

5.1 Landscape Objectives

Introduction

Currently the existing landscape at Wensley Road provides a disjointed and under utilised public space with little clarity on way-finding and connections to adjacent green spaces.

However there are many positive features to the site, namely that the green space features several existing mature Turkey Oaks which provide shade and habitat for many species.

As many of these mature trees will be retained as possible and succession planting will be implemented to ensure that the character of the space is maintained over time.

The space will be designed to be safe and accessible for all users as well as to promote improved access from the surrounding tower blocks into the central space.

The existing play provision will be consolidated and expanded to provide equipment for all ages.

We have established four guiding principles to the design, outlining the main aims of the landscape strategy.



Promoting good access from Wensley Road to existing green and active travel networks



Enhancing nature at Wensley Road through a nature recovery network and connected green corridors



Make Wensley Road a great place to live for families with safe connections from homes to greenspace



Create a fun and stimulating natural play space with activities for all ages

5.1 Landscape Objectives

1. Promoting good access from Wensley Road to existing green and active travel networks

Wensley Road sits between two landscape typologies; the site is peri urban and borders on a rural landscape.

Sitting just outside of the city centre the site has the potential to be incredibly well connected to both the urban centre and the wider natural landscape surrounding Reading.

The site benefits from its close proximity to Cycle Route R6: Meadway, Southcote & Coley Park to Reading Town Centre. Each of the Reading cycle routes terminates in central Reading, linking through a network of central cycle links to form a network encompassing the Reading Borough Council area and beyond.

We will look to strengthen these connections through an improved path network within the site, and signage and wayfinding at key node / orientation points.

-  Cycle route R6
-  Enhanced east / west connection through site between Fobney Island Nature Reserve and Cycle Route R6
-  Enhanced connectivity between site and Courage Park

Existing Access Routes through the Site



5.1 Landscape Objectives

2. Enhancing nature at Wensley Road through a nature recovery network and connected green corridors

The site is adjacent to some significant areas of green infrastructure within Reading, not least of which is the Fobney Island Nature Reserve. This is an area of significant ecological and habitat value.

The site will look to be a continuation of this biodiversity rich landscape and become a vital link in an expanded green network.

This will be achieved through creating a range of habitat types within the site. A more varied mix of native tree species will be introduced with both fruiting and flowering species. A more varied mix of grassland including wildflower meadow and species rich grassland will also be introduced.



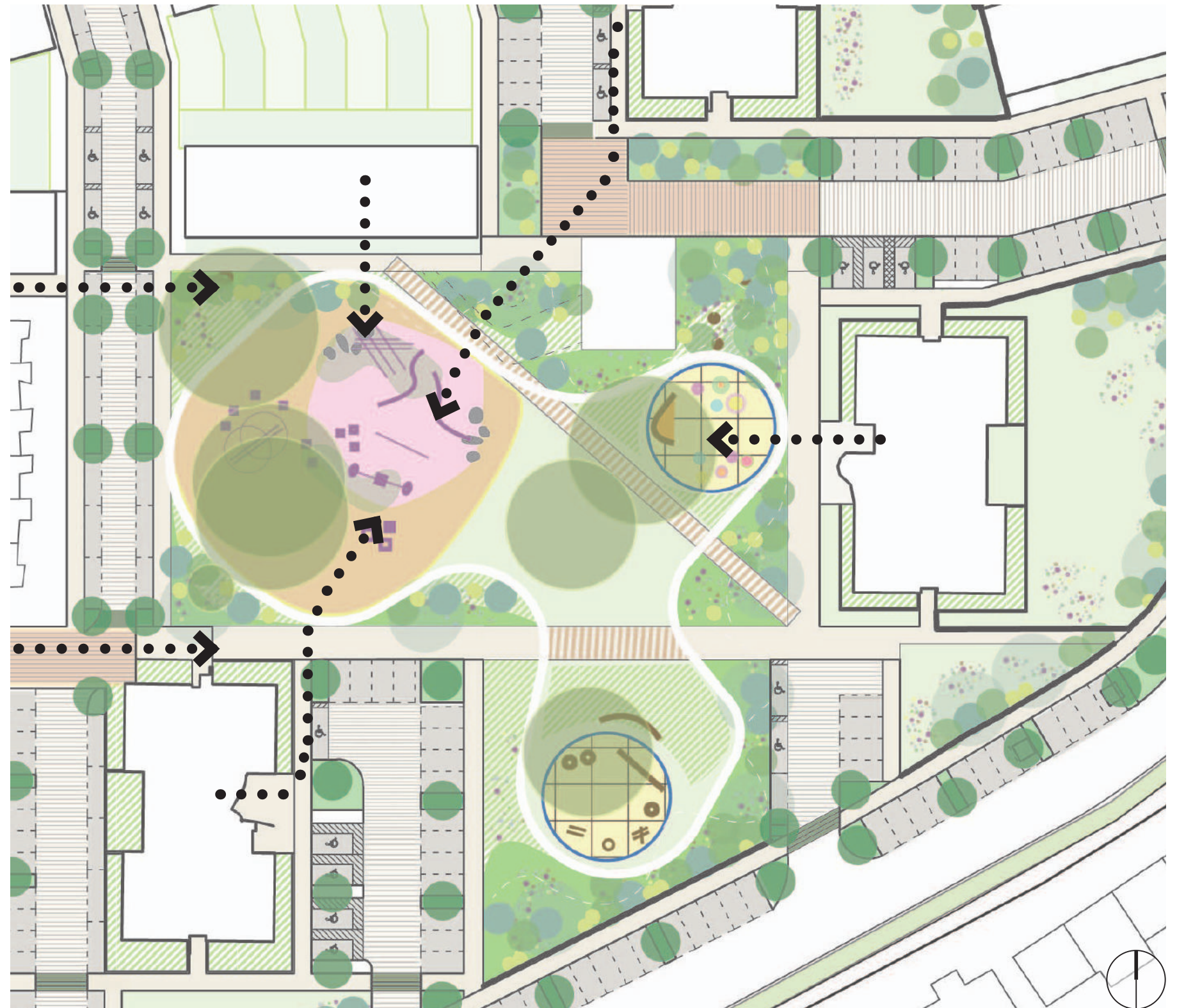
5.1 Landscape Objectives

3. Make Wensley Road a great place to live for families with safe connections from homes to greenspace

The existing greenspace at the centre of Wensley Road with its mature tree cover is already an excellent resource for the community.

We will look to strengthen it further through new planting and improved play facilities for all ages.

We will also improve its relationship to the homes by providing direct, safe, pedestrian priority connections between both the existing and new housing and the central greenspace.



Site accessibility diagram - not to scale

5.1 Landscape Objectives

4. Create a fun and stimulating natural play space with activities for all ages



5.2 Concept Landscape Masterplan

It is proposed to retain the existing landscape amenity space at the centre of the site, with new development located to overlook the space and improve casual surveillance.

Sport England's document "Active Design" outlines 10 key principles to promote environments that offer individuals and communities the greatest potential to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

The intention is to promote as many of the 'ten principles of active design' within the planning and execution of the improved public realm.

We will promote connected walking and cycling routes through clear signposting from the recreation network within the site.

