

READING GOLF CLUB, READING BERKSHIRE

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT - LANDSCAPE CHAPTER
MAY 2021 ADDENDUM REVISED VERSION

ISSUE SHEET

JOB NAME: READING GOLF CLUB, READING, BERKSHIRE
JOB NUMBER: D2743
CLIENT: FAIRFAX (READING) LIMITED AND READING GOLF CLUB LIMITED

REVISION	DATE	REVISION DETAILS	PREPARED BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY
00	19.03.2020	DRAFT FOR INTERNAL REVIEW	NY	LS	AS
01	27.03.2020	DRAFT FOR CLIENT REVIEW	NY	LS	LS
02	15.05.2020	DRAFT FOR TEAM REVIEW	NY	LS	LS
03	19.05.2020	ALL PLANS ARE UPDATED WITH APPLICATION BOUNDARY	NY	LS	LS
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05	03.06.2020	FINAL SUBMISSION	NY	-	-
06	11.12.2020	FINAL SUBMISSION - ADDENDUM VERSION	NY	LS	LS
07	24.05.2021	UPDATE TO REFLECT THE REVISED LAYOUT AND OFFICER COMMENTS	NY	LS	LS

CONTENTS

1.0	Landscape Baseline	8	6.0	Landscape Maintenance and Management	44
1.1	Introduction and Purpose	8	6.1	Introduction	44
1.2	Site Description	8	6.2	Review Procedure	44
1.3	Landscape Related Designation	8	6.3	General Operations	44
1.4	Site Topography	8	6.4	Maintenance & Management	44
1.5	Landscape Character and Perceptual Qualities	8	6.5	Existing Established Trees	44
1.6	Visual Assessment	8	6.6	Semi-mature, Nursery Stock and Standard Trees	44
2.0	Landscape Analysis	10	6.7	Ornamental Shrub Planting	44
3.0	Landscape Design	12	6.8	Ornamental Grass and Herbaceous Planting	44
3.1	Landscape Concept	12			
3.2	Landscape Masterplan Intent	14			
3.3	Tree Strategy Intent	18			
3.4	Open Space Provision	24			
4.0	Landscape Character Areas and Precedent Images	30			
4.1	Pocket Park and Green Link	30			
4.2	Play	32			
4.3	Social Garden	34			
4.4	SuDS	36			
5.0	Landscape Materials	38			
5.1	Soft Landscape Design Intent	38			
5.2	Hard Landscape Design Intent	43			

INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This landscape section of the DAS Addendum has been prepared on behalf of Fairfax (Reading) Limited and Reading Golf Club Limited in relation to the land at Reading Golf Club, Kidmore End Road (the Site), to address officers’ comments as part of the application re-submission.

The proposal aims to deliver over 250 residential units and a health centre set within public open space, the location of which is heavily influenced by the retention of the existing trees.

The tree proposals have maximised the use of the landscape space, with a provision of 134 trees, which are predominantly native and comprise a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species palate. The updated tree planting proposals have been prepared in consideration of the Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy 2020 and further discussions with the Arboricultural Officer.

This report is to be read in conjunction with the Landscape and Visual Assessment ES Chapter, the main DAS and the Arboricultural & Planning Integration Report and their addendum versions. The texts changes made in this addendum are written in Italic fonts, and the revised figures are sit adjacent to the original ones.

Outline planning application, with all matters reserved except access, for the development of land at Reading Golf Club, involving demolition of the existing clubhouse and the erection of a new residential-led scheme, including provision of community infrastructure.

A summary table is shown opposite, which sets out a summary of changes to each page.

OFFICERS COMMENTS AND RESPONSE

Comments have been received from the Tree Officer dated the 21st September and the Landscape Service Manager dated 8th December 2020. The comments were primarily in relation to the existing trees, proposed trees and the public open space.

Further comments dated on the 11th March 2021 from the Tree Officer have been reviewed, the landscape comments were primarily in relation to the proposed tree numbers. The key comments were addressed by the Arboriculturist.

A summary of the consultation comments and response have been included in this document as set out on the following pages.

SECTION NUMBER	PAGE NUMBER	ADDENDUM DETAILS
-	4	ADDED AN INTRODUCTION OF THIS DOCUMENT, INCLUDING A SUMMARY OF ADDENDUM AND THE OFFICERS COMMENTS AND OUR RESPONSE.
1.0	8	AMENDED THE INTRODUCTION SECTION AND ADDED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RE EXISTING TREES AND SITE CONDITION.
1.0	9	NO CHANGE.
2.1	10	ADDED DESCRIPTIONS ON TREE SPECIES SELECTION AND THE REFERENCE TO TREE STRATEGY 2020.
2.1	11	NO CHANGE.
3.1	12	ADDITIONAL TEXTS ADDED TO RESPOND TO THE 3:1 TREE PLANTING RATIO COMMENT; TREE RETENTION NUMBER HAS BEEN AMENDED; AND THE PROVISION OF PLAY AND OTHER TYPES OF OPEN SPACE.
3.1	13	NO CHANGE.
3.2	14	ADDED INFORMATION ON TREE REMOVAL, TREE PROPOSALS AND THE PROPOSAL OF GREEN VERGES AND THE FIGURE REFERENCING.
3.2	15	NO CHANGE.
3.2	16	THE ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN HAS BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT THE OFFICERS COMMENTS.
3.2	17	THE ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN HAS BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT THE OFFICERS COMMENTS.
3.3	18	ADDED INFORMATION ON TREE REMOVAL, TREE PROPOSALS, INCLUDING SPECIES AND THE FACTORS CONSIDERED WHEN PREPARING THE TREE STRATEGY; INFORMATION ON CUCUMBER WOOD WOODLAND PLANTING IS ALSO ADDED.
3.3	19	DATES OF THE FIGURE HAS BEEN ADDED.
3.3	20	DATES OF THE FIGURE HAS BEEN ADDED. THE CHANGES TO THIS PLAN ARE REFLECTED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.
3.3	21	DATES OF THE FIGURE HAS BEEN ADDED. THE CHANGES TO THIS PLAN ARE REFLECTED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.
3.3	22	NEW FIGURE HAS BEEN ADDED TO REFLECT THE REVISED LAYOUT.
3.4	24	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ADDED ON OPEN SPACE PROVISION. THE REVISED QUANTUM OF THE OPEN SPACE PROVISION IS ADDRESSED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.
3.4	25	REVISED QUANTUM OF THE OPEN SPACE PROVISION.
3.4	26	NO CHANGE ON THIS PAGE. THE CHANGES TO THIS PLAN ARE REFLECTED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE. DATES OF THE FIGURE HAS BEEN ADDED.
3.4	27	THE OPEN SPACE PROVISION PLAN HAS BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT THE LATEST LAYOUT.
3.4	28	THE OPEN SPACE PROVISION PLAN HAS BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT THE LATEST LAYOUT.
4.1	30	NO CHANGE
4.1	31	SECTIONS AND KEY PLAN HAVE BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT THE LATEST LAYOUT.
4.2	28	THE KEY PLAN HAS BEEN UPDATED
4.2	32	THE SECTION AND KEY PLAN HAVE BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT THE LATEST LAYOUT.
4.3	34	NO CHANGE
4.3	35	THE SECTION AND KEY PLAN HAVE BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT THE LATEST LAYOUT.
4.4	36	NO CHANGE
4.4	37	NO CHANGE
5.1	38	SOFT LANDSCAPE DESIGN INTENT AND THE OVERACHING STRATEGY HAVE BEEN UPDATED TO ADDRESS OFFICER’S COMMENTS
5.1.1	40	NO CHANGE TO THIS PAGE. THE AMENDMENT ON TREE PALETTE IS REFLECTED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.
5.1.1	41	THE TREE PALETTE HAS BEEN UPDATED TO ADDRESS OFFICER’S COMMENTS
5.1.2	42	NO CHANGE
5.1.3	42	NO CHANGE
5.2	43	NO CHANGE
6.0	44	ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF PROPOSED TREES HAVE BEEN ADDED

