



ST ALBANS
SCHOOL



PART OF HENRY BOOT



WOOLLAM PARK

NorthSt Albans

SUPPLEMENTARY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

RESPONSES TO URBAN DESIGN / LANDSCAPE COMMENTS

**(TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT SUBMITTED WITH
OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION 5/2024/2271)**

OCTOBER 2025

REVISION A

INTRODUCTION

The material provided in this document responds to comments made by St Albans City and District Council (SACDC) on urban design, and Hertfordshire County Council comments on landscape matters in respect of **Outline Planning Application 5/2024/2271**.

The document is structured in two main sections:

- **Section 1** responds to comments and matters raised by SACDC's Urban Design Advisor (Garry Colligan) dated 23rd April 2025.
- **Section 2** responds to comments and matters raised by Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Landscape Officer (Adam Rumble) dated 5th June 2025.

For ease of reference, both the **Urban Design** and **Landscape Design** comments are appended to this document at Appendices A and B respectively.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Design & Access Statement (DAS), and all other submitted information relating to Outline Planning Application 5/2024/2271.

Design Meetings

Prior to the submission of Outline Planning Application 5/2024/2271, in accordance with SACDC's Strategic Sites Masterplan Toolkit (July 2023), the Applicant presented initial proposals for the Site to the Design: South East (D:SE) – St. Albans Design Review Panel.

D:SE – St. Albans DRP have been engaged with three times during the course of formulating proposals for the Site; twice (in November 2019 and March 2020) in relation to previous scheme proposals that supported representations to the emerging SACDC Local Plan and more recently in March 2024 in specific relation to the formulation of Planning Application 5/2024/2271.

A series of pre-application design workshops were held with SACDC's Urban Design Advisor and HCC's Landscape Officer to inform and shape the development proposal as follows:

- Pre-application workshop 1: **Project Brief** (25 June 2024)
- Pre-application workshop 2: **Contextual Analysis** (31 July 2024)
- Pre-application workshop 3: **Local Centre Location Options/ Landscape Framework & Sections / Spatial Typologies** (20 August 2024)
- Pre-application workshop 4: **Sandridgebury Lane Proposals / Productive Landscape Proposals / Emerging DAS structure** (9 October 2024)

Additionally, a post-submission review of the comments provided at Appendix A was held virtually between the design team and SACDC's Urban Design Advisor and HCC's Landscape Officer on 6 of May 2025.

A further review meeting took place with with SACDC planning and Urban Design Advisor on 22 September 2025. This document has been fully updated taking on board these comments.

Please refer to the DAS for further detail of pre-app consultation and workshops.

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

This document is structured as follows:

- Urban Design (Section One) / Landscape (Section Two) comments where a response is necessary are provided with the corresponding number from the original comments.
- A response to each comment is provided supported by plans and diagrammatic material as necessary, including referencing relevant information in the DAS.
- As previously noted, the original Urban Design and Landscape comments are appended at Appendices A and B respectively.
- Appendix C is also provided, this includes the Sewell Park Landscape Masterplan (Drawing No. LL1167-2.1-1000) submitted with Reserved Matters Application (RMA) 5/2024/1284 for the adjacent Sewell Park site, which is referred to in the Urban Design and Landscape comments.

One

Response to Urban Design Advisor's comments

Section One provides a direct response to the comments raised by the Urban Design Advisor in relation to the submitted Woollam Park planning application. For reference, the original Officer's report is included in Appendix A.

COMMENT 1.3

Street Structure

- 1.3 *"While the green space is shaped by the context, the street layout and layout of the civic/community space less so. These take on an orthogonal geometry, appropriate to a flat urban site. While I understand this generates efficient plots for volume housebuilding, it does not accord with the emphasis on contextual response set out in the design guidance referenced above, supported by the NPPF".*

Design Team Response

The proposals seek to strike a balance between responding to the Site and its context, whilst also making most efficient use of the Site (in accordance with the NPPF) to achieve the target number of homes required by emerging site allocation B1.

All proposals for streets and spaces have been formulated in conjunction with HCC to achieve acceptable alignments, gradients and geometries.

It is also important to note that the Planning Application is made in Outline and therefore, other than the Primary Street network (which is a development parameter), the precise alignment of Secondary and Tertiary streets is not applied for in Outline and only shown illustratively in the submission material. Alternate alignments for the finer grain of streets and spaces could therefore be agreed at Reserved Matters Application stage.

The submitted Access & Movement Parameter Plan (drawing number: DE-565-73D) also included at Page 120 of the submitted DAS provides the alignment of Primary Streets.

Please also refer to response to Comment 4.11 below (page 21) for further detail of the contextual analysis that supports the design evolution of Woollam Square as a key civic/community space within the scheme.

COMMENT 1.4

Relationship with Sewell Park

- 1.4 *"The relationship to the Sewell Trust Site. There needs to be a stronger relationship between these 2 sites: connecting routes, scale, height, typology, the green space between the 2 developments. The latter should be considered as an integrated whole; currently it reads as a residual space between 2 separate schemes".*

Design Team Response

The design team would welcome further dialogue with the relevant parties to achieve the right approach to integration between the Sewell Park scheme and the application proposals.

It is important to note in this context that the Sewell Park proposals are the subject of a Reserved Matters Application (Reference: 5/2024/1284) and are well-advanced within the planning process. In this sense, the Woollam Park design team have sought to work with a number of elements that are 'fixed' by the Sewell Park scheme and particularly on the boundary between the two sites.

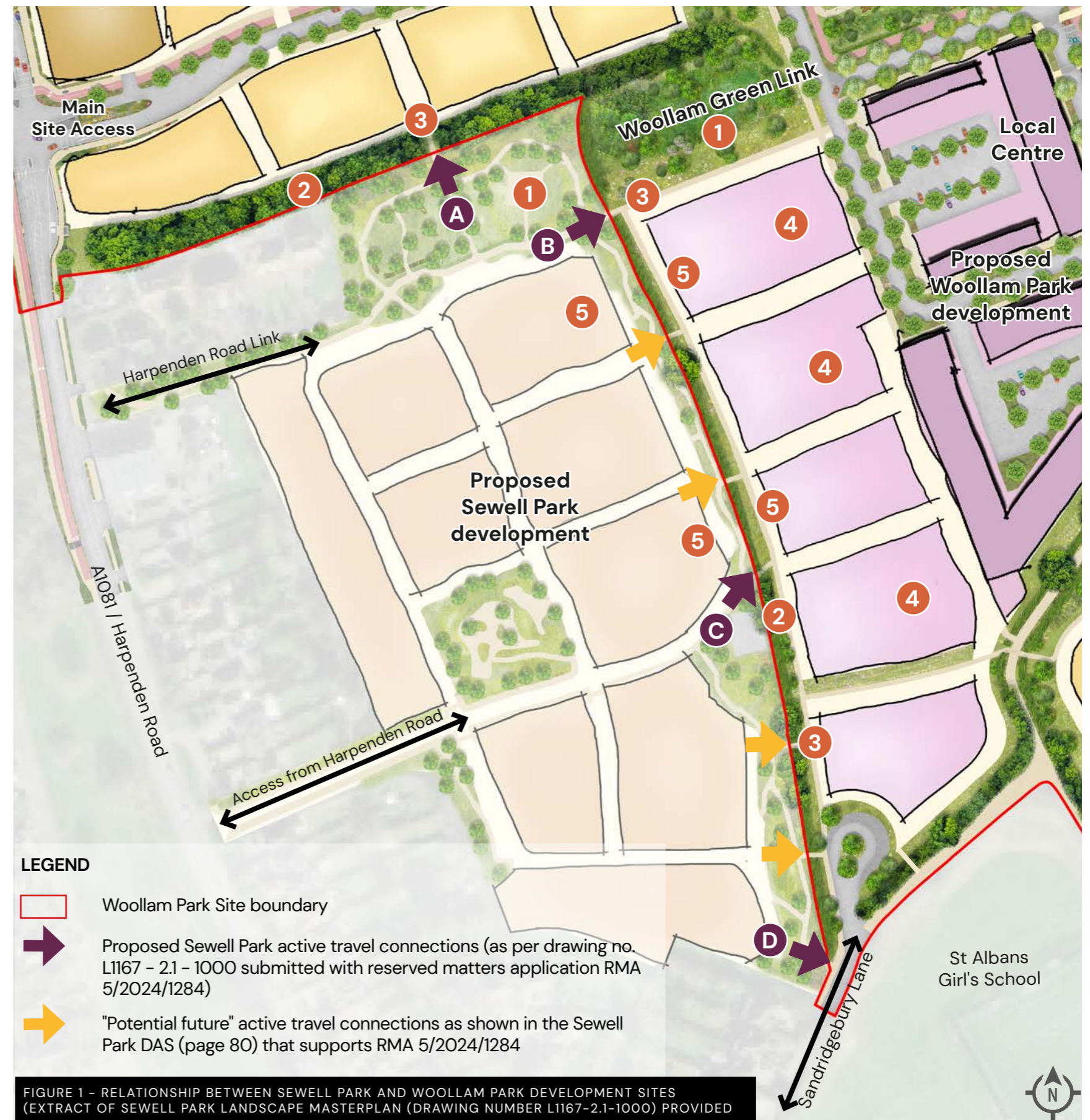
The Sewell Park Landscape Masterplan (Drawing No. LL1167-2.1-1000) submitted with RMA 5/2024/1284 is provided at Appendix C and analysed below at Figure 1 (page 5), identifying a number of key matters in relation to the Urban Design comments (as above) on this issue.

The Design Team Response to this relationship is continued overleaf at Figure 1.

COMMENT 1.4 CONTINUED

Design Team Response Continued

- 1 East-West Green Link - 'Woollam Green Link'**
 The proposed Woollam Green Link has been deliberately shaped by the open space that forms the north of Sewell Park proposals. As such Woollam Green Link is an extension of this space, forming a key green corridor to the Local Centre and beyond. The form and function of Woollam Park has been configured to ensure spatial continuity. Together, the two spaces will create an east-west green link, supporting active travel between the proposed Common / Local Centre (east) and beyond to Harpenden Road to New Greens (west) - Refer to Figure 1.
- 2 Existing Landscape & Vegetation**
 Within the boundary between the two sites are a number of Category B and C trees, along with Category B hedgerow that are sought to be retained by both proposals for ecological and landscape reasons. The intention is that this existing green asset will act as an essential green corridor between two development sites. Retention of these important assets limits the ability to make numerous connections through the corridor. Please also refer to page 24 (Comment 4.16) below which provides details of proposed tree retention and removal in this location.
- 3 Active Travel Connections**
 All connections into Woollam Park are effectively informed by the proposed Sewell Park connections - those proposals being at a more advanced stage in the planning process. It is noted that only four active travel connections into the Woollam Park site are proposed by RMA 5/2024/1284 (shown A-D on Figure 1). A number of "potential connections" are shown in the DAS supporting RMA 5/2024/1284, however these do not feature on the application drawings for RMA 5/2024/1284. It is also important to note that the delivery of connection point C - which strategically would provide one of the strongest active travel connections because it connects directly to Harpenden Road - is questionable, because at present it is showing as crossing the Root Protection Area (RPA) of an existing Category B tree on the Sewell Park side.
- 4 Block Structure**
 The proposed Woollam Park block structure seeks to reflect the block structure proposed by the Sewell Park scheme to provide continuity across both sites.
- 5 Built Form**
 As previously noted, the proposed Sewell Park proposals are at a more advanced stage in the planning process. The Sewell Park scheme proposes large 4 and 5-bed homes adjacent to the Woollam Park site boundary. The Woollam Park scheme proposes higher density development (smaller 2-4-bed homes) in this location to take benefit from the proximity of this part of the Site to the proposed local centre. Despite the difference in proposed density and building typology, buildings are proposed to be relatively similar scale at a maximum of 3-storys.



COMMENT 2.5

Character Areas

- 2.5 *"While there is a clear difference in character between the central character areas and the rest of the site, there is not such a clear distinction between Woollam Green and Longspring Hoe. This is reflected in the density and heights parameter plans which make no differentiation between the two".*

Design Team Response

We do not see character being represented solely by density and height and would not advocate deliberately altering height or density to create artificial differentiation.

The Spatial Typology profiles provided at pages 80–88 of the submitted DAS show how character can be articulated in different ways; for example, Longspring Hoe will take its character cues from the adjacent Longspring Wood to inform materiality and form, and the sloping land with views to it from the north informing the open space strategy for this part of the Site to incorporate a greater degree of planting between blocks to provide landscape mitigation.

COMMENT 2.6

Woollam Green Residential Character

- 2.6 *"Woollam Green covers two areas which have quite different contexts. The western section forms the site entrance, close to Harpenden Road (a main travel corridor between St Albans and Harpenden) with its bus stops, while the eastern section is on the countryside edge. This should be reflected in the character and identity of these two areas and the subsequent density and height parameter plans".*

Design Team Response

The differing contexts of two areas in Woollam Green and the proposed design responses are reflected by the edge typologies section at pages 110–116 of the DAS and identified on the Edges Plan Figure 31 (page 110) of the DAS.

COMMENT 2.7

Longspring Hoe Density

- 2.7 *"Page 108 of the DAS states there will be lower density housing along the edge of Longspring Wood – this should be captured in the parameter plan".*

Design Team Response

Density is not applied for as a parameter of the Outline Planning Application. Density is however shown for illustrative purposes on the Density Plan in the submitted DAS (Figure 24, page 75) where an 'up to' figure is provided. Page 108 of the DAS, as referred to, indicates that density should be lowered in this location within the 'up to' range.

COMMENT 2.8

Sandridgebury Lane

- 2.8 *"While development along the Sandridgebury Lane edge will "face onto the lane", it would be good to have this defined more precisely, including front doors to homes along this edge".*

Design Team Response

Please see the response to Comment 3.14 below (page 9) which provides further details on the design approach to Sandridgebury Lane.

COMMENT 2.9

Relationship with Sewell Park

2.9 "More integration along the Sewell Park Edge. The sketch provided on page 112 of the DAS shows quite different development form either side of the site boundary and a contorted pedestrian link".

Design Team Response

Please see the response to Comment 1.4 above (incl. Figure 1, pages 4-5) which provides further details on the design approach to the relationship with the Sewell Park scheme.

COMMENT 2.10

Harpenden Road Edge

2.10 "On the Harpenden Road edge, the proposal to form a continuation of the existing developed frontage to the immediate south is supported. However, the sketch provided on page 113 of the DAS does not indicate this".

Design Team Response

It is important to note in this context that the Planning Application is made in Outline and layout material provided in the submitted DAS is illustrative only and would be subject to a future RMA in any case.

Figure 2 (right) provides an amended indicative 'Harpenden Road Edge' diagram which has been expanded to the south to show the existing built form and building line on Harpenden Road.

The diagram shows that the position of the primary link street access from Harpenden Road fixes a position that allows only for a single plot depth to its south. The diagram also shows an existing building edge line that has been used to inform the indicative positions of built form in this location. The limitations of the single plot depth to the immediate south of the primary link street advocate the use of a 'corner turning' housing typology in this location to support a positive frontage to both Harpenden Road and the primary link street.

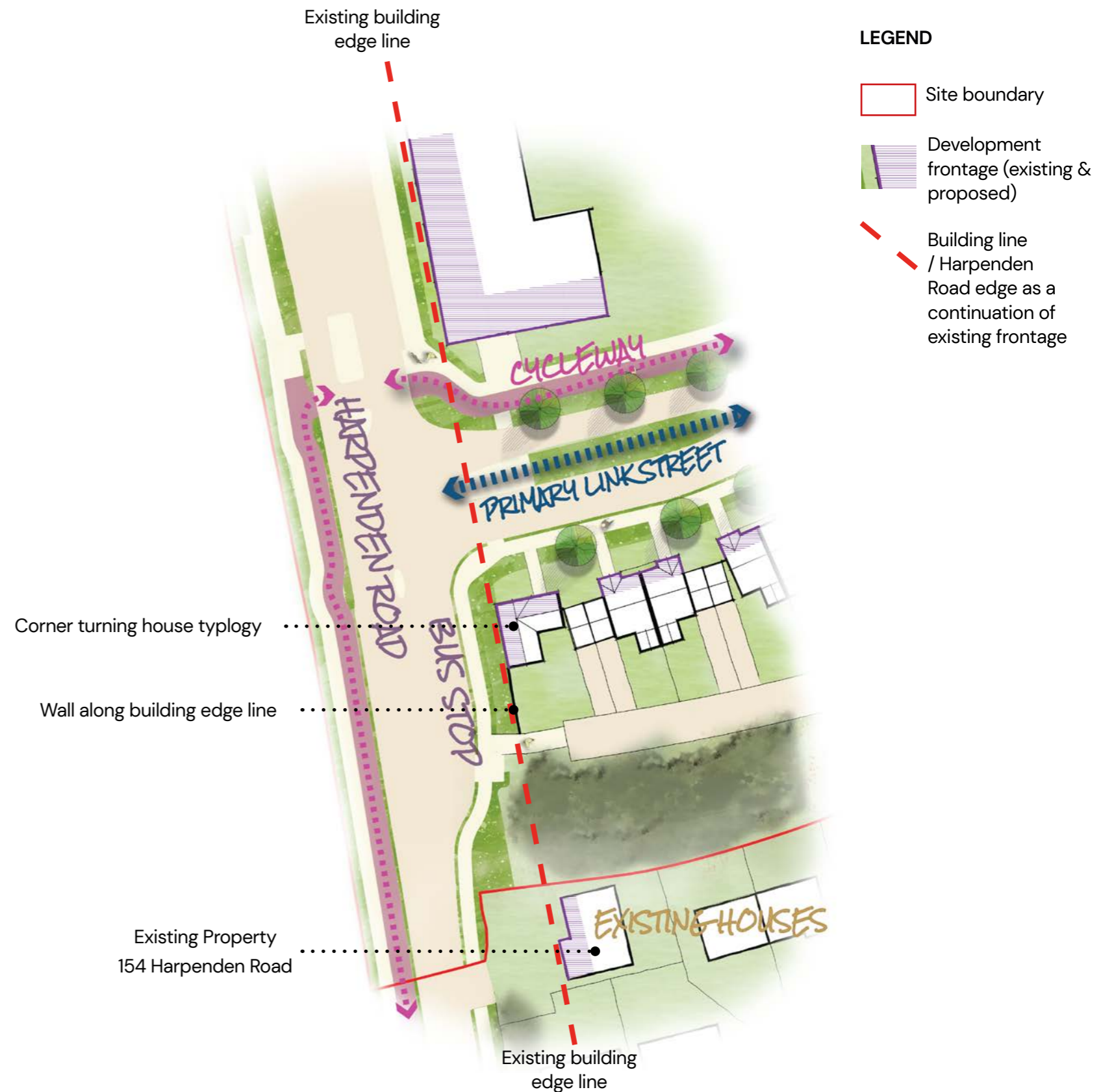


FIGURE 2 - AMENDED HARPENDEN ROAD EDGE

Note: Refer to page 113 of the DAS for original diagram

COMMENT 2.11

Northern Perimeter Edge

2.11 "The Northern Perimeter Edge is described on page 115 of the DAS: "Typically, dwellings on this (edge) will be of a lower density (detached and semi-detached) in order to achieve aspirations for a looser form of development in this location." This is not illustrated in the accompanying sketch which shows a tight formation of semi-detached houses forming a straight frontage".

Design Team Response

It is important to note in this context that the Planning Application is made in Outline and layout material provided in the submitted DAS is illustrative only and would be subject to a future RMA in any case.

Figure 3 (right) shows an amended 'Northern Perimeter Edge' diagram that indicates how a looser form of development could be achieved on the Northern Perimeter Edge by providing a less orthogonal layout, varying relationship depth to the northern boundary, varying building orientation and incorporating a greater degree of planting to frontages.

