

XQLA Design Review

Land South of Barugh Green Road and East of Higham Common Road, Barnsley
(Barnsley West)

8th February 2024 – Landscape notes on Design Matters

REF:	NOTE:	ACTIONS:
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p><i>Scope and Purpose of Briefing Note</i> This note has been prepared by XQLA on behalf of Barnsley Council to assist with the determination of 2no. hybrid planning applications at Barnsley, West Yorkshire 2021/1089 (relating to full planning application for the earthworks, strategic drainage and landscape infrastructure and outline planning application for the employment area) and 2021/1090 (full planning application including for earthworks, strategic drainage ponds and new link road, works to Hermit Lane and Phase 1 residential development).</p> <p>The following documents were reviewed in the preparation of this note regarding the planning applications. The wider masterplan proposal is for up to 1560 dwellings (previously 1,760) and up to 43 hectares of employment on land south of Barugh Green Road, Barnsley. The site currently comprises of approximately 116 hectares of open fields, which were previously an open-cast coal mine prior to land reclamation.</p> <p>The review has considered the following information sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barnsley West, Masterplan framework (MUI) dated 15th November 2019 - Landscape Masterplan PI 1754-00-001-GIL-0100 Rev 09 - Proposed Indicative Site Plan BWM-BBA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-1004-S2-P16 - Landscape Design Statement Rev 04 12/10/23 (submitted as part of 1089) - Parameter Plan (BWM BBA ZZ XX DR A 1052 S2 P10) - Proposed Masterplan 13731-THP-SITE-XX-DR-A-035-Rev H - Phase 1 Landscape Design Sheet 1 of 2 1754-00-001-GIL-0101 rev 05 (note rev 06 in revision information) - Phase 1 Landscape Design Sheet 2 of 2 PI 1754-00-001-GIL-0102 rev 06 - Barnsley West Masterplan Framework Delivery Strategy rev 03 11/10/23 - Barnsley West Phase 2 11: Planning Layout dated 18/06/20 DWG 20-CL4-SEGB-BWPI-02 - Proposed Site Sections PI 1754-00-001-GIL-0228/ 0227/0226 - 2021 11089 Topographic Survey - Proposed Site Sections PI 1754-001-GIL-0221 /0222 / 0223 / 0224 / 0225 <p><i>Assumptions and Limitations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This review seeks to respond to the scope set out in BMBC's briefing correspondence of 17th January 2024 which set out matters to consider from a landscape perspective. To achieve a robust design review it is advised that further input is obtained from urban design and architectural disciplines including potentially, a Building for Healthy Life review. - No direct communication occurred between XQLA and the applicant during the compilation of this review. - A site visit was undertaken by XQLA on 31st January 2024. 	
2	<p>Review of Landscape Elements</p>	

This note assesses landscape design proposals for the strategic landscaping for both 2021/1089 and 2021/1090 as follows:

Levels and topography

The proposed approach to earthwork levels in Planning Applications 2021/1089 and 2021/1090 (as per the parameter plan BWM-BBA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-1052-S2-P10) in general terms is now more nuanced so as to more closely respond to existing levels, both across the site, and at interfaces, relative to the previous proposals submitted.

For example the updated strategy will marginally decrease the ground height of the northern employment area plateau (134.90 AOD from 135.10 AOD) and see a more nuanced approach at the southernmost roundabout on the link road by 'stepping up' from 136.00 AOD at the Link Road roundabout to 143.20 then 147.00 AOD on the southern sections next to the motorway (against a simpler two approach of 142.80 and 146.10 AOD in this area.) Whilst this lowers the landscape and building heights around the roundabout the large commercial buildings against the motorway is proposed higher in the ground. Given the maximum building height has been lowered to 18.5m (from max. 23m high as per the Parameter plan rev P03) these adjustments along the motorway side are not considered to greatly alter the arising visual effects (although it is an improvement from a landscape perspective,) either from the motorway or from properties at Pogmoor. This assists to explain why the supporting LVIA has not identified significant betterment in terms of the mitigation of visual effects following these changes, or indeed from medium – long distant views from the north or northwest. The structures are still to be highly visible from the surrounding existing residential properties in the vicinity and further afield.