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RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION COMMENTS	
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL CONSULTATION COMMENT	LANDSCAPE RESPONSE RELATIVE TO THE REVISED PROPOSALS AND SUBMISSION
DATED 21 SEPTEMBER 2020 REGARDING TREE PROPOSALS	
118 trees are proposed to be planted. The proposed tree planting is only on a 1 for 1 basis. This is not acceptable and does not meet with our Tree Strategy (existing or revised) aim to increase canopy cover in the Borough or Local Plan policies to increase canopy cover. Whilst I appreciate that 1000 trees are intended for Cucumber woods, these are in the SODC area hence do not address our policies or canopy cover targets for the RBC area. In addition, although it is not stated, I would assume these 1000 trees will be small whips. Their environmental benefit will be limited for many years and it is extremely likely that, as with most whip planting, a significant portion will not establish and survive or remain long term to become nature trees.	134 tree replacements are now proposed as replacements for the 131 trees proposed be removed. The removals includes 24 category ‘B’ (moderate quality) trees, 96 category ‘C’ (low quality) trees and 11 category ‘U’ (unsuitable for retention quality). The location of the proposed planting has been carefully considered further in the re-submission to address the ‘zone of influence’ of the proposed tree at maturity relative to NHBC Chapter 4.2 and in relation to the anticipated shading from that tree anticipated at maturity. The proposed tree planting is located wholly within the areas of public realm and includes large tree species along the spine road. There is no reliance on planting in rear gardens. For this particular site a bespoke solution to addressing the RBC Tree Strategy has been taken. Whilst the compensatory tree planting to address the shortfall of replacement planting lies outside of the administrative boundary, the benefits of tree planting does not simply top at administrative boundaries. There is a long tradition of ‘borrowing the landscape’ in design terms. There are significant benefits of planting a new woodland adjacent to Cucumber Wood, at the head of a valley landscape that extends into Reading there will be indirect benefits to the borough by planting in this location. The planting structure of the woodland can be agreed as part of the clearance of conditions in terms of the species mix and the size of the planting. As with any planting, there will be some losses and over time the woodland would need to be selectively thinned to ensure the even development of the tree canopy. There is an opportunity for this woodland to be a future ancient woodland and therefore an extension to Cucumber Wood. Furthermore, the location of this planting will benefit from active management to ensure its successful maturation and in a location which is visible from the neighbouring public rights of way. As with the planting of any tree, their environmental benefit, with positive maintenance and management, will only be realised in the long term.
As was made clear at pre-app, service routes should be outside RPAs and I expect the applicant to have considered this in devising the layout. Indicative services routes shown on the two Service Plans submitted appear to avoid RPAs – submission of service plans should be included in any landscape condition as normal.	An updated utilities plan has been prepared as part of the re-submission and we confirm that this continues to avoid RPA’s of existing trees. The final location of the services and tree planting can be provided in detail as part of any future RMA / discharge of condition.
6.1 of LS DAS – this gives basic maintenance, the details of which would be agreed via condition which should include details of who will maintain the communal areas. The applicant should consider mammalian pests when submitting landscaping details, specifically tree pit specifications. If the golf course experiences particular issues at present, use of appropriate guards would be prudent.	Additional details of the landscape management have been added into this DAS, however, the purpose of this section of the DAS is to set out some over arching principles for the maintenance and management of the illustrative proposals as part of the outline application. It is anticipated that a detailed and co-ordinated landscape, arboricultural and ecology maintenance and management plan would be required as part of the clearance of conditions / RMA.
I note all trees are to be proposed at 5m+ at planting (20-25cm girth). This is not necessary for the whole site. There is a balance to be achieved between larger stock size trees that provide immediate impact but take longer to establish and start growing and smaller stock size which are easier to establish and start growing sooner. It would be reasonable to focus the larger stock size on the main access route through the site.	The plant schedule provides for several sizes with the larger tree stock provided along the spine road and frontage.
Proposed tree planting palette is noted. It is disappointing that there no reference to existing 2010 or revised 2020 Tree Strategy in terms of species and mix. From the 2020 Tree Strategy, over dominance of Prunus is noted and the aim to create a Borough tree stock consisting of 30% family, 20% genus and 10% species – this information should be referred to when devising the final landscaping. Omitting Prunus would also help reduce dominance of Roseaceae family (Prunus, Sorbus & Malus). It is positive that it includes Oak as they will be the future veterans to replace the existing. No evergreens are included which they should be to help with all year round greenery. I appreciate that native evergreen choice is very limited and only leaves Scots Pine as in terms of landscape value (only other is Yew) but I have no objection to an exotic species where space for a feature tree may allow, e.g. Cedar to reflect historic use of these in nearby Rosehill House and BBC Caversham Park.	The plant schedule and percentages in relationship to species has been wholly updated to address this comment and to bring further resilience to the tree planting across the site. The proposals have removes the Prunus and now include Scots Pine, Holly, Yew and Cedar and Small leaved lime. Albeit the percentage of Birch, Midland hawthorn and Hornbeam are higher than the recommended 10% species ratio, they bring a good mix of variety to the existing Reading Borough tree species and rich biodiversity value. This has been discussed and agreed with the Tree Officer over the phone on the 10th December 2020.
In any case, species can be agreed at a later date; the important issue at this point to the demonstration of sufficient landscaping.	Noted and agreed.
There is mention of ensuring foundations are as per NHBC guidance. This will be really important in relation to existing and new trees, particularly as the Arb Report indicates (para 3.6) a potentially clay soil bedrock. Looking at the British Geologic Survey Borehole maps, boreholes were done very close to the course (land immediately to the south) and these show predominantly clay. We want to avoid potential tree related subsidence claims in the future and the related felling or substantial reduction of large trees. If predominantly clay soils exist then buildings should be kept outside the potential zone of influence of existing and new trees, especially those high water demand species known to be implicated in subsidence claims. This is of importance looking into the future with climate change in mind given the predicted higher frequencies of hot summers which are what results in tree related subsidence cases increasing. E.g. for Oaks buildings should be 25m from the tree; for Limes 16.5m, for Ash 17.25m (with ref to water demand and zone of influence given in NHBC guidance) – these distances are the absolute minimum and I am aware from experience that Oak can still cause subsidence within the zone of influence when NHBC foundation guidance is exceeded hence keeping them outside this zone is preferable than within the zone, even to NHBC foundation depth which only. In relation to new trees, this could be considered when new planting is devised in detail.	The proposed tree planting has now been laid out considering the zone of influence relative to NHBC Chapter 4.2.