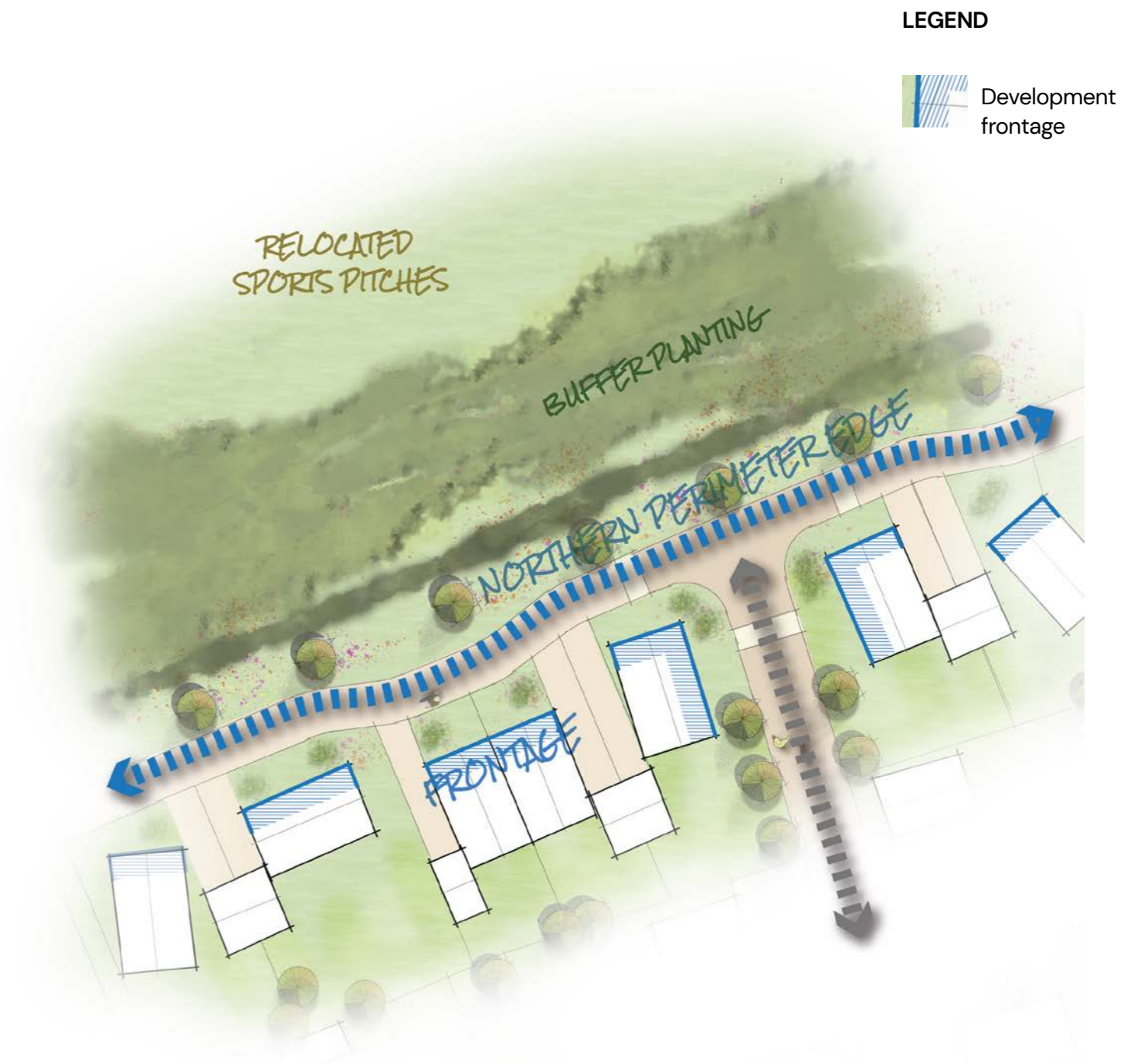


FIGURE 3 - AMENDED NORTHERN PERIMETER EDGE

Note: Refer to page 115 of the DAS for original diagram

COMMENT 3.14

Sandridgebury Lane

3.14 "During pre-app meetings we discussed at length the suitability of Sandridgebury Lane as an active travel corridor, especially after dark, as it is lined with high hedgerows which will limit overlooking and the habitat value of the hedgerows could limit lighting opportunities. The applicant did a lot of work on this including, discussing in principle a feasible reduction in the height of the hedgerow with HCC ecologist. There are some sections in the DAS (p.126), but they lack annotation to make any real commitment on the proposals. Also, removal of sections of hedgerow and planting of additional hedgerow to compensate? Likewise, I can't find firm commitments on the frontage to the lane: are there front doors, balconies, front gardens? We discussed alternative, after-dark routes, but these are not clear to me in the document? It's difficult to assess this critical element on the information I can find".

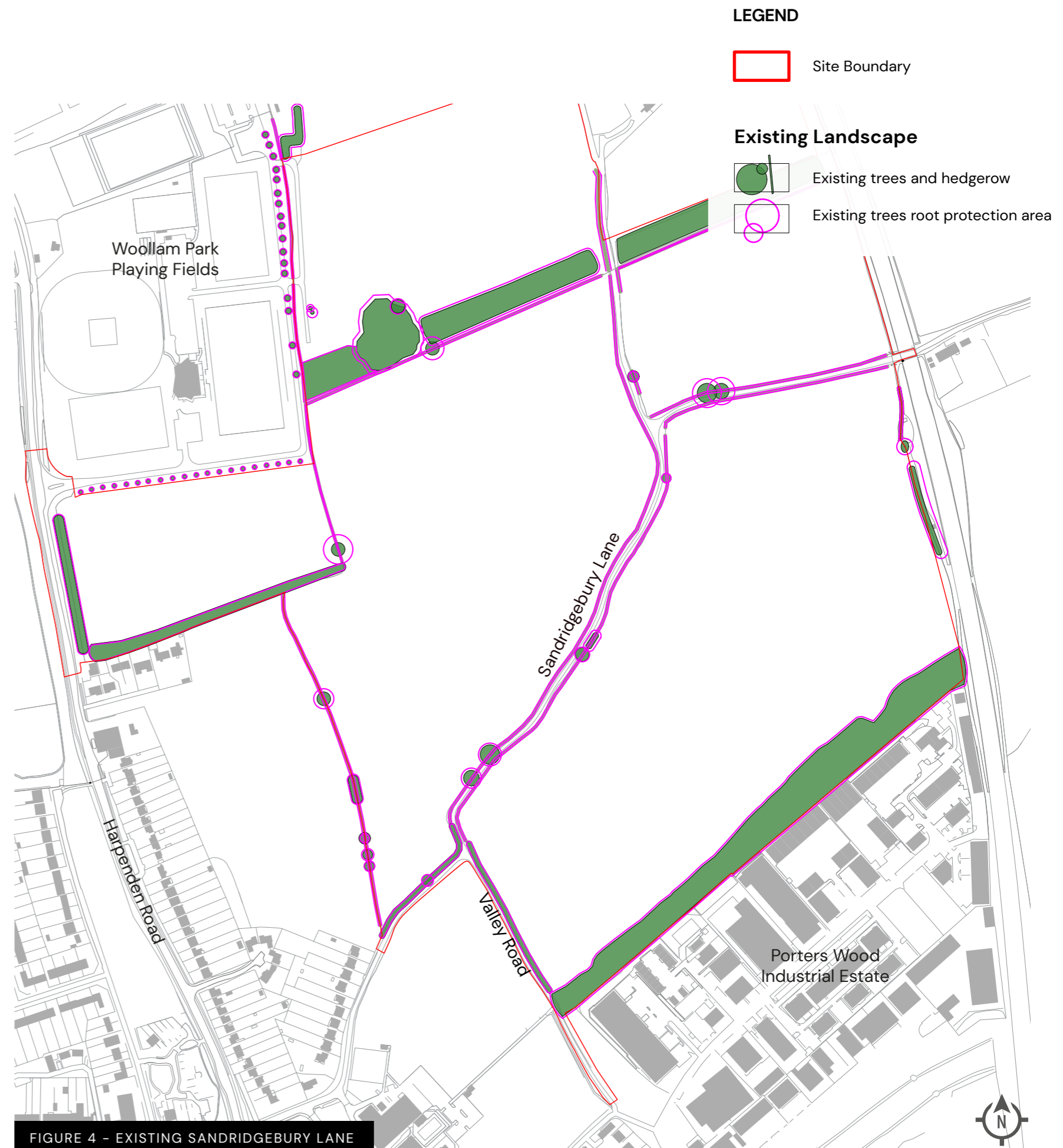
Design Team Response

The material provided on the following pages provides detailed information on the proposed design approach for Sandridgebury Lane. As noted, the majority of this material was presented during pre-application Workshop 4 (9th October 2024).

Figure 4 (right) and the photograph below show the existing hedgerows and trees on Sandridgebury Lane which is characterised by almost continuous vegetation along both sides of the lane.



Existing Sandridgebury Lane including hedgerows either side of the lane



COMMENT 3.14 CONTINUED

Design Team Response Continued

Figures 5-8 below identify key sections that demonstrate how the existing hedgerows and proposed frontages to Sandridgebury Lane are to be treated through the proposals.

The illustrative sections A-A to E-E (which amend those provided at page 126 of the submitted DAS) provide details of hedgerow height reduction to 1.5m and proposals for built frontages including front doors, balconies and front gardens onto Sandridgebury Lane to enhance natural surveillance.

Refer to the response to Page 16 and Figure 13 for further detail regarding retained hedgerow height along Sandridgebury Lane.

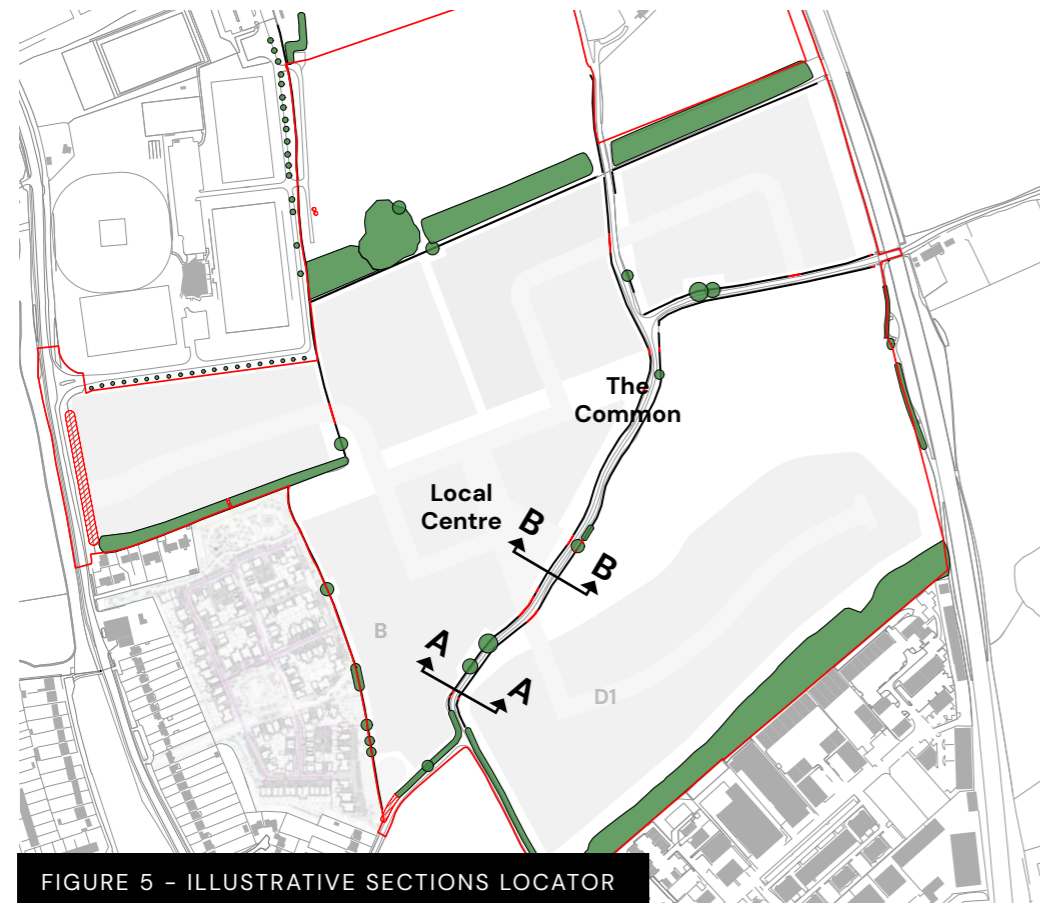
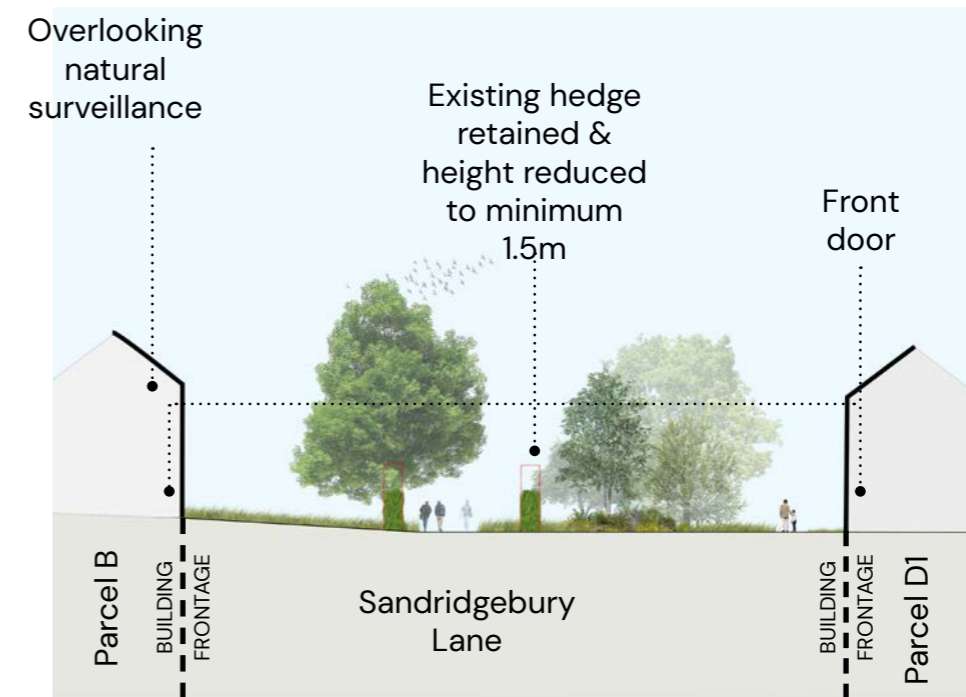
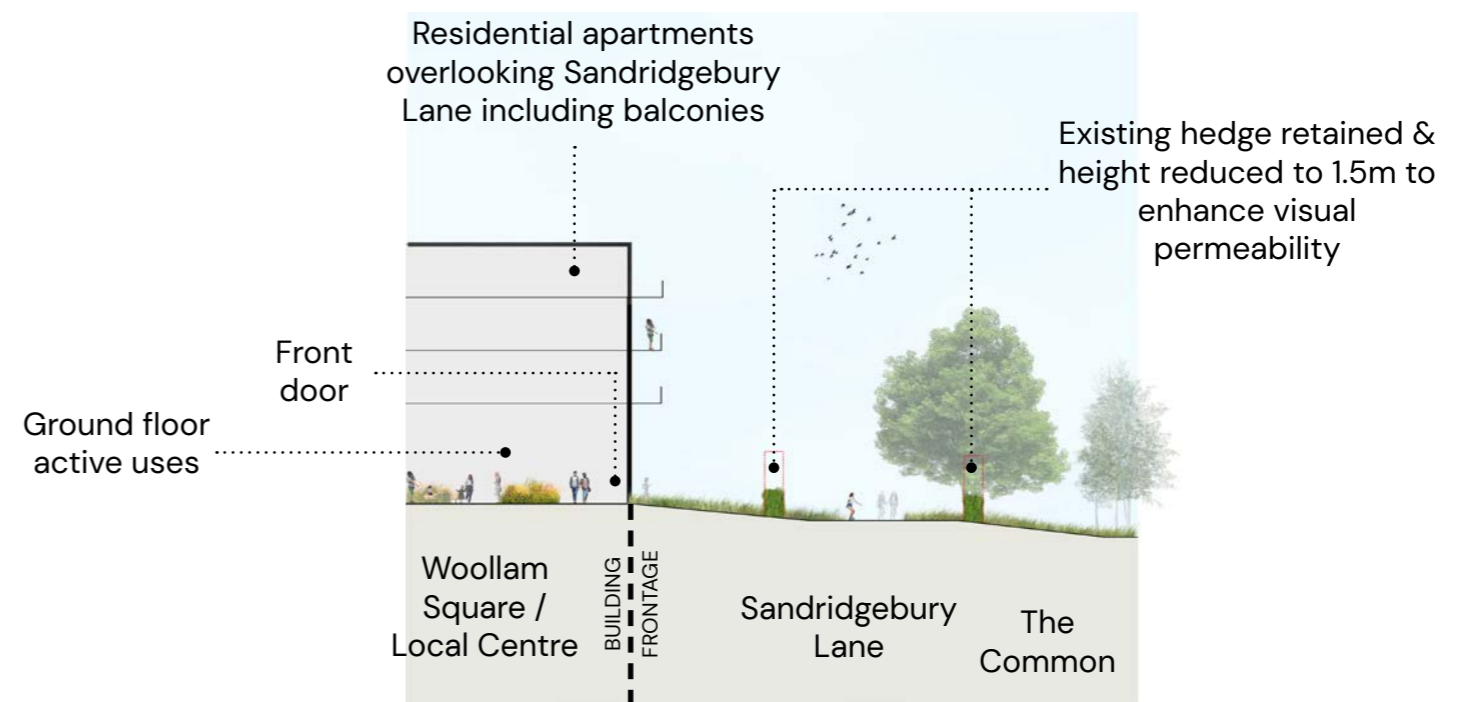