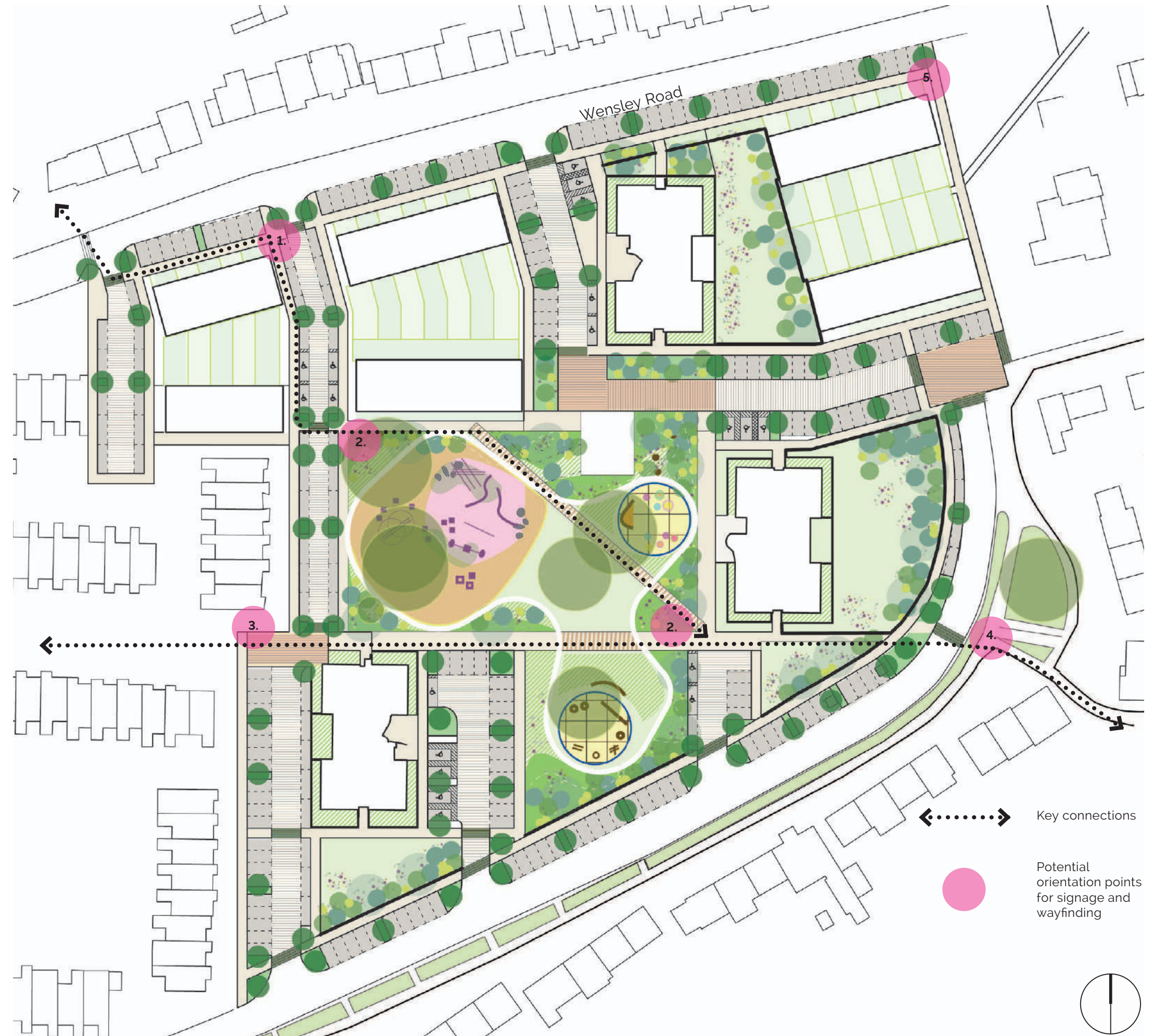
We will look to provide 'activity for all', through the introduction of a wide range of play opportunities, outdoor gym equipment for older children and adults, and perambulatory walking routes with seating for older people.

1. Towards Courage Park
2. Central Green space and wider route finding
3. Towards Cycle Route R6
4. Towards Holy Brook Trail and Fobney Island
5. Towards Coley Park



» Bespoke signage and wayfinding elements

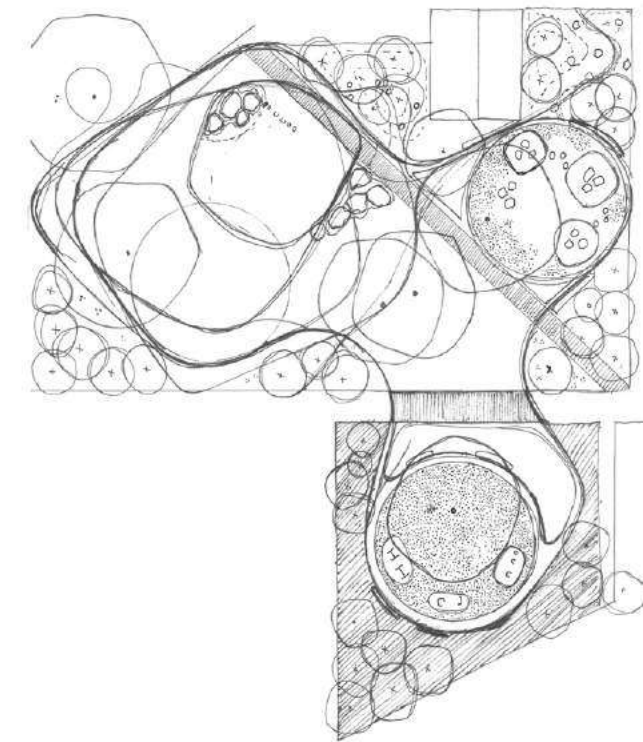
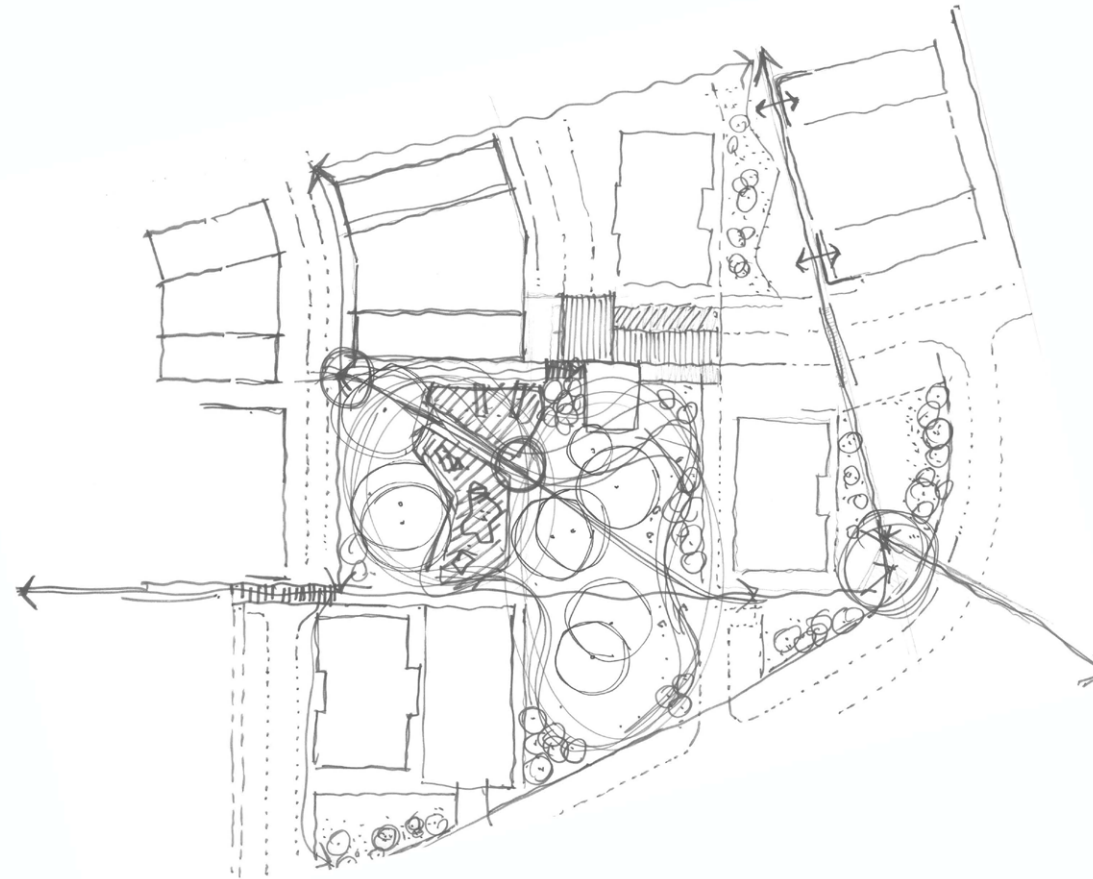
Concept Landscape Plan - not to scale »



