

Sacombe Road Bengo Masterplanning Framework (August 2019)



Contents

1. Introduction
2. Site Location & Planning Context
3. Site Analysis - Location & Site in Context
4. Site Analysis - Ecology & Built Heritage
5. Topography
6. Existing Movement & Connections
7. Local Character
8. Opportunities & Constraints
9. Landscaping Framework
10. Design Principles
11. Design Principles - Character Areas
12. Design Principles - Masterplanning Framework
13. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)
14. Landscaping Strategy - Landscape
15. Landscaping Strategy - Images
16. Design Aspirations - Illustrative Images

Introduction

Introduction

This Masterplan framework document has been prepared in response to East Herts Council's commitment to ensure high quality design through a masterplanning process. The document builds on material previously submitted as part of this process. The masterplan document is submitted on behalf of Durkan in support of proposals for the residential development of a 1.68HA of land at Bengoe Nurseries, Sacombe Road, Hertford, SG14 3HG.

The Masterplan Framework will form the basis of initial discussions with third party stake holders including the Parish Council and the Shaping Hertford Steering Group.

This Masterplan framework document is intended to demonstrate the core design principles forming the underpinning design concepts for a detailed planning application to deliver around 50 new dwellings to be submitted in Autumn 2019.

The details included within this document follow a thorough examination and comprehensive assessment of the site and the wider surroundings and demonstrate the thought processes leading to the a proposed design that includes:

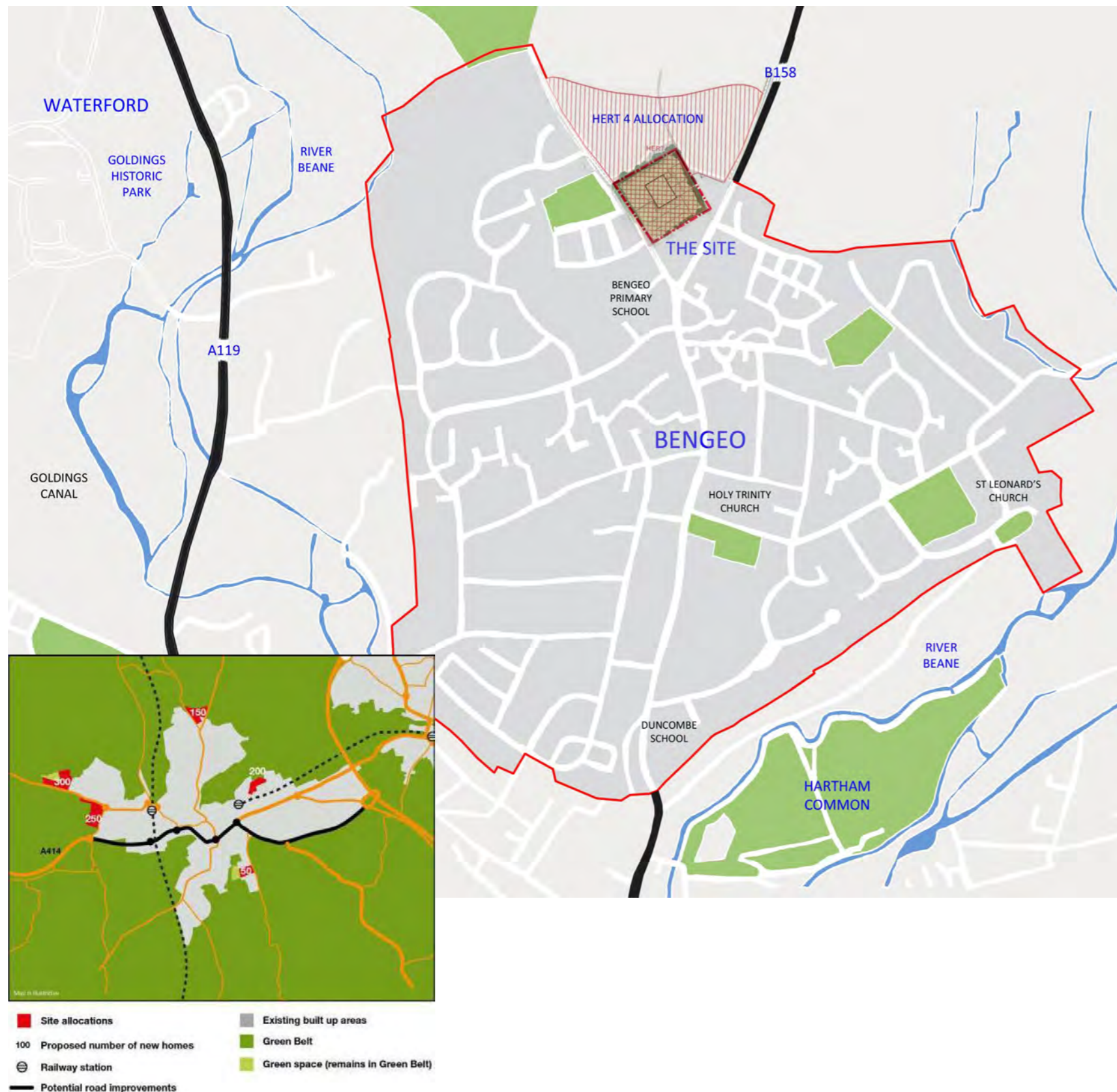
- A range and mix of around 50 dwellings including a 40% provision of affordable housing.
- The inclusion of integrated public open spaces incorporating children's play facilities.
- Sustainable Drainage strategies.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes running through the development forming important off-site connections to the neighbouring LEAP to the west and byway to the east.
- The retention, strengthening and enhancement of existing landscaping features.
- New strategic landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.
- Consideration of existing school drop-off parking issues.
- A carefully considered road hierarchy incorporating shared surfaces.
- Safer by Design Principles.