FIGURE 5 - ILLUSTRATIVE SECTIONS LOCATOR

Note: Proposal to reduce existing hedgerow height to 1.5m - 2m along full length



Section A - A



Section B - B

FIGURE 6 - AMENDED SANDRIDGEBURY LANE ILLUSTRATIVE SECTIONS

Note: Refer to page 126 of the DAS for original sections

COMMENT 3.14 CONTINUED

Design Team Response Continued

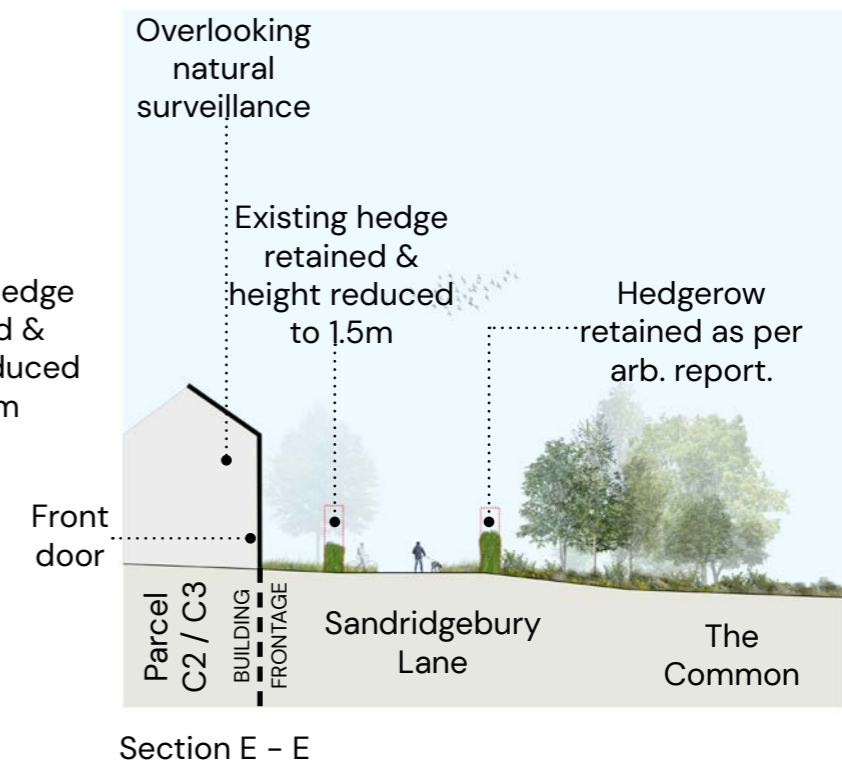
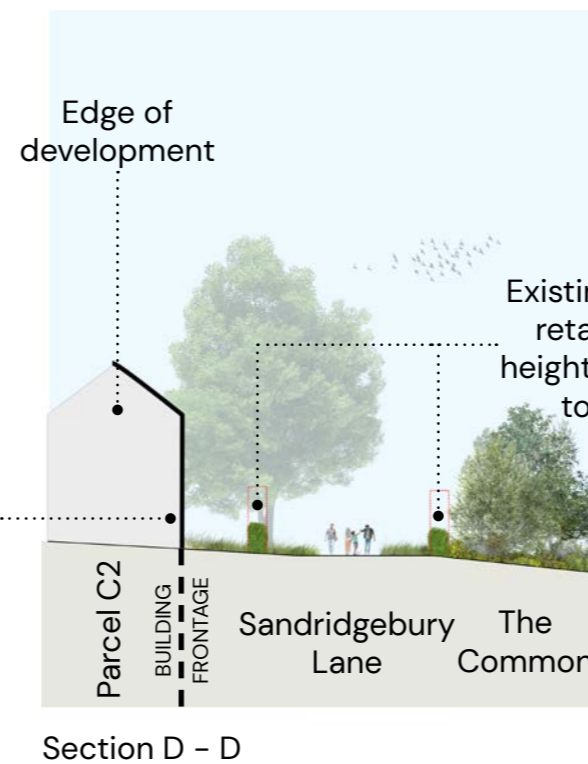
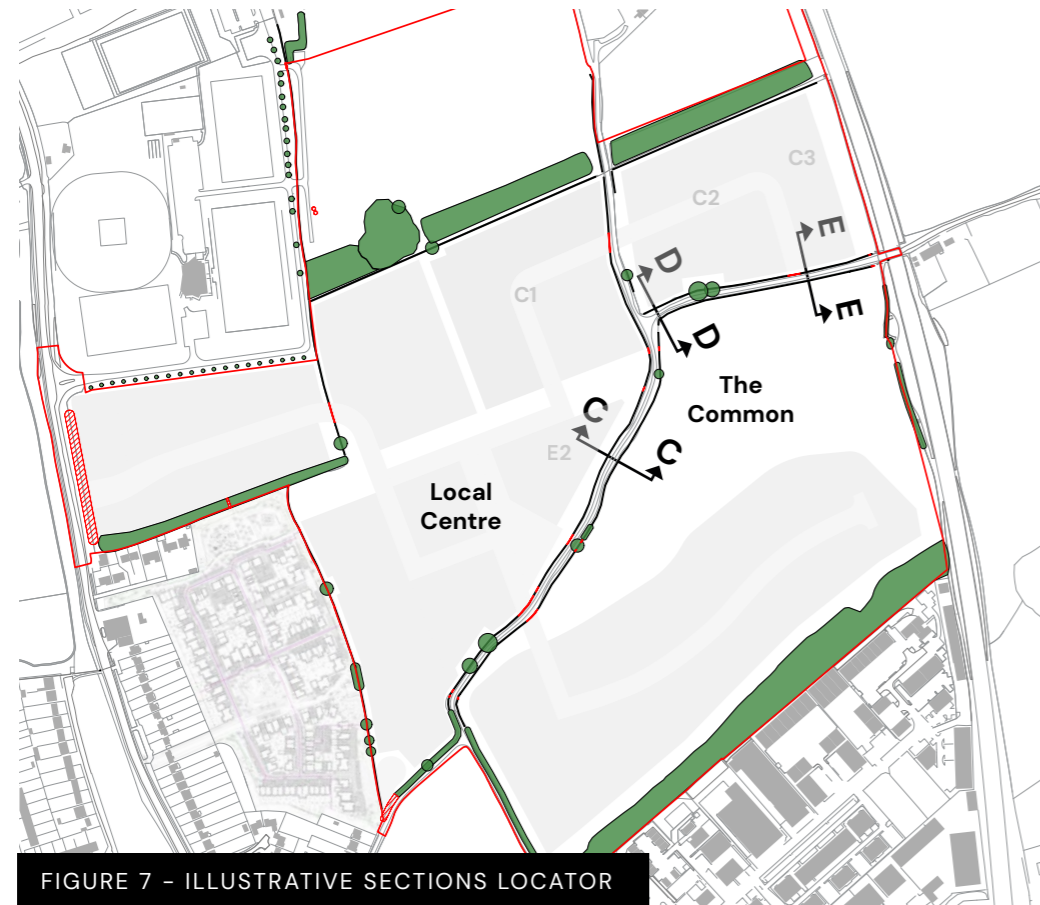
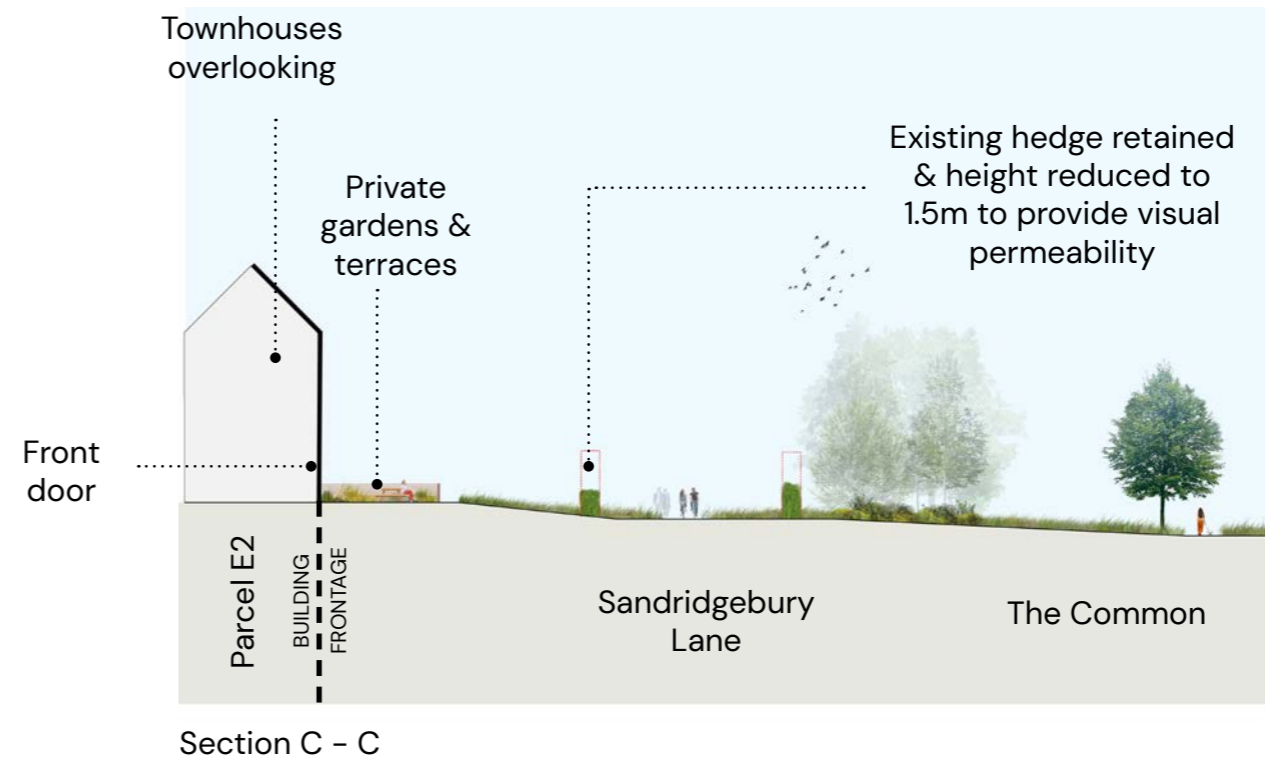


FIGURE 8 - AMENDED SANDRIDGEBURY LANE ILLUSTRATIVE SECTIONS

Note: Refer to page 126 of the DAS for original sections

COMMENT 3.14 CONTINUED

Design Team Response Continued


Figure 9 (right) shows the proposed locations for hedgerow removal to accommodate access and connectivity along Sandridgebury Lane and Valley Road. Proposed hedgerow breaks will be minimised to seek to retain the character of the hedgerow and to preserve ecological connectivity (further discussed on following pages). A total of approximately 135 linear metres of hedgerow and 43 linear meters of tree groups are proposed to be removed along Sandridgebury Lane and Valley Road.













It should be noted that extensive new native hedgerows and trees are proposed to be planted along Sandridgebury Lane and throughout the wider Woollam Park scheme.

Legend

 Site Boundary

Proposed Hedge Removal

 Punching holes through existing hedgerow to accommodate access

-  Proposed Sandridgebury Lane turning head and connection to Parcel B
-  Connection to Parcel B
-  Valley Road connection to Parcel D1
-  Connection to Parcel D (South) and Parcels B / F (North)
-  Connection North / South between Local Centre / The Common / Parcel D1
-  Secondary connection Local Centre / The Common / Parcel D2
-  Sandridgebury Lane to Woollam Green Link
-  Connection east-west Wollam Green Link / The Common
-  Sandridgebury Lane to Parcels C2 / C3
-  Connection to Hertfordshire Way (North) and the Common (South) parallel with railway line
-  Connection across Parcels C2 / C
-  Valley Road to Parcel D1 and Longspring Wood ancient woodland

- A / C / G 'Woollam Green'
- B 'Woollam Stead'
- E / F Local Centre
- D 'Longspring Hoe'

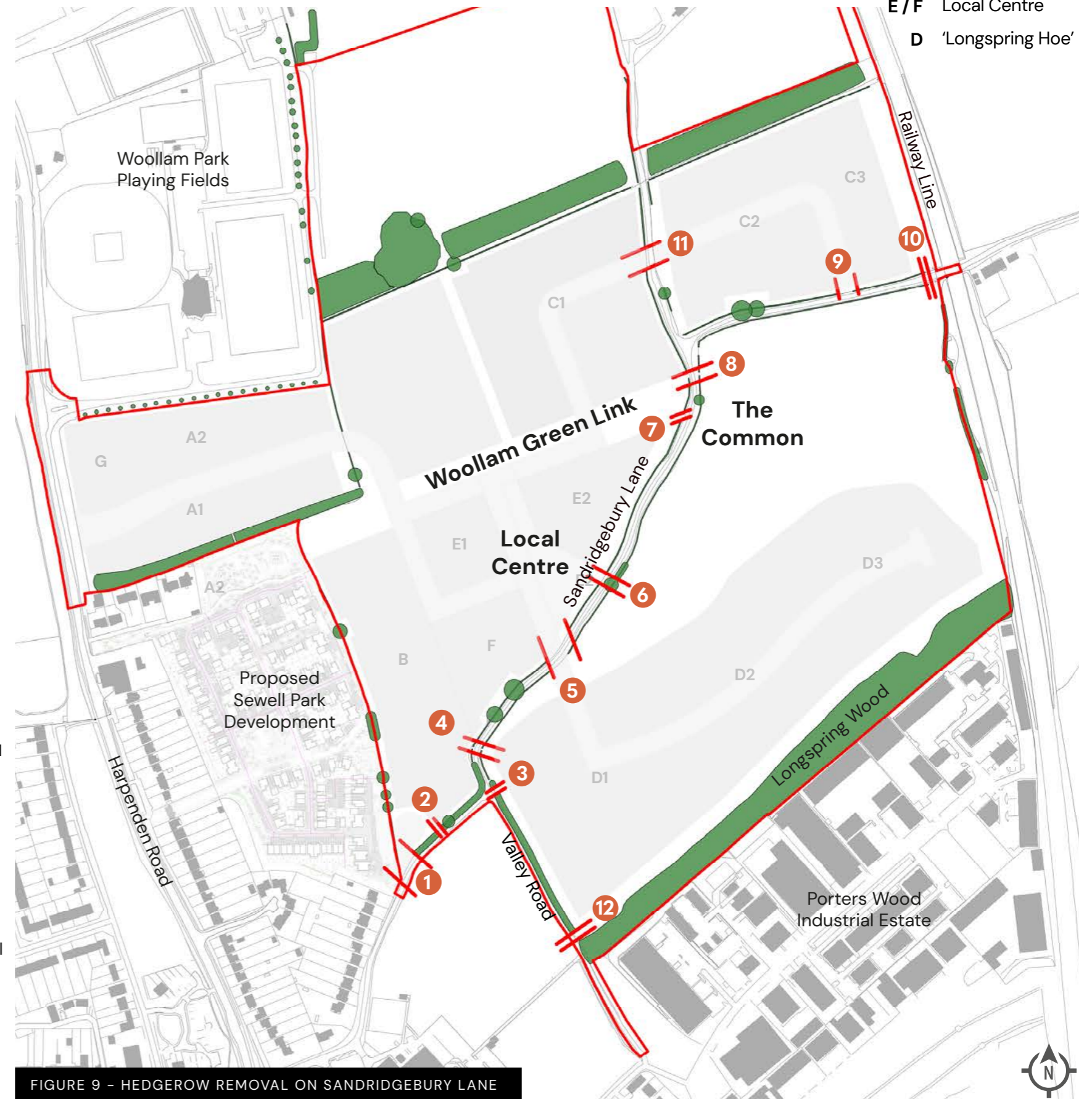


FIGURE 9 - HEDGEROW REMOVAL ON SANDRIDGEBURY LANE

COMMENT 3.14 CONTINUED

Design Team Response Continued

New native hedgerows and trees are proposed to be planted along Sandridgebury Lane to fill existing gaps and to enhance the character and ecological benefits of the lane. The arboricultural survey for the Site identifies that the hedgerow on Sandridgebury Lane is generally of moderate quality throughout.

Figure 10 (right) shows the location for proposed new hedgerow planting on Sandridgebury Lane. Approximately 101 linear meters of new planting is proposed along Sandridgebury Lane.

In addition to new Sandridgebury Lane hedgerows, extensive new hedgerow and tree planting are proposed elsewhere across the wider Site. Refer to DAS and Landscape design proposals for further details.

- A / C / G 'Woollam Green'
- B 'Woollam Stead'
- E / F Local Centre
- D 'Longspring Hoe'

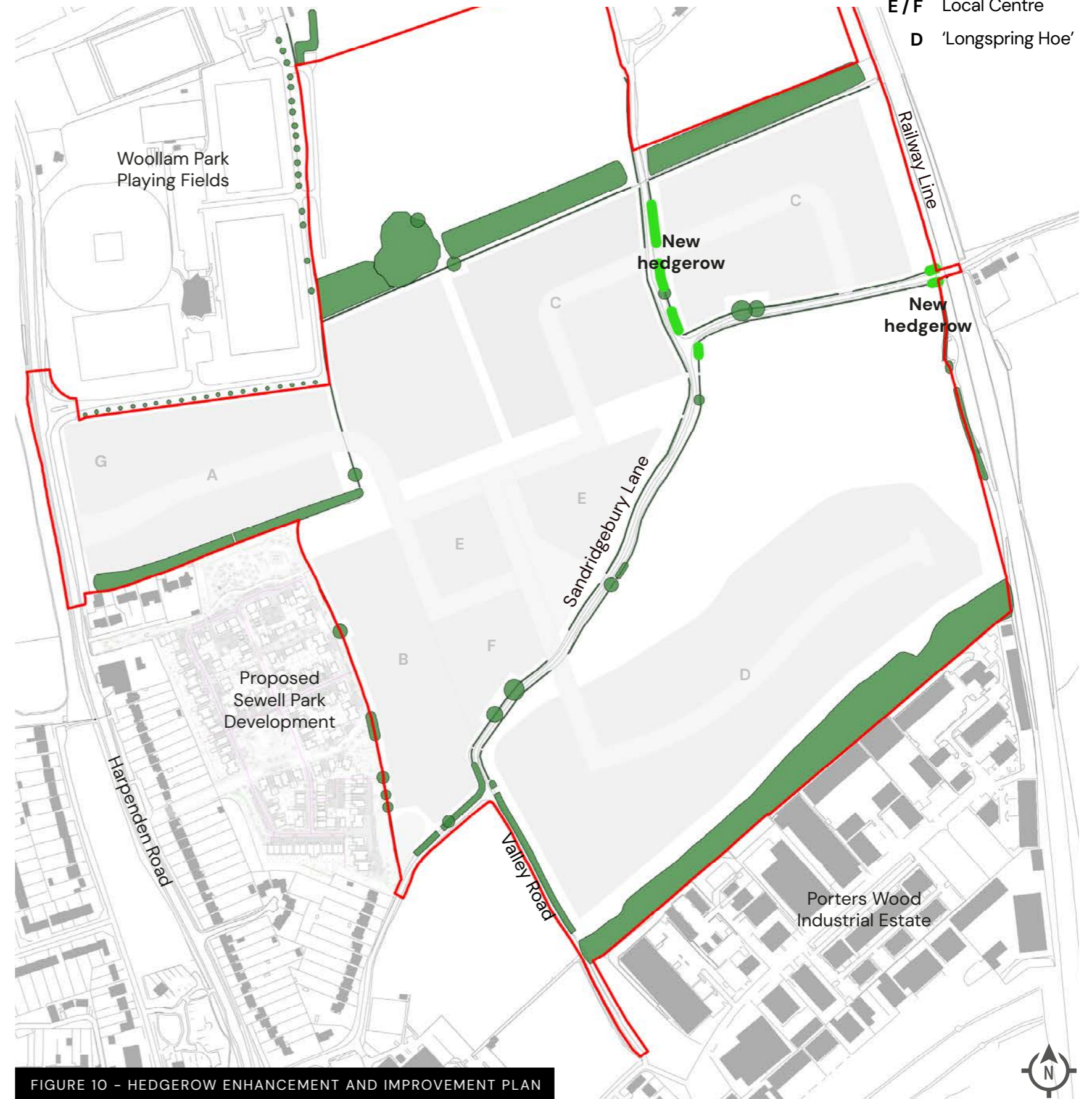


FIGURE 10 - HEDGEROW ENHANCEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

COMMENT 3.14 CONTINUED

Design Team Response Continued

To support the proposal, the Applicant's ecological consultant (FPCR) issued a technical note providing further information in respect of ecological conditions relating to Sandridgebury Lane – provided at Figure 11 (right). The note has been fully reviewed and concludes that hedgerow removal has been carefully considered and proposed such that existing hedgerow habitats on Sandridgebury Lane will maintain their functionality as a wildlife corridor. Furthermore, new planting proposed will increase habitat diversity, connectivity, foraging and resting resources on-site, supporting long term biodiversity gains.



Existing Sandridgebury Lane and Valley Road

Following ongoing discussions with the St Albans District Council regarding the proposed planning application for site to the North of St Albans, this technical note adds further information concerning the ecology surrounding the Sandridgebury Lane.

Sandridgebury Lane bisects the site, bordered by four hedgerows and arable environs on both sides. The hedgerows support moderate diversity of native woody species, with individual mature trees recorded along their lengths (*Figure 1*). These hedgerows are seasonally managed supporting narrow margins of modified grassland including cocks' foot *Dactylis glomerata*, false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, cleavers *Gallium aparine* and common hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*. Of the four hedgerows along Sandridgebury Lane hedgerow H9 is assessed as moderate condition, H6 and H11 are moderate condition and H10 is good condition using the Statutory Metric Habitat Condition Assessment.

Ecological survey work identified that the hedgerows, individual trees and arable margins bordering Sandridgebury Lane, provide limited opportunities to be used as wildlife corridors for badgers, bats and bird species onsite. A single mature Penduculate oak tree (Tree No T5) along hedgerow H9 was assessed as providing moderate roosting potential for bat species onsite.

The proposals will result in sections of the hedgerows bordering Sandridgebury Lane, to be removed to facilitate infrastructure access. Retained sections of hedgerow will be enhanced through the planting of additional native tree species and the creation of minimum 1m buffer strip of undisturbed strip of species rich grassland along the length of the hedgerows. The arable land on the eastern periphery of the lane will be lost to provide diverse green infrastructure including areas of species rich grassland, mixed scrub, woodland and Sustainable Urban Drainage systems, increasing habitat diversity as well as foraging, commuting and resting for the protected species recorded onsite. This proposed habitat enhancement and creation will be secured through a 30-year management plan to promote biodiversity net gain across the site.

Individual mature trees along the hedgerows will be retained and buffered appropriately according to the arboricultural impact assessment, while additional native shrub and tree planting along the hedgerows to increase woody species diversity and provide "hop overs" allowing aerial connectivity across the proposed gaps (*Figure 2*). Further creation of a new wildlife corridors from a mixture of mixed scrub, woodland, hedgerows and species rich grassland will increase connectivity, linking the hedgerows network along Sandridgebury Lane to the Long Spring Wood LWS in the south and the Heartwood Forest in the north. A sensitive lighting scheme will utilise low level directional lighting to avoid light pollution onto the hedgerow structures, maintaining wildlife corridors.

It is considered that the mitigation measures to the existing hedgerow habitats either side of the Sandridgebury Lane will maintain its functionality as a wildlife corridor. Furthermore, the proposed habitat creation which will increase the habitat diversity, connectivity, foraging and resting resources onsite supporting long term biodiversity gains.

FIGURE 11 - TECHNICAL NOTE: ECOLOGY SUMMARY FOR SANDRIDGEBURY LANE (PRODUCED BY FPCR)

COMMENT 3.14 CONTINUED

Design Team Response Continued


Further to the pre-application urban design workshops, a number of 'after dark' active travel routes are also proposed across the development that are proposed to provide safe, well-lit, and accessible routes for pedestrians and cyclists at all times of the day - including hours of dark. Figure 12 (right) illustrates the alignment of after dark routes across the Site including alternative routes to the north and south.

Figure 48 (page 143) of the submitted DAS provides further detail on Lighting Strategy that supports the proposals, including routes that are proposed to be lit and the types of lighting proposed.