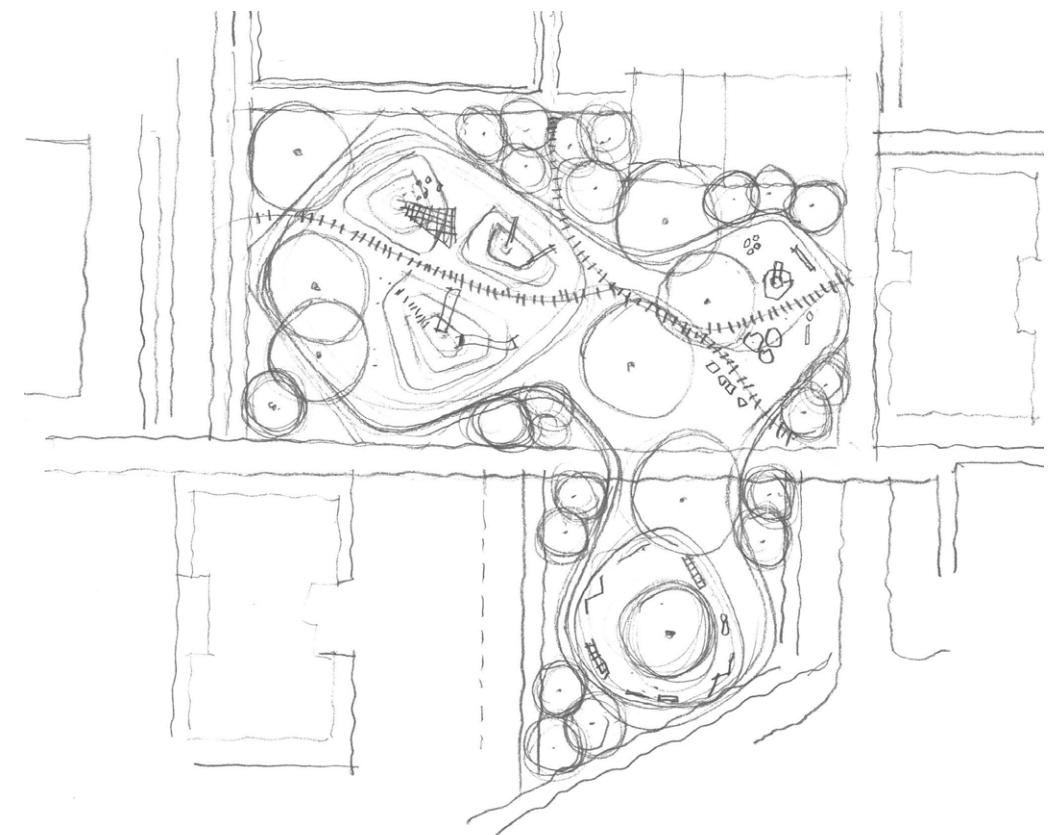
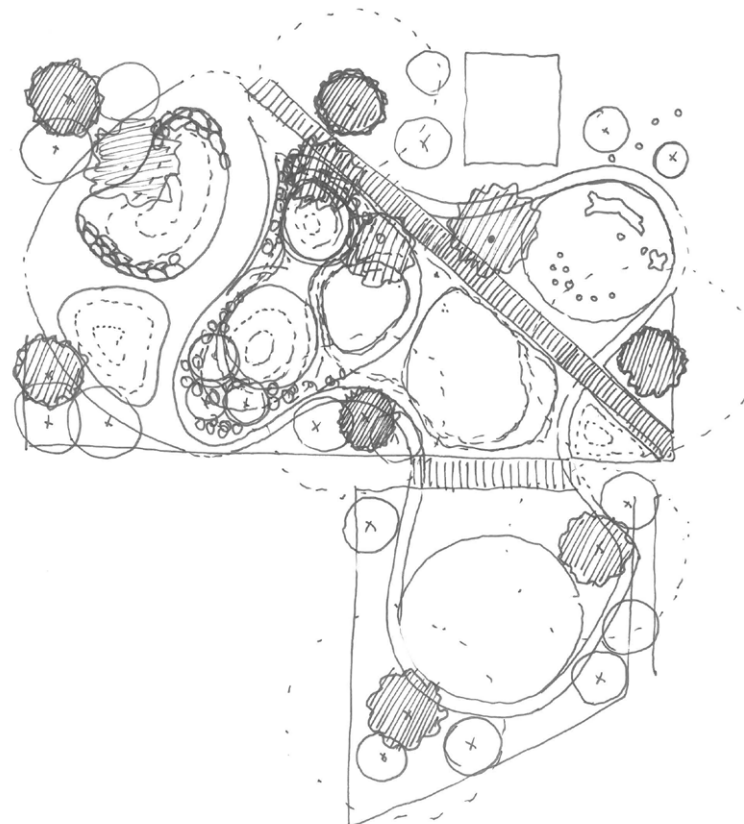
5.3 Design Development

The design has developed in response to feedback received through the pre-application process.

Accessibility into the site has been a key focus of the design development, therefore the design has had multiple iterations ensuring that access is thoroughly considered. The design has also developed to include consideration of the existing tree provisions, local context, and biodiversity aims.



September 2019



January 2020

5.4 Landscape Masterplan

The existing site already has a number of positive landscape attributes, including a centrally located landscape amenity space containing play facilities and a mature tree structure.

The design intends to knit together the incoherent existing spaces to create a vibrant central green space featuring exciting natural play and biodiverse planting. The character of the site and adjacent green spaces will be retained and enhanced in this proposal.

Streets will be reoriented to accommodate pedestrian crossings and enable access into the site.

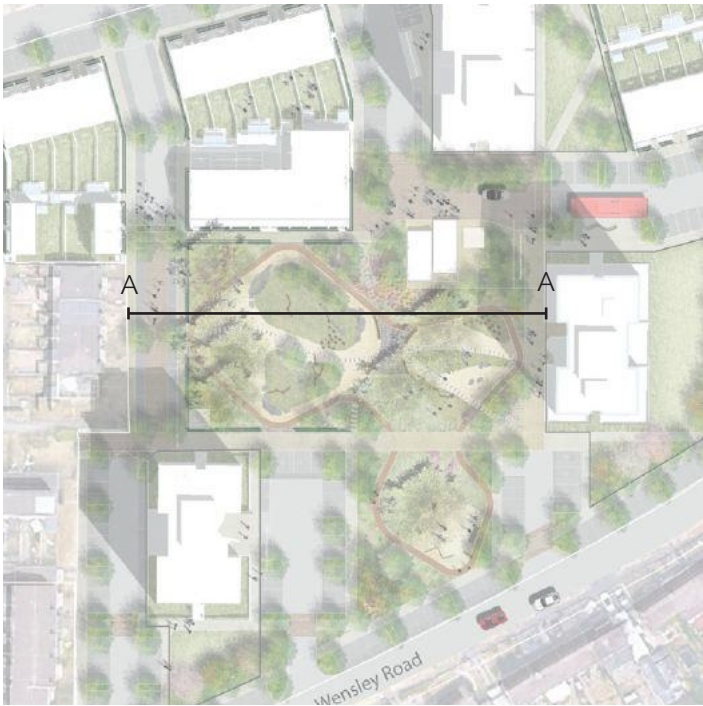
Proposed Landscaping

- ① Shared surface streets
- ② 5 -11 year old's play area
- ③ Under 5's play area
- ④ Seating area
(inc. existing memorial benches)
- ⑤ Outdoor gym
- ⑥ Perimeter exercise trail
- ⑦ New street trees
- ⑧ Native woodland buffer
- ⑨ Private rear gardens



5.5 Proposed Site Sections

Section A-A



Key Plan



Site Section A-A - not to scale

5.5 Proposed Site Sections

Section B-B



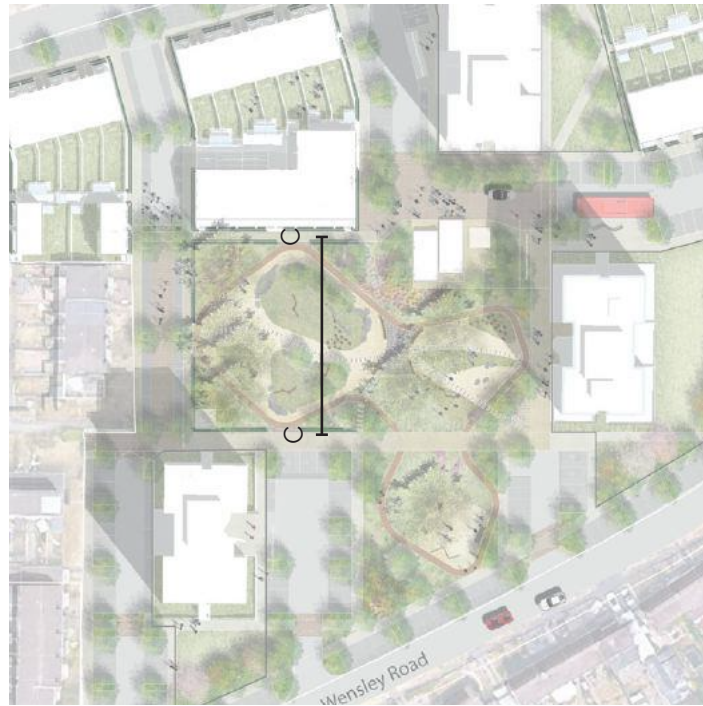
Key Plan



Site Section B-B - not to scale

5.5 Green Space Cross Sections

Section C-C



Key Plan



Site Section C-C - not to scale

5.6 Play Strategy

It is proposed to enhance the existing play space within the central green space by creating a modern, biophilic facility that relates better to the site's landscape features and caters for a wider range of ages.

In particular, we will provide play opportunities for under 5 year old's which is currently lacking on site. We will seek to make the space multi-generational by providing landscape features that are stimulating for older people as well.

An improved 5 – 11 year old's play area will be provided which will utilise topography to create exciting and imaginative play experiences. A new under 5's doorstep play area will also be provided. This will be located close to the new bus stop at the centre of the site, and will be easily accessible by families either living in the adjacent flats or walking through the site. It will be in keeping with the natural character of the landscape beneath the existing oak trees and will be designed to create natural and imaginative play experiences. A new outdoor gym will be provided in order to provide play opportunities for older children and adults, and to help promote healthy lifestyles within the area.

These spaces will be connected by a perimeter exercise loop which is fully off road, and connects with other key pedestrian routes within the development to ensure direct access to the play facilities from the adjacent housing.



