

PLAN

Eaton Court, Reading
Landscape Design Statement
February 2026
PLA 0136 SD 1001 R00

Landscape Proposal

Site Plan

Landscape proposals look to support the change in use of the site from offices to homes and in doing so create an attractive, welcoming and well functioning environment for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Proposals have considered a range of important factors including the site's context adjacent to a conservation area, its ecological context, existing vegetation, accessibility, topography, boundaries, surface water and urban tree canopy.

Proposals look to introduce new tree planting, replace existing paving, introduce new hedgerow, shrub and herbaceous planting and new green roofs.

1. New high quality block paving to pedestrian circulation spaces.
2. New high quality block paving to the parking areas
3. Newly re-arranged parking courtyard to provide 3 accessible parking bays.
4. Existing vehicle gate refurbished and upgraded to provide automated access.
5. Existing paved area to create a green boundary with a native hedge and shade tolerant planting.
- 6) Existing carpark retained with newly allocated parking spaces and car club spaces.
- 7) New shade tolerant native rich planting including ferns and woodland perennials
- 8) New native hedgerow to provide a soft structure to boundaries and introduce wildlife corridors.
- 9) Proposed trees
- 10) Existing trees
- 11) Sedum and wildflower green roof
- 12) Existing bus stop on Oxford Road
- 13) New species rich grass
- 14) New refuse store
- 15) New secure bike storage
- 16) Existing substation retained



--- Application boundary

Landscape Proposal

Access

Access largely remains as existing however the change in use will alter the frequency, typical hours and type of access. The transport access strategy is discussed in detail within the transport statement by RGP which accompanies this application. Landscape design proposals look to support the sitewide transport strategy while considering the safety, living experience and quality of the environment. New planting and paving will consider transport needs in relation to robustness of materials, affect of trees on parked vehicles and visibility.

All trees will have a minimum 2m clear stem and shrub and herbaceous planting will be low level within sight lines around manoeuvring vehicles. Typical 600mm high and subject to maintenance that avoids uncontrolled growth in safety critical locations.

Existing levels are largely retained however minor amendments are proposed to create Part M and BS 8300 compliant pedestrian routes.

Key

-  Accessible parking bays (6 No.)
-  Allocated spaces
-  Car club spaces
-  Visitor Spaces
-  Existing Pedestrian access retained
-  Improved pedestrian access. New kerbing and surfacing.
-  Maintenance access
-  Vehicular access
-  Automation added to vehicular gate with key fob and code access for residents
-  Existing manually operated gate retained for maintenance access.
-  Building entrance



Landscape Proposal

Boundary Treatment Strategy

The site currently benefits from a distinctive boundary condition that extends around the majority of its perimeter. This red brick wall with brick coping matches the character of the building and provides glimpses into the spaces within via lowered sections. These help to establish a relationship between public and private space by softening the otherwise hard edge. The wall is approximately 1.8m high at its tallest and 1.1m on the eastern boundary along Eaton Place. Proposals look to retain the wall in all instances.

The change of use to residential should result in greater passive surveillance of the northern stretch of Eaton Place and internal courtyard therefore this proposal looks to remove the security fencing on the northern boundary to create a more welcoming entrance for drivers.

All existing gates are to be retained however the vehicular gate to the parking courtyard would benefit from automation with key fob and key pad access for residents.

A length of boundary facing Oxford Road is currently open with a small number of bollards and temporary concrete barriers restricting access. The proposal looks to broadly retain an open boundary albeit softened by replacing hard elements with hedging and shrub planting.

Key

- Existing brick walls retained.
- Existing brick faced concrete walls to carpark retained
- Existing mesh security fence attached to walls to be removed
- Existing open boundary retained with added shrub and hedge planting to create soft structure and enclosure.
- Existing gates retained
- Automation added to vehicular gate with key fob and code access for residents
- Existing galvanised palisade fence to be retained



