corridor.

Account should be taken in any planting and management programme for bat, bird and butterfly use of the existing hedgerows, woodland and grassland.