1. Under 5's play



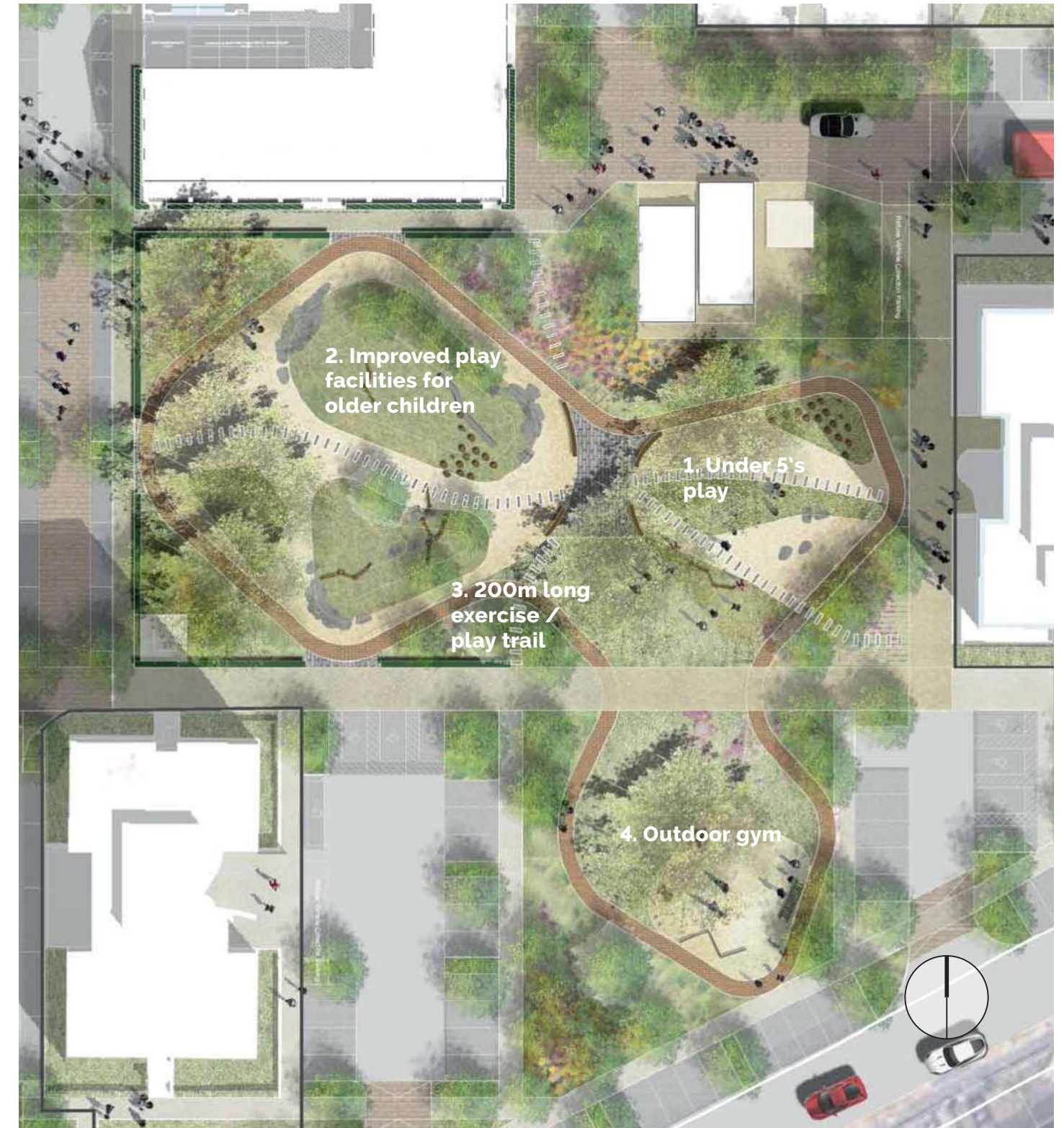
2. Improved play facilities for older children



3. 200m long exercise / play trail incorporating multi- generational activities



4. Outdoor gym



Central Green Space Play Strategy

5.7 MUGA & Pump Track Removal Rational

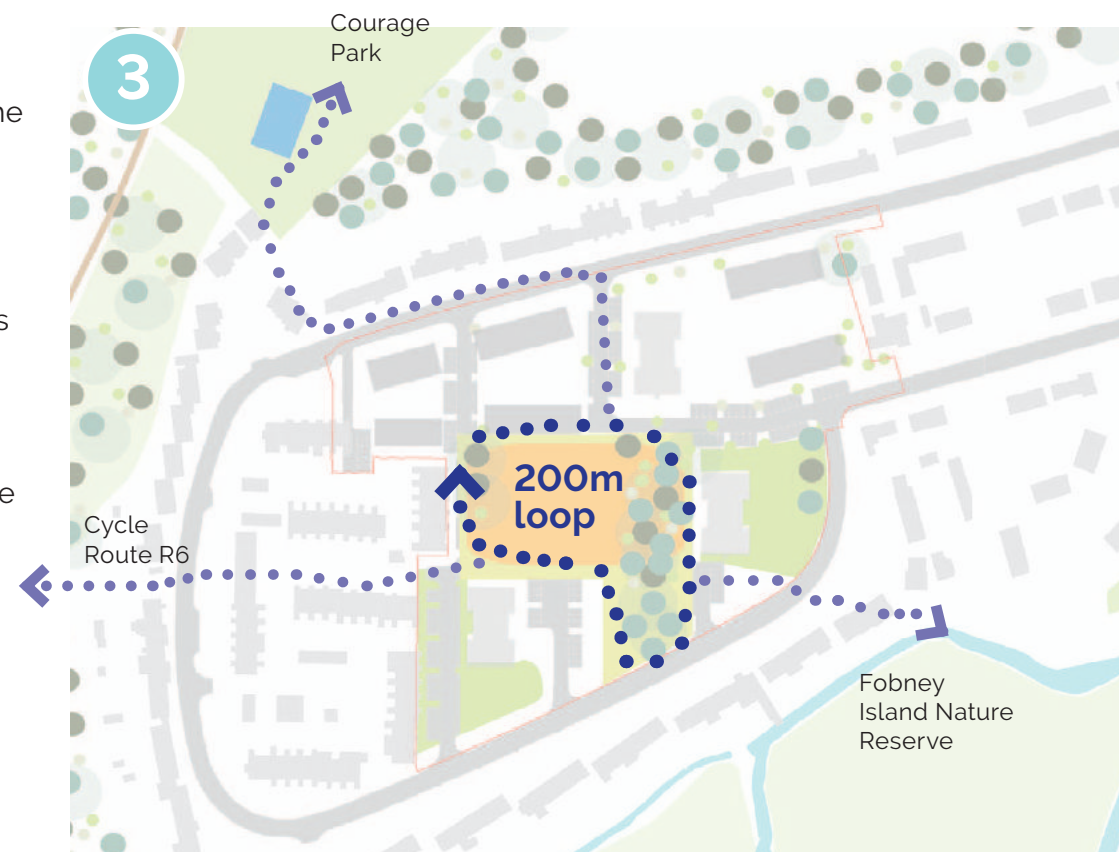
During the process of developing the landscape proposal, the existing play equipment on site was evaluated to determine whether it should be retained, reprovided or removed. This involved assessing what other play facilities are available in the local area, how accessible they are from the site as well as what types of facilities would be suitable on the site, owing to the proximity to existing dwellings.

This was also informed by feedback and conversations with local residents and Ward Councillors, who provided information in terms how frequently different equipment was used and whether there was a demand for other types of equipment not currently provided on site. In addition, this was also discussed at the pre-application meetings with the Natural Environment Officer and Parks Development Manager.

1. Based on Fields in Trust's recommended separation distances between a MUGA and habitable rooms, it is not feasible to re-provide the MUGA on site. Currently the MUGA is within 12m of the existing dwellings to the west of the site and the fencing surrounding the MUGA obstructs overlooking from the houses across the central green space.

2. To mitigate the loss of the MUGA on site the route to the to existing MUGA in nearby Courage Park will be reassessed for potential improvements to encourage greater use such as an improved crossing point and lighting.

3. Provide equivalent play on site e.g. outdoor gym, with better connections to wider networks based on Sport England's ten principles of active design.



MUGA Removal and Mitigation Strategy Diagrams

5.8 Greenspace Comparison

Existing Greenspace

The existing greenspace is under utilised and in places surrounded by parking rather than connected directly to residential blocks. At present the greenspaces with short mown grass offer limited amenities for residents. However, the central play space is a key feature with ample play amenities.

Proposed Green Space

Greenspace will be rendered more amenable through qualitative improvements in line with policies EN8 and EN9. These include the enhancement of play facilities for a wider range of ages, improved connection to housing, consideration of existing site topography and ecology and improved connection to adjacent green spaces and the wider green network.