Landscape Proposal

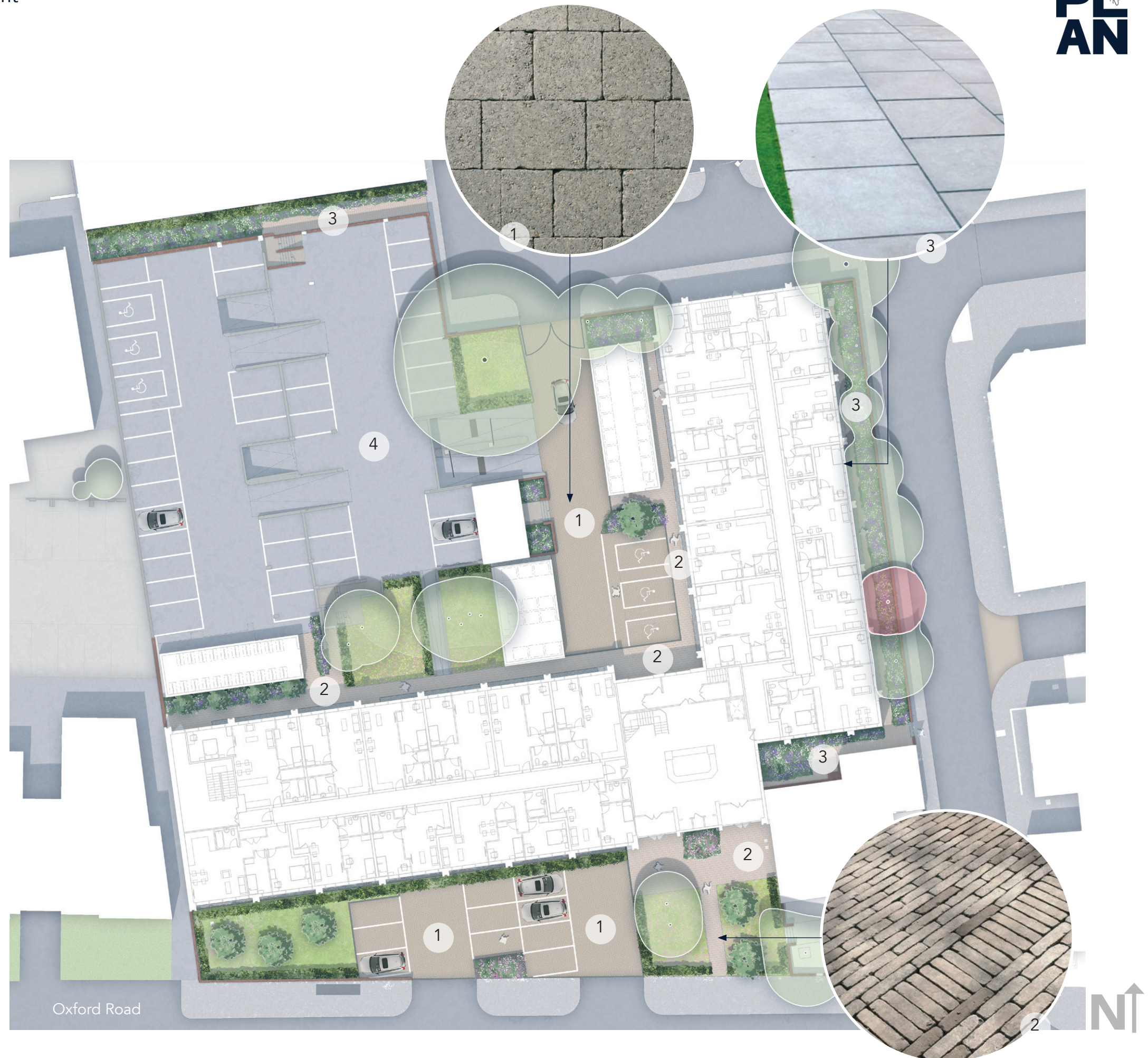
Hard Materials Strategy

Existing surfaces largely comprise of block paving and pre-cast concrete slabs. These surfaces are typically in poor condition with many cracks, overrun with moss and weeds, faded or uneven - likely due to failing sub bases. Resurfacing is required to create a safe, level and attractive environment.

New hard materials will be sensitive to context and character while supporting the functional needs of the residents. High quality yet cost effective materials compliment the change in use from office to residential. Textured, warm colour tones provide relief from nearby asphalt public footpaths and roads and create a character more suited to homes rather than commercial space.

1. High quality concrete block paving in neutral warm grey tones.
2. High quality narrow brick paving is contemporary while a tumbled effect creates texture and softness.
3. Pre-cast concrete flags will be used for maintenance routes not accessible to residents.
4. Existing asphalt retained to the carpark.

The FRA and SuDS Report by EAS which accompanies this application concludes permeable paving is not suitable for this site. SuDS measure are proposed as part of the green roof provision.



Landscape Proposal

Trees Removed and Retained

The site currently benefits from a number of mature trees the majority of which will be retained to ensure new residents can enjoy a green outlook while new planting matures and the site becomes greener over time.

Some tree root protection zones currently sit under existing paving - paving proposed for replacement. The arboricultural impact assessment by Arbtech, which accompanies this application, outlines mitigation methods for replacing landscape finishes within potential rooting zones.