Our Vision

Our vision is to deliver a well-designed, high quality, verdant development combining attractive new dwellings within carefully balanced landscaped settings including the improvement and enhancement of the existing landscape and ecology to create a high quality new addition to the existing community. Key elements include:

- Traditional housing forms within a landscape led design approach.
- Dwellings that frame and overlook the main streets providing active frontages.
- Key buildings at strategic locations.
- Double aspect built forms that 'turn the corner'.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes that link the development to key areas off-site enhancing connectivity to the wider community.
- Passive natural surveillance to streets, parking areas and open spaces.
- On plot parking where possible to reduce car dominance.
- An integrated road hierarchy to help define character areas.
- An integrated landscaping design to help define character areas.
- Subtle design variation to help define character areas.
- Retention and reinforcement of mature trees and hedgerows around the site perimeter.
- Policy compliant car and cycle parking standards.
- Refuse strategies contained within private areas.
- Policy compliant garage designs.
- A fabric first approach to energy conservation.
- SuDs strategies.
- Sustainable strategies including the provision of charging points for low and zero carbon vehicles and covered secure storage for cycles.
- Generous private gardens.
- Reduced density at the fringes of the development.
- Open space to the periphery of the development.

Site Location & Planning Context



Planning Context

The site is allocated for residential development in the submitted version of the East Hertfordshire District Plan under reference HERT4.

The site has historically been located within the Metropolitan Green Belt where highly restrictive planning policies apply. Following the adoption of the new District Plan (Oct 2018), this site has been removed from the Green Belt and will form the first phase of an allocation to provide around 150 dwellings. HERT4 sets out an expectation for the site to deliver around 50 new dwellings by 2022 with the wider allocation to deliver housing by 2027 (in the event that the extraction of minerals occurs on the neighbouring site). This aligns with strategic policies DPS2, DPS3 and HERT1.

The allocation establishes the principle of residential development for the site in line with the Council's aspirations.

Key policy HERT4 requires a masterplan to be collaboratively prepared involving a range of key stakeholders. This document has evolved through a process of pre-application engagement with East Herts Council and statutory and non statutory consultees and includes a public exhibition and presentations to the Shaping Hertford Steering Group.