Typology	Existing (m2)	Proposed (m2)
Public greenspace	11,275	4,378
Non-accessible / under used greenspace	2,039	-
Communal private greenspace	-	3,211
Private back gardens	-	1,832
Paths	3,071	3,463
Roads/parking	5,409	6,919
Built footprint	1,892	3,883



Existing Greenspace Diagram

Diagram Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing public greenspace
- Non-accessible / under used greenspace
- Roads / parking
- Buildings



Proposed Greenspace Diagram

Diagram Legend

- Site Boundary
- Proposed public greenspace
- Proposed potential private communal greenspace
- Proposed private gardens
- Roads / parking
- Buildings

5.9 Playspace Comparison

Existing Playspace

The existing play space includes a MUGA, a pump track and a play area with fixed equipment for older children.

Existing play space:

MUGA: 468m2
Playground: 915m2
Pump track: 732m2
Total: 2,115m2

Proposed Playspace: 3,808m2

We will utilise the full extent of the central greenspace and use its special woodland character to create an exciting range of play opportunities.

We will re-provide play for older children, whilst also providing play for toddlers and young children which is currently lacking.

Exercise opportunities for teenagers and adults could be provided in the form of a green gym. We will make this space multi- generational so that it can be used by people of all ages.



Existing Playspace Diagram

Diagram Legend

- Total = 1,952m2
- Pump track - 735m2
- MUGA - 302m2
- Play area - 915m2



Proposed Playspace Diagram

Diagram Legend

- Total playable landscape = 3,808m2
- Older children's play area
- Under 5's natural play
- Green gym area

5.10 Tree Strategy

Existing Tree Provision and Removals

We will deliver an overall net gain in the number of trees on site. This will look to retain as many of the existing high value trees as possible, as well as new, varied native tree planting.

The existing category A Turkish Oak and London Plane trees in the central green space will be retained.

Tree planting proposals will focus on the implementation of street trees, and new 'groups' of a variety of species which are disease resistant and drought tolerant. Specimen trees will also be selected to retain the character and habitat of the current landscape once mature trees begin to decline and need to be removed.



Tree Retention & Removal Diagram

Diagram Legend

- Retained
- Removals



Tree Retention & Reprovision Diagram

Diagram Legend

- Retained
- Reprovisions - groups
- Reprovisions - street trees
- Reprovisions - specimen trees

5.10 Tree Strategy

We recognise that the site has an excellent existing tree resource with a number of mature stands of London Plane and Turkey oak in particular. The stand of turkey oaks in the centre of the site are a unique landscape feature which contribute heavily towards the wooded character of the site, as well as having significant ecological and habitat value. We have sought to retain as many of the existing mature trees within the central greenspace as possible, and have integrated the play facilities within the trees.

Overall we aim to propose the planting of 184 new trees of a variety of species, selected to promote biodiversity and biosecurity, and ensure the longevity of the character of the space as a green ecologically rich development.

New street tree planting species will be selected to reflect the street hierarchy. Large monocultures will be avoided in order to create species diversity to help future proof against large tree losses through pests and disease. New tree planting will include native fruiting and flowering species to help enhance the site's biodiversity and habitat value. This will be the case for the new native woodland buffer planting at the perimeter of the site as well.

Due to the age of the existing Turkey oaks we have selected several locations for new large species to grow into maturity and maintain the character of the central space.

These trees will be planted amidst other species with shorter life spans, so that as the trees mature and take up more room, these smaller species will naturally be declining.

Street Trees



Liquidambar styraciflua



Quercus Palustris



Prunus padus



Carpinus betulus 'Frans fontaine'

Succession Planting



Quercus robur



Liriodendron Tulipifera

Companion Planting



Betula pendula



Sorbus aucuparia



Cercis canadensis



Amelanchier lamarckii



Betula nigra

Woodland Edge Planting



Betula pendula



Sorbus aucuparia



Ilex aquifolium



Pinus sylvestris



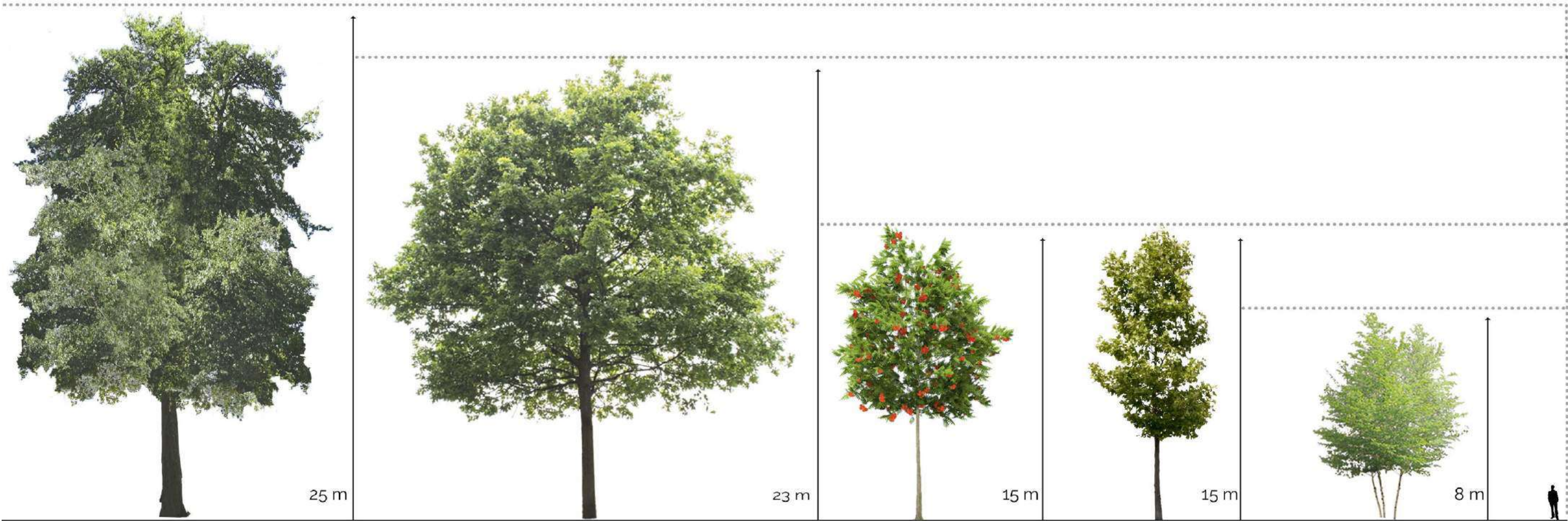
Existing Trees



Tree Strategy Diagram

5.10 Tree Strategy

- Key
- Existing trees
 - Succession planting
 - Companion planting
 - Street trees



Existing trees
Quercus cerris
Platanus x acerifolia

Succession planting, such as
Quercus robur will replace existing mature trees.

Woodland Edge planting
Sorbus
Betula pendula
Ilex aquifolium
Pinus sylvestris

Street trees
Liquidambar styraciflua
Quercus Palustris
Prunus padus
Carpinus betulus 'Frans

Lower level companion planting
Sorbus
Betula pendula
Cercis canadensis
Amelankier lamarckii

5.11 Planting Strategy

The planting strategy reflects the aims to create a biodiverse landscape through key plants. The plants chosen are those that partner naturally in oak woodlands.

This planting strategy will promote a self regulating system of low maintenance plants that blend well with the surrounding landscape to the south of the site.

Woodland planting



Hyacinthoides non-scripta



Deschampsia cespitosa



Hart's tongue fern



Dryopteris dilatata



Anemone nemorosa



Allium ursinum



Galanthus nivalis



Emorsgate W1 Woodland Seed Mix

Hedge Planting



Hornbeam hedge



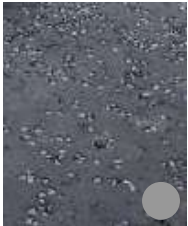
Planting Strategy Diagram

5.12 Material Palette

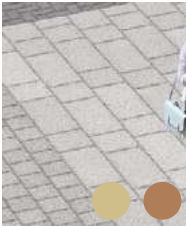
Robust materials will be selected to blend with the character of the landscape.

Where hard surface materials are required within the RPA's of existing trees, a Cellweb no dig construction build-up will be used. This will vary in thickness depending on whether it is trafficked by pedestrians or vehicles. The extent of the no dig areas will be agreed with the Arboriculturalist and Council Tree Officer.