Legend

 Site Boundary

Movement

 Proposed alternative after dark routes:
Alternative Northern Route and
Alternative Southern Route

- A / C / G 'Woollam Green'
- B 'Woollam Stead'
- E / F Local Centre
- D 'Longspring Hoe'

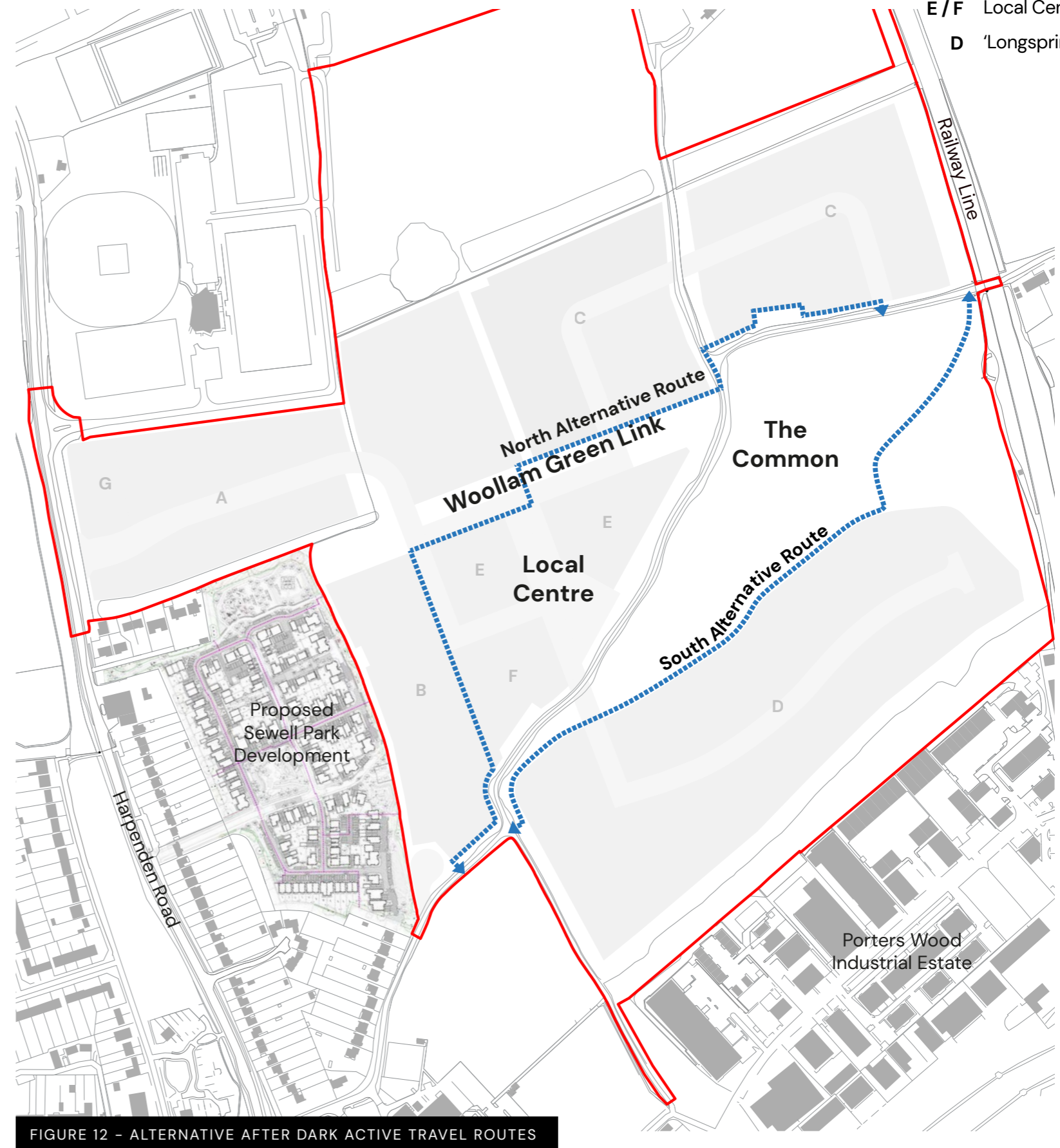


FIGURE 12 - ALTERNATIVE AFTER DARK ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTES



COMMENT 3.14 CONTINUED

Design Team Response Continued

Existing hedgerows are to be maintained at their current height stated in the Arboricultural Survey produced by FPCR. Hedgerows highlighted below in Figure 13 (right) are to be maintained at 1.5m height. This allows greater surveillance onto Sandridgebury Lane from adjacent housing and greater visibility for users along the length of Sandridgebury Lane.

- A / C / G 'Woollam Green'
- B 'Woollam Stead'
- E / F Local Centre
- D 'Longspring Hoe'

Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  Existing hedge maintained at 1.5m minimum height

Note: All other existing hedgerows to be retained at current height stated in Arboricultural Survey (undertaken by FPCR).

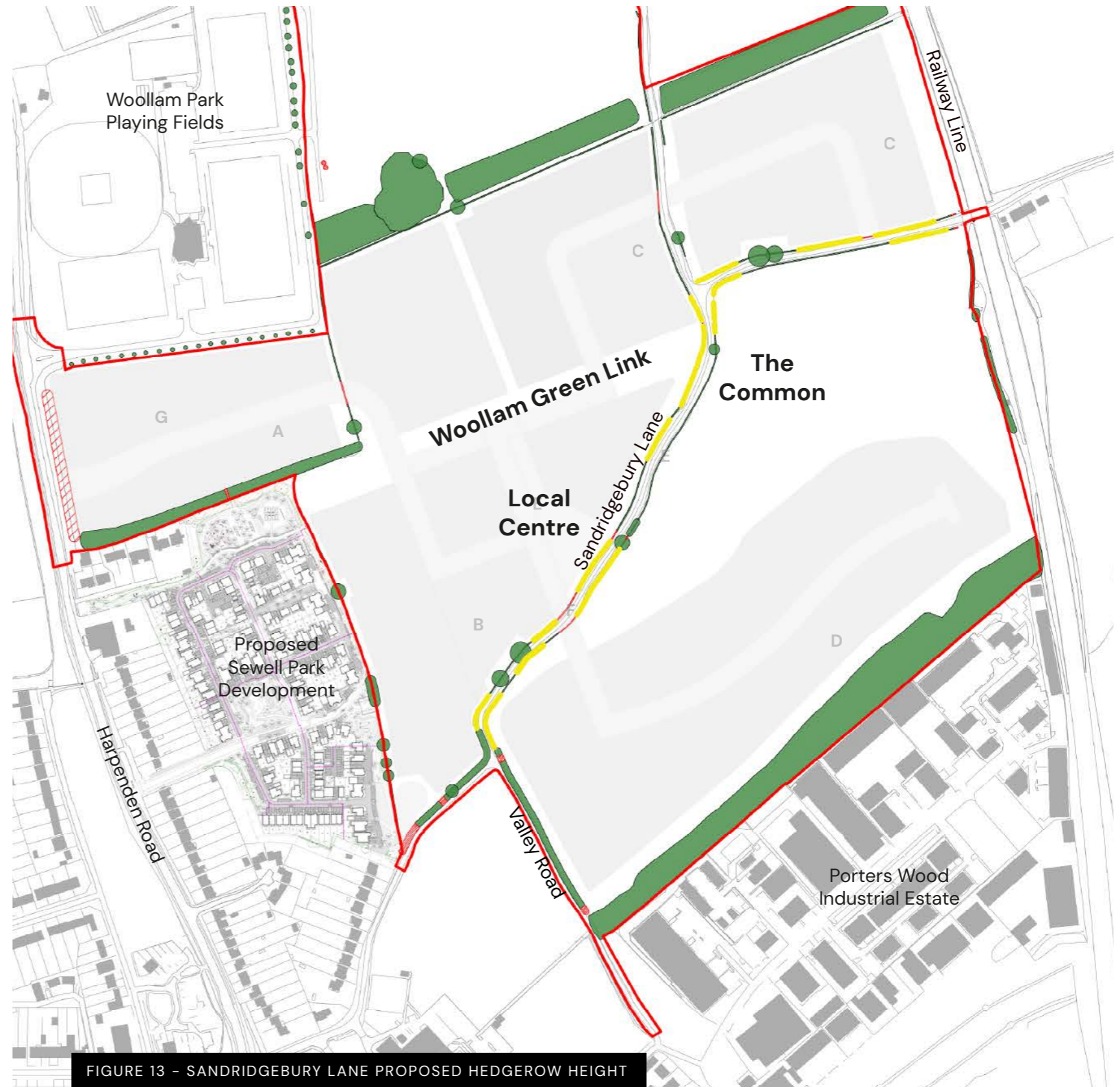


FIGURE 13 - SANDRIDGEBURY LANE PROPOSED HEDGEROW HEIGHT

COMMENT 3.15

Relationship with Sewell Park

3.15 "As aforesaid, there needs to be greater integration with the Sewell Trust Site to ensure seamless movement between the 2 sites".

Design Team Response

Refer to the response to Comment 1.4 above (pages 4 & 5).

COMMENT 3.16

Sandridgebury Lane Turning Loop

3.16 "The turning head on Sandridgebury Lane (at the south end of the active corridor) is a significant piece of transport infrastructure at a key gateway to the site. If this is the only viable option a great deal of care is required to include landscaping and screening to mitigate its impact on the character of Sandridgebury Lane".

Design Team Response

Figure 14 (right) provides a public realm proposal for the proposed turning head at Sandridgebury Lane. It is proposed that a combination of new and existing vegetation would be used to screen the turning head from Sandridgebury Lane. A change in surface material is also proposed to support a hierarchy of street typologies with Sandridgebury Lane being the dominant route.

It is proposed that built form would front the turning area and Sandridgebury Lane to create a positive outlook and edge to the public realm.



Legend

 Site boundary

FIGURE 14 - PUBLIC REALM PROPOSAL FOR SANDRIDGEBURY LANE TURNING LOOP

COMMENT 3.17

Street Network & Gradients

3.17 "The orthogonal layout of streets results in some streets running more or less perpendicular to the contours. This could result in gradients that are not conducive to walking and cycling, potentially negating much of the otherwise well considered design of the walking and cycling network".

Design Team Response

As noted above in the response to Comment 1.3 (page 4), all proposals for streets and spaces have been formulated in conjunction with HCC, to achieve acceptable alignments, gradients and geometries.

It is also important to note that the Planning Application is made in Outline and therefore, other than the Primary Street network (which is a development parameter), the precise alignment of Secondary and Tertiary streets is not applied for. Therefore as an Outline it is only shown illustratively in the submission material. Alternate alignments for the finer grain of streets and spaces could therefore be agreed at Reserved Matters Application stage.

Figure 15 (right) shows diagrammatically all of the proposed primary street gradients. As noted above, these have been deemed to be acceptable by HCC as highways authority and comply with Part M Building Regulations (maximum of 1:20 gradient), NHBC Guidance and other relevant standards and guidance. As such, these movement routes positively support walking and cycling.

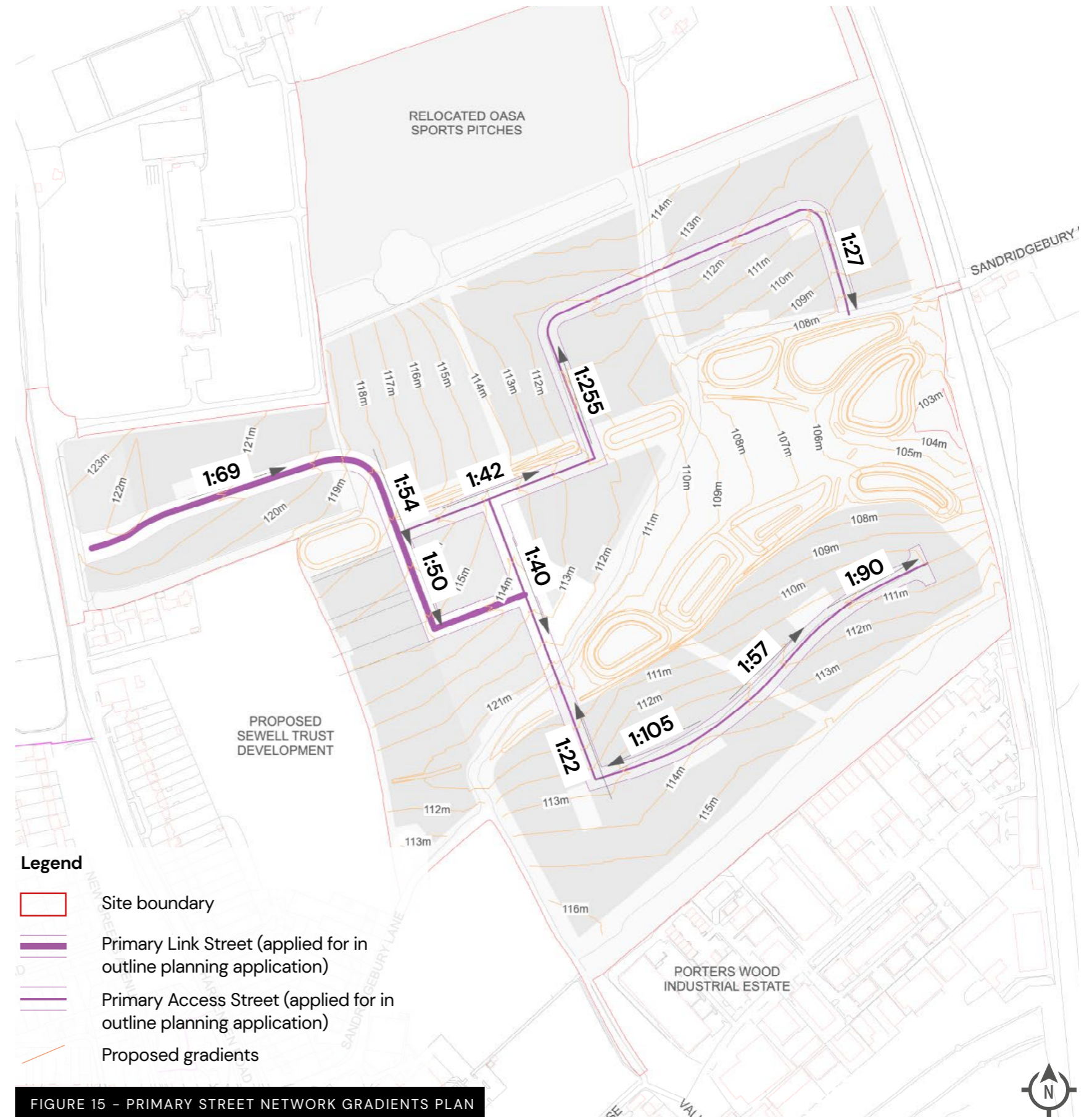


FIGURE 15 - PRIMARY STREET NETWORK GRADIENTS PLAN

COMMENT 3.18

New Sports Pavilion Annex – Cycle Parking

3.18 "Regarding the Sports Changing Pavilion Annex, there is an imbalance between parking for cars (I counted 153) and cycle parking spaces (I counted 8). This will not encourage active travel".

Design Team Response

Proposals for the Sports Pavilion Annex and the car and cycle parking that supports it have been formulated in conjunction with HCC as highway authority.

The circa 153 no. car parking spaces are existing and in use as part of the wider Woollam Park sports playing facility. The proposal would not change the existing car parking use.

Figure 16 (right) highlights a further 28 no. cycle parking spaces (14 no. hoops) are proposed to support the proposed new Sports Pavilion Annex in accordance with HCC parking standards. This is made up of 4 no. Sheffield-type cycle parking hoops located directly adjacent to the Pavilion Annex building, and a further 10 no. Sheffield-type cycle parking hoops located adjacent to the disabled parking spaces.

It is important to note that the proposed new Sports Pavilion Annex is ancillary to the main OASA Sports Pavilion facility to the west. The existing main Sports Pavilion facility provides cycle parking for whole Woollam Playing Fields site. The proposed new cycle parking facilities are therefore in addition to existing on site provision.

Additional cycle parking, beyond achieving required standards, could be provided, subject to the demand on these facilities.

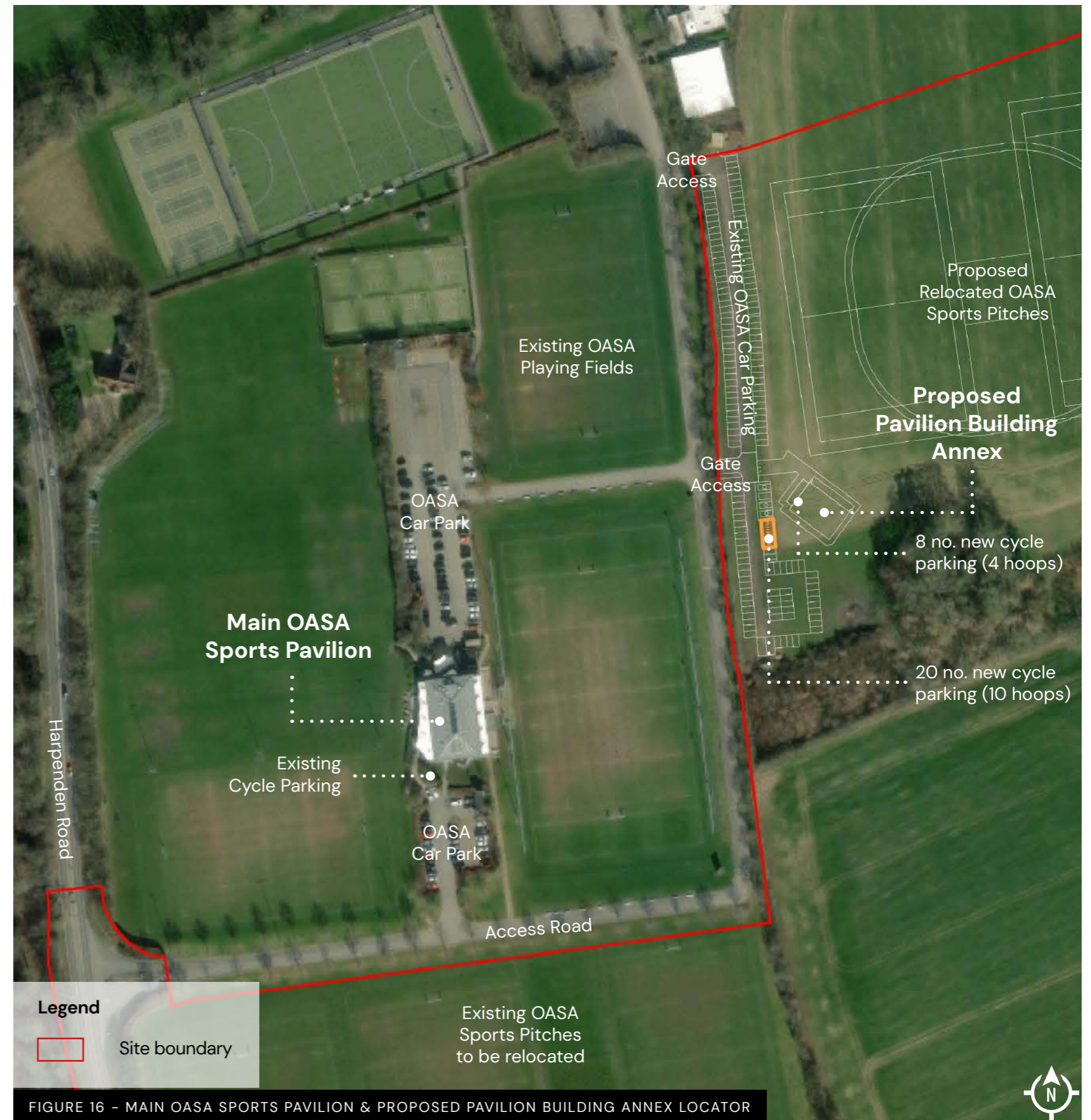


FIGURE 16 – MAIN OASA SPORTS PAVILION & PROPOSED PAVILION BUILDING ANNEX LOCATOR

COMMENT 4.10

Woollam Green Link

4.10 "The east-west linear space is highly rectilinear and formally laid out in a way one would expect to see in a city centre, not an edge of town suburb. The applicant should draw on local precedents such as New Greens Avenue, Harpenden Common, Batford Springs, Sandridge Village Centre which flex to respond to contours and the needs of the different uses fronting the space (which in this case are quite diverse: houses, apartments, school, shops)".

Design Team Response

A number of built precedents have been reviewed to test the Woollam Green Link proposals through their design development including both local examples such as those listed in Comment 4.10 as well as the open spaces that feature as part of exemplar design UK urban extensions (e.g. Elmsbook (Bicester), Barton Park (Oxford), Eddington (Cambridge)).

The Design Team have sought to propose an approach to the public realm that supports an exemplar new community and makes most efficient use of land in accordance with the NPPF. The space is intended to be flexible (as suggested by Comment

4.10) whilst also fulfilling a number of core functions (e.g. drainage, active travel movement).

Additionally, it is important to note that the extent and linearity of Woollam Green Link is dictated by the proposed shape of the open space in the adjacent in Sewell Park (refer to Comment 1.4, pages 4 & 5).

Further to the discussions at the post-submission review of urban design comments (6 May 2025), Figure 17 below shows an amended Woollam Green Link proposal showing illustratively how this linear space could be configured to be less orthogonal and more 'organic' in layout terms.