Policy HERT4 sets out a series of requirements expected from the delivery of a development. These include a 40% allocation of affordable housing, an appropriate mix of housing, the delivery of green infrastructure, vehicular access from Sacombe Road, off-site mitigation measures and wider pedestrian and cycle connectivity, all of which are included within these proposals.

The proposals must also be considered in relation to any future adjoining development.

As the overall allocation site would be delivered in two phases, it is important to plan the site to reflect its existing countryside boundaries, but also to allow for successful integration as and when a second phase may be brought forward at a later date.

In line with HCC LTP4 Policy 1 sustainable travel methods will be at the heart of the development through:

- The promotion of sustainable patterns of movement.
- The provision of cycle routes and linkages.
- Linkages and enhancements to local bus services.
- Prioritising pedestrian and cycle use over car use.
- Measures to encourage modal switching.

Site Analysis - Location & Site in Context



Location of the Site

The site, measuring 1.68 Ha, is located in the Bengo area of Hertford on the northern edge of the town. The site contains a large glass house building associated with its use as a Garden Centre. The site is served by an existing vehicular access from Sacombe Road, along the western boundary.

The site is located to the east of a recently constructed housing development for 97No dwellings, accessed from Sacombe Road. Along the southern boundary, the site is adjoined by an allotment field with the existing built-form of Hertford located beyond. The eastern boundary is partly adjoined by an existing residential dwelling with agricultural fields extending to the north and north-east. The site is easily accessible to services and facilities with direct footpath links along both Sacombe Road and Wadesmill Road.

The Site in Context

There are a range of local amenities, services and shops available within Bengo which are within walking distance of the site, including a Post Office and a Cooperative Food Store.

The site is also located approximately 1.5km from the centre of Hertford and its associated shops and facilities including doctor's surgeries, supermarkets and leisure facilities.

Bengo Primary School is located approximately 0.1km to the south-west of the site. Furthermore, Duncombe School, an independent school is located approximately 1km south of the site, providing school places between 2 and 11 years of age.

A bus service (bus route 33) currently runs via Bengo Street / The Avenue and Cowper Crescent located an approximate 3-minute walk to the south of the site, with services running at least every 30 minutes into the centre of Hertford. Hertford also benefits from two railway stations, providing regular direct links into London.

Site Analysis - Ecology & Built Heritage



Ecology

An initial ecology appraisal has been undertaken which sets out the site has limited ecological significance due to the previous land use and extent of hard surfacing and buildings.

There are no ecology constraints which will impact on the proposed building layout.

There is an opportunity to incorporate high quality landscaping, planting up existing hedgerows, protecting high quality trees and maximising the benefits of the SuDs features to create new habitats and improve biodiversity across the site.

This approach aligns with Policies NE3 and NE4.

Tree Survey

A tree survey has been completed for the site to determine the constraints and the impact on the development proposals in relation shading, tree route protection areas and tree category to BS5837. High quality trees will be retained and incorporated into a high-quality landscape scheme. The proposed development will seek to promote new tree planting where appropriate.