No excavation is proposed within RPAs below existing sub bases.

The proposed refuse store (A) sits within the RPA of G2. The store will follow arboricultural recommendations for its foundation design.

Several trees will see benefits to their growing conditions through the proposals. T1, T2, T9 and all within G2 will see careful reduction or removal of hard landscape finishes around their trunks and replacement planting carefully installed. This will improve access to water and air for tree roots.

Trees to be removed

G2-2

Category U:

Species: Cherry sp.

Age: young to middle aged

Condition: Low

Structural condition: Poor

Arboricultural comments: Extremely sparsely foliated; above average amounts of deadwood.

Removal of G2-2 will reduce competition for surrounding trees and allow additional light to windows and the proposed ground level planting.

See the Arboricultural Impact assessment and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment by Arbtech for details of existing tree conditions and habitat value.



Landscape Proposal

New Trees

New trees have been proposed to enhance pedestrian routes, bring additional interest to the courtyard, create focus for key views and improve street greening along Oxford Road.

This strategy considers the **Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy**, (March 2021) which highlights the following aims:

- Diversity and resilience: Avoid over-reliance on any one genus or species. The borough aims for no more than 30% of any family, 20% of any genus, and 10% of any species across the urban forest.
- Right tree, right place: Accounting for site constraints - proximity to buildings, pavements, utilities, and access for maintenance. The strategy stresses sufficient rooting space and correct pit sizing.
- Native vs. non-native: Native species are preferred in semi-natural areas or biodiversity corridors, but non-natives are acceptable if they offer wildlife value or climate resilience
- Amenity and shading: The strategy supports species that provide visual appeal and summer shade.
- Maintenance and long-term survivability: Emphasises proper planting technique, root space, and ongoing care to ensure trees achieve their canopy potential.

Sorbus torminalis supports pollinators with its flowers and provides berries that feed birds and small mammals, while its canopy offers shelter and contributes to long-term woodland structure. Sorbus torminalis is drought resistant and tolerates a range of soils.

Prunus avium 'Plena' produces dense flowering, attracting bees and other pollinators, and its fruits support bird populations, enhancing seasonal food availability. Located in a south facing location this provides a striking floral display for the benefit of residents and the public.

Acer campestre 'Queen Elizabeth' offers structural habitat for invertebrates and birds, with dense branching suited for nesting, while its leaves support various specialist insects. This tree is well suited to constrained locations where space is limited.

Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer' flowers provide early-season nectar for pollinators, and its upright form creates vertical habitat in urban streetscapes, supporting small birds and invertebrates. This tree is well suited to constrained urban locations where rooting zones are limited. A spring floral display benefits both people and wildlife.



A palette of majority native trees bring a variety of colour and texture, leaf and flower. All are hardy and well suited to the urban environment and resilient to the effects of climate change. While there are areas on-site where trees can spread out, some will be planted in more constrained areas and species have been chosen to suit.



Landscape Proposal

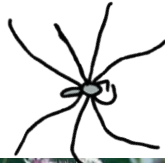
Shrub and Herbaceous Planting

The planting strategy aims to create a consistent palette throughout the development that is generally low maintenance, attractive, offers ecological enhancement and provides seasonal interest for people and wildlife.

New development should encourage a positive relationship between people and nature and introduce measures to benefit both. Ecological enhancements will be implemented into the planting beds such as bug hotels and log piles. Proposed measures will help to improve the wider ecological network and help expand foraging routes across the urban fabric.

Planting in the shadier spaces will comprise of woodland understorey planting with supplementary ornamental species of shade loving flowering perennials. A mix of evergreen and deciduous plants will be used to provide year-round structure and interest.

Ground cover planting will be used to suppress weeds and create a green carpet.



Ajuga reptans f. albiflora 'Alba'



Anemone x hybrida Honorine Jobert



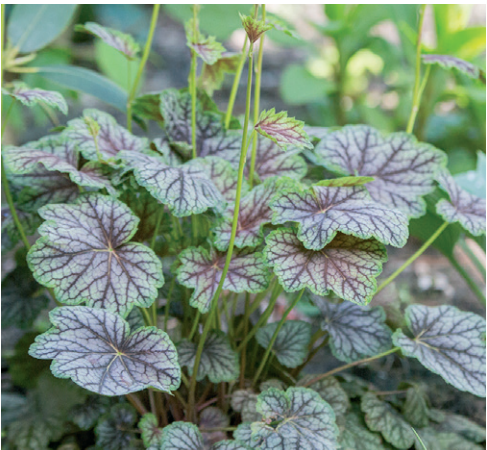
Betonica officinalis 'Hummelo'