To mitigate this visual impact, a higher density of larger planted tree sizes should be proposed amongst the typical whip planting and shrubs increasing the screening effect of the visibility mounds demonstrated on section S20:226-unit 7 building. Moreover, considering the large scale of these structures, well-integrated landscape spaces are required for the employment area to function cohesively in the context of its residential neighbourhoods in the immediate surrounding, as well as for the community using and working in the employment facilities.

For the residential blocks, with the revised levels strategy, as per the parameter plan (BWM-BBA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-1052-S2-P10) the building levels are expected to be closer to the existing topography, reducing the extents of earthworks. This however would result in the building finished floor levels for the residential units to the west of the link road to be approx. 1-3.5m higher (varies as per location) than what was originally proposed. With no reduction in the building heights, these residential units (max. height 13.5m) would sit taller in the landscape, as compared to original parameter plan (BWM-BBA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-1052-S2-P03).

The northern residential block, which originally also housed the amenity block, is now proposed to sit lower in the ground by approx. 5m. This would therefore help in scaling down the general massing of the built structures at the wider masterplan scale.

Generally, the levels for the rest of development area are close to the original levels strategy, with residential and building heights now capped to a maximum of 18.5m.

Overall, the development would be a considerable scale of building blocks in the landscape, influencing the actual and perceived scale of these structures. Therefore, it would be imperative to integrate landscape, not only as peripheral treatments to mitigate the visual impacts on the surrounding locality, but also to establish human scales and relationships, within the proposed neighbourhoods.

The proposed topographical levels in the residential and publicly accessible areas where indicated seem appropriate, with Active Travel and primary routes proposed to be generally 1:21. However, the Masterplan Framework (Nov 2019) states 1:14 may be acceptable around the steeper contours. Albeit accessible to cycles and able-bodied users, 1:14 will prove prohibitive to non-powered wheelchair users and those with mobility issues. It is not advisable to exceed 1:21 as this would then constitute a ramp and the use of handrails and rest areas incorporating a variety of seating opportunities would need to

be provided. Care should be taken through specification to strike the balance between accessibility and in keeping with the context of the site.

Edge of Development

The interface of the employment area with the M1 motorway ranges from 10-30m. Whilst this will not sustain mature deciduous woodland, it is the minimum screening required to provide a green corridor at a location such as this.

The commercial buildings northwest of the existing residential housing of Pogmoor are offset by a 60-100m wide structural landscape zone (referred to as Gawber Forest in the Masterplan) of mixed deciduous/evergreen tree planting and wet meadow. This width has been increased from the 2021 submission by the 'drawing back' of employment area plateau (southern section). Also at some locations, adjacent to the existing housing, approx. 5m high vegetated earth mounds are being proposed to further screen the employment area. As the commercial buildings have been positioned right up to the edge of the proposed employment area plateau, it will be difficult to screen at source, as most of the proposed tree planting will be positioned on the slope below the plateau and will therefore be less effective. Consideration should be given to positioning the building structures further back from the plateau edge, it would allow space for additional tree planting on the upper edge of the plateau adjacent to the buildings and so provide more effective screening of views from residents at Pogmoor.

The interface treatment of the employment area with the southern Link Road roundabout (at Higham) has been improved from the 2021 proposal through a more nuanced approach to the plateau levels strategy (as detailed above,) with the (marginal) drawing back of building lines, reduction of building heights and inclusion of a landscaped bund to the south of the roundabout to screen views of Unit 5. This has improved the visual environment in this location to some degree, at an important threshold, however further verified visualisation would be necessary to fully appreciate the degree of betterment achieved.

Along the west edge of the development opportunities have been lost to integrated existing public space with the development well. For example, at the relationship is poor in the vicinity of Higham playing fields.

Proposed Planting & Landscape Types

The mix, location, types, scale and extent of vegetation types are generally good. The species palettes proposed in the Landscape Design Statement (Rev 04; Oct 2023) for the; Arboretum, native mixed woodland, native mixed woodland (understorey), native mixed wetland scrub, native mixed hedgerow, native shrub planting, ornamental shrub planting, rocky gorse scrub mix and various meadow planting, all seem generally appropriate and will provide a good mix of native planting adjacent the existing woodland and, within naturalistic areas whilst reserving the non-native, ornamental planting for the civic and neighbourhood areas as shown on the Landscape Masterplan PI 1754-00-001-GIL-0100 Rev 09.

The Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan adopted in 2019 stipulates a range of local priority habitats to be created, conserved & enhance, and connected, these include mixes deciduous woodland, wet woodland, parkland & wood pasture, traditional orchard, scrub, hedgerows etc. Broadly speaking the proposals will meet the Biodiversity Action Plan, however the Landscape Design Statement (Rev 04; Oct 2023) only provides a snapshot of the species proposed, and there are no further details provided as part of either application 1089 or 1090. Further assurance is needed in this regard.

National Planning Framework section 14 paragraph 158 states "Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures."

It is clear from the proposals that the Biodiversity Action Plan and flood risks have been considered, however ensuring these trees are appropriately sourced / grown and positioned in appropriate locations is key to the future resilience to climate change.

There are remaining concerns as under section 4.1.2 Native Mixed Woodland and tree palette of the Landscape Design Statement (Rev 04; Oct 2023) states "These woodlands are proposed to have a mix of deciduous and evergreen species which will provide, cover, shade and screening throughout the year." However, there are no evergreen species proposed within the native tree palette. The only evergreens proposed are in 4.1.3 understorey. This may result in the planted trees having limited screening in winter months, particularly against the elevated plateau of the Employment Area. The Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan states "Although plantation of coniferous woodlands in Barnsley are non-native in some cases, they support important species of wildlife".

A stronger tree strategy is needed for use of trees e.g. in groups to define spaces or used as focal features with different tree species supporting the delivery of different neighbourhood characters. Generally, trees are 'scattered' throughout the masterplan if not included within formal avenues. These lack the structure required to add to the identity and wayfinding. Using feature species at key locations throughout the site will aid a sense of community identity and benefit the wayfinding strategy.

There appears to be an avenue of single species proposed adjacent to the civic square, which although may be aesthetically pleasing should be avoided to minimise any risk of diseases wiping out the site's trees. It is unclear from the key on the drawing PI 1754-00-001 whether this is indicating single species or single size.

The width of the Cascade Arboretum on the eastern side of the new Barugh Green Road, the new link road, (15m) should be increased to match the width on the western side (20-25m) to provide sufficient space for the proposed large tree species and create usable amenity space for the residents in the vicinity, rather than just a linear routeway. The scale of the trees shown on Fig 10.109 of the Masterplan Framework (Nov 2019) do not accurately reflect the species proposed on the Cascade Arboretum/ link road P50 of the Landscape Design Statement. Given the engineered nature of the slopes and linear form of the feature there is a danger that this space will not feel welcoming or useable and every effort should be taken (through design) to counter these challenges.

The example scale of the proposed trees on the drawings 2021/1090 Phase 1 Landscape Design Sheet 1 Rev. 05 and 2021/1090 Phase 1 Landscape Design Sheet 2 Rev. 06, show proposed tree sizes of 40-45cm girth (Type 1), 20-25cm girth (Type 2), 14-16cm girth (Type 3) and 8-10cm girth (Type 5). The (Type 1) 40-45cm girth trees are extremely large. These will provide an instant visual impact but will require considerably more maintenance attention and will require a longer establishment period. Trees planted at this size are also more prone to failure. It may be more appropriate to specify smaller girth trees; 20-25cm girth trees normally provide the appropriate balance in these scenarios between immediate impact and acceptable establishment rates.

Connectivity & Accessibility

A number of Active Travel routeways form part of the primary connections within the development site. These include the segregated cycle routes which connect to the wider proposed potential commuter network, however, limited exit points through the length of these routeways, may lead to lack of perception of safety. To ensure the routeways are popular and not underutilised, further tertiary connections should be considered allowing users the choice to curate their journeys.

The Active Travel route running along the south-eastern boundary, in the vicinity of the employment units is flanked by a retaining wall on one side and land mounds on the other. This may therefore lead to a confined walking experience, (as illustrated in Short Section 05- PI 1754-00-001-GIL-0226). Whilst the use of natural buffers such as landscape mounds and implementation of levels strategy is realised to be critical to mitigate landscape visual impact, this should be integrated with the functioning of the routeways through the site and maintain a comfortable visibility/ sight distance.