Built Heritage Statement

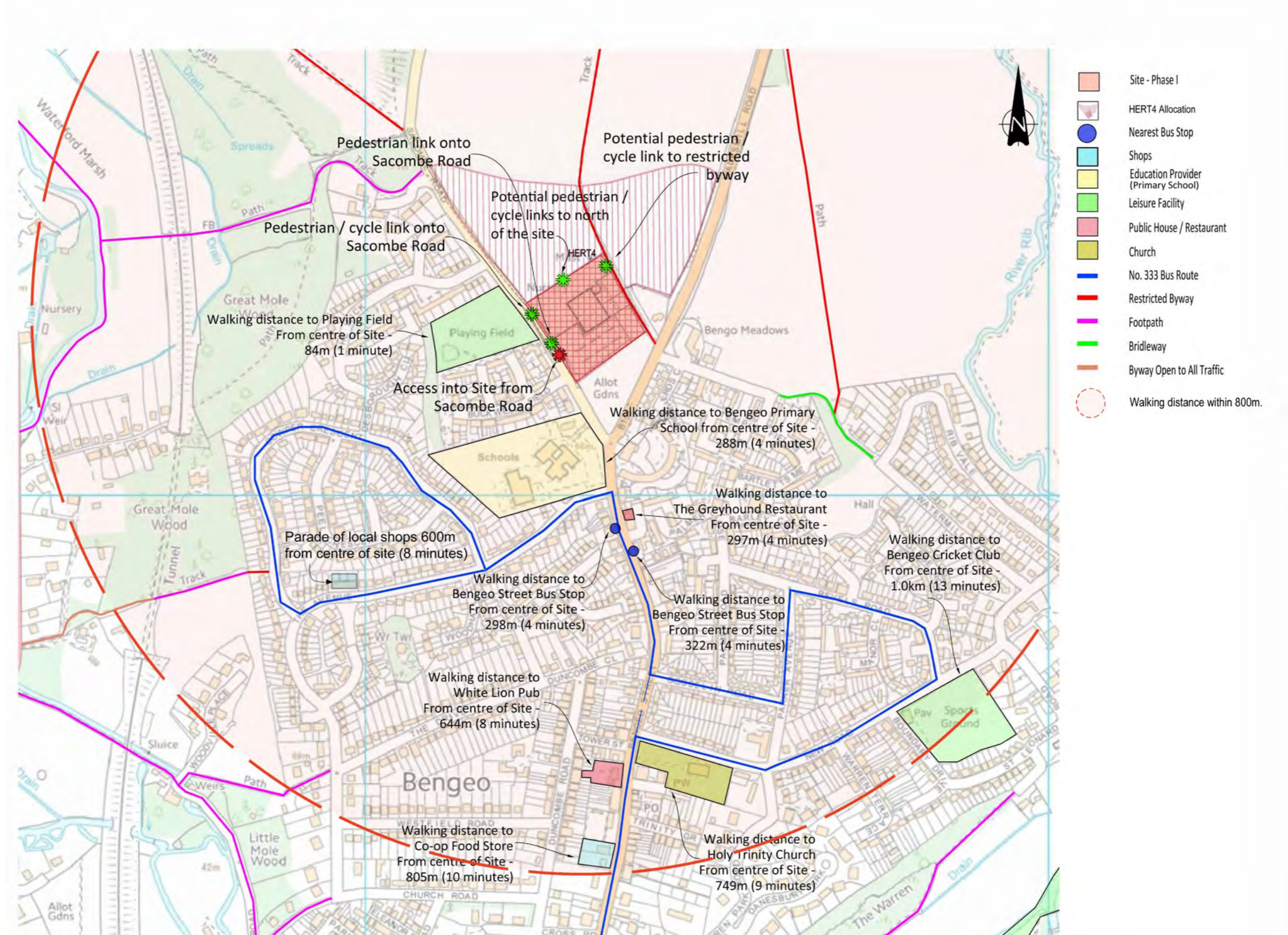
A Statement has been prepared by CgMs which establishes that the site forms a neutral part of the setting of the Hertford Conservation Area, which is the only built heritage asset that has the potential to be affected by the development of the site.

Whilst the proposed development of the Site would result in a change within the setting of the Conservation Area, the design of the proposed development responds to the scale, massing and appearance of the existing built development to the west of the site. This ensures that the Site remains a neutral element of the Conservation Area's setting and its significance will not be harmed.

Topography



Existing Movement & Connections



Local Character

Local Context

The Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal (Adopted 2017) recognises the distinctive character of different areas. The development site is adjacent to Identity Area 2- North West Quadrant which includes the allotments to the south. The built form of the immediate locality is a mixture of historic terraced housing with additional later semi-detached and detached housing. There is a grouping of historic buildings along the linear route of Bengoe Street which is interspersed with modern housing and commercial premises reflecting the expansion of Hertford.