Roads/Public Realm



Bitmac

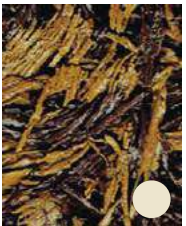


Concrete precast paving to shared surface areas

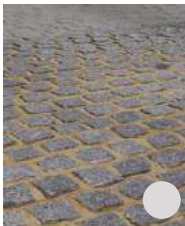
Central Greenspace/Play



Self binding gravel



Tiger mulch



Granite Sett paving



Materials Strategy Diagram

6.1 Building Impact Studies

Daylight, Sunlight & Overshadowing Assessment

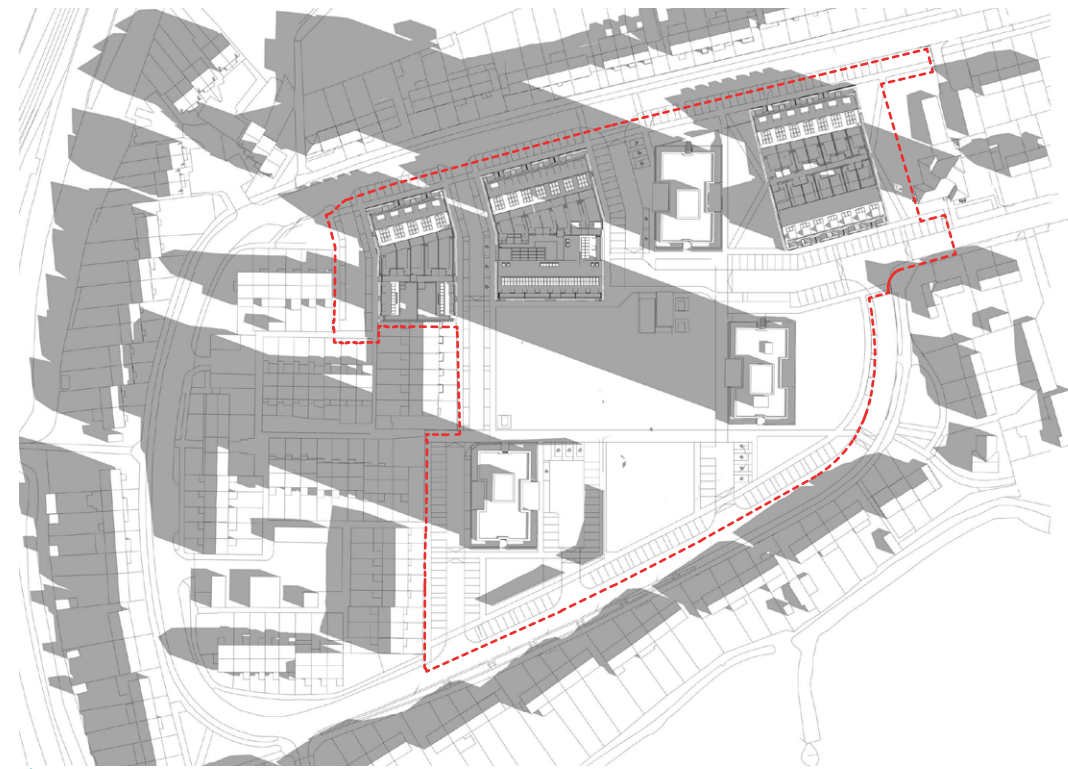
The proposed scheme has been carefully designed to provide future occupants with adequate daylight and sunlight levels throughout the year, with attention to not impact negatively on the natural daylight received by the neighbouring buildings.

A Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment has been prepared and submitted as part of the application. This assessment demonstrates that the impact of the proposed development on the existing properties is negligible.

Microclimate Assessment

The impact of the proposed development for the annual wind microclimate conditions has been assessed and a Microclimate Assessment has been prepared and submitted as part of this application.

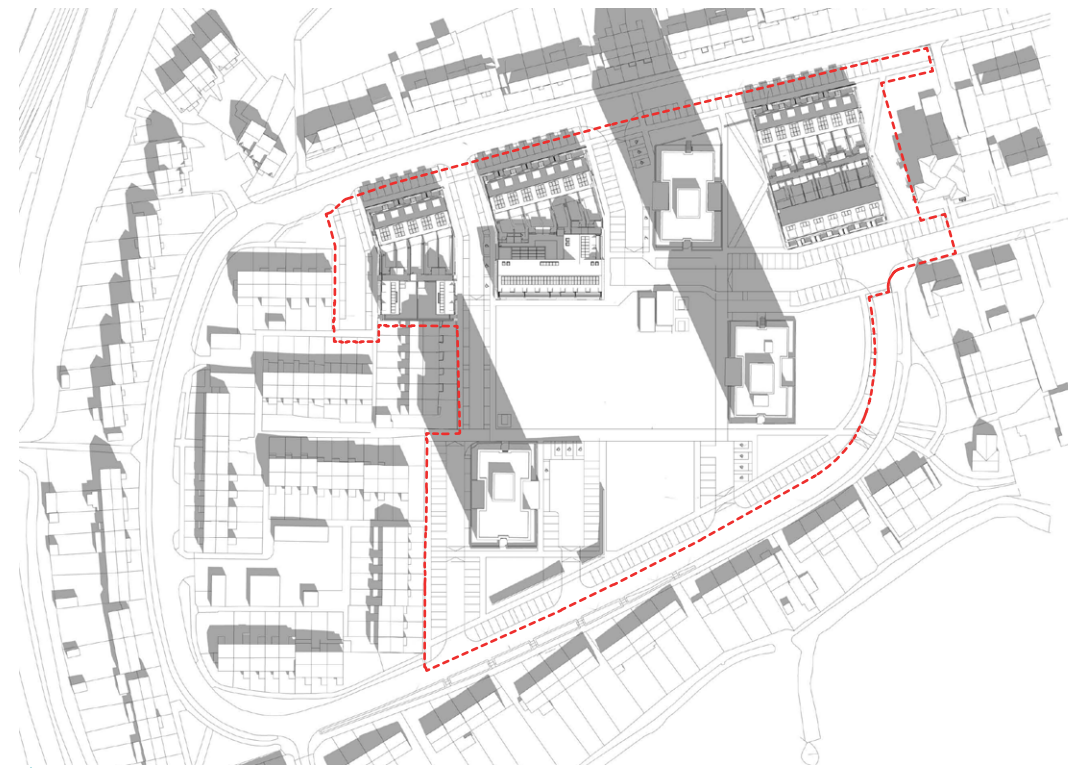
The assessment demonstrates that owing to the low height, massing and the location of the proposed development on the site, the wind conditions will not be worse than the existing and the design proposals, including the planting could potentially help to mitigate some of the existing issues on the site.



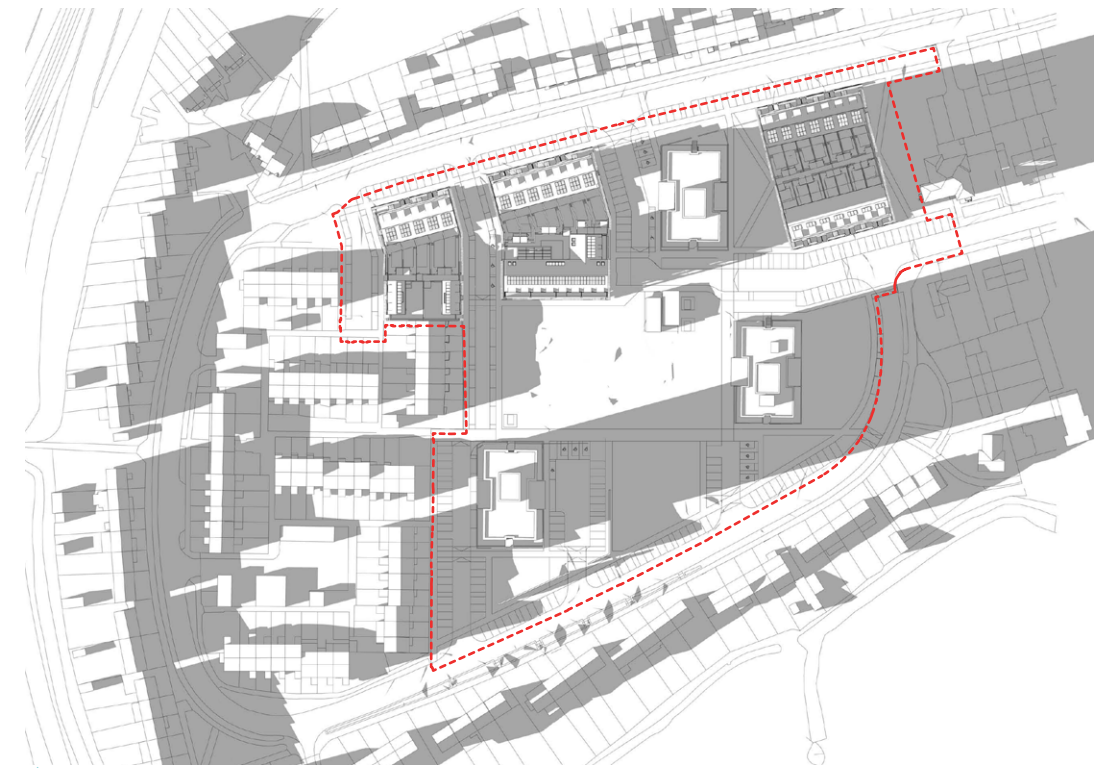
Spring Equinox - 21st March - 08.00



Spring Equinox - 21st March - 14.00



Spring Equinox - 21st March - 11.00



Spring Equinox - 21st March - 17.00



6.2 Accessibility Statement

The submitted proposal for the Wensley Road site will be a high quality, inclusive residential development, designed to be safe and accessible for all.