Generally, exposed dead structures/ facades should be balanced with active and integrated streets. This is critical in the context of the large-scale long buildings in the employment area. (For example, in the context of the sections illustrated in the drawing PI 1754-00-001-GIL-0227)

Shared Pedestrian/cycle connections between the development and the surrounding neighbourhood have been established through the masterplan. These routes are commonly flanked landscape elements. However, these are short links, interspersed with few trees/small clumps of landscape, directly opening up/leading to the internal vehicular roads, and therefore there is a lack of integration both with the streetscenes, wider open spaces and trails across the wider masterplan. The common abrupt interface of the vehicular road layout with these trails through the landscape across the masterplan limits the opportunity to create a coherent, pleasurable experience and circular use for walking and cycling.

Vehicle access routes are generally direct, with each housing area connecting to the major routes via a single access point eliminating the potential for 'rat-runs'. However, the excessive number of roads and resultant hardstanding looping around the residential properties both reduces the available green space and severs the connection from the residential to the landscape. This reduces the quality of the available green spaces and inherent wellbeing benefits. The current layout appears as 'Anywhere Development' which will not deliver high quality places. A more balanced (less highway dominated) approach should be sought integrating open space, architecture, and movement to create distinctive and legible places based on a deep understanding of appropriate local and vernacular references.

Streets and spaces without residential units facing them should also be reconsidered due to lack of visual surveillance and welcoming nature. These were noted in a number of locations.

It is noted that document 2021/1089 004 Planning Statement Appendix 3 (Amended) - October 2023 states that "Buses are able to freely pass along the link road. At this stage no bus stops are proposed on the link road. Bus stops will be centred around the local centre." There also are no details provided at this time surrounding any cycle storage / active travel hubs proposed within / around the civic space.

Regarding the pathway which skirts the edge of the employment area connecting Pogmoor Lane to Hermit Lane. The proposed woodland canopy is situated overarching the footway combined with a proposed hedge which may create a canyon effect. This combined with what appears to be a retaining structure and boundary treatment could create isolated sections of the path which may ultimately result in opportunities for anti-social behaviour or result in a lack of use of the footway, and therefore negatively impact the existing users. Secure by Design principles must be achieved with escape routes. The design should also look to celebrate the views north and northeast from this elevated location, and in so doing assist offer a more attractive route. Offsetting the trees to create a wider and more open path would help mitigate this. The consideration of use of low-level lighting may be beneficial in this context, throughout the wider pathways.

Further thought should be given to:

- The delivery of a hierarchy of routeways, working in combination with the purpose of the space and associated with tree and shrub planting to create integrated, welcoming spatial designs and potential introduction of one-way streets for smaller loops.
- 'Child friendly' connectivity between the green corridor running along the northside of Craven Wood with the play areas to the south.
- The inclusion of mobility / active travel hubs and cycle storage throughout both the Employment Area and the residential development.

Materiality

The general surfacing materiality proposed feels appropriate to the use and locations including the use of robust bound materials where appropriate and more granular natural / materials with natural properties in areas of recreation. The footways proposed on PI 1754-00-001-GIL-0102 through the recreational spaces appear to be generous at an average of 3m (scaled from plan). That said there remains further thinking at the detailed design stage, in terms of vernacular references and detailing, to ensure good contextual design comes forward. The highest quality material should be achieved, including the use of stone, at key locations.

It is recommended that all timber elements of street furniture / playground equipment are sustainably source hardwood timbers with galvanised steel foundation footings to ensure the durability and the longevity of the interventions.

Long term implementation and development

The proposal is to implement the MUI development in phases over 15 years.:

- The Link Road 2024 – 2026
- The Employment Area 2024 – 2027
- Residential (in seven phases) 2024 – 2036
- Strategic Infrastructure 2025 – 2027
- Commercial Area and School 2026 – 2027.

All associated landscaping in each phase (especially mounding, trees, and planting for screening) should be installed as early as possible within the appropriate season to allow for faster establishment and to gain the maximum benefits of screening and environmental enhancement, but only in areas without risk of damage from subsequent construction phases.

The Landscape Design Statement (Rev 04; Oct 2023) states "The initial strategy for the proposed public open space in the strategic landscape areas is considered to be managed by management companies in principle at this outline planning stage". We can assume that all roads will become local authority highways adopted landscapes however, the residential development ref. 1090 is now at a full planning application stage therefore further detail is now required to understand the proposed maintenance / adoption arrangements. This information should therefore be requested.