When detailed landscape plans are submitted at a later planning stage, the applicant should be aware that we will expect a biosecurity statement in relation to the sourcing of all plant and wood material; biosecurity forming part of our 2020 Tree Strategy.	Noted and this point will be incorporated into a specification note on the drawing.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION COMMENTS	
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL CONSULTATION COMMENT	LANDSCAPE RESPONSE RELATIVE TO THE REVISED PROPOSALS AND SUBMISSION
DATED 08 DECEMBER 2020 REGARDING OPEN SPACE	
We anticipate a significant impact on neighbouring communities, as this application is for a new relatively intensive development, that will effectively urbanise a site that currently is high quality open space, because of the landscaped setting through which the golf course meanders. In terms of its existing landscape contribution, it brings the green belt right into an residential suburb. Open space has more than recreational use, and the intensification of residential development has costs for the existing community in terms of loss of visual amenity, loss of peace and quiet, loss of access to wildlife, biodiversity and climate change costs.	The site is designated as Green Belt and as such this statement is incorrect. It is a private recreational space. The landscape and visual effects of the proposed development are set out in the LVIA ES Chapter as submitted with the application. The finds of which remain unchanged in the re-submission. In addition to the LVIA and the landscape chapter of the DAS, we draw attention to the engagement of GLVIA 3 para 5.37, second bullet point, which states that: <i>“the contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character.”</i>
Because the development site is large, it has the potential to provide high-quality residential accommodation within this beautiful landscaped setting, with access to the countryside, which should benefit not only the new residents but also neighbouring communities. In our view, the part of the site brought forward to Reading Borough Council for development does not achieve this. It is inadequate reassurance that the rest of the site, within South Oxfordshire and outside the RBC Planning area, will provide the leisure and landscape	There is no reliance on the land in SODC to provide the leisure and landscape. The landscape section of the DAS documents the proposed landscape strategy in terms of Public Open Space (POS) and tree planting.
We have noted in the past that there is: - Insufficient public open space easily accessible to the rest of the neighbourhood – this remains the case - No provision of Local Areas of Play (LAPS) – we agree that a single Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) should be provided instead - No provision of Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) – we agree with the applicant that this should be provided off-site and not within the development - SUDS should be situated well away from play area and should not be included as public open space – this remains the case	The landscape section of the DAS sets out (in response to each of the points opposite): - That the proposed development exceeds the policy requirement in terms of POS across this site to serve the development; - A single LEAP is proposed in the central open space; - A contribution to provide a MUGA off site was agreed during the pre-app process, as it was agreed that this type of ‘urban’ feature would not be appropriate for this site; - The POS calculation wholly excludes the SUD areas. The detail design of these is to be reviewed by RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) but there are also opportunities for interaction with these features as a positive landscape feature in their own right.
As we have said before, it is important to note that new residents will require access to both private and public open space. Gardens are private open space, and, while important to families, do not fulfil the infrastructure needs for community recreation. Private gardens, circulation space (other than public rights of way), and parking do not contribute to recreational public open space, and should be excluded from on-site provision.	As set out in the landscape chapter of the DAS, the private garden spaces have not been included in the POS calculation. The POS calculations are based wholly on that in the public realm.
We have also requested before that new adopted rights of way that recognise current use need to link Bugs Bottom (Hemdean Bottom) (Reading) with Kidmore End Road (Reading), via Highdown Bottom (South Oxon) and Cucumber Wood (South Oxon). These rights of way should retain their ‘accessible countryside’ character, allowing recreational walking that links Bugs Bottom with Chalkhouse Green, Emmer Green and Sonning Common.	There are no proposals to alter the accessible countryside character of the existing Public Rights of Way.
Clearly this development will be liable to CIL contributions, but not including a MUGA (and possibly no LEAP) will therefore attract S106 funding in addition to CIL.	Noted and it was agreed during the pre-app process that contributions would be made regarding the provision of a MUGA.
DATED 11TH MARCH 2021 REGARDING OPEN SPACE	
The planting notes are generally acceptable although the British Standards referred to are outdated. BS4034:1989 has been withdrawn and BS3882 should be 2015 not 2007; It is appropriate no to refer to BS8545:2014 ‘Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape. Recommendations’; Biosecurity statement should be provided in relation to the suppliers to be used.	This has been addressed in the revised drawing D2743 Reading Golf Club L_103 Tree Plan revision 11.
It is noted that the majority minimise potential conflicts (subsidence) with new dwellings, however there are a few locations where this is not avoid hence, as with existing trees, foundation type will need careful consideration.	This has been reviewed and addressed in the revised drawing D2743 Reading Golf Club L_103 Tree Plan revision 11, in relation to trees opposite to plot 121-130, south of plot 130 and the east of plot 162.
Whilst I appreciate that 1000 trees are intended for Cucumber woods, these are in the SODC area hence do not address our policies or canopy cover targets for the RBC area. In addition, although it is not stated, I would assume these 1000 ‘trees’ will be small whips. Their environmental benefit will be limited for many years and it is extremely likely that, as with most whip planting, a significant portion will not establish and survive or remain long term to become nature trees. There is reliance on the out-of-Borough ‘tree’ planting in Cucumber woods – comments on this above apply.	For this particular site, a bespoke solution to address the RBC Tree Strategy has been taken. Whilst the compensatory tree planting to address the shortfall of replacement planting lies outside of the administrative boundary, the benefits of tree planting does not simply stop at administrative boundaries. There is a long tradition of ‘borrowing the landscape’ in design terms. There are significant benefits of planting a new woodland adjacent to Cucumber Wood, at the head of a valley landscape that extends into Reading and there will be indirect benefits to the Borough through planting in this location. As with any planting, there will be some losses and over time and the woodland would need to be selectively thinned to ensure the even development of the tree canopy. There is an opportunity for this woodland to be a future ancient woodland and therefore an extension to Cucumber Wood. Furthermore, this planting will benefit from active management to ensure its successful maturation, this in a location which is visible from the neighbouring Public Rights of Way and from the dwellings that back on to the golf course. As with the planting of any tree, their environmental benefit, with positive maintenance and management, will only be fully realised in the medium to long term.
It should be noted that the tree number to be removed stated is not consistent with the Arb document.	This has been addressed in this revised DAS.