The new homes have been designed to meet or exceed building regulations in accordance with the approved documents. All homes are responsive to the changing needs of residents and aspire to provide accessible and adaptable accommodation for everyone.

The existing and the proposed street network, public realm and site access points have been carefully considered to provide accessible, welcoming, safe, robust and legible routes across the site and to the front door of every home.

Key Access Elements of the Design

1. Approach to the Site

The main approach to the site is along Wensley Road to the east, which is the only vehicular access route into the Coley Park Estate. The site can also be accessed via pedestrian and cycle routes, with a link to Southcote to the west, route to Courage park to the north-west and walking routes through Fobney meadow to the south.

2. Service/ Emergency Vehicle Access

Service and emergency vehicles will be able to access the site from the existing Wensley loop road and two new routes are proposed through the site. The first is an extension to Lesford Road which then runs north in front of Wensley Court, connecting to Wensley Road. The second is north-south mews which runs along the west side of the site.

The latter not only provides vehicular access to the proposed dwellings, it also provides improved vehicular access to the existing houses neighbouring the west side of the site.

The layout of the proposed roads and parking courts has been designed to provide emergency and service vehicle access to all of the existing

tower blocks. Where the central green space has been extended up to the west elevation of Riversley Court, a wide, north-south pedestrian footpath with removable bollards at either end is proposed to ensure that an emergency vehicle can reach the front entrance and dry riser inlet of this block.

A wide west-east pedestrian route to the north of Irving Court, also with removable bollards, provides an alternative emergency vehicle route across the site if required.

Tracking of a large refuse and fire tender has been undertaken throughout the site and turning circles have been allowed for in the single access parking courts.

3. Access from the Street

Four wheelchair accessible flats and twenty-eight houses have direct level access from the street. All of the upper floor flats are accessed from a single communal core, however this is a four storey building and all wheelchair accessible units are a ground floor, no lift provision has been made in the design.

Throughout the site 2m wide footpaths are included at either side of the proposed roads and to the perimeter of the car parking courts, with drop kerbs or raised tables at the designated crossing points. The material choices for the external areas are designed to be accessible to wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility.

In the road areas immediately adjacent to the central green space, raised shared surface zones with contrasting surface materials are proposed. This is intended to calm traffic and facilitate safe and easy access to the amenity space by reducing the amount of kerbs and edges that can restrict mobility.

A combination of existing and proposed street lighting throughout the site will ensure a safe approach for all residents to their front door. A proposed external lighting plan has been included as part of the planning submission.

4. Inside the Homes

All the homes have been designed to meet the minimum requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). To ensure ease of access and future adaptability to meet the changing needs and mobility requirements of residents, the principles have been followed;

- Limit circulation areas in favour of maximising habitable room sizes, however where there are
- Circulation space and corridors are a minimum of 1050mm wide and in places 1200mm or greater.

- All houses have an entrance level bathroom/ WC off the main hallway.
- All homes have a variety of storage solutions, in excess of the areas required by NDSS.
- Doors to all habitable rooms, WCs, and bathrooms have a minimum of 775mm clear opening width
- All wheelchair accessible dwellings are accessed at ground floor and have been designed to be part M4, category 3 and exceed NDSS.



Apartment Building Entrance

6.3 Designing Out Crime

Safety and security are of great importance and a 'Secured by Design' certification is an objective for this development. In advance of the planning submission, the proposal has been reviewed by the Crime Prevention Advisor for Berkshire and the design comments have been incorporated. Recommendations regarding specifications will be integrated into detailed design development.

The process of developing the design has been guided in part by the Secured by Design principles that seek to achieve natural surveillance in active neighbourhoods through the design of the layout, the mix of dwelling types and connections to established movement networks.

Routes through and around the site are well defined, overlooked and busy. The continuity and enclosure that contributes to the character of the development also assists in reducing crime and the fear of crime.

Therefore the followings measures have been incorporated into the design to help ensure the safety and security of all residents:

- Rear access routes to provide access to gardens, the cycle stores and for service maintenance, have been carefully designed to ensure that they are as short as possible and only have a single point of entry. Only residents and Reading Borough Council staff will be able to access these routes, via a self-closing, secure entry gate.
- The central green space has been designed to provide a range of facilities that are visually and physically connected and overlook one another. The overall layout of the proposed dwellings and landscape decisions, including the removal of the MUGA are intended to ensure that the central green space is well overlooked by existing and proposed homes.
- The communal entrance to the apartment block has been designed to include an 'airlock' entry system to provide two means of

defence before entering communal corridors. Letter boxes would be located internally before second secure access door.

- The apartment building has a single cores to access the upper floor flats. Residents would only have access to the lobbies that provide access to their own front door.
- 24 hour lighting to communal areas would be provided both internally and externally. External lighting would also be located at all of the front doors, including the communal entrance doors to the apartment building.
- The intention is to design out vulnerable spaces, however consideration will be given to the installation of appropriate CCTV in certain areas.
- The proposed landscaping has been carefully considered, with a combination of low level planting to be maintained at 1m or less and tree canopies to be at least 2.4m from the ground, in order to maintain clear sight lines and natural surveillance.
- Perimeter treatment to the central green space, including mature hedge planting and bollards have been intentionally selected to prevent vehicles encroaching on this space.

The principles of the security features are listed below:

- Communal doors will have proper certification and be tested with the preferred locking system. For the houses the post box will be through the front door:
- Lighting for car park will meet BS5489:
- Rear gardens will be is secured with fencing defining the private space:
- Defensible space around the ground floor dwellings will have mature hedges and planting:
- PAS24 doors to all accessible doors. Laminated glazing BSEN356 level P1A:
- All bin and bike stores to be secure and follow SBD guidance.

6.4 Sustainability Statement

Reading Borough Council have declared a climate change emergency and the Wensley Road development is intended to set an example of how highly sustainable housing can be delivered in Reading.

A sustainability statement has been prepared and submitted as part of the application. The information below is a summary only.

Energy and Renewables

All of the proposed dwellings have been designed to meet Zero Carbon, based on the emerging part L carbon factors. This is to be achieved through a combination of the following:

- Increase overall wall thickness and insulation to improve the thermal performance of the building fabric.
- Triple glazed windows.
- Individual air source heat pumps (ASHP) to heat each of the houses and a communal ASHP to heat the flats.
- Roof mounted PV panels, predominantly mounted on south facing roof pitches.
- Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) system in every dwelling
- Stringent air tightness

The energy performance of the new development has been accessed assuming best practice construction. A separate Energy strategy has been prepared and submitted as part of the application.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs)

The proposed scheme has been carefully designed to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs) solutions with the aim of controlling surface water run-off and reducing potential risk of flood.

A separate SUDs strategy has been prepared and submitted as part of the application.

Water Efficiency

The new dwellings will reduce the use of potable water to below 105 litres/person/day using water efficient fitments. A downpipe is proposed to the rear of every house to provide the opportunity for rainwater collection for gardening purposes.

Waste Recycling

The front garden of each of the houses has been designed to incorporate an enclosure to accommodate general waste and recycling bins. The same approach has been taken for the wheelchair accessible ground floor flats. Within the apartment building a shared refuse and recycling store is proposed immediately adjacent to main entrance.

Transport

A wide range of measures have been made in the scheme to reduce the reliance on private cars. The '11 Bronze' bus route already provides a regular bus service to the site and within the development a new bus stop is proposed adjacent to the central green space.

Each of the proposed houses has been designed with private cycle storage and the apartment building has a communal cycle store. All of the cycle storage can be accessed by residents from a secure private rear access route. Improved and extended cycle routes, with new signage and lighting are also proposed across the site.

A total number of 36 eclectic vehicle charging bays are proposed (15% of the of the car parking bays provided). These have been situated in a range of locations throughout the site to ensure there is a charging point in close proximity to all of the proposed and existing dwellings.

A Transport statement has been prepared and submitted as part of this application.