The statement also outlines "it will be important that local residents are involved in decision making so as to help ensure the open space continues to meet their needs, opportunities for its enhancement are realised, and to further foster the sense of belonging, emotional ownership and community cohesion. There may be opportunities for parts of the open space to be used in association with informal and formal training programmes including apprenticeships, community-led activities, and volunteering"

A statement of how this will be delivered and phased in association with the development phasing plan should be provided and coordinated with the local authority.

Appropriateness of different areas, e.g. landscaping around children's play areas, and landscaping near cycle paths, pedestrian routes etc.

Generally, the residential blocks have been offered significant areas of structural landscape to access, including swales, vegetation and woodland blocks within close proximity.

The community spaces at the centre of the scheme, associated with the school and commercial development, offer distinctive areas of civic landscape to the new neighbourhood which is then linked to the wider neighbourhood and naturalistic landscape to the northeast by a green corridor (incorporating an existing hedgerow). This appears generally successful subject to detailed design including the pedestrian crossings and spaces which radiate from this centre which should be generous, and people centred. However, the useability of the east – west green corridor is questioned. Consideration should be given to rebalance the long linear space so that the hedgerow defines one side of the space only leaving the remaining areas free to offer better amenity opportunities. This approach is taken more successfully in the context of the retained hedgerow running north-south from the school playing fields.

Some of the larger proposed areas of open space, such as the sequence of green spaces that coalesce from the Link Road north east towards Phase 1/ Redbrook seem well thought out and connected with a range of opportunities from naturalistic landscape through to play and social space, however there are numerous, smaller interspersed areas of vegetation and open space across the masterplan that provide limited recreational and amenity value and may prove to be maintenance burden. Consideration should be given to reducing the number of 'micro-greenspaces' which appear as left over space in preference to areas of larger spaces, linked together with existing green spaces, recreational locations and active travel routes, to form a cohesive grid of green spaces corridors and foraging

routes that would benefit various wildlife species alongside people. Residential ownership and 'adoption' and engagement will be critical should these micro-spaces remain.

There are concerns that the 'greens' achieved across the Masterplan provided in GA P11754-00-001-GIL-0102 rev 06 demonstrate a lack of integration with wider green infrastructure due to their siting within small scale residual blocks, and are further constricted within the urban elements such as boundary walls or two-way vehicular roads. Active travel routes, although contributing to the usability of the landscape, often further bisect these already narrow green spaces, compromising their integrity and rendering them redundant. Informal play integrated in some of these spaces appear to be 'fillers', rather than areas with curated/ incidental play opportunities. This is largely due to a lack of wider spaces to play or freely manoeuvre around, because of their proximity to vehicular roads and active travel routes.

There are no obvious concerns at this stage regarding the safety or visibility from the proposed planting adjacent to the children's play areas, but there may be issues if the species-rich grass and 'traditional' wildflower meadows aren't maintained appropriately as this is key to their success. Maintenance and wider Secure by Design matters should be considered robustly at the detailed design stage.

Regarding the drawing P11754-00-001-GIL-0102 rev 06 submitted as part of planning application 2021/1090 the green connection tapers to approximately 10m width with smaller tree species proposed alongside hedging. The residential properties either side do not directly overlook this area therefore appropriate maintenance strategies should be adopted to ensure this link is utilised safely. Consideration for low-level lighting should be given through these spaces to aid comfortability. The sighting of any shrubs, hedges and trees should be considered to ensure a feeling of openness is maintained.

Ancient Woodland Buffer

The TPO protected ancient woodland being retained has been well integrated into the design proposals from an ecological perspective with a 15m edge buffer of native shrub/scrub planting intended to help protect it. The proposed species, as outlined on page 51 of the Landscape Design Statement (Rev 04; Oct 2023), are appropriate. (Softworks details of the proposed planting is still to be provided). The design seeks to integrate the woodland and buffer within wider landscape areas at some locations (around swale features). This placemaking approach is encouraged as the woodland will provide an attractive backdrop to the broader open space offer and related activities even though it is not accessible. A more graded approach is encouraged at the interface of the woodland with housing to avoid an abrupt edge and deliver distinctive spaces of different character and offer.

Also, the new footpaths through the ancient woodland are acceptable and are proposed to be 'no-dig' construction or raised walkways to minimise the impact on the woodland.