'Play-on-the-way' features

Informal social spaces

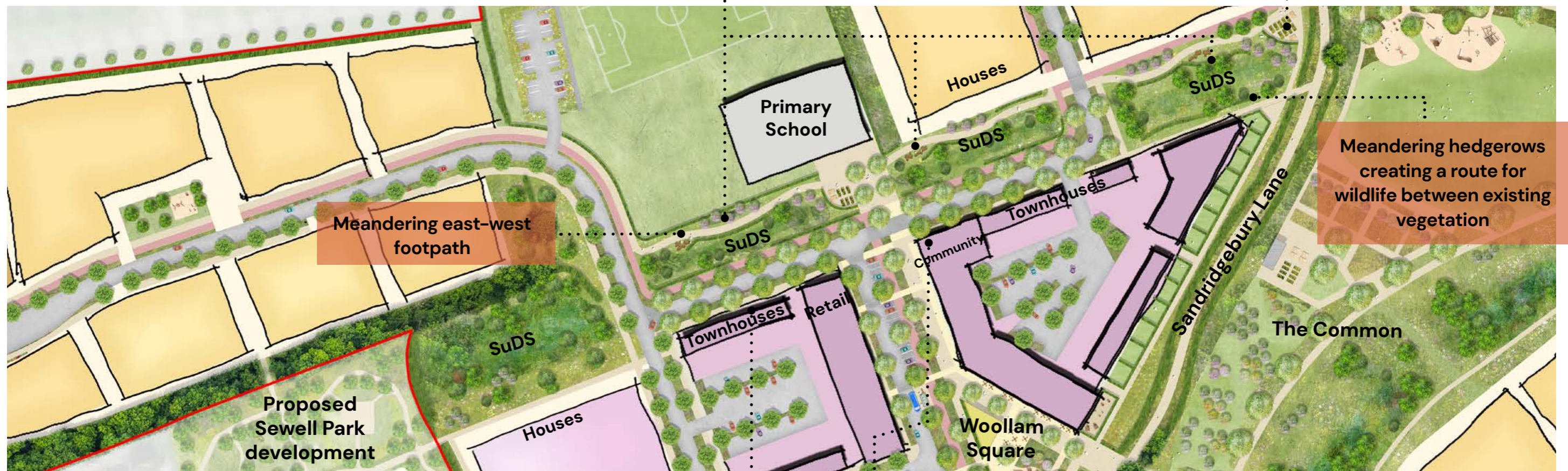


FIGURE 17 - AMENDED WOOLLAM GREEN LINK

Note: Refer to page 104 of the DAS for original diagram

COMMENT 4.11

Woollam Square

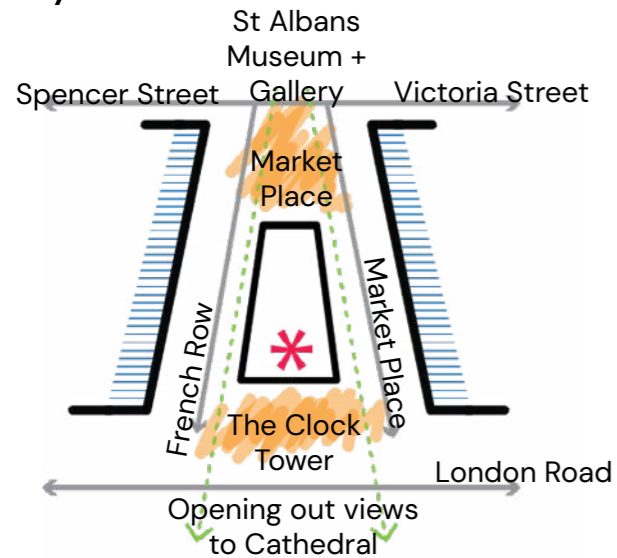
4.11 "Likewise, the form of Woollam Square is regimented in a way not supported by contextual analysis (see examples above & Wheathampstead High Street)".

Design Team Response

The proposed design of Woollam Square was discussed in some detail at the Design Review Panel (DRP) on 19 March 2024. A number of built precedents were reviewed to test the Woollam Square proposals through the design development of the space. Figure

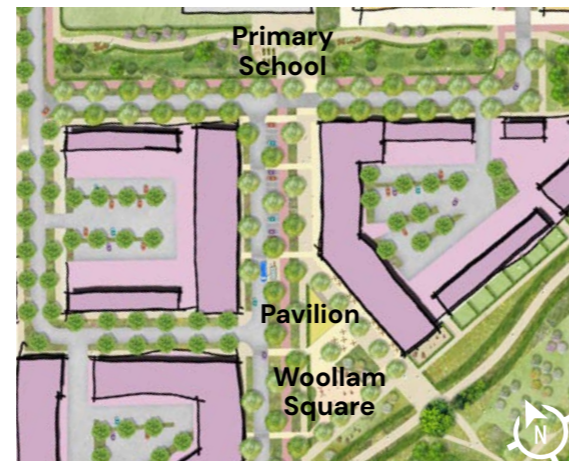
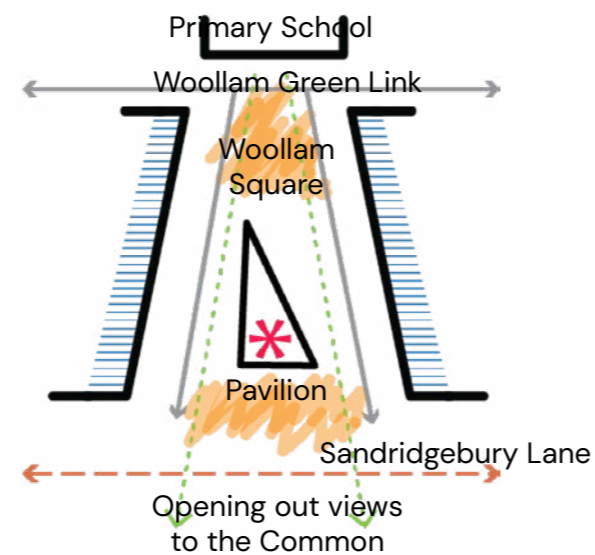
18 (below) illustrates how spatial elements from key local spaces have been used to inform the proposed design of Woollam Square. The Design Team have sought to propose an approach to the public realm that supports an exemplar new community and allows for a great degree of flexibility.

Example - Market Place, St Albans City Centre



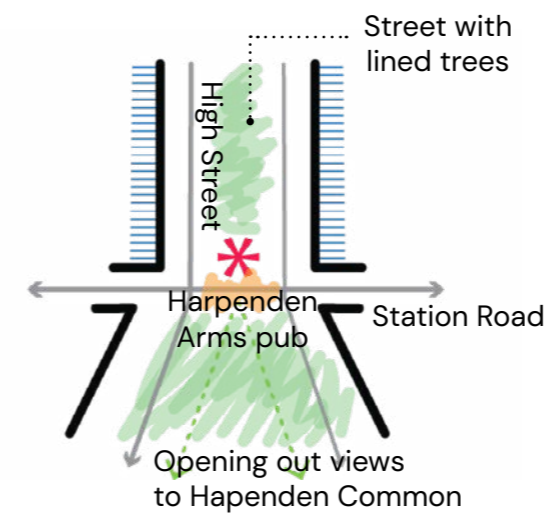
- Key spaces - Market Place and space fronting The Clock Tower - are oriented in a way that maximises solar gain into activity spaces
- The Clock Tower - a visual landmark and terminating gateway
- Pedestrian street, French Row, running through Market Place (north-south)

Proposal - Woollam Square, Woollam Park



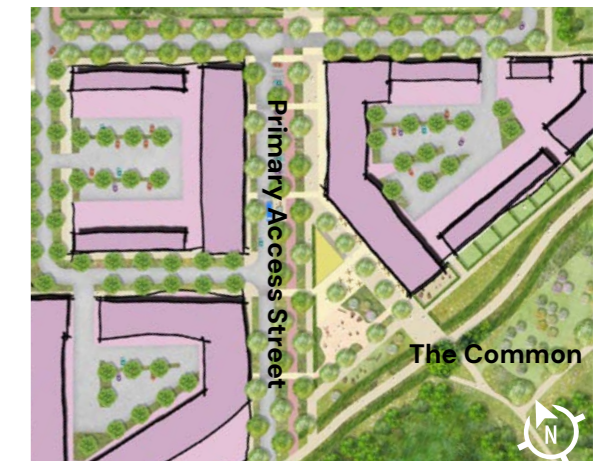
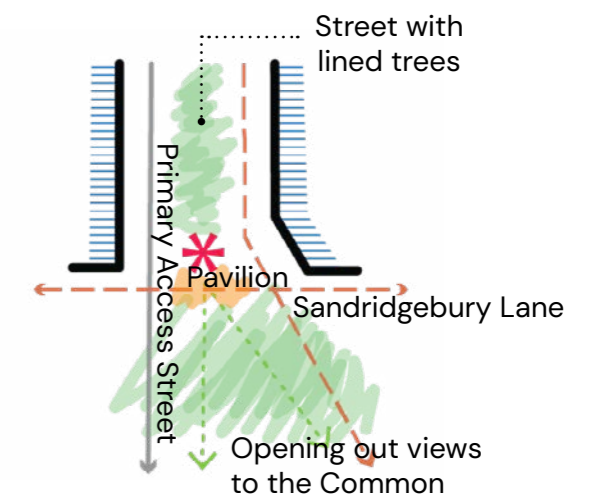
- Key spaces in Woollam Square are oriented in a way that maximises solar gain into activity spaces
- Pavilion - a visual landmark and terminating gateway
- Active travel route running through Woollam Square (north - south)

Example - High Street & The Harpenden Common, Harpenden Town Centre



- Mature line of trees on High Street
- Harpenden Arms pub act as a visual landmark feature on the end of High Street. Wider views to the Harpenden Common are opening out from the pub
- Tertiary streets run parallel / to the right side of to High Street and the Harpenden Common

Proposal - Woollam Square, Woollam Park



- Trees planted on Primary Access Street
- Pavilion sits at Woollam Square and act as a visual landmark feature. Pavilion frames the wider views to the Common
- Active travel movement is prioritised in Woollam Square, with a number of pedestrian / cycling routes going through and towards wider residential areas

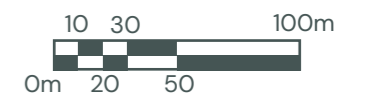


FIGURE 18 - WOOLLAM SQUARE CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS EXAMPLES & PROPOSAL

COMMENT 4.12

Woollam Green Link

4.12 "The addition of some play-on-the way to the Woollam Green Link."

Design Team Response

Refer to the response to Comment 4.10 (page 20) for further detail on Woollam Green Link proposals, including play-on-the-way features.

COMMENT 4.13

Sandridgebury Lane Turning Head

4.13 "The turning head on Sandridgebury Lane creates a significant piece of transport infrastructure, out of character with the leafy lane. More detail is required on the mitigation and integration of this highway infrastructure".

Design Team Response

Refer to the response to Comment 3.16 (page 17) for further detail on turning head on Sandridgebury Lane.

COMMENT 4.14

Drainage strategy

4.14 "Overall, there is a very clear water management diagram which has responded to topography and existing surface water flows to shape the masterplan. However, on the Green and Blue Infrastructure Parameter Plan, there is a zone of "Alignment protected for surface water drainage", which does not seem as integrated in the scheme as the other blue infrastructure".

Design Team Response

The submitted Parameter Plan seeks to provide a flexible approach for the future applications, so as not to cause undue problems for delivery at a later date. Figure 19 (below) illustratively shows how the 'alignment protected for surface water drainage' could be integrated to the street scene to permit this surface water movement, connecting into the wider water drainage network across the site.

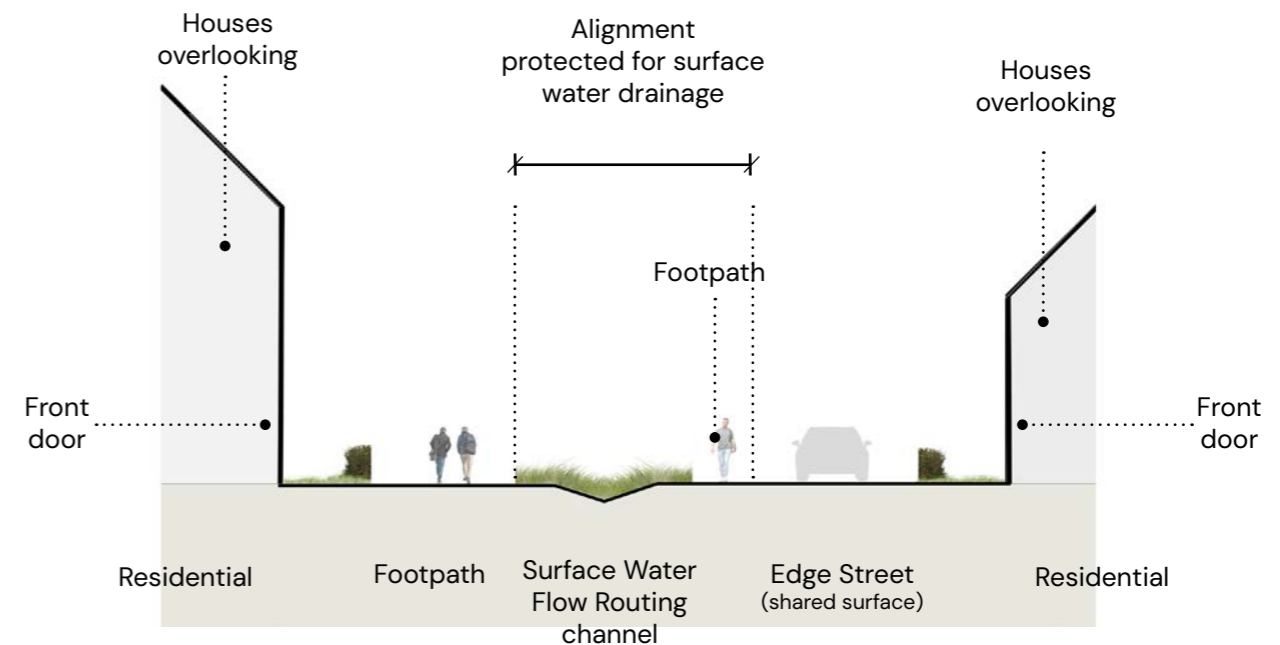


FIGURE 19 - ALIGNMENT PROTECTED FOR SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE ILLUSTRATIVE SECTION

COMMENT 4.15

New Sports Pavilion Annex – Public Realm

4.15 "The arrival point and setting of the Sports Pavilion Annex is dominated by car parking. While it is understood that parking for disabled people needs to be close to the pavilion, other parking could be relocated such that the pavilion has a public realm setting".

Design Team Response

The new Sports Pavilion Annex and its surroundings have been designed as secondary to the main OASA Sports Pavilion and therefore the landscape treatment is less celebratory than its nearby 'parent' building.

As highlighted in the response to Comment 3.18 (page 19), the car parking spaces are existing and in use as part of the wider Woollam Park sports playing facility. The proposal would not change the existing car parking use.

However, in view of comment 4.15, the Advanced Planting Specification Plan (drawing reference: DE_565_103 and 103a) to support the scheme has been further developed to show additional planting that would further enhance the arrival to the new Sports Pavilion Annex and its overall setting – Refer to Figure 20 (right).

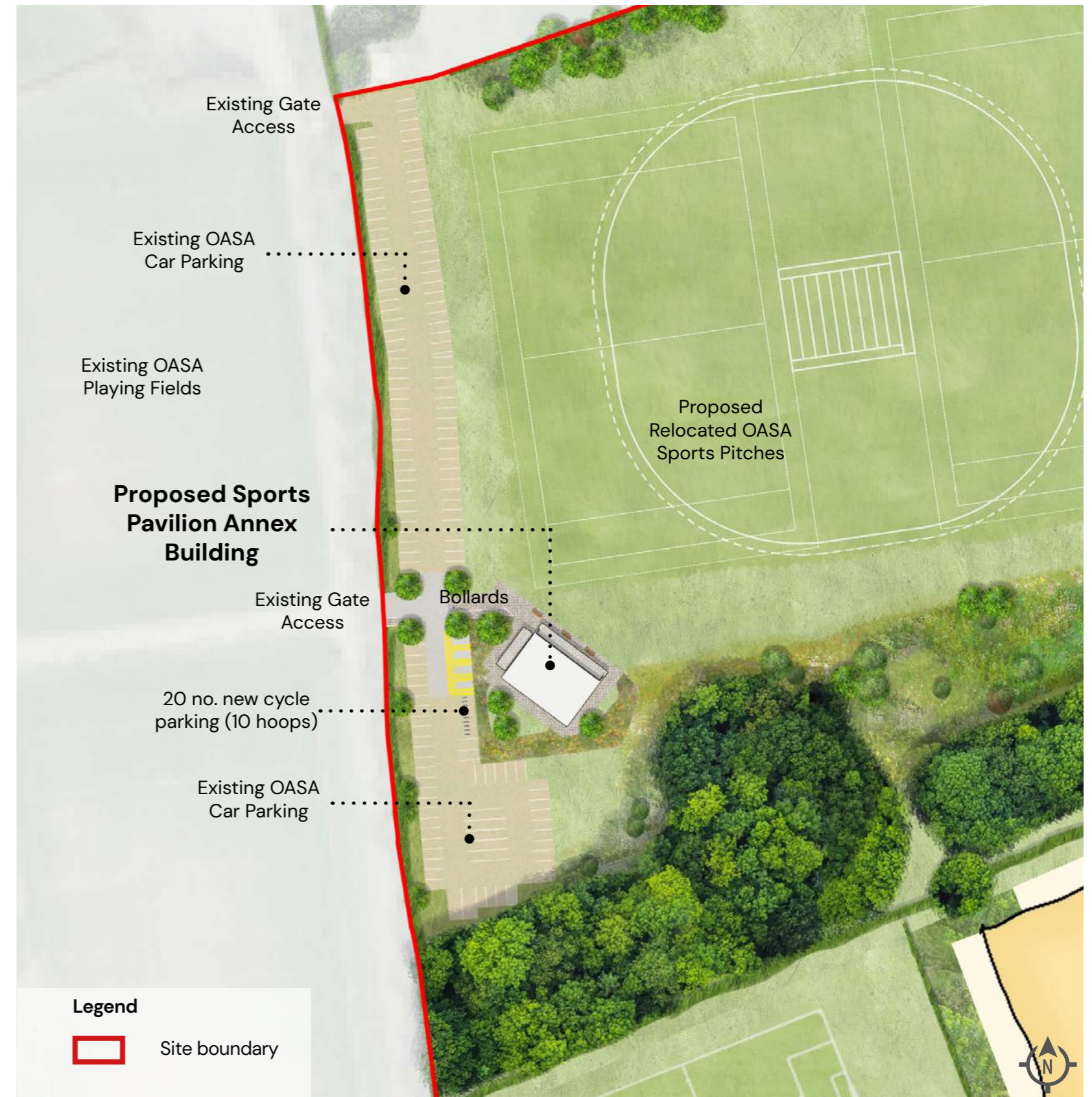


FIGURE 20 – AMENDED SPORTS PAVILION ANNEX PLANTING PLAN

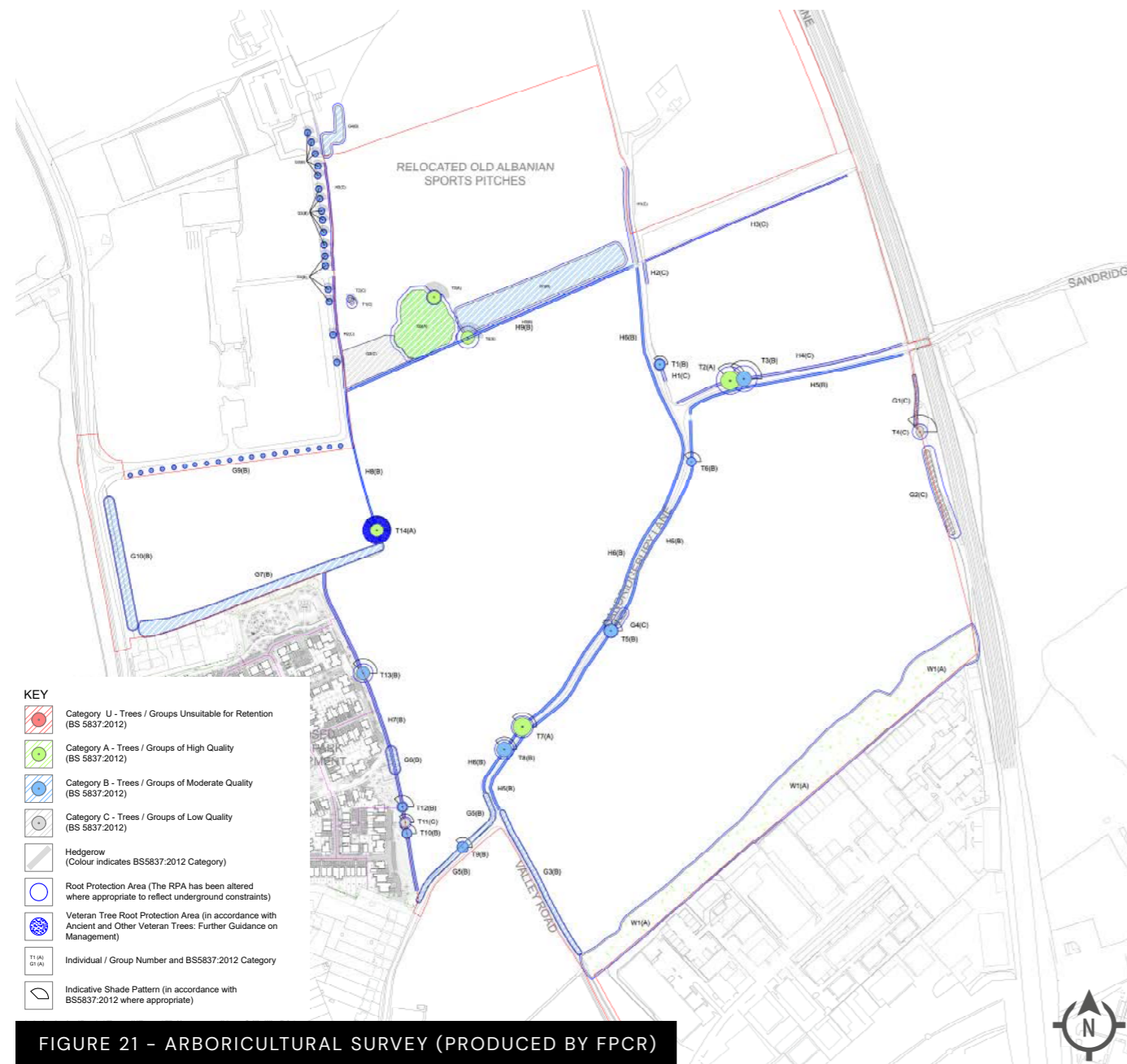
COMMENT 4.16

Tree Removal

4.16 "Tree removal: the Landscape Framework Plan shows very few existing trees and very few removed. Yet looking at a satellite view of the site there seems to be many more trees and more that would need removal: for instance, where the turning circle on Sandridgebury Lane is proposed".