The pattern of development within Identity Area 2 creates views that are generally contained by the built form. Longer views are along highways where the interplay between building scale, materials and building line set backs from the carriageway complemented by mature trees and planting define the verdant character of the street scene.

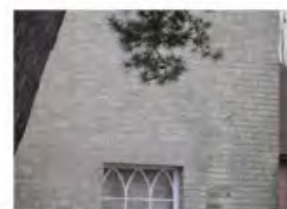
There are a number of notable residences built in the 19th and early 20th century which are located within this area of Bengoe including Bengoe House and the Grade II listed Warren Park.



Red Brick with burnt headers: Flemish bond



London stocks: Flemish bond



White brick: Flemish bond



Weatherboarding



Pargetting



Stucco



Plain tiles



Pantiles (mainly in north and east Herts)

From Understanding Hertfordshire's Character by HCC.

Image Location

1. Bengoe Street
2. Westfield Road
3. Duncombe Road
4. Fanshawe Street
5. Fanshawe Street
6. The Drive
7. New Road
8. Bengoe Mews
9. Warren Street



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.


















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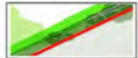









Opportunities & Constraints



-  Proposed access into site from Sacombe Road
-  1.68 Hectares Proposed residential development area
-  Existing restricted byway to east of site
-  Existing tree and hedgerows to be retained within public open space. Satisfactory off-set to proposed development - opportunities to reinforce existing boundaries with new tree and shrub planting.
-  Dwellings to provide positive frontage to later residential development to northern boundary
-  Dwellings to provide positive frontage to existing restricted byway along eastern boundary
-  Dwellings to provide positive filtered views to Sacombe Road along western boundary
-  Proposed foul water pump station location
-  Future links to later development (Subject to land ownership)
-  Future pedestrian links (Subject to site conditions)
-  Pedestrian crossing point on Sacombe Road (Details subject to consultation with the LA)
-  Future footpath link from within site to promote convenient access to existing play adjacent to Buckwells Field development
-  Amenity of existing dwellings to be respected with satisfactory off-set distances from new development
-  Opportunity to provide public open space adjacent to existing hornbeam tree to eastern boundary to ensure soft landscaping asset stays within public realm
-  Positive frontage to allotments

Landscaping Framework



-  RETAINED EXISTING VEGETATION AND ECOLOGY
-  SIGNIFICANT BUFFER ALONG SOUTHERN BOUNDARY
-  EXISTING BYWAY
-  TREE LINED THOROUGHFARE
(INCLUDING SEMI -MATURE TREES WITHIN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN)
-  GREEN LINKS
-  POTENTIAL FUTURE CONNECTION
-  RELATIONSHIP WITH ALLOTMENTS
-  LOCATION OF NEW VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS
-  POTENTIAL SuDS/ATTENUATION FEATURES
-  POTENTIAL LOCATION FOR WATER TREATMENT STATION
-  TREE LINED SECONDARY STREET

Design Principles

Primary Elements of the Emerging Design

The underpinning design principles reflect the thought process undertaken to achieve a development with a clear sense of identity and of place that can successfully integrate into the existing community.