Play

The linear nature and variety of play interventions will provide a mix of play opportunities accessible within walking distance from residential dwellings and provide access to natural landscapes surrounding the residential developments. This is a real positive. However some of the informal play areas are isolated and form no real connection to the wider green infrastructure, these appear to be located to utilise redundant spaces rather than following any particular strategy and therefore are disconnected and may be underutilised. Further informal play opportunities could be incorporated, in particular within the north-eastern pond areas to encourage engagement with the natural landscape interventions. This could be in the shape of an informal play trail, boulders / planting / mounds etc. The overarching play offer should be landscape led. The site offers a fantastic base for opportunities to explore the undulating landscape through play, mound and slopes should be adopted where possible and should offer openings / connections to the wider green infrastructure.

Confirmation should be sought through future planning applications that the distance and spatial and quality requirements for play set out in the Landscape Statement in relation to NEAPS, LEAPS and LAPS will be met through all future phases of the development.

Hermit Lane closure and new multiuser routes

Closing Hermit Lane to traffic but retaining it as an active travel route from Higham to Gawber is welcomed as this is an established, characterful route and critical to movement from Barnsley over the motorway to the wider rural landscape.

Positioning play provisions (LEAP & NEAP) alongside the route is supported as it will promote their use and connectivity via sustainable means.

The existing hedgerows on Hermit Lane have been highlighted as 'important' in the ecological reports. Retaining the hedgerows on Hermit Lane and translocating other 'species-rich' hedgerows, which cannot be retained in-situ, into the new landscape (as proposed on page 62, fig 6.92 of the 2021/1090 012.A HB.NC Updated Planning Statement – 11 Oct 2023 A) will help to maintain and create wildlife corridors. Although the height of the hedge should be maintained at an appropriate level to allow passive surveillance from adjacent residential homes and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour.

The connection over the Link Road must be of the highest quality and focused on the sustainable user. At the current time this high bar is not met as the crossing with the Link Road into Higham is indirect and unwelcoming as the route is channelled behind the north side of the proposed commercial offer.

The routeway is a critical sustainable movement route and must be closed for the minimum of time.

SuDS

The 2021/1089 Landscape Design Statement (Rev. 04 – Oct 2023) states a proposed SuDS strategy including source control interventions (e.g. permeable paving, green roofs, water butts and rainwater harvesting), plus proposed swales, dry attenuation basins and areas of permanent open water. Although some thought has been given to surface water capture through SuDS, which are integrated into the proposed landscape enhancing ecology and biodiversity, more detail is required on how the SuDS systems are linked and together in a cohesive way. Also, more could be done to capture pollutants from highway runoff water before it is transferred to attenuation basins and or into existing water courses. The use of roadside bioretention rain gardens to capture the 'first flush' of the most polluted highway runoff could be situated within proposed roadside verges or wider areas of roadside pedestrian footpaths. The specification and make-up of the soil type and planting within the raingardens, swales and basins will be crucial to their success and in the making of amenity/habitat creation.

There is limited detail provided on the swale features however, soil typologies and species of plants utilised should be responsive to the microclimate of each location. Consideration should be given to how wet these are likely to become, as well as general maintenance and management considerations. An understanding on the proposed kerb inlets and silt capture should be provided to ensure these features are adoptable and maintainable, particular as a result of silt build up.

3

Overall assessment of how well the landscape design proposals would comply with the requirements of the Barnsley West Masterplan.

Fig 1.3 on page 10 of The Masterplan Framework (Nov 2019) sets out the health & wellbeing principles which provides the approach to deliver the Masterplan.

1. *Landscape-led layout that promotes a strong connection to the landscape.*
2. *Engaging with the local and wider community*
3. *Places to meet, socialise and play.*
4. *Encourage walking, cycling and public transport use.*
5. *Safety and natural surveillance*
6. *Responsive to microclimate and environmental context*
7. *Identity and sense of place*

1. *Landscape-led layout that promotes a strong connection to the landscape.*

The nature of the blocks of housing proposed and the unnecessary highway dominance create a barrier between the landscape and the proposed dwellings. The detailed design proposes some good connection with landscape and play opportunities but in the wider areas within the residential development these landscaped areas are minimal and feel to have been created in redundant space rather than thought out valuable positions that would help develop the connection required. To achieve the requirements set out in the Masterplan "A minimum of 60% of dwellings should directly face onto a formal open space." and "at least 70% of dwellings should be no more than one minute walk to an open space from the front door." Connections to the wider green spaces are good, but further play could be incorporated to as part of a strategy rather than incidentally located, this would increase the residents' connection to the green space.