Design Team Response

All potential removals of trees / group of trees / hedgerows are accurately shown on the Tree Removal Plan (Figure 22). This should be read alongside the existing Arboricultural Survey Plan (Figure 21). These plans provide a comprehensive representation of existing vegetation and proposed removals.



COMMENT 4.17

Green and Blue Infrastructure Parameter Plan

4.17 *"On the Green and Blue Infrastructure Parameter Plan, the description of Green Infrastructure includes "streets, access" – which I find ambiguous, especially as the alignment zone for primary streets is excluded from the green infrastructure on the plan".*

Design Team Response

Comments noted. To avoid any potential ambiguity we have updated the Green & Blue Infrastructure parameter plan to remove the word 'streets' from the legend. Instead we have replaced with the word 'routes'. This is important to still allow physical connections – 'routes' – between parcels to ensure inter block connectivity, allow open space management and maintenance vehicle access to maintain SuDS and other green and blue infrastructure. Refer to updated Green & Blue Infrastructure parameter plan (drawing reference: DE_565_74) for further detail.

COMMENT 4.18

Neighbourhood Greens & Open Spaces distribution

4.18 *"The Land Use Parameter Plan shows 6 neighbourhood greens in the Longspring Hoe area and just 2 in the Woollam Green area, which seems an uneven distribution, though could be supported in the analysis of spatial typologies".*

Design Team Response

In addition to recreational requirements, the distribution of neighbourhood greens and open spaces across the site has been informed by the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), with the placement of open spaces intended to mitigate the dominance of built form. This is particularly prevalent when addressing views from the Hertfordshire Way to the northeast of the Site, with open space proposed in Longspring Hoe necessary to break up the massing of built form, and over time providing a green foil throughout the southern part of the development. Refer to LVIA for further details.

COMMENT 5.10

Woollam Green Link – Play-on-the-way facilities

5.10 *"Play-on-the-way facilities or similar in the Woollam Green Link".*

Design Team Response

Refer to the response to Comment 4.10 (page 20), for further detail on the proposed Woollam Green Link, including potential locations for play-on-the-way facilities.

COMMENT 5.11

Toulmin Drive Recreation Ground

5.11 *"Early pre-app submissions included contributions to Toulmin Drive. Football pitches and changing rooms in lieu of on-site provision. I couldn't find reference to this in the submission".*

Design Team Response

As further discussed in the Planning Statement, improvements to Toulmin Drive Recreation Ground will also be possible through the financial contribution to be provided as a planning obligation; this will have the effect of improving what are existing poor grade facilities and increasing the utility of the playing fields and the William Bird pavilion.

We understand that the Council intend to commission a feasibility study regarding the potential improvements.

Two

Response to Landscape Officer's comments

Section Two provides a direct response to the comments raised by the Landscape Officer in relation to the submitted Woollam Park planning application. For reference, the original Officer's report is included in Appendix B.

COMMENT 6.1

Hedgerows on Sandridgebury Lane & Arboricultural Impact Assessment

- 6.1 *"It was understood that as part of the Pre Application discussions a height was proposed for the retained hedgerows along Sandridgebury Road. This is mentioned in the DAS however it is not highlighted in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, given that this would result in works to Comments are given in line with BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to the hedgerow and the loss of existing hedgerow height it should be included in the Report. It would be beneficial to have this included at this stage as it formed part of the visual impact for the site as well as providing a safety aspect for the users of Sandridgebury Lane".*

Design Team Response

Refer to the response to Comment 3.14 for further detail (including Figure 13) regarding retained hedgerows along Sandridgebury Lane. Also note Ecologist's comments regarding proposed height of hedgerow – Figure 11.

COMMENT 7.1

Hedgerows on Sandridgebury Lane & LVIA

- 7.1 *"The description of the lane makes reference to the 4–5m high hedgerows but as part of the Pre-Application stage it was discussed that these were to be reduced down to around 1.5m in height to provide passive surveillance for users of the active travel route. It is suggested that the assessment takes into account this information and the receptor is reassessed. Ultimately this may not change the assessment however including all the relevant information and changes to the existing setting is required".*

Design Team Response

We have noted this in the LVIA and discuss that the likely effect of the hedgerow management and downgrading of the lane will create a more sensitive future receptor group. However, for the purpose of this planning application it does not affect the baseline position (which is predominantly vehicular) and therefore will be classed as a naturally less sensitive receptor than for example, a pedestrian walker (as per GLVia guidance).

COMMENT 7.2

Viewpoints, Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

7.2 *"In regard to some of the close views primarily Viewpoint 9. It is noted that the existing vegetation in this area is to be lost and as such the built form would not be screened to the same extent. Updated visuals that either highlight the fact that existing vegetation in areas would be lost and as mentioned above wireline visuals that show the extent of the built mass for the viewpoints. This comment would also be prevalent to the viewpoints that are within the site".*

Design Team Response

We do not believe that wirelines are particularly helpful at this range to the development. Wirelines tend to be more useful at mid range where built form parameters are being determined from sensitive receptors (such as footpaths). A wireline at close range will not show that much given there is so much vegetation in the foreground, and a wireline shows very little detail.

COMMENT 8.1

Neighbourhood Greens & Open space distribution

8.1 *"The indicative location for Neighbourhood Greens and Open Spaces appears to be sensible, they are heavily located towards the southern portion of the site, could there be opportunities to include some of these spaces in the northern parcel adjacent to the primary school".*

Design Team Response

Refer to the response to Comment 4.18 (page 25), for further detail on location of Neighbourhood Greens and Open Spaces.

COMMENT 8.2

Zone of Alignment Protected for Surface Water Drainage

8.2 *"Within the Green and Blue Infrastructure Parameter Plan there is a 'Zone of Alignment protected for Surface Water Drainage' located within the residential developable area. In principle there is no objection to highlighting this section for drainage, however some further clarification as to the potential requirements for this space would be beneficial to understand the character of this section within the residential development parcel would be. The Drainage Strategy Plan suggests that a 0.5m deep 3.5m wide Surface Water Flow Routing channel is proposed in this location".*

Design Team Response

Refer to the response to Comment 4.14 (Figure 19, page 22) for further detail on integration of the potential Surface Water Flow Routing channel in the residential development.

COMMENT 8.3

Surface Water Drainage proposal & Open Space Provision

8.3 *"It is noted that the area outlined for Surface Water Drainage features is considerably large and effectively covers the majority of the Open Space Provision other than the location of the Allotments and Grow Zones. This is somewhat concerning given the current Surface Water Drainage proposals that include basins with depths up to 2.3m with slopes between 1:3 and 1:5".*

Design Team Response

There is significant public open space that is not in the drainage strategy – refer to DAS for further detail and breakdown of public open space provision. It is worth noting that the proposed attenuation areas are provided for infrequent flooding and will not be permanently wet. The drainage strategy is also divided into different types of basin, the one mentioned above is the deepest basin and found at the very end of the chain of basins.

COMMENT 8.4

Fencing around Drainage Basins

8.4 "Would these features require any safety fencing around them? It is also noted that given the slopes of these features and their depth that they would not likely be usable for multi-functional purposes. This should be clarified. It is not envisaged that all SUDS will include a fence".

Design Team Response

In line with advise from PJA (Drainage & Earthworks consultant) the drainage basins to 'The Common' and 'Woollam Green Link' are not proposed to be fenced, as they are mostly designed to be shallow in depth, sloped edges and safely integrated within the public realm.

Note, the drainage basin adjacent to the relocated sports playing pitches will be fenced to restrict unauthorised access. Refer to Figure 25 (page32) for further detail.

COMMENT 9.1

Proposed Landscaping for Access Point from Harpenden Road

9.1 "The application is seeking approval for the Access point into the site therefore we would expect to see the proposed soft landscaping for this section of the development included with the submitted information. This will ensure that sufficient space is secured for the proposed soft landscaping scheme and to mitigate the visual impact of the development and the loss of the existing vegetation in this location.

Design Team Response

Figure 23 (right) provides additional detail for the soft landscape proposal for the access into Woollam Park from Harpenden Road. It is proposed that a combination of new tree planting and verge planting would soften the development edge from the Harpenden Road. Street trees are proposed to line the primary access route into the site.

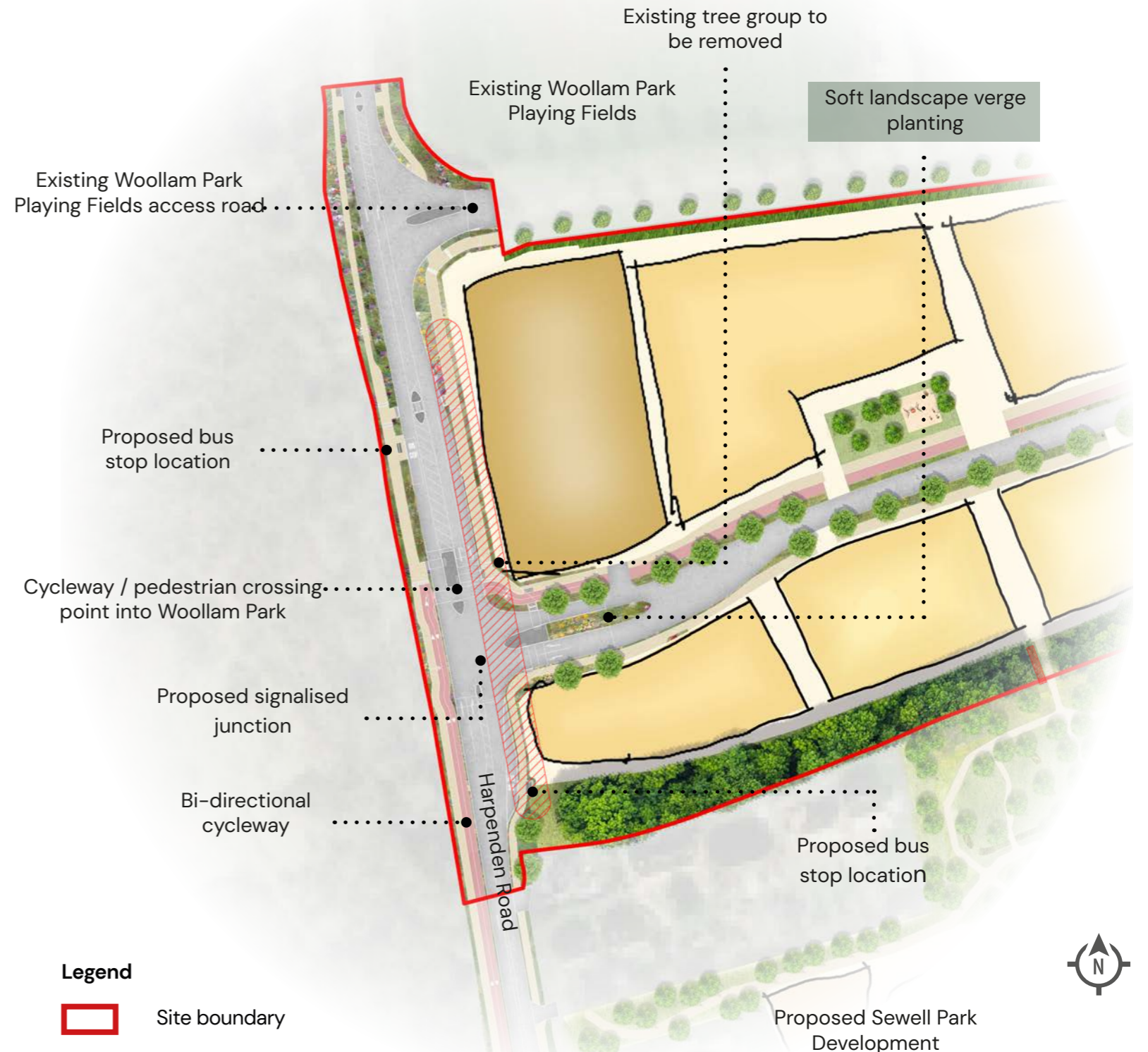


FIGURE 23 - PROPOSAL FOR HARPENDEN ROAD ACCESS SOFT LANDSCAPING

COMMENT 9.2

Proposed Landscaping for Sandridgebury Lane Turning Loop

9.2 "It is also noted that the Sandridgebury Lane Arrangement, Sandridgebury Lane Turning Loop and Modal Filter at Valley Road are also proposed for approval. As such the same level of information would be required in regard to Landscaping strategy for these areas".

Design Team Response

Figure 24 (right) provides a public realm proposal for the proposed turning loop at Sandridgebury Lane. It is proposed that a combination of new and existing vegetation would be used to screen the turning head from Sandridgebury Lane.

A change in surface material is also proposed to support a hierarchy of street typologies with Sandridgebury Lane being the dominant route. This includes one material used to delineate car turning loop radius, and a further complementary material highlighting the wider turning loop required for larger vehicles, such as school coaches / buses, refuse vehicles and the like. This will help visually break up the hard standing space. The size of the turning loop is based on vehicle tracking information as provided by PJA (Transport consultant) – Refer to DAS Figure 36 (page 124) for further details.

COMMENT 9.3

Sandridgebury Lane Turning Loop

9.3 "The turning loop on the southern part of Sandridgebury Lane will be a key feature of the site as it will act as the modal shift location for the Active Travel route that Sandridgebury is being downgraded to. Therefore, it is important that this location is designed accordingly and has strong soft landscaping to highlight the transition from a vehicle dominant route to a pedestrian focused leisure / travel route".

Design Team Response

Refer to the response above, for further details on Sandridgebury Lane Turning Loop public realm and landscape strategy.



FIGURE 24 – LANDSCAPE STRATEGY FOR SANDRIDGEBURY LANE TURNING LOOP

COMMENT 10.1

Tree Planting in Car Parking for OASA Sports Pitches Relocation Area

- 10.1 *"Where possible some additional soft landscaping / tree planting could be included along the car parking area between the proposed pitches. Small clusters and groups of trees would appear more natural and integrate into the scheme better than singular rows of trees".*

Design Team Response

Refer to the response to Comment 4.15 (page 23) for further detail on landscape / tree planting to the proposed sports pitch relocation.

The revised Advanced Planting Specification Plan (drawing reference: DE_565_103) is produced separately and shows additional soft landscaping / tree planting to this area. Refer to Figure 20 (page 23 for further detail).

COMMENT 10.2

Tree Planting in Attenuation Basin for OASA Sports Pitches Relocation Area

- 10.2 *"There is concern that the proposed area for the attenuation basin for the sports pitches has tree planting proposed in the location. It should be clarified and agreed with the LLFA that this proposal would be acceptable, from a Landscape point of view there is no objection and it would create multi-purpose integrated features".*

Design Team Response

Further discussions have taken place with PJA (Drainage & Earthworks consultant). The drainage basins are mostly designed to be shallow in depth, sloped edges and safely integrated within the public realm.

The principle of planting trees within the basin has been agreed and will not impact the overall capacity or effectiveness of these features. Indeed the principle is supported, creating a multi-purpose integrated feature as part of the wider landscape.

COMMENT 10.3

Proposed Drainage Basins Depth

- 10.3 *"There is also concern that the proposed basin is to be around 1.5m deep with 1:3 slopes or a retaining wall. It should be clarified if security / safety fencing would be required around the feature given the steep slopes and deep nature".*

Design Team Response

The drainage basin to the south of the Sports Pitch Relocation Area has been further reviewed and revised, including sloped sides in lieu of a vertical retaining wall to the northern edge – refer to latest PJA drawings for further details.

A standard post and wire fence is proposed to prevent unauthorised access into this drainage basin – Refer to Figure 25 overleaf (drawing reference: DE_565_82 revision E Proposed Fencing and Enclosure Plan).

COMMENT 10.4

Sports Pitches Boundary Fencing

10.4 "We note that a 1.8m high Security Fence is proposed around the boundary of the site. There is however an extension to this on the eastern boundary that appears to extend across the private vehicle access route that runs north from Sandridgebury Lane. Clarification as to why the security fencing runs across this area. The fencing around the sports pitches could also be visually detracting and there could be opportunities to integrate this into the boundary planting proposed, similar to how it is proposed along the southern boundary".

Design Team Response

Noted. The 1.8m Security Fence previously shown extending eastwards has been removed as per Figure 25 (drawing reference: DE_565_82 revision E - Proposed Fencing and Enclosure Plan).

Fencing around the relocated Sports Pitches themselves to the east and the north boundaries is proposed colour coated (green) 'D' mesh fencing and fully integrated into the proposed existing and new boundary planting.

Also note a standard post and wire fence is proposed to the southern edge of the playing pitch plateau, restricting unauthorised access to the drainage attenuation basin and existing planting further to the south - Refer to Figure 25 (right).



Example of D mesh fence



Example of timber knee rail fence



Example of demountable ballstriking netting

LEGEND

- Planning application site boundary
- Security boundary fence. D mesh fence, circa 1.8m high, polyester powder coating (PPC) rigid metal fence
- Security boundary fence. D mesh fence, circa 3m high, polyester powder coating (PPC) rigid metal fence
- Timber knee rail fence. Treated timber 'birds-mouth' posts, with square horizontal fencing rail, secured with galvanised straps, circa 1.0m high
- Demountable ballstriking netting (4.5m high). Only erected whilst rugby is in session
- Standard post and wire fence (1.2m high) with metal wire mesh to restrict potential access to drainage attenuation basin



Example of 1.2m high post and wire fence

FIGURE 25 - SPORTS PITCH RELOCATION PROPOSED FENCING / ENCLOSURE PLAN

COMMENT 11.1

Proposed Hedgerow / Fencing for Ball Strike

- 11.1 *"The DAS (Page 142) highlights the requirement for either a 3m high hedgerow or 3m high fence to be installed on the site boundary to prevent balls straying from the existing OASA Sports Pitches into the Residential Development. The soft landscaping option would be the preferred option as it would have a less visually intrusive impact on the new dwellings in this location. If, however, a fence is required we would expect mitigation planting to be provided within the 4m set back buffer."*

Design Team Response

Noted. We propose a hedgerow to the OASA Sports Pitches (northern boundary edge) and a fence to the end of private residential gardens (southern). This arrangement has the benefit of a visually softer boundary treatment, whilst also minimising potential for balls straying from OASA Sports Pitches into the Residential Development.

COMMENT 11.2

Lighting Strategy

- 11.2 *"The Lighting Strategy within the DAS (page 143) will require fleshing out as the scheme develops into the Reserved Matters stage as the current proposals seem quite standardised and some of the overlapping areas where Street Lighting meets Visually Sensitive movement routes will require some clarification"*

Design Team Response

With this being an Outline Planning Application we would expect lighting to be covered by a planning condition. Specific and more detailed lighting details will need to follow these initial design principles as set out in the DAS.