1. Gateway into the development - Focal buildings set within an attractive landscaped setting will frame the primary entrance.
2. A coherent movement strategy that promotes sustainable principles.
3. Internal Routes:
 - Primary Street - A verdant avenue combining dwellings set back from the carriageway with footpaths adjacent to tree lined grass verges. The primary street leads to the eastern green fringe.
 - Secondary streets - Form connections from the primary street to the lanes serving the fringes of the development.
 - Tertiary Streets - Designed as Lanes serving less dense dwellings at the fringes of the development.
 - Combined cycle/footway links connecting important features outside of the development including identifying and providing the space for future links to any potential development. Awkward footpath arrangements that lead nowhere will be avoided.
3. Landscape and Ecology - The primary street will be designed as a verdant thoroughfare linking the main access to interconnecting public spaces. The north-south fringe will include public amenity greens and will integrate play spaces, SuDs and new planting strategies to enhance and strengthen the existing landscaping features providing increased ecological benefits. The fringes of the development will combine existing tree and hedge planting with new tree, hedge and shrub planting to create a 'leafy green' character offsetting new low density detached housing.
4. Public Open Spaces - Open spaces will be designed to interconnect with the verdant primary route and development fringes. The open spaces will be versatile spaces where children can play safely overlooked by housing to create a secure environment where they can interact with their natural surroundings.
5. Layout - Dwellings will be designed to overlook roads, footpaths and public open spaces providing natural surveillance and active frontages to all public areas in the best practice of secure by design philosophy. The built form will include focal buildings in key locations and buildings designed to 'turn the corner'. Density will be low at the fringes of the development and increase towards the centre along the primary and secondary routes. A key aim will be to avoid a development dominated by cars by ensuring that parking can be accommodated on plot or within off-road parking courts.
6. Building Heights - The maximum height of buildings will be 2.5 storeys with buildings along the eastern boundary and south-east corner no higher than 2 storeys.
7. Frontages - Respond to their respective character areas. The emphasis will be on subtle variation to ensure that the development as a whole maintains a cohesive identity.

Design Principles - Character Areas

Character Areas

Two character areas will play an important role within the design with areas defined by landscaped settings and by nuances in architectural expression.

Character areas will be designed as a series of subtle variations blending into one another creating a natural architectural flow throughout the development.

CA1 - The development edge will be softer in approach and will include detached dwellings framing and overlooking open spaces to the north and east and defining the character adjacent to Sacombe Road.

CA2 - The central area will be defined with strong, formal active frontages set within 'green' streets. There will be a focal point to provide a 'sense of arrival'.

Open Space

Existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and reinforced around the site perimeter. Dwellings will be set back from all external boundaries behind amenity greenspace and existing and reinforced trees and hedges providing an attractive leafy outlook along lanes.

A carefully considered tree and planting strategy will be integral to the main east/west thoroughfare creating a verdant street through the development forming green links to and from character areas and public open spaces.

The internal street network will be privately managed and designed to adoptable standards.

Design Principles - Masterplanning Framework



Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)

Sustainable Drainage Systems

The new development will explore and incorporate a variety of sustainable drainage systems to mitigate the potential threat of flooding and as part of a comprehensive landscaping strategy to enhance the sustainability of the site and will seek to promote water efficiency through innovative design.

The proposed SuDs strategy for the site is to have a combined hard and soft approach with the potential inclusion of swales, soakaways, permeable surfaces and below ground storage.

The site does not benefit from being located in the vicinity or close by to an accessible ditch to which surface water could discharge. The on-site infiltration testing demonstrated that the site could however benefit from the use of infiltration with a below-ground system, soakaways and use of porous driveways.

Underground storage areas will be located within open spaces and parking areas and in those areas identified by favourable infiltration testing results.

The combined hard/soft approach will mitigate the impact of surface water discharge from the development to decrease any risk of flooding.

The development will connect (subject to agreement with Thames Water) to the existing foul sewer and drainage network beneath Sacombe Road. Other utilities including gas, electricity and communications are available locally for connection with minimal disruption and a small substation may be required within the development.

Thames Water have confirmed that a private foul pump station will be required. To minimise impact the station will be designed below ground with a small service kiosk above ground concealed within a landscaped setting.