Aстранtia major 'Alba'



Asplenium scolopendrium



Heuchera Green Spice



Helleborus x sternii



Sesleria autumnalis



Vinca minor f. alba 'Gertrude Jekyll'



Geranium rozanne



Polystichum setiferum



Polystichum aculeatum



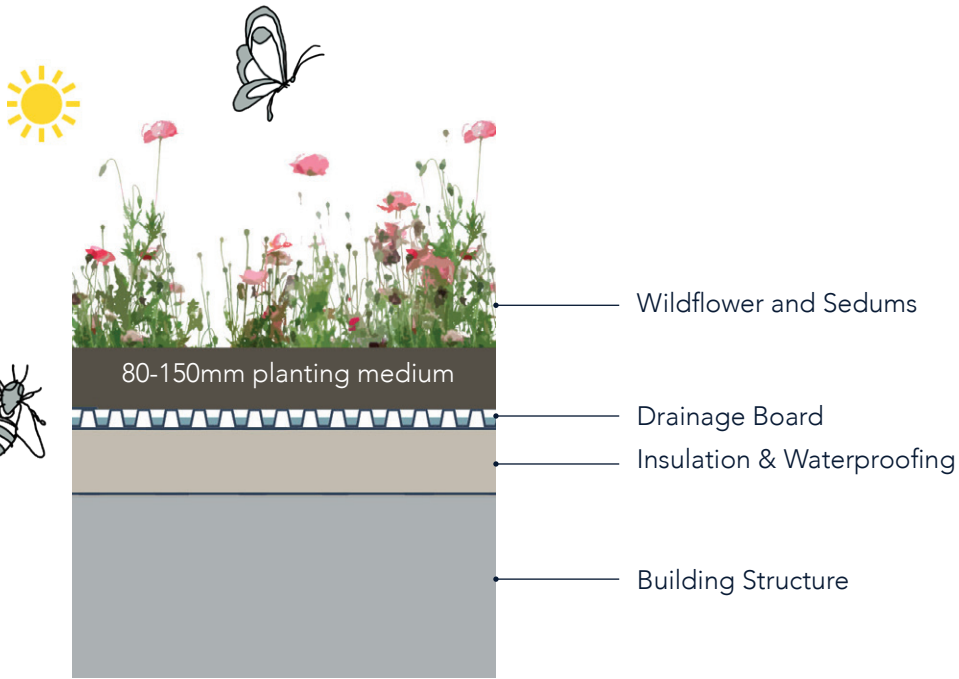
Landscape Proposal

Green Roofs

A series of extensive green roofs are proposed across the scheme which aim to improve the ecological value of the site and wider area by providing a range of habitats and foraging grounds for flying insects and birds. A mix of wildflower and sedum planting will provide year round interest and help to maximise biodiversity. The species mix will be informed by the ecology report to ensure maximum ecological value and robustness.

- Key:
- 1. Combined sedum and wild flower green roof
 - 2. Mixed Sedum species
 - 3. Native wild flower mixture
 - 4. Habitat Log Piles

The green roof will contribute to the SuDS strategy by reducing the surface water run-off to rates within the parameters described by the FRA and SuDS Report by EAS which accompanies this application (Section 6 on page 13).



Typical roof build-ups



Landscape Proposal

Ecology Strategy

Reading Biodiversity Action Plan Designations:

The nearest designated site according to the Reading Biodiversity Action Plan is the Cow Lane Depot which likely influences and shares ecological characteristics with nearby rail sidings and the edges of Victoria Park Recreation Ground.

There is little publicly available detailed species list or recent habitat condition data specifically for the Cow Lane Depot site on council or statutory ecology pages.

Existing Habitats On-site

(extracted from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment by Arbtech accompanying this application)

Grassland:

An area of modified grassland (approximately 90m²) is present on the south-western site boundary. The grassland has >10% bare ground (~20%) and a sward height of 5 -10cm. No scrub or bracken was identified within the grassland. The survey noted previous management and footfall.

An area of modified grassland (approximately 40m²) is present in the centre of the site. The survey noted previous management and footfall.

Shrubs:

The hardstanding has areas of buddleia *Buddleja* sp. growing through the concrete. Areas of overgrown introduced shrubs surround the paths and the car park. Species included common barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, firethorn *Pyracantha* sp., common ivy *Hedera helix* and Wilsons Honeysuckle *Lonicera ligustrina* var. *yunnanensis*.