1.0

LANDSCAPE BASELINE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This landscape DAS has been prepared following an analysis of the Site and its surrounding context. A review of the Local Plan policies, landscape related designations and landscape character, alongside the physical elements of the Site, including topography, woodland, vegetation and visual amenity, which together influence the landscape constraints and opportunities and which collectively have informed the landscape vision for the Site.

This document has been subsequently updated to address officers’ comments dated the 21st September, 8th December 2020 and 11th March 2021.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The Site forms part of the southern section of the wider area of Reading Golf Course and occupies the area wholly within Reading Borough Council administrative area. It is therefore bound by the wider Golf Course to the north; Kidmore End Road, with dwellings on Chalgrove Way and beyond to the east; Emmer Green Primary School, Emmer Green Play Fields and retirement homes on Lyefield Court to the south; and dwellings along Eric Avenue and Highdown Hill Road to the west.

The Site comprises the highly managed and designed southern section of the 18-hole Reading Golf Club and contains a series of predominantly linear treebelts and individual trees which define the fairways.

There are 320 trees or groups of trees on or near the Site. Of these, 11 are high quality (category A) and comprise English oak and Scots pine; 119 are moderate quality (category B); 174 are low quality (category C) and 16 are unsuitable for retention quality (category U).

Some boundaries are vegetated and comprise clipped, intermittent hedgerows and treebelts, while some are more open to residential gardens, allowing views over the Golf Course. Trees within the Site are both deciduous and evergreen and the entire Site is covered by an Area Tree Preservation Order (reference number TPO 4/18).

Under the Emerging Local Plan Policy EN12 a Green Link is proposed north and south and east to west across the Site. However, the Site is not designated as open space, nor is it publicly accessible.

The Site is readily influenced by the existing surrounding built form and is not accessible by the general public, except for paid members. It is a manicured landscape on the settlement fringe and is distinctly different from the rural landscape beyond.

Refer to Figure 1.1 - Viewpoint Location Map and site photos which illustrate the existing Site landscape.

1.3 LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

The eastern section of the Site is identified as a proposed allocated Site for residential development in the Adopted Local Plan 2019 (Policy CA1b).

With the exception of the Area Tree Preservation Order covering the entire Site, there are no other landscape related designations that cover the Site. A small linear portion at the northern edge of the Site is identified as Local Wildlife Site / Local Nature Reserve in the current Local Plan and is connected to the wider areas through a network of green links through the residential area.

Under the Adopted Local Plan Policy (EN13) Major Landscape Features are identified to the north of the Site adjacent to Crawshay Drive. However, it is a relatively small area and mainly comprises a dense area of trees and shrubs.

There are a number of landscape designations present in the wider study area beyond the Site. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies approximately 1km to the north and 2km to the west; the Historic Park and Garden of Caversham Park lies to the south-east beyond the intervening built form; Surley Row Conservation Area lies to the south, again, beyond the intervening built form. In addition, Clayfield Copse Local Nature Reserve is located to the east. The Site does not form a role in the setting to these landscape related designations.

Areas of Ancient Woodland and Replanted Woodland are present in the landscape to the north (namely Cucumber Wood) within the wider Golf Course.

There are a series of Listed Buildings scattered throughout the townscape of the study area and include Old Grove House (Grade II*) and The Barn (Grade II) at Highdown Hill Road which are the closest to the Site. There is limited inter-visibility between the Site and these Listed Buildings (and where their setting is predominantly informed by dwellings).

1.4 SITE TOPOGRAPHY

The natural topography of the Site gently slopes from 85m AOD around the existing Golf Club House towards to the northern section of the Golf Course to approximately 75m AOD around the wooded area at the north-eastern tip.

The natural topography of the Site has been modified in places to provide level surfaces at the tee boxes alongside a series of bunkers and associated mounds, resulting in a series of uncharacteristic hummocks across the natural profile.

1.5 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SUMMARY AND PERCEPTUAL QUALITIES

The Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (BLCA) was prepared by LUC for the Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU).

The BLCA defines fifty-five character areas, however, the Site sits within the Urban Area of Reading, consequently it was not assessed further.