Maintenance & Management

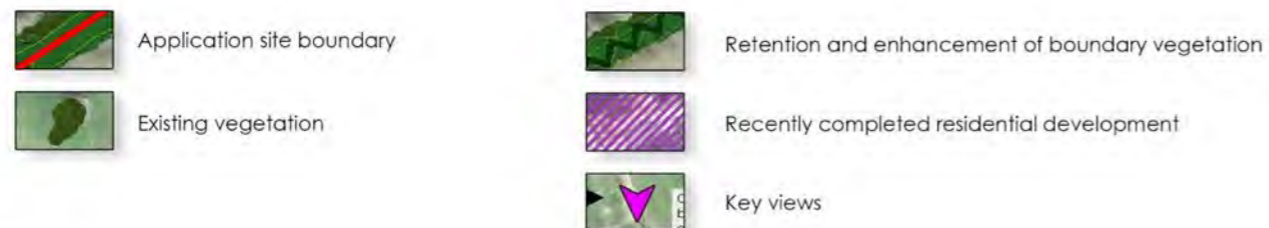
The proposed public open spaces, roads and footpaths will be maintained & managed by an independent management company and adhere to a site wide maintenance & management plan.

The purpose will be to set out the long term aims and objectives for all stakeholders involved and how components will be developed & maintained through timed operations in perpetuity.

These items will include all publicly assessable open space, SuDs & drainage features, lighting & boundary features, foul pump station and parking management for communal & visitors spaces. The site will be handed over to a resident led management company following practical completion of the site



Landscape Strategy - Landscape



Landscape

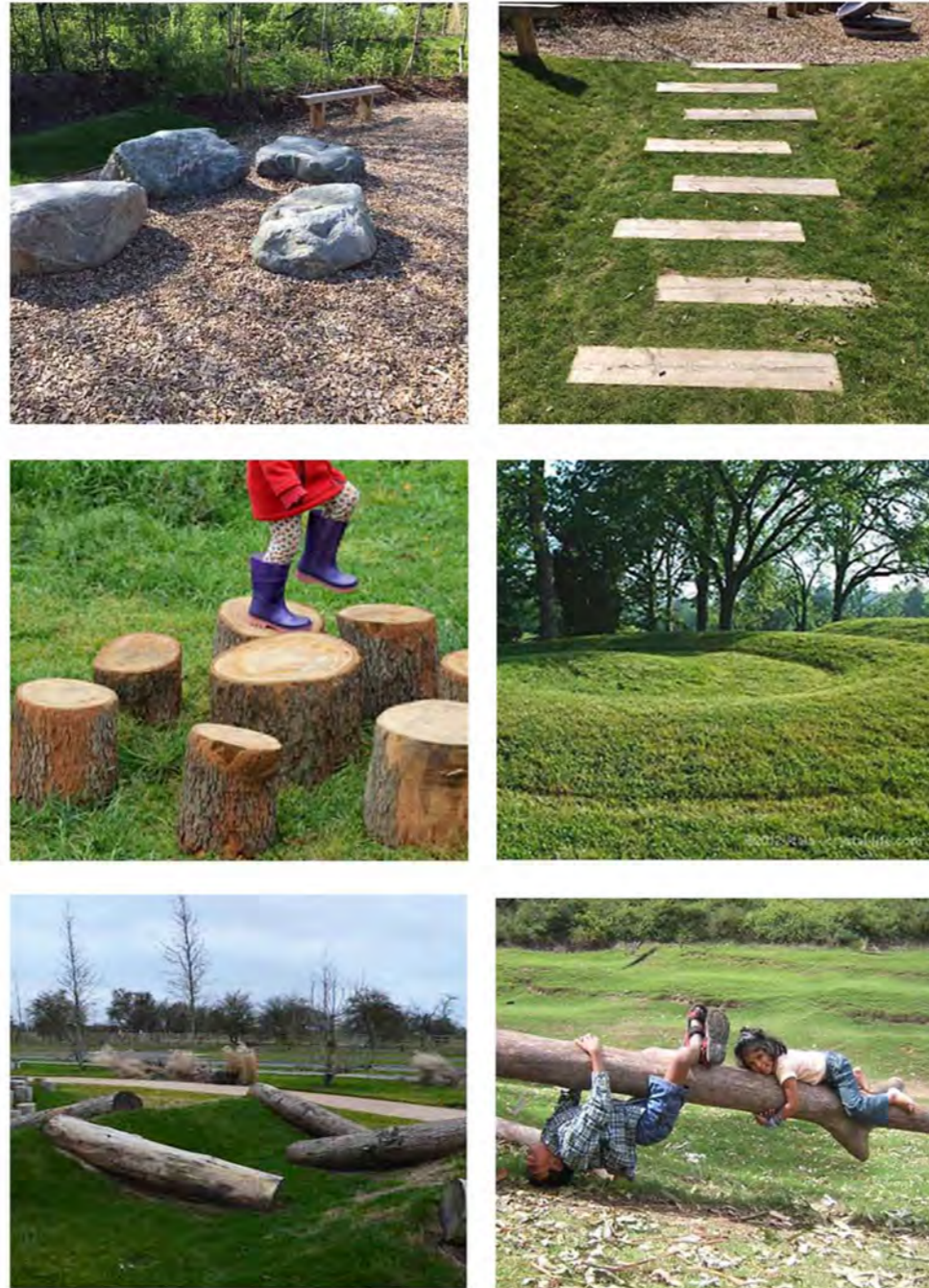
The development layout will seek to conserve the site's existing perimeter hedges and trees. These landscape features will be reinforced by high quality landscaping and the introduction of new hedgerow and tree planting in and around the built form (Policy DES3). This strategy of proposed vegetation will assist in enhancing existing landscape features and help assimilate the new development into the wider landscape.