COMMENT 11.3

Hedgerow Height Reduction on Sandridgebury Lane

- 11.3 *"The Design Access Statement makes reference to the reduction in height of the existing hedgerows along Sandridgebury Lane within the cross sections. As mentioned above it would be expected that this information is highlighted both within the Arboricultural Information and the LVIA Assessment to fully explain and identify the proposed changes to the existing site and how this would ultimately impact the visual setting of the site"*

Design Team Response

Refer to response to Comment 6.1 (page 27) for further detail on height reduction of existing hedgerow along Sandridgebury Lane from Arboricultural perspective. Refer to response to Comment 7.1 (page 27) for further detail on height reduction of existing hedgerow along Sandridgebury Lane from LVIA Assessment perspective.

COMMENT 11.4

Tree Planting in Drainage Basins

- 11.4 *"As mentioned for the Full Application there is concern that the Landscape Framework highlights that trees are proposed within the SUDS Basins. This should be clarified with the LLFA to understand if this is an acceptable approach as soft landscaping can impact the storage capacity for attenuation features. Again, as mentioned previously from a Landscape point of view there is no objection to this proposal as it would create a visually and ecologically multifunctional feature"*

Design Team Response

Refer to response to Comment 10.2 (page 31), for further detail on proposed tree planting in drainage basins.

ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION COMMENT

Proposal for Longspring Wood Public Right of Way

9.1 They emphasised that ancient woodland is irreplaceable and protected under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Natural England/Forestry Commission Standing Advice.

Key concerns include:

- The proposed 15m buffer is likely insufficient for a large-scale development of up to 1,000 homes.
- The application lacks a detailed assessment of impacts and mitigation strategies for both construction and operational phases.
- Risks to the woodland include soil compaction, pollution, disturbance to wildlife, habitat fragmentation, and increased recreational pressure.
- Effective mitigation measures should include a larger buffer zone, habitat connectivity improvements, alternative pathways, lighting strategies, dust control, and enhanced woodland management.
- Proposed woodland and tree planting should contribute to long-term biodiversity, flood mitigation, and climate resilience, not just serve as visual screening.
- The Commission reminded that any development potentially leading to ancient woodland loss must be referred to the Secretary of State, per the 2024 Consultation Direction.

Design Team Response

To again confirm, there will be no loss of ancient woodland; indeed as further discussed in the submission material, Longspring Wood will be protected and its' setting further enhanced.

Figure 26 (right) provides additional detail regarding the surfacing of the existing Public Right of Way through the Longspring Wood ancient woodland. The use of bark chippings will reduce the soil compaction and disturbance to wildlife and habitat by encouraging users to use the PROW route, rather than meandering through the woodland.

The additional existing permissive path will be retained and promoted, parallel with the northern edge of the ancient woodland. It will be surfaced and lit, encouraging users to use this alternative parallel route.

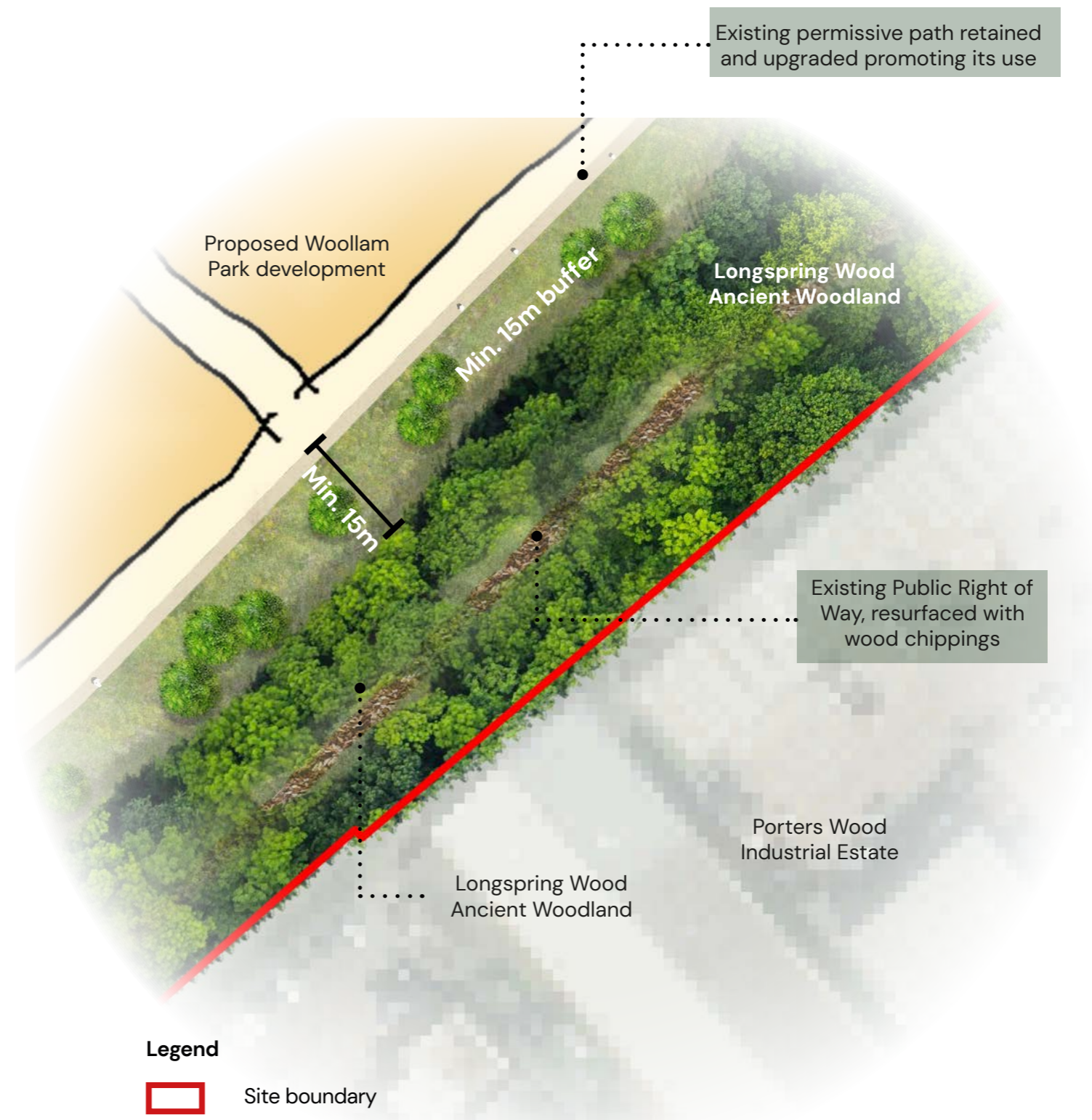


FIGURE 26 - PROPOSAL FOR LONGSPRING WOOD PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

Appendices

These appendices contain the comments from Urban Design Advisor (Appendix A) and Landscape Officer (Appendix B) regarding the Woollam Park Outline Planning Application **5/2024/2271**. These reports provide the basis for the comments addressed in this Supplementary Design Principles document and are included here for reference.

Additionally, Appendix C includes the Sewell Park Landscape Masterplan (Drawing No. LL1167-2.1-1000) submitted with Reserved Matters Application (RMA) 5/2024/1284 for the adjacent Sewell Park site, which is referred to in the Urban Design and Landscape Officers comments.

APPENDIX A – URBAN DESIGN COMMENTS (DATED 23 APRIL 2025)

Urban Design review North St Albans

Post submission review

Type: Hybrid planning application
 Status: Post-application
 Applicant: Hallam Land; and St Albans School and St Albans School Woollam Trust.
 Planning authority: St Albans City and District Council
 Date of feedback: 23rd April 2025

Remit

St Albans City and District Council have commissioned me to review the urban design quality of the above application in relation to the following planning policy and guidance documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024
- St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994
- St Albans District Local Plan Reg 19 B1
- Design Advice Leaflet No. 1 'Design and Layout of New Housing' SPG
- National Design Guide
- St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance, which consists of the
 - Design Principles,
 - Design Toolkit,
 - Masterplan Toolkit and
 - Employment Toolkit

Given the prominence of the National Design Code in the latest revision of the NPPF (2024 Para.138), I have used it to structure my feedback.

As the NPPF also refers to Building for a Healthy Life as an assessment tool (NPPF 2024, Para. 138) for the objectives of the NPPF, I have used this document as a reference.

Pre-application urban design process

Design workshops were held as part of the pre-application process at which the applicant presented proposals for discussion and my feedback:

Pre-application workshop 01	25 th June 2024
Pre-application workshop 02	31 st July 2024
Pre-application workshop 03	20 th August 2024
Pre-application workshop 04	9 th October 2024

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1. Context & Identity

References:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities
 Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places
 Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal Change
 Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994

Policy 2: Settlement Strategy
 Policy 69: General design and layout

Design Advice Leaflet No. 1 'Design and Layout of New Housing' SPG

i. Design and layout
 xii. Materials

National Design Guide

C1 – Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
 C2 – Value heritage, local history and character
 I1 – Respond to existing local character and identity
 I2 – Well-designed, high quality and attractive places and buildings
 I3 – create character and identity

St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: Design Principles

1. A distinctive place

St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: Design Toolkit

Chapter 1: Observing Place
 Chapter 2: Evaluating Place

Building for a healthy Life

Distinctive places – a memorable character
 Distinctive places – making the most of what's there

Which aspects of the scheme are successful?

- 1.1. The applicant has provided a comprehensive contextual analysis covering:
 - 1.1.1. Topography and geology
 - 1.1.2. Water
 - 1.1.3. Green infrastructure
 - 1.1.4. Site visibility from surrounding countryside and neighbourhoods
 - 1.1.5. Ecology & Biodiversity
 - 1.1.6. Historic legacy
 - 1.1.7. Conservation & archaeology
 - 1.1.8. Visual & environmental exposure, enclosure & shelter
 - 1.1.9. Connectivity
 - 1.1.10. Edges
 - 1.1.11. Urban grain & built form
 - 1.1.12. Land use
 - 1.1.13. Unique features and narrative

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1.1.14. Local vernacular details and materials

These have been observed and evaluated following guidance in the St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: The Toolkit.

- 1.2. The plan for the site has been largely driven by this analysis. The green space at the heart of the site is shaped by the typography, geology, surface water run-off, movement desire lines across the site. It responds to the wider context by taking the form of a valley running east-west forming a green “ripple” parallel to Beech Bottom Dyke and Long Spring Wood.

What could be improved?

- 1.3. While the green space is shaped by the context, the street layout and layout of the civic/ community space less so. These take on an orthogonal geometry, appropriate to a flat urban site. While I understand this generates efficient plots for volume housebuilding, it does not accord with the emphasis on contextual response set out in the design guidance referenced above, supported by the NPPF.
- 1.4. The relationship to the Sewell Trust Site. There needs to be a stronger relationship between these 2 sites: connecting routes, scale, height, typology, the green space between the 2 developments. The latter should be considered as an integrated whole; currently it reads as a residual space between 2 separate schemes.

2. Built Form

References:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11: Making effective use of land

Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places

Design Advice Leaflet No. 1 'Design and Layout of New Housing' SPG

i) Design and layout

National Design Guide

B1 - Compact form of development

B2 - Appropriate building types and forms

B3 - Destinations

St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: Design Principles

2. A compact place

Building for a healthy Life

Distinctive places – easy to find your way around

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Which aspects of the scheme are successful?

- 2.1. The applicant has defined four character areas, drawing from vernacular spatial typologies in the St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: The Toolkit. The centre of the site (Woollam Square and Woollam Stead) has a distinct character with a higher density around the neighbourhood centre achieved by a mix of typologies including apartments, townhouses, and terraced houses
- 2.2. Development along the Sandridgebury Lane edge will “face onto the lane”.
- 2.3. The care home on the Harpenden Road edge has the potential to form an appropriate gateway to St Albans.
- 2.4. There is a well-considered approach to key buildings which mark important locations on the site, terminate vistas and turn corners.

What could be improved?

- 2.5. While there is a clear difference in character between the central character areas and the rest of the site, there is not such a clear distinction between Woollam Green and Longspring Hoe. This is reflected in the density and heights parameter plans which make no differentiation between the two.
- 2.6. Woollam Green covers two areas which have quite different contexts. The western section forms the site entrance, close to Harpenden Road (a main travel corridor between St Albans and Harpenden) with its bus stops, while the eastern section is on the countryside edge. This should be reflected in the character and identity of these two areas and the subsequent density and height parameter plans.
- 2.7. Page 108 of the DAS states there will be lower density housing along the edge of Longspring Wood – this should be captured in the parameter plan.
- 2.8. While development along the Sandridgebury Lane edge will “face onto the lane”, it would be good to have this defined more precisely, including front doors to homes along this edge.
- 2.9. More integration along the Sewell Park Edge. The sketch provided on page 112 of the DAS shows quite different development form either side of the site boundary and a contorted pedestrian link.
- 2.10. On the Harpenden Road edge, the proposal to form a continuation of the existing developed frontage to the immediate south is supported. However, the sketch provide on page 113 of the DAS does not indicate this.
- 2.11. The Northern Perimeter Edge is described on page 115 of the DAS: “Typically, dwellings on this (edge) will be of a lower density (detached and

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semi-detached) in order to achieve aspirations for a looser form of development in this location." This is not illustrated in the accompanying sketch which shows a tight formation of semi-detached houses forming a straight frontage.

3. Movement

References:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places

St Albans District Local Plan Reg 19 B1

Key development requirements 6-9

Design Advice Leaflet No. 1 'Design and Layout of New Housing' SPG

iii) Roads and footpaths

National Design Guide

M1: A connected network of routes for all modes of transport

M2: Active travel

M3: Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users

St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: Design Principles

4. A connected place

5. Great streets and public spaces

7. Active and healthy

Building for a healthy Life

Integrated neighbourhoods – natural connections

Integrated neighbourhoods – walking, cycling and public transport

Which aspects of the scheme are successful?

- 3.1. Permeability and connectivity have been very well-considered with a strong emphasis on active travel and public transport with excellent infrastructure integrated for these modes.
- 3.2. The site presents challenges for connectivity and permeability. There is a steep level change along the southern edge, which is bounded by the private properties of the industrial estate, with affords no access to the site. The eastern edge is bound by the railway line which has just one penetration (Sandridgebury Lane). To the west is the Sewell Trust Site which, while permeable in itself, is set to the rear of existing homes, presenting challenges to connectivity. Beyond the Sewell Trust site to the west is Harpenden Road which has fast-moving traffic and few formal crossings, presenting something of a barrier to movement. The north side is bound by private sports pitches. The site itself is sloping, so there is potential for street gradients to be challenging for walking and cycling. However,

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within these constraints the applicant has developed a scheme that prioritises walking and cycling and public transport.

- 3.3. The centre piece of this approach is the closure of Sandridgebury Lane and Valley Road to general traffic and their conversion to active travel corridors for walking and cycling. Sandridgebury Lane is well-connected, leading south to the centre of St Albans and north to Sandridge, utilising the only penetration available (in this area) through the rail viaduct.
- 3.4. The red line boundary stretches northwards to include a new walking route in the scheme which will connect the Sandridgebury Lane active travel path (and the site in general) northward to the Hertfordshire Way, significantly improving access to wider walking and cycling routes in the area and to destinations such as the Heartwood Forest.
- 3.5. To the south there are connections to the PROW that skirts Long Spring Wood and in turn connects to Valley Road, again significantly improving the walking network in the wider area. The existing Public Right of Way through Longspring Wood is retained and fences included to protect the ancient woodland.
- 3.6. The scheme includes a comprehensive network of 2-way cycle paths/ lanes giving excellent cycling access to homes within the development and for those travelling to the neighbourhood centre or through the site to wider destinations. This cycle network is largely accommodated within attractive green spaces.
- 3.7. A proposed signalised crossing of Harpenden Road will significantly improve east-west walking and cycling connectivity to/from the scheme and in the wider area.
- 3.8. This signalised crossing connects to a proposed 2-way cycle path running from the crossing southward along the Harpenden Road. It will connect to a cycle path provided by others to significantly improve cycle access to wider destinations such as St Albans city centre.
- 3.9. Further off-site travel improvements include a raised table at the junction of Valley Road and Darwin Close, slowing vehicular traffic to the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.10. Scheme proposals include cycle parking in excess of the Draft Parking Standards in the Emerging Local Plan and proposals for convenient, secure cycle parking have been well-considered.
- 3.11. As well as a well-considered cycling and walking network the scheme promotes travel by public transport with a proposed bus stop in the

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neighbourhood centre, accessed by the aforesaid excellent walking and cycling network.

3.12. The mobility Hub, a multi-modal interchange offering a range of mobility options in one place as well as complementary facilities including eBike/eScooter hire options for short journeys; cycle tool stations and secure cycle parking; public space with greenery, seating, and shelter; local information, including timetables, walking/cycling maps, and notice boards; wider services to help residents to live locally, from parcel lockers to cafe/co-work space in adjoining buildings.

3.13. Access for private cars is not as convenient as active travel and public transport. While there is an access from the east, realistically most of the site will be served by a single access point on Harpenden Road. By deprioritising vehicular connectivity and permeability, active travel and public transport become relatively more attractive options.

What could be improved?

3.14. During pre-app meetings we discussed at length the suitability of Sandridgebury Lane as an active travel corridor, especially after dark, as it is lined with high hedgerows which will limit overlooking and the habitat value of the hedgerows could limit lighting opportunities. The applicant did a lot of work on this including, discussing in principle a feasible reduction in the height of the hedgerow with HCC ecologist. There are some sections in the DAS (p.126), but they lack annotation to make any real commitment on the proposals. Also, removal of sections of hedgerow and planting of additional hedgerow to compensate? Likewise, I can't find firm commitments on the frontage to the lane: are there front doors, balconies, front gardens? We discussed alternative, after-dark routes, but these are not clear to me in the document? It's difficult to assess this critical element on the information I can find.

3.15. As aforesaid, there needs to be greater integration with the Sewell Trust Site to ensure seamless movement between the 2 sites.

3.16. The turning head on Sandridgebury Lane (at the south end of the active corridor) is a significant piece of transport infrastructure at a key gateway to the site. If this is the only viable option a great deal of care is required to include landscaping and screening to mitigate its impact on the character of Sandridgebury Lane.

3.17. The orthogonal layout of streets results in some streets running more or less perpendicular to the contours. This could result in gradients that are not conducive to walking and cycling, potentially negating much of the otherwise well-considered design of the walking and cycling network.

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3.18. Regarding the Sports Changing Pavilion Annex, there is an imbalance between parking for cars (I counted 153) and cycle parking spaces (I counted 8). This will not encourage active travel.

4. Nature and Public Spaces

References:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal Change

Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994

Policy 74: Landscaping and tree preservation

Policy 75: Green space within settlements

St Albans District Local Plan Reg 19 B1

Key development requirements 10 & 12

Design Advice Leaflet No. 1 'Design and Layout of New Housing' SPG

v) Landscape

xi) Open space

National Design Guide

N1: Provide a network of high quality, green open spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities including play

N2: Improve and enhance water management

N3: Support rich and varied biodiversity

P1: Create well located, high quality and attractive public spaces

P2: Provide well-designed public spaces that are safe

P3: Make sure public spaces support social interaction

St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: Design Principles

5. Great streets and public spaces

Building for a healthy Life

Distinctive places – well defined streets and spaces

Streets for all – Green and blue infrastructure

Out of scope (this report):

- Soft landscaping: species selection and detailed design
- Biodiversity net gain
- Arboriculture
- Car parking numbers

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Which aspects of the scheme are successful?

- 4.1. The public realm and green space has been very well considered.
- 4.2. The plan is laid out around a generous green space. This green space follows the contours of the site and looks natural within the context. It responds to topography, geology and surface water flows with a series of SUDS basins leading to an area by the railway line where the water will drain through the chalk sub-base. This green space also responds well to movement patterns across the site.
- 4.3. This green space is multi-use with a mown-grass area where kids can kick a ball around, formal play areas (LAP, LEAP), a community growing space and more natural areas. The whole provides a variety of habitats.
- 4.4. A civic/ community plaza is provided at the heart of the plan as part of the neighbourhood centre, a space where the community can gather for local events as well as day-to-day activities such as meeting friends or sitting outside a café.
- 4.5. The proposed Woollam Green Link, a linear east-west space, provides a further east-west green connection. It is a generously proportioned green space catering for all transport modes, it fronts and gives access to the school and connects to the civic/ community space and continues the green space in the Sewell Trust Site plan. It incorporates swales and cycle paths and community grow boxes, forming an appropriate and engaging space to front the primary school.
- 4.6. There is a continuity of green space across the site, connecting habitats and connecting people to nature.
- 4.7. Within the residential neighbourhoods there are neighbourhood greens (5 are shown) which include LEAPs and community grow zones with raised planters.
- 4.8. The principle that, as a starting point, all existing tree cover and hedges should be retained where possible, is supported.
- 4.9. The intention to deliver the park and Woollam Green Link in the first phase of homes will help establish the character and identity of the site and provide amenity to residents from the start of occupation.