Within the study area, the land use can be broadly split north and south, with that to the north being mixed farmland, and the south being settled in irregular urban grids associated with the northern edge of Reading.

The landform undulates with a series of dry valleys flowing north, north-south and

east-west; and where the skyline is either formed by built form in the proximity to the settlement edge, or by trees.

The Golf Course, a man-made and manicured landscape, comprising amenity sports grass, reflecting the function of the Golf Course on the settlement edge and creates a transitional, fringe landscape, with a strong contrast between the rural field patterns beyond to the north and the suburban edge to the south. Mature trees set out in both linear arrangements and groups define the greens and are scattered through the Golf Course and on the Site boundaries.

The Site is readily influenced by the existing settlement edges to the east, south and west. Buildings in close proximity to the Site are predominantly two storey in height, with occasional three storey apartment blocks. Land uses are predominantly residential, interspersed with a school, play area, local shops and facilities and a series of green space *in the local area*.

1.6 SUMMARY OF BASELINE VISUAL ASSESSMENT

A visual assessment of the Site was carried out in February and December 2019, with additional Site visits carried out in January and March 2020 to address Officer’s comments. A full assessment of visual effect is set out in the Environmental Statement submitted with the Application.

The Site does not lie within a strategic viewing corridor as identified in policy; nor it is visible from a scenic viewpoint identified on the Ordnance Survey map.

The Site forms a discrete part of the settlement edge fabric, but where the vegetation both along the Site boundaries and within the Site are discerned.

Due to the combination of intervening built form and vegetation, views of the Site are limited to the immediate local environs and therefore a small geographic area. Open views of the Site occur from the rear elevations of the residential receptors which bound the Site immediately to the east, south and west. Open and partial views of the Site occur from the receptors using the road corridors immediately adjacent to the Site, such as Kidmore End Road, Brooklyn Drive, Eric Avenue.

The character and amenity of the views are informed by the vegetated Site boundaries, the Club House, Green Keepers accommodation and the greens of the Golf Course, often set in the context of the built form of the settlement edge beyond and wooded backdrop of Cucumber Wood Ancient Woodland to the north.

Views beyond the immediate Site environs are predominantly truncated, or where the location of the Site is difficult to perceive, due to the combination of undulating topography, built form and the layers of vegetation within the settlement to the east, south and west; and topography and vegetation to the north.



PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT 1
VIEW LOOKING SOUTH-EAST FROM THE EDGE OF SETTLEMENT ALONG HIGHDOWN HILL ROAD.



PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT 2
VIEW LOOKING SOUTH EAST FROM THE NORTH-WESTERN CORNER OF THE SITE.



PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT 3
VIEW LOOKING NORTH FROM THE EMMER GREEN PLAY FIELDS.



PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT 4
VIEW LOOKING WEST AT KIDMORE END ROAD INTO THE BACK GATE OF THE SITE.



PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT 5
VIEW LOOKING WEST FROM THE EASTERN CORNER OF THE SITE IN FRONT OF THE CLUB HOUSE.



FIGURE 1.1 - VIEWPOINT LOCATION MAP (FABRIK, 2019)



PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT 6
VIEW LOOKING NORTH-WEST INTO THE SITE ENTRANCE AT KIDMORE END ROAD



PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT 7
VIEW LOOKING WEST FROM THE NORTH-EASTERN BOUNDARY OF THE SITE.

2.0

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

2.1

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL CONSTRAINTS

The landscape and visual baseline assessment, alongside the review of planning policy and landscape character guidance have been instrumental in understanding the landscape constraints and opportunities of the Site, which are defined as follows:

- A proposed 'Green Link' passing through the Site relative to Adopted Local Plan 2019 Policy EN12;
- The area to the north eastern edge of the Site is identified for Biodiversity Interest. Combined with the point above, there is potential to create a green corridor to enhance the biodiversity value of the Site to address Local Plan Policy EN12;
- Careful selection of *tree species in reference to Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy 2020, to respond to the climate change issue and also* to provide a biodiversity link through the Site to the wider context as outlined in the Local Plan policies;
- Open space is to be provided according to Local Plan policies (which rely on the Fields in Trust Guidance) relative to developments over 50 dwellings;
- *There are 320 trees or groups of trees on or near the Site.* The blanket TPO Designation, the retention of the most significant existing trees, refer to Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report, which assesses the existing trees based on their condition, quality and value in order to inform the removal or retention of trees, hence identify the design opportunities and constraints for the development;
- The demolition of the existing clubhouse;
- The natural topographic profile across the Site is gently sloping and is therefore not a constraint to develop;
- To create a positive interface with the landscape to the north and create opportunities for a connected and comprehensive green infrastructure;
- The opportunity for woodland planting off-site.

Refer to Figure 2.1 - Landscape Opportunities and Constraints Plan.

LEGEND

	SITE BOUNDARY
	ALLOCATED DEVELOPMENT AREA IN LOCAL PLAN (90 - 130 DWELLINGS)
	EXISTING CLUBHOUSE TO BE DEMOLISHED
	TREE CATEGORY A AND IMPORTANT TREES (IRRESPECTIVE OF CATEGORY)
	TREE CATEGORY B
	TREE CATEGORY C
	TREE CATEGORY U
	EXISTING GRAVEL TRACKS
	APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF GREEN LINK THROUGH THE SITE (LOCAL PLAN POLICY EN12)
	BIODIVERSITY INTEREST (LOCAL PLAN POLICY EN12)
	ANCIENT WOODLAND (CUCUMBER WOOD)
	APPROXIMATE ALIGNMENT OF EXISTING BELOW GROUND FOUL WATER PIPELINE
	EMMER GREEN PLAY FIELDS
	GROVE ROAD ALLOTMENTS
	1-2 STOREY BUILDINGS
	2 STOREY BUILDINGS
	3 STOREY BUILDINGS



FIGURE 2.1 – LANDSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS PLAN (FABRIK, 2020)

3.0

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

3.1

LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

The overarching landscape concept responds to the Site conditions, constraints and opportunities. *It also aims to address the climate change and adaptation issues by proposing a suitable mixture of tree species and planting throughout the scheme.*

The landscape concept provides a consolidated central green core to the Site, located on a green spine, which responds to Policy EN12 and which provides the opportunity for a new spine of trees through the core of the Site.