The landscape proposals include the following:

- Native tree and shrub planting to provide a buffer around the edge of the site, forming a transitional area between the development proposals and existing vegetation.
- A natural greenspace which forms the setting to a high quality, existing hornbeam tree, to ensure a suitable development off-set and ensure the soft landscaping feature is prominent within the public realm, forming a focal point within the development.
- All areas of greenspace will be well overlooked by properties to ensure that they are attractive and safe to use.
- The design of the publicly accessible open space will provide the following benefits:
 - Encourage biodiversity
 - Landscape and sustainability benefits;
 - Create amenity value
 - Enhance existing hedges and trees with additional landscape elements to provide a mix of habitats.

Views of the site are localised due to topography, built form and vegetation. There are a number of short and medium distance views of the site from the countryside to the north and across the existing allotments and enclosing hedging from the southern approach continuing east along Wadesmill Road. Due consideration will be given to design, scale, form, layout and landscaping which will minimise the visual impact of the development (Policy DES2).

Landscape Strategy - Images



Childrens play combined with landscaping

Strategic landscape proposals will be designed to improve the local environment and create spaces for relaxation, support wildlife and generate additional sensory experiences for residents and visitors.



Wildflower and SuDs areas

Boundary native tree and shrub planting



Street and feature trees and planting

Design Aspirations - Illustrative Images

Summary

A new development to benefit the Bengo community to include:

- The delivery of around 50 new high quality dwellings within a landscaped setting.
- An attractive high quality development with a strong sense of identity.
- Well defined streets and spaces.
- An improved network of cycle and footpath links in and around the site.
- The reinforcement and enhancement of the existing natural environment.
- A landscape led approach through the provision of a high quality landscape framework.
- The inclusion of character areas.
- The delivery of open market and affordable housing to meet local needs.
- Fully accessible dwellings built to the highest standards.
- An integrated network of public open spaces.
- A comprehensive SuDs strategy.
- Children's play areas within the landscaped setting.
- Policy compliant car parking and cycle storage.
- A highly legible road, cycle and footway network incorporating shared surfaces.
- Design and construction methods developed from Building Futures Sustainable Design Toolkit.
- Any solar panel designs are to be fully integrated into the roof.
- High speed broadband through FTTP provision subject to existing infrastructure.



Traditional housing designs with high quality materials along a verdant street



Well proportioned detached housing in a semi-rural setting



Housing along a lane with materials complementing surroundings



Detached housing overlooking beautiful green spaces



Simple but effective features and detailing



Organic children's play areas



Traditional palette of materials