What could be improved?

- 4.10. The east-west linear space is highly rectilinear and formally laid out in a way one would expect to see in a city centre, not an edge of town suburb. The applicant should draw on local precedents such as New Greens Avenue, Harpenden Common, Batford Springs, Sandridge Village Centre which flex to

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respond to contours and the needs of the different uses fronting the space (which in this case are quite diverse: houses, apartments, school, shops).

- 4.11. Likewise, the form of Woollam Square is regimented in a way not supported by contextual analysis (see examples above & Wheathampstead High Street).
- 4.12. The addition of some play-on-the-way to the Woollam Green Link.
- 4.13. The turning head on Sandridgebury Lane creates a significant piece of transport infrastructure, out of character with the leafy lane. More detail is required on the mitigation and integration of this highway infrastructure.
- 4.14. Overall, there is a very clear water management diagram which has responded to topography and existing surface water flows to shape the masterplan. However, on the Green and Blue Infrastructure Parameter Plan, there is a zone of "Alignment protected for surface water drainage", which does not seem as integrated in the scheme as the other blue infrastructure.
- 4.15. The arrival point and setting of the Sports Pavilion Annex is dominated by car parking. While it is understood that parking for disabled people needs to be close to the pavilion, other parking could be relocated such that the pavilion has a public realm setting.
- 4.16. Tree removal: the Landscape Framework Plan shows very few existing trees and very few removed. Yet looking at a satellite view of the site there seems to be many more trees and more that would need removal: for instance, where the turning circle on Sandridgebury Lane is proposed.
- 4.17. On the Green and Blue Infrastructure Parameter Plan, the description of Green Infrastructure includes "streets, access" – which I find ambiguous, especially as the alignment zone for primary streets is excluded from the green infrastructure on the plan.
- 4.18. The Land Use Parameter Plan shows 6 neighbourhood greens in the Longspring Hoe area and just 2 in the Woollam Green area, which seems an uneven distribution, though could be supported in the analysis of spatial typologies.

5. Uses

References:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres

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Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities
Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places

St Albans District Local Plan Reg 19 B1

Key development requirements 1-5

National Design Guide

U1: Mix of uses

U2: A mix of home tenures, types and sizes

U3: Socially inclusive

St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: Design Principles

3. A place for all

Building for a healthy Life

Integrated neighbourhoods – Facilities and services

Which aspects of the scheme are successful?

- 5.1. The mix of uses has been very well considered.
- 5.2. While primarily a residential suburb, the scheme has a mix of uses to support a vibrant community: 2FE Primary School, neighbourhood centre, areas for play, relocated OASA sports pitches, open green space and community growing garden.
- 5.3. A variety of homes catering for all ages are proposed ranging from apartments, houses in a variety of sizes and typologies (terraced, semi-detached, detached, town houses), age restricted specialist accommodation for the elderly and a care home,
- 5.4. Furthermore, it is located within walking distance of Woollam Playing Fields, a tennis club, a rugby club, Toulmin Drive football pitches, St Albans Girls School.
- 5.5. There is good access (significantly improved by the scheme) to the wider countryside, including the Heartwood Forest, for leisure pursuits.
- 5.6. There are employment opportunities nearby, including an industrial estate adjacent.
- 5.7. The scheme includes a NEAP, a LEAP, 4 LAPs and teenage areas. Further opportunities for play are integrated into the landscape.
- 5.8. Consideration has been given to long-term stewardship, albeit the detailed proposals will come forward at a later date.
- 5.9. The intention to deliver the local centre, primary school, mobility hub at an early stage will help build a sense of community and provide amenity to early occupiers.

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What could be improved?

- 5.10. Play-on-the-way facilities or similar in the Woollam Green Link.
- 5.11. Early pre-app submissions included contributions to Toulmin Drive Football pitches and changing rooms in lieu of on-site provision. I couldn't find reference to this in the submission.

6. Homes and Buildings

References:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places

St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994

Policy 70: Design and layout of new housing

St Albans District Local Plan Reg 19 B1

Key development requirement 11

Design Advice Leaflet No. 1 'Design and Layout of New Housing' SPG

iv) Parking and garaging

viii) Orientation

ix) Amenity space around dwellings

x) Defensible space

National Design Guide

H1: Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment

H2: Well-related to external amenity and public spaces

H3: Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities

St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: Design Principles

6. Great homes

Building for a healthy Life

Integrated neighbourhoods – homes for everyone

Streets for all – Back of pavement/ front of home

Out of scope:

Number, size, mix, tenure, internal space standards of homes, and distances between dwellings for privacy and daylight are important planning consideration but outside the remit of this report.

Which aspects of the scheme are successful?

- 6.1. The design of the Sports Changing Pavilion Annex has been well-considered. It is a compact, efficient form with a shallow-sloping roof to minimise the impact on the Green Belt. Split flint cladding is a durable choice and is a contemporary reinterpretation of local vernacular buildings, while brick and timber add warmth and reference the existing OASA pavilion to which this is an annex.

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Aluminium window frames, raised seam roofing and rooflights also reference the existing OASA pavilion.

7. Resources and Lifespan

References:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal Change

National Design Guide

R1: Follow the energy hierarchy

R2: Careful selection of materials and construction techniques

R3: Maximise resilience

L1: Well-managed and maintained

L2: Adaptable to changing needs and evolving technologies

L3: A sense of ownership

St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance: Design Principles

8. Facing the climate crisis

9. Flexible and adaptable

10. For the long term

A sustainability review is outside the remit of this report. Comments relate to urban design aspects of the scheme.

Which aspects of the scheme are successful?

- 7.1. The site is well-located and designed to promote public transport (adjacent existing bus routes and bus loop on site) and active travel (see above re walking and cycling).
- 7.2. Surface water management has been well-considered and integrated into the scheme. Proposed SuDS features include attenuation basins, swales, bioretention systems, filter strips, and permeable paving.
- 7.3. There are large areas of green space creating habitats for biodiversity and linking with adjacent green spaces to create a network of habitat corridors.
- 7.4. A range of uses (see above) have been included which will meet many day-to-day needs of the community limiting the need for travel.
- 7.5. Consideration has been given to sustainable principles of design and construction of the buildings, albeit detailed commitments will be made through Reserved Matters applications and Building Control applications.

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- 7.6. The Sports Changing Pavilion Annex incorporates sustainable construction and technologies including PVs on the roof and clerestory windows and rooflights to reduce the requirement for artificial lighting.

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APPENDIX B – LANDSCAPE COMMENTS (DATED 5 JUNE 2025)

Growth & Environment
Executive Director Mark Doran



St Albans City & District Council
Civic Centre
St Peters Street
St Albans
Herts AL1 3JE

Herts Landscape Planning Advisory Service
Growth & Environment Unit
Hertfordshire County Council
Postal Point CHN 217
County Hall
Pegs Lane
Hertford
Herts SG13 8DF
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

TEL: 01992 555205
EMAIL: Landscape@hertfordshire.gov.uk
REF: 5/2024/2271
DATE: 05 JUNE 2025

Dear Case Officer,

REFERENCE: 5/2024/2271
PROPOSAL: Hybrid planning application comprising: (1) Full planning application for the relocation and replacement of existing playing fields and erection of pavilion annex; and (2) Outline planning application (access sought) for the construction of up to 1000 new homes (Use Class C3) to include a mix of market housing, affordable housing, age restricted specialist accommodation for the elderly, adult disability service units; a care home (Use Class C2); a local centre (Use Classes E and F); a primary school (Use Class F); the laying out of green infrastructure including habitat creation; drainage infrastructure; earthworks; pedestrian and cycle routes; new means of access and alterations to existing accesses.
ADDRESS: Land Off Sandridgebury Lane And Between The Railway And Harpenden Road St Albans Hertfordshire

Thank you for consulting the Herts landscape service on the above proposal. The following comments are given with regards to landscape matters in line with national and local policy requirements, British Standards, and industry accepted good practice guidance.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK¹

The National Planning Policy Framework² (NPPF) confirms that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes,³ and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

¹ Note: The list of national and local policies and guidelines is not comprehensive, refer to the national planning policy framework, planning practice guidance, local development plan, and other relevant strategies and guidance documents for all relevant policies and guidelines

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, July 2021

³ In a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan

Decisions should also ensure that new developments, are sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, support healthy lifestyles through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and an appropriate amount and mix of green and other public space, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, and appropriate and effective landscaping.

The NPPF recognises that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and serves to ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Policy 1 Metropolitan Green Belt
- Policy 69 General Design and Layout
- Policy 70 Design and Layout of New Housing
- Policy 74 Landscaping and Tree Preservation
- Policy 75 Green Space within Settlements
- Policy 80 Floodlighting

Design Advice Leaflet No.1 – Design and Layout of New Housing

Woodland / Tree Preservation Orders – TPO No. 1569 (W1 – Broadleaved Mixed Woodland)

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT, STRATEGY & GUIDELINES⁴

The site lies within landscape character area 102 – Ayres End Valleys and Ridges

The landscape character is described as a network of dry interconnecting valleys with a sense of rural seclusion despite the close proximity of settlements on the higher ground to the rear of the smaller plateau areas on the fringes of this area. The visual containment is aided by the prominent small and medium sized woods located on the upper reaches of the valley sides. Narrow lanes and equestrian activities create a relatively relaxed feel. The plateau areas are more open, with large arable fields and intermittent clipped hedgerows. On the fringes of the adjacent urban settlements there is a greater emphasis on recreational activities, including playing fields, equestrian activity, golf and community woodland.

The condition is assessed as Moderate and the strength of character is assessed as Moderate, the overall strategy for managing change is to Improve and Conserve.

Of relevance to the proposed development the guidelines for managing change include:

- utilize ancient hedge, field and woodland boundaries to establish the most appropriate location for wood restoration and expansion and creating eco-corridors. Build on the pattern of woodland on the upper slopes of the valley sides
- use indigenous species and native stock of local provenance wherever possible
- promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area, particularly in the south, to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries where possible

⁴ Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines for Southern Hertfordshire, The Landscape Partnership 2001
<http://webmaps.hertfordshire.gov.uk/environmentpublic/index.htm>

- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention/enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- improve public access arrangements including the scope for circular walks from adjacent settlements and access to woodlands
- ensure that ancient lanes and their associated hedgerows are retained, protected, enhanced and integrated into any new development with due regard to their historic, ecological and landscape value.
- new buildings and structures to be in keeping with the local vernacular and remaining historic character of the site.
- promote planting schemes that will reduce the impact of existing urban development on the landscape of adjacent areas
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedge banks, sunken lanes, ditches and hedges.

ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT⁵

FULL APPLICATION

We understand that it is required to remove 2no individual trees to facilitate the proposed parking area for the scheme. The trees are of low quality and are proposed to be mitigated by new boundary planting along the northern and eastern boundaries.

There is no in principle objection to the proposed removal of these trees as the mitigation proposals for the sports pitch and pavilion site is substantial. We are supportive of the boundary planting along the northern and eastern boundaries.

OUTLINE APPLICATION

It is understood that to facilitate the proposed development it is required to remove 1no Group and part removal of 3no Groups as well as part removal of 5no Hedgerows. This would ultimately result in the loss of 143m of Category B Hedgerow on the boundary of Harpenden Road, 155m of Category B and C Hedgerow across the site, 39 Category B Trees and 2 Category C Trees.

It is acknowledged that the part removal of hedgerows relates to creating gaps to allow for pedestrian and in some places, vehicle crossing points to connect the development across Sandridgebury Lane.

It is noted that the loss of G10 would be a considerable loss of existing vegetation to the site access point. Sufficient mitigation planting at the access point should be proposed to limit the visual impact upon Harpenden Road. We are pleased to see that as part of the Landscape Framework soft landscaping and tree planting is proposed around the access point into the site. As the gateway into the scheme, it is an opportunity to create an attractive entrance into the site, large trees or specimen trees should be included at this location

It was understood that as part of the Pre Application discussions a height was proposed for the retained hedgerows along Sandridgebury Road. This is mentioned in the DAS however it is not highlighted in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, given that this would result in works to

⁵ Comments are given in line with BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations.

the hedgerow and the loss of existing hedgerow height it should be included in the Report. It would be beneficial to have this included at this stage as it formed part of the visual impact for the site as well as providing a safety aspect for the users of Sandridgebury Lane.

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT⁶

METHODOLOGY

The submitted Methodology for the LVIA is supported and the supplementary background information and plans included with the LVIA are beneficial.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the Users of Sandridgebury Lane (within the site) is partially supported. There is concern that the assessment does not mention that the existing hedgerow vegetation along the lane is to be reduced in height which would impact the screening of the development. Due to the lane becoming an Active Travel route and removing cars from the lane it would ultimately impact the Sensitivity of the Receptor due to inherent change of nature.

The description of the lane makes reference to the 4-5m high hedgerows but as part of the Pre-Application stage it was discussed that these were to be reduced down to around 1.5m in height to provide passive surveillance for users of the active travel route. It is suggested that the assessment takes into account this information and the receptor is reassessed. Ultimately this may not change the assessment however including all the relevant information and changes to the existing setting is required.

We are supportive of the other Receptor Assessments and agree with the conclusions that have been drawn.

VIEWPOINTS

The proposed viewpoints are acceptable and we acknowledge that they are representative of the potential views of the site from the wider surroundings. It is difficult however to understand the potential visual impact with just the proposed extent of development highlighted on the viewpoints.

Wireline visualisations that include the proposed building heights in the proposed locations would be beneficial in highlighting where and to what extent the development would be visible from the viewpoints.

In regard to some of the close views primarily Viewpoint 9. It is noted that the existing vegetation in this area is to be lost and as such the built form would not be screened to the same extent. Updated visuals that either highlight the fact that existing vegetation in areas would be lost and as mentioned above wireline visuals that show the extent of the built mass for the viewpoints. This comment would also be prevalent to the viewpoints that are within the site.

⁶ Comments are given in line with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition,¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental management and Assessment (GLVIA3)

PARAMETER PLANS

LAND USE

The included notes within the Key for the different Land Uses is supported and it is positive to see that landscaping and drainage is included in the Residential and Built Form Land Uses. The indicative location for Neighbourhood Greens and Open Spaces appears to be sensible, they are heavily located towards the southern portion of the site, could there be opportunities to include some of these spaces in the northern parcel adjacent to the primary school.

GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Within the Green and Blue Infrastructure Parameter Plan there is a 'Zone of Alignment protected for Surface Water Drainage' located within the residential developable area. In principle there is no objection to highlighting this section for drainage, however some further clarification as to the potential requirements for this space would be beneficial to understand the character of this section within the residential development parcel would be. The Drainage Strategy Plan suggests that a 0.5m deep 3.5m wide Surface Water Flow Routing channel is proposed in this location.

It is noted that the area outlined for Surface Water Drainage features is considerably large and effectively covers the majority of the Open Space Provision other than the location of the Allotments and Grow Zones. This is somewhat concerning given the current Surface Water Drainage proposals that include basins with depths up to 2.3m with slopes between 1:3 and 1:5.

Would these features require any safety fencing around them? It is also noted that given the slopes of these features and their depth that they would not likely be usable for multi-functional purposes. This should be clarified.

ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

There is no in principle objections to the proposals for the movement strategy for the site both vehicular and pedestrian. The proposed network of footpaths across the Open Space is supported.

There is potential concern for the connection points to the Sewell Park Development. It is noted from the Arboricultural Impact Assessment that there are 2 sections of existing hedgerow that is to be removed to facilitate these connection points. Should more connection points be required / proposed then the Arboricultural Impact Assessment would need to be updated to highlight any additional sections of existing vegetation that would be required for removal.

Discussions with the Sewell Trust Application to clarify the connection points from both sides would be beneficial to avoid any issues with the footpath connection points being different and the need to update a range of documents.

BUILDING HEIGHTS

There is no in principle objection to the proposed heights of the built form. As mentioned above however the heights information should be included and highlighted within the LVIA to understand how the proposed built form would affect the viewpoints.

ACCESS

The application is seeking approval for the Access point into the site therefore we would expect to see the proposed soft landscaping for this section of the development included with the submitted information. This will ensure that sufficient space is secured for the proposed soft landscaping scheme and to mitigate the visual impact of the development and the loss of the existing vegetation in this location.

It is also noted that the Sandridgebury Lane Arrangement, Sandridgebury Lane Turning Loop and Modal Filter at Valley Road are also proposed for approval. As such the same level of information would be required in regard to Landscaping strategy for these areas.

The turning loop on the southern part of Sandridgebury Lane will be a key feature of the site as it will act as the modal shift location for the Active Travel route that Sandridgebury is being downgraded to. Therefore, it is important that this location is designed accordingly and has strong soft landscaping to highlight the transition from a vehicle dominant route to a pedestrian focused leisure / travel route.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

FULL APPLICATION

Where possible some additional soft landscaping / tree planting could be included along the car parking area between the proposed pitches. Small clusters and groups of trees would appear more natural and integrate into the scheme better than singular rows of trees.

There is concern that the proposed area for the attenuation basin for the sports pitches has tree planting proposed in the location. It should be clarified and agreed with the LLFA that this proposal would be acceptable, from a Landscape point of view there is no objection and it would create multi-purpose integrated features.

There is also concern that the proposed basin is to be around 1.5m deep with 1:3 slopes or a retaining wall. It should be clarified if security / safety fencing would be required around the feature given the steep slopes and deep nature.

We note that a 1.8m high Security Fence is proposed around the boundary of the site. There is however an extension to this on the eastern boundary that appears to extend across the private vehicle access route that runs north from Sandridgebury Lane. Clarification as to why the security fencing runs across this area.

The fencing around the sports pitches could also be visually detracting and there could be opportunities to integrate this into the boundary planting proposed, similar to how it is proposed along the southern boundary.

OUTLINE APPLICATION

The DAS (Page 142) highlights the requirement for either a 3m high hedgerow or 3m high fence to be installed on the site boundary to prevent balls straying from the existing OASA Sports Pitches into the Residential Development. The soft landscaping option would be the preferred option as it would have a less visually intrusive impact on the new dwellings in this location. If, however, a fence is required we would expect mitigation planting to be provided within the 4m set back buffer.

The Lighting Strategy within the DAS (page 143) will require fleshing out as the scheme develops into the Reserved Matters stage as the current proposals seem quite standardised and some of the overlapping areas where Street Lighting meets Visually Sensitive movement routes will require some clarification.

The Design Access Statement makes reference to the reduction in height of the existing hedgerows along Sandridgebury Lane within the cross sections. As mentioned above it would be expected that this information is highlighted both within the Arboricultural Information and the LVIA Assessment to fully explain and identify the proposed changes to the existing site and how this would ultimately impact the visual setting of the site.

As mentioned for the Full Application there is concern that the Landscape Framework highlights that trees are proposed within the SUDS Basins. This should be clarified with the LLFA to understand if this is an acceptable approach as soft landscaping can impact the storage capacity for attenuation features. Again, as mentioned previously from a Landscape point of view there is no objection to this proposal as it would create a visually and ecologically multifunctional feature.

The Indicative Phasing approach in principle is acceptable, it is positive to see that all of the Soft Landscaping and Open Spaces is to be delivered at an early stage to ensure that future residents will be able to enjoy the proposed amenities. At the Reserved Matters stage, it would be beneficial to understand how Phase 2 would come forward given that the space is large and includes the Open Space provisions and Drainage features. Would this be done prior to construction of dwellings? Would Landscape and Visual Mitigation requirements be delivered prior to construction of built form?

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

As mentioned above there are some concerns and clarifications required at this stage as well as additional information / updates to Plans and Documents.

FULL APPLICATION

- Clarification regarding the Soft Landscaping Strategies for the Drainage features.
- Clarification around the security fencing around the site.
- Explore the opportunities for additional tree planting.

OUTLINE APPLICATION

- The applicant should submit Soft Landscaping proposals for the Access from Harpenden Road. This should include a detailed soft landscaping plan with specification for the soft landscaping.
- As mentioned above updated viewpoint visualisations to include wireline visuals for the proposed building heights would be beneficial to highlight the potential visual impact of the development from the viewpoints.
- Clarification and update to the Arboricultural Report and LVIA to highlight to reduction in height of the existing hedgerow along Sandridgebury Lane.
- Clarification regarding the Soft Landscaping Strategies for the Drainage features.

We therefore advise the LPA that we suggest a holding objection to the proposed development until the additional information and clarifications highlighted above are submitted.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Rumble
Landscape Officer
Herts LEADS (Landscape Ecology Archaeology Design Sustainability)

APPENDIX C – SEWELL PARK LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN



CDM Regulations 2015
 All current drawings and specifications for the project must be read in conjunction with the Designer's Hazard and Environmental Assessment Report.
notes
 The contractor is responsible for checking dimensions, tolerances and references. Any discrepancy is to be verified with the Architect before proceeding with the works. Where an item is covered by drawings in different scales the larger scale drawing is to be worked to. Do not work drawings if you are unsure to be worked to in all cases.



Define.

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