The proposal is driven primarily by the retention of the most significant existing trees (refer to Aboricultural and Planning Integration Report) within and along the boundaries of the Site and the provision of a Green Link as identified in the Local Plan Policy. The proposed high quality development parcels are sensitively located to minimise the impacts to the trees while allowing space for new tree planting to enhance the biodiversity as required in the Local Plan and Policy CC: Adaptation to climate change *and in line with the Tree Strategy 2020 sets out by Reading Borough Council.*

It is acknowledged that a 3:1 ration is recommended in the Reading Tree Strategy 2020, however, unlike developments in typical brown field or green field sites, there are 320 trees or tree groups already exist on Site, and effectively 189 of them are proposed to be retained (131 no. of trees or groups of trees are proposed to be removed). The masterplan layout has been influenced by the tree retention, the zone of influence of the future anticipated rooting zone associated with that particular tree specie and their shading, therefore, the density of the trees (consider both the retained and the proposed) are relatively high in comparison to the surrounding areas, and has utilised the full spacial potential within the public realm areas.

The Green Link combines the existing and proposed green infrastructure and sweeps across the centre of the Site from the east to the north. *The design intent is that the open space network, including a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP), natural and amenity green space, centred around the existing trees, which forms part of the landscape features of the Site.*

A footpath connection to Emmer Green School is also provided at the south of the Site as part of the Green Link.

With the landscape primary located in the centre of the Site, it provides the opportunities for the proposed built form to back onto the existing settlement edge.

Refer to Figure 3.1 - Landscape Concept Plan.

LEGEND

	SITE BOUNDARY
	EXISTING TREE - CATEGORY A
	EXISTING TREE - CATEGORY B
	EXISTING TREE - CATEGORY C
	EXISTING TREE - CATEGORY U
	CENTRAL GREEN SPINE
	PRIMARY OPEN SPACE
	SUDS / ATTENUATION
	FOOTPATH CONNECTION TO EMMER GREEN SCHOOL
	DEVELOPMENT PARCEL



FIGURE 3.1 – LANDSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN (FABRIK, 2020)

3.0

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

3.2 LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN INTENT

At this outline stage, the indicative Site layout as shown opposite (which has informed the parameter plans) delivers the landscape concept and has been co-ordinated with the landscape design intent. It therefore comprises a varied network of green open spaces, which includes:

- The retention of the most significant trees across the Site; *There are 320 trees or groups of trees on or near the Site. 131 no. of them are proposed to be removed, which primarily comprise low quality trees and address the comments from the Tree Officer in relation to shading and the Zone of Influence (Zol);*
- The formation of a Green Link through the Site, connecting east and west and south to Emmer Green Primary School in accordance with Policy EN12;
- A central 'green hub' as a pocket park which provides space for both formal (through the provision of equipped play) and informal recreation and which allows interaction with nature.
- Small sensory gardens and amenity spaces located either sides of the Green Link amongst the development parcels, which can be naturally overlooked;
- The opportunity for planting 134 no. new large and medium sized tree species, *primarily selected from the tree families outlined in Appendix 4 Tree Strategy 2020, and proposed* within the public realm in respond to Local Plan Policy CC3: Adaptation to climate change; and
- Creation of a series of attenuation basins across the Site in respond to Policy CC3: Adaptation to climate change. *Note that the attenuation basins do not form part of the Public Open Space calculation.*
- *Creation of green / wildflower verges along the main access road to provide biodiversity opportunities;*

Refer to Figure 3.2 - Indicative Site Layout prepared by Paul Hewett Architect (July 2020), Figure 3.2A - revised Site Layout prepared in December 2020 and the latest Site Layout shown in Figure 3.2B, including the changes adjacent to plot 52 - 66, prepared in May 2021.

LEGEND

-  EXISTING TREES (TO BE RETAINED)
-  PROPOSED TREES (IN PUBLIC REALM)
-  PROPOSED SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEM (TBC)
-  PROPOSED MAIN ACCESS ROAD WITH PAVEMENT
-  PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL ACCESS
-  PROPOSED EQUIPPED PLAY AREA



Fairfax

Fairfax (Reading) Ltd and Reading Golf Club Ltd

Scale: 1 : 1000 @ A1 Dm By: PJH Date: May '21

Drg No: 2054/PL.04 Rev G

Project: Land at:

READING GOLF CLUB

KIDMORE END ROAD,

EMMER GREEN, READING

Drawing Title:

SITE LAYOUT

Copyright: Paul J Hewett R.I.B.A. Chartered Architect

Paul Hewett R.I.B.A.

CHARTERED ARCHITECT

Paul Hewett BA(Hons)DipArch(Hons)R.I.B.A.

CHARTERED ARCHITECT

51 Foulds Drive : The Dell : Angmering : West Sussex : BN16 4HF

FIGURE 3.2 – INDICATIVE SITE LAYOUT (PAUL HEWETT ARCHITECT, JULY 2020)





FIGURE 3.2B- INDICATIVE SITE LAYOUT (PAUL HEWETT ARCHITECT, MAY 2021)

3.0

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

3.3 TREE STRATEGY INTENT

The key landscape principal is the retention, as far as possible, of the existing landscape framework of trees across the Site, including individual groups of trees, memorial trees and boundary hedges. *The outline proposals require the removal of 118 trees or groups of trees (131 trees in total) to allow the construction of dwellings, parking spaces and associated infrastructure. Of these, 24 trees are ‘B’ (moderate quality) category, i.e. 9, 16, 21, 37, 38, 95, 96, G138 (8 in group), G165 (3 in group), 175, 181, 190, 194, 201 & 253. The remainder are ‘C’ (low quality) category (96) or ‘U’ (unsuitable for retention quality) category (11).* Refer to Aboricultural and Planning Integration Report.

134 no. of native tree species are proposed across the Site (planted at a mix of 5m and 3m in height at day one) to provide a direct replacement for those lost (the majority of which are category C grade). The intention is that these will comprise both large and medium sized tree species *with various height*, creating a new tree framework to the Site, which will be evident from the immediate local environs.