Trees:

Existing trees are discussed earlier in this report.

Summary:

The grassland, scattered trees and introduced shrubs will likely provide habitat for a limited assemblage of common invertebrates.

A detailed assessment of species activity is included in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment by Arbtech which discusses bat roosting potential, reptile habitat, badger, birds, amphibians, Hazel Dormouse, riparian species and hedgehog.



With the exception of birds and bats that can use tree canopy and buildings, the development is likely to have a limited effect on local wildlife populations, owing to more extensive habitat locally due to the majority of the site being fenced off (well-sealed) and surrounded by busy roads,

Landscape Proposal

Ecology Strategy

While the site currently provides limited habitat due to its urban context, the landscape proposals look to introduce new habitat and improve the existing. Habitat enhancements will be visible to help build a relationship between people and wildlife.

1) A wildflower and sedum green roof would create new habitat for invertebrates and provide a reliable foraging resource for pollinators within an otherwise hard urban context. benefits can be further enhanced by using varied planting and substrate depths to increase ecological diversity at roof level and contribute to strengthening local habitat networks across the area.

2) A Carpinus native hedgerow in an urban setting supports local biodiversity by offering habitat and food for birds, insects, and small mammals. It also contributes to ecological connectivity, linking green spaces and allowing wildlife to move safely through the city.

3) New woodland understorey of native ferns and perennials provides essential habitat and food for insects, fungi, and small mammals, sustaining urban biodiversity. It also stabilizes soil, aids nutrient cycling, and maintains micro climates that support the broader woodland ecosystem.

4) Species-rich grassland in an urban context supports a wide range of pollinators, insects, and small mammals, forming a crucial part of local food webs. It also maintains soil health, promotes ecological resilience, and preserves native plant diversity.

5) Proposals look to introduce log piles made from site arisings as part of the maintenance strategy. Log piles offer shelter, breeding sites, and foraging opportunities for insects, amphibians, and small mammals, boosting urban biodiversity. They also support fungi and detritivores, helping to recycle nutrients within the ecosystem.

6) Sunny aspect perennial and shrub planting provides nectar and pollen for pollinators and habitat for insects especially if seed heads are left through winter before removing to allow for new growth in the spring.

7) New tree planting is discussed elsewhere in this report.



Landscape Proposal

Maintaining the Landscape

Caring for Green Spaces

The success of the new shared spaces will rely on an ongoing commitment and regime of maintenance and management for the healthy establishment of the new trees and soft landscape areas.

The ground floor spaces have been designed with consideration to ongoing environmental and capital costs as well as projected use, changes to climate, seasons and maturation of the landscape. As such, the management plan structure should be robust and flexible to accommodate environmental and economic changes.

Due consideration should be given to the financial and resource constraints to ensure an appropriate and robust management and maintenance structure is established to meet the aspirations of the local authority, residents and the operator of the site.

Monitoring

A Management Plan will be an essential document to provide a framework within which effective monitoring, management and maintenance can occur.

The purpose of the Management Plan would be to confirm the structure, principles and objectives of the long-term management. In addition the report would highlight key maintenance operations that would be necessary to ensure the long-term health and vigour of the landscape.

Materials

Paving materials, street furniture, lighting and other installations will be selected for robustness, durability, longevity and timeless quality. The aim is for a cohesive palette of fixtures and fittings that is able to withstand heavy use and be fit for purpose for a long time thus providing best value both financially and environmentally. Preference is given to sustainable natural materials and robust furniture for the timeless design quality, vandal resistance and low maintenance requirement.

Planting

Planting should respect the need for ease of maintenance. Robust, semi-mature trees and shrub and herbaceous planting should be used to provide instant visual

benefit and to reduce the risk of damage to the trees/plants from vandalism or accidental damage.

Soft Landscape Areas;

Trees & Planted Zones (maintained by management company):

- Ground level public realm and amenity spaces for residents
- Green roof

Hard Landscape Areas:

Pedestrian access routes within the private spaces (maintained by management company)

Actions:

- Watering
- Weed control
- Pruning/feeding
- Plant replacements
- Litter picking
- Re-cultivation/mulch top-up
- Clipping hedges & cutting back grasses
- Cleaning
- Vandalism
- Settlement of paving
- Drainage maintenance
- Replacing light fittings

Green roof:

Regular inspections of the whole system with regard to damage/degradation particularly to substrate/roof to ensure integrity of the building fabric is maintained.

Planting suitable to the system installed to be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

Keeping rain water outlets clear of debris.