6.5 Building Services & Maintenance

The building services and maintenance have been considered at planning stage to ensure they are incorporated successfully within the design proposal, without impacting on the day-to-day life, safety and security of residents. Therefore the following design features have been incorporated:

- Individual air source heat pumps (ASHPs) would be integrated into the rear gardens of the proposed houses. The distance from the dwellings reducing the need for acoustic attenuation and services to the house from the ASHP would run below the garden. Maintenance access to the ASHP is via a secure rear access route and does not require access into private gardens. The entrance to each of the rear access routes is adjacent to a vehicular route.
- A communal ASHP to serve the apartment building is located externally to the rear of the building. Maintenance access to the ASHP is via a secure rear access route. The entrance to the secure access route is located on a vehicular access route.
- An electrical plant room (DNO Transformer Room) to serve the all the proposed dwellings is located to the rear of the apartment building. Double doors directly accessible from the road would provide 24 hour maintenance access.
- A sprinkler system is proposed throughout the apartment building.
- Rainwater down pipes are located on the front and rear elevations, and will be coloured to blend into the brick work with matching hoppers on the front elevations.
- Lighting to the entrances and rear gardens will be low energy with carefully selected luminaires.
- The dry riser inlet will be integrated within the entrance to the apartment building.
- Intercom and door fob access systems will be integrated throughout the communal circulation of the apartment building. Only residents and Reading Borough Council staff will have access to the main entrance lobby and core, and Residents will only have fob access to the lobby servicing their home.
- The communal refuse store will be accessed via external doors, only accessible by residents, Reading Borough Council staff and refuse collection service.
- All risers are located and accessed off the main circulation core. Access panels are provided at each floor of the core for maintenance purposes.
- A service cupboard is located within each home which provides the storage for a washing machine, wall-mounted mechanical ventilation and heat recovery unit (MVHR), wall-mounted district heating interface unit (HIU), service heating and domestic hot water cylinder.
- All mechanical ventilation vents will be integrated on the rear elevations where possible.
- All windows are designed to meet Part K Building regulation requirements.
- All communal windows are to be cleaned internally and externally by a suitably equipped and trained cleaning contractor. Either with a pole system from ground floor externally and each individual floor internally or a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP).
- Private balconies all have a minimum of 1100mm high handrails.



Apartment Building South Elevation

6.6 Building for Life

Building for Life 12 is a national standard for well designed homes and neighbourhoods predicated on the notion that good quality housing can improve social wellbeing and quality of life. It is run by CABI at the Design Council, the Home Builders Federation and Design for Homes, supported by Nottingham Trent University. This section demonstrates how this proposal meets the twelve Building for Life (2015) criteria of what new housing developments should be: attractive, functional and sustainable places.

Integrating into the Neighbourhood

1. Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones; whilst also respecting existing buildings and land uses along the boundaries of the development site?

The scheme satisfies the criteria by providing improved pedestrian and cycle routes both within the site and connecting to the wider area. Two new vehicular routes are also proposed, providing improved access for both new and existing residents.

To replace the existing section of Wensley Road between Lesford flats and Wensley Court, a new route is proposed to connect Lesford and Wensley Road. A second proposed vehicular route runs along the west boundary of the site.

2. Facilities and services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas or cafes?

The scheme satisfies the criteria as it is within walking distance of the Coley Park Community Centre, a number of local shops and schools. Reading town centre is also easily accessible by bicycle or car and is within a 30-40 minute walk.

3. Public Transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

The scheme satisfies the criteria as the '11 Bronze' bus already provides a regular service from the proposed site to Reading town centre and Reading Central train station. The proposed scheme includes a new bus stop within the site, which will include improved lighting and electronic display boards.

Each of the proposed dwellings has been designed with private cycle storage, which can be accessed by residents from a secure private rear access route. Improved cycle routes, with new lighting and signage are also proposed across the site.

4. Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

The scheme satisfies the criteria by providing a mix of 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 4 bedroom dwellings all of which are affordable. 28 of the 46 dwellings are family sized houses meeting the housing need in the immediate area. Existing local residents will be given priority in terms of allocating the new homes.

Creating a Place

5. Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

The scheme satisfies this criterion by reflecting on the traditional brick terrace typology, identified throughout Reading. The proposed buildings are simple yet of high quality design, with a carefully considered materials palette. A high quality landscaped setting and improved pedestrian footpaths provides a distinctive landscape environment.

6. Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?

The scheme satisfies this criteria as the proposed building are situated to prevent any increased overshadowing of the existing spaces and a microclimate analysis has been undertaken to ensure that the scheme does not worsen the wind conditions. Natural, biodiverse habitats are encouraged through the proposal of soft landscaped gardens, hedges and planting.

7. Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?

The scheme satisfies this criterion by creating a new street frontage along the south side of Wensley Road, with terraces terminating in corner houses to create street level activity on the new perpendicular routes. Whilst the new apartment building has been positioned to frame the central green space.

Careful attention has been paid to the coordination of the architectural and landscape elements, particularly where the proposed buildings interface with the streets and public realm.

8. Easy to find your way around

Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?

The scheme satisfies this criterion by positioning the front entrances clearly facing existing and proposed streets, with integrated signage and lighting. Existing pedestrian routes through the site have been enhanced to retain legibility within the neighbourhood context.

Street & Home

9. Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?

The new central green space has removed all vehicular access, apart for emergency vehicles, to give priority to pedestrians. The newly proposed streets which provide vehicular access to the new and existing homes reduces speeds of vehicles through the use of changes in direction and a shared surface street that does not prioritise vehicles over pedestrians and cyclists.

10. Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

The scheme satisfies the criteria as rather than retaining the large existing car parks, the site layout has been redesigned to integrate the car parking within the street scape and with two smaller parking courts neighbouring Irving and Riversley Court. Street trees and crossing points are proposed at regularly intervals throughout the parking arrangement.

11. Public and private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?

The scheme satisfies the criteria by establishing a clear definition between public and private realms, with clear boundary treatments. The dwellings have been have been situated to ensure that central green space is well overlooked and the connected landscape design allows overlooking between different play areas.

6.6 Building for Life

All of the houses have been designed with a private amenity space to the front and a large rear garden to the back, with access via a secure private access route.

All the upper floor flats have a private balcony space accessible from both the living room and one of the bedrooms and the ground floor flats have a private, clearly defined private amenity space to the front.

12. External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?

The scheme satisfies the criteria by providing a refuse and recycling store integrated within the front gardens of each of the individual houses and cycle store integrated into the design of the rear gardens, accessed via a secure private access route.

Within the apartment building a communal refuse and recycling store is located immediately adjacent to the main entrance and the communal cycle store is located adjacent to a secondary entrance, accessed via a private secure access route.



⚡ New street frontage along the south side of Wensley Road

7.1 Conclusions

The design proposal submitted for this planning application represents a major component of the overall regeneration for the Wensley Road site. The scheme will provide much needed affordable homes for local families, better integrate the site with the surrounding urban fabric as well as improve the physical environment and facilities for both the new and the existing residents.

Collaborative Design Process

Involving the community in the design process from the outset has allowed the design to be led by the issues and ideas of local residents.

Regular consultation meetings with Council Members, Planning Officers and the Reading Design Review has also ensured that the proposal responds to the wider needs within Reading, as well as future aspirations for new housing for the town.

Respecting Existing Neighbours

In addition to providing improved spaces for existing residents, the proposed layout has also been developed and refined to ensure that it does not negatively impact on the existing residents living within the site or in the surrounding area.

The distance between the proposed and the existing buildings as well as the locations of windows has been carefully considered to prevent overlooking into any existing property. The relatively low building massing means that there is no increased overshadowing of existing homes and the microclimate analysis demonstrates that the proposal could improve wind conditions within the site.

Amenity Space for All

Owing to its value to the existing residents and the wider community, the large public amenity space has been very much the central focus of the proposal, and the layout of both the proposed housing and car parking has been designed to maximise the amount of usable space in this area.

Led by suggestions for the local community, the design of central green space will provide play facilities and outdoor exercise facilities, for a range ages and people with limited mobility, connected through a system of nature trails.

Pedestrian and cycle routes across the site have been carefully considered to ensure that the central green space can be easily and safely accessed from the wider area. The proposed new bus stop is also located immediately adjacent to the central green space to encourage use by residents who also live further afield.

High Quality Affordable Housing

The scheme will provide 46 affordable homes, which have all been designed to provide well proportioned living spaces with lots of natural daylight and generous private amenity space, meeting both National Described Space Standards and policy requirements.

To meet the housing need within the local area, the majority of the dwellings are family sized homes with twenty-six 3-bedroom houses and two 4-bedroom houses. However, the apartment building which includes eight 1-bedroom flats and ten 2-bedroom flats provides a housing option for young families or older residents wishing to down size.

Sustainable Living

Reading Borough Council have declared a climate emergency and the Wensley Road proposal is an opportunity to demonstrate the type of sustainable development that could be delivered in Reading. The proposal has been designed to achieve Zero Carbon, based upon the new part L carbon factors, incorporating features such as air source heat pumps, PV panels, increased wall thickness allowing for increased insulation and triple glazed windows.

The approach to sustainability is not limited to energy performance, the integration of cycle stores for every dwelling along with improved cycle and pedestrian routes supports active lifestyles and reduces reliance on car use. Easily accessible recycling facilities are intended to encourage waste recycling, whilst enhanced tree planting and vegetation will help improve air quality, health and wellbeing.

A Well-Connected Community

The new routes across the site for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles have been designed to improve journeys and access across the site, as well as improve connections to the wider area.

The experience of pedestrians and cyclists has been prioritised over the use of cars. Rather than retaining the large existing car parks, which do not function well and do not meet policy requirements, the site layout has been redesigned to integrate the car parking within the streetscape. Proposed parking will be interspersed with street trees and crossing points at regularly intervals throughout to great a pleasant environment for pedestrians.

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