The tree species proposed have taken into account of the findings on the Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy 2020 and their environmental merits towards biodiversity and climate change. The species are selected from a mixture of the families, including Sapindaceae, Betulaceae, Cupressacea, Rosaceae, Fagaceae, Pinaceae, Aquifoliaceae, Taxaceae and Malvaceae, and include the following species:

- *Acer campestre (Field maple)*
- *Alnus glutinosa (Common alder)*
- *Betula pendula (Silver birch)*
- *Calocedrus decurrens (Cedar)*
- *Carpinus betulus (Hornbeam)*
- *Crataegus laevigata (Midland hawthorn)*
- *Corylus avellana (Hazel)*
- *Fagus sylvatica (European beech)*
- *Ilex aquifolium (Holly)*
- *Pinus sylvestris (Scots pine)*
- *Quercus robur (English oak)*
- *Sorbus torminalis (Wild service tree)*
- *Taxus baccata (Yew)*
- *Tilia x cordata (Small leaved lime)*

The tree strategy has considered the following:

- The creation of a spine of trees through the centre of the site that reflects the linear character of tree planting associated with the golf course;
- Comments raised at consultation event, including the relocation of 4 no. of memorial trees;
- *The creation of a wide variety of tree species within the Reading Borough as set out in the Tree Strategy 2020. This to provide protection against pests and diseases spreading through particular varieties of trees, as well as supporting a greater range of fauna;*
- *The selection of native trees: Native trees generally support a greater number and diversity of wildlife than non-native trees and their association with wildlife have been built up over a longer period;*

- *The environmental benefits, such as reducing gas level in the atmosphere, intercepting rain and wind and providing habitat for wildlife; And the aesthetic benefits, such as enhancing the landscape feature of the Site and providing a new tree structure to the site and maintaining the longevity and variety of species across the site.;*
- National House Building Council chapter 4.2 regarding trees and foundation depths (i.e. Positioning trees at a distance away from buildings to minimise foundation depth) *and the mature tree height in relation to the water consumption and the zone of influence associated with the future rooting zone of the proposed treeS;*
- The position of the trees where their natural canopy can be realised.

Refer to Figure 3.4A - Tree retention, removal and proposal plan. *Figure 3.4B shows the latest tree retention, removal and proposals following the Tree Officer’s comments dated the 11th March 2021.*

Furthermore, an area to the west of Cucumber Wood, to the north of the Site in the wider golf course, has been identified as a receptor site for the creation of a new woodland area as compensation for the tree removals proposed within the Site. This area will accommodate approximately 1000 trees, whilst also providing strengthening of and extension to the existing woodland. *The trees proposed in this area will be a mixture of size and varies in height, to make an immediate impact but also allow thinning in the later stage. It aims to create a native, woodland in the wider landscape area, in contrast to the more formal soft landscape framework within the development parcels. This is envisaged to be actively managed to ensure its successful establishment.*

Whilst the compensatory tree planting to address the shortfall of replacement planting lies outside of the administrative boundary, the benefits of tree planting does not simply top at administrative boundaries. There is a long tradition of ‘borrowing the landscape’ in design terms. There are significant benefits of planting a new woodland adjacent to Cucumber Wood, at the head of a valley landscape that extends into Reading there will be indirect benefits to the borough by planting in this location. The planting structure of the woodland can be agreed as part of the clearance of conditions in terms of the species mix and the size of the planting. As with any planting, there will be some losses and over time the woodland would need to be selectively thinned to ensure the even development of the tree canopy. There is an opportunity for this woodland to be a future ancient woodland and therefore an extension to Cucumber Wood. Furthermore, the location of this planting will benefit from active management to ensure its successful maturation and in a location which is visible from the neighbouring public rights of way.

Refer to Figure 3.3 - Compensatory Tree Planting Plan.

LEGEND

SITE BOUNDARY

OWNERSHIP BOUNDARY

CUCUMBER WOOD ANCIENT WOODLAND

PROPOSED WOODLAND COMPENSATION PLANTING LOCATION

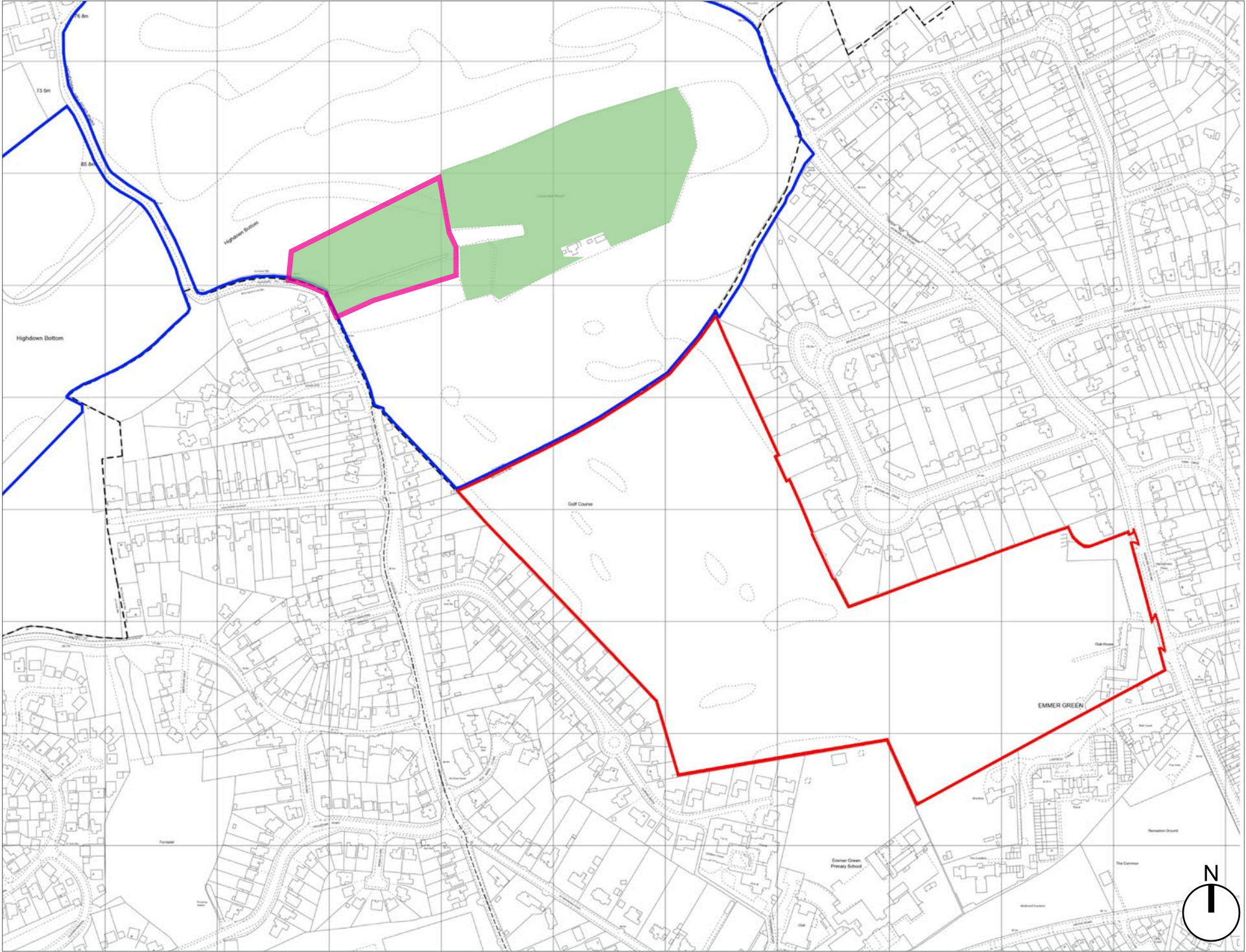


FIGURE 3.3 – COMPENSATORY TREE PLANTING PLAN (MAY 2020)



FIGURE 3.4 – TREE RETENTION, REMOVAL AND PROPOSALS PLAN (ARBORTRACK SYSTEMS LTD & FABRIK, MAY 2020)

THIS DIAGRAM HAS BEEN AMENDED TO REFLECT THE LATEST TREE PROPOSAL

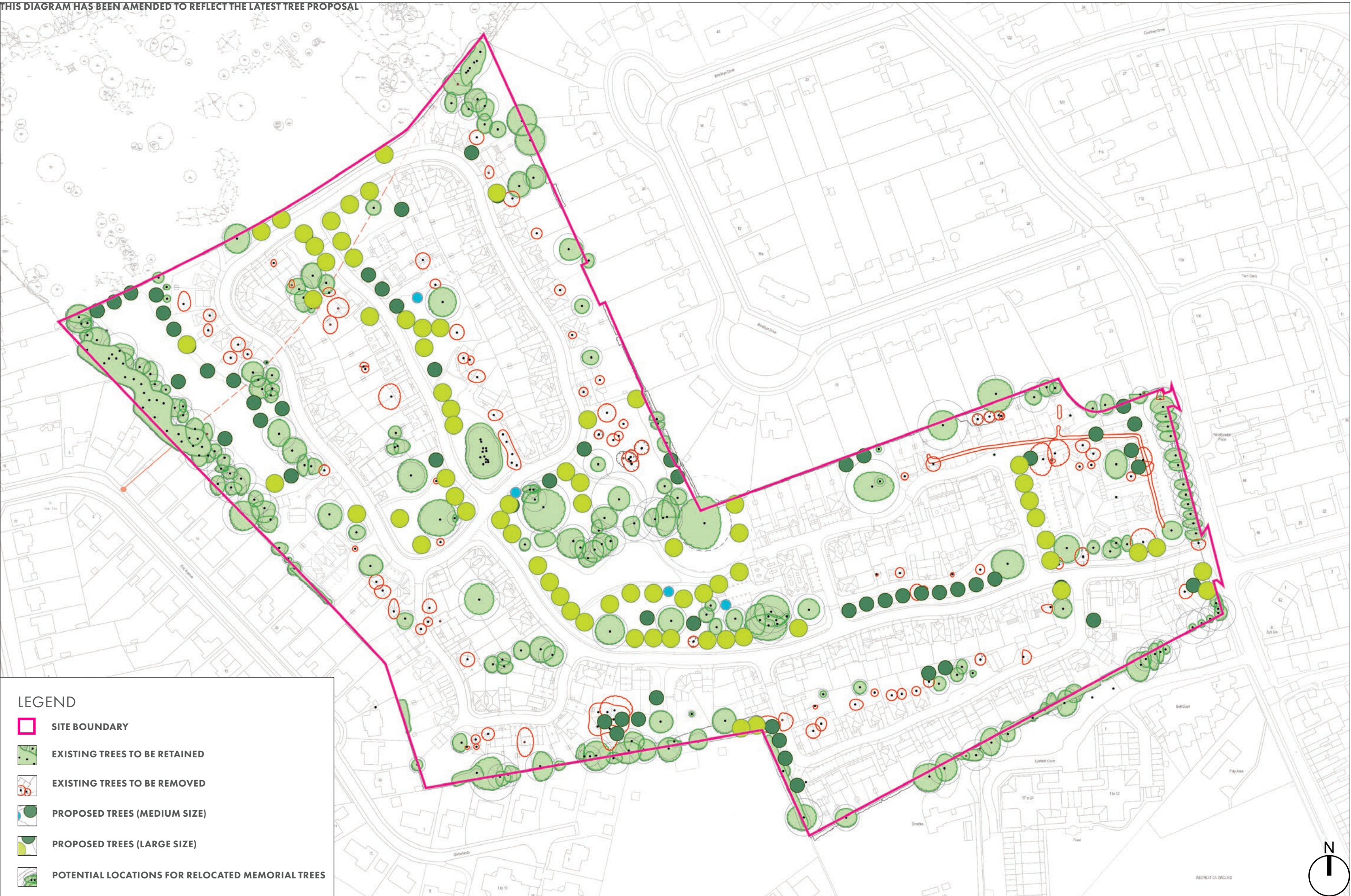


FIGURE 3.4A – TREE RETENTION, REMOVAL AND PROPOSALS PLAN (ARBORTRACK SYSTEMS LTD & FABRIK, DECEMBER 2020)

THIS DIAGRAM HAS BEEN AMENDED TO REFLECT THE LATEST TREE PROPOSAL



FIGURE 3.4B – TREE RETENTION, REMOVAL AND PROPOSALS PLAN (ARBORTRACK SYSTEMS LTD & FABRIK, MAY 2021)