2. Engaging with the local and wider community

There isn't enough information provided to demonstrate that this has been met. There is a paragraph within section 3.10 of the Landscape Design Statement (Rev 04; Oct 2023) that considers the potential involvement of local stakeholders in management and maintenance. The wider community have concerns over the loss and access to green space as referenced in the redacted community involvement statement. There are still concerns surrounding the access to the new green spaces for residents of the surrounding area. These are detailed elsewhere in the above referenced Landscape Design Statement, but generally relate to the connectivity to Pogmoor & Higham.

3. Places to meet, socialise and play.

There are places to meet, socialise and play throughout the proposed masterplan, however the dominance of the proposed road network and the arrangement of the housing is not maximising the use of the space and rather feels car dominant. The civic area on earlier sketches (Fig 5.13 and 5.14 in Barnsley West Masterplan Framework MUI dated Nov. 2019) demonstrated residential dwellings overlooking the civic square providing a more social space with passive surveillance. This seems to have been lost on the information shared on the Landscape Masterplan P11754-00-001-GIL-0100 Rev 09. The residential blocks and the school/ civic centre are separated by a thin strip of landscape and line of trees along the eastern and southern edges of the amenity space, respectively.

Presently indicated as 'species rich grass', the space in front of the amenity unit could be designed as a congregational public square/ public space, facilitating a sense of community space within the development.

The narrow interfacing along with the nature of public spaces of the amenity centre leads to a loosely integrated community space and seems inadequate to create a thriving public space in the centre of the development.

It is noted that there is no open green space proposed, or connections proposed as part of the Employment Area. The landscape strategy for the employment area is led by the need to mitigate the visual impact of the large-scale buildings, and therefore largely focussed on peripheral treatments. The long continuous woodland blocks, wrapping round the employment block, lack of break out spaces, pathways within confining landscapes, set within the large-scale structures, may lead to uncomfortable outdoor experiences.

4. Encourage walking, cycling and public transport use.

There are a good range of connected walking / cycle routes throughout the masterplan however some of these may prove both uncomfortable for users and inaccessible for others should 1:14 routes be adopted and some of the earthworks / landscaping proposals be reviewed. The lack of any public transport stops proposed on the new link road along with the large number of 5.5m wide roads proposed across the masterplan will likely result in a continued car dominance and less reliance on public transport. Local amenities are proposed in the form of a new school and civic area. The closure of Hermit Lane also provides a traffic free entry and egress to the centre of the residential development.

Further work should be done to encourage occupants of the Employment area to access the landscape surrounding it / for break out spaces to aid both mental health and wellbeing.

	<p><i>5. Safety and natural surveillance</i> Generally, safety and passive surveillance is good overall, however, there are a number of streets and paths through landscaping proposed e.g. An area on PI 1754-00-001-GIL-0102 which are narrowed by proposed hedging and trees, and with have no natural surveillance. This extends to the roads which loop round immediately to the east of the link road. There are also some concerns relating to the channelised connections to the surrounding existing housing areas. Some re-design should be considered as well as the incorporation of low impact low level amenity lighting to key routes / connections.</p> <p><i>6. Responsive to microclimate and environmental context</i> The level of detail provided at this stage does not provide enough detail to establish whether this has been met. Although the environmental context has been considered through the implementation of SuDS and the protection and relocation of existing hedgerows and protection of the ancient woodland.</p> <p><i>7. Identity & Sense of place</i> The design proposals (as per Landscape Design Statement Rev 04 Oct 2023 - Section 4) is indicated as consistent with the Design Code principles and character areas, but it isn't immediately evident how it is place specific or the distinction between the character areas (from a materials/landscape perspective). This needs to be brought through in the conditioned details associated with the application to deliver a coherent streetscape with bespoke features that deliver a sense of place and identity.</p> <p>It is not clear from the information submitted how well the architecture proposed will interact and be responsive to the surrounding landscape to create the sense of place and local distinctiveness. The relationship between the built environment and surrounding landscape is critical to the successful creation of a sense of comfortability and place. Section 11.14 Principles of Gateway Buildings proposes the use of distinctive node buildings with contrasting forms and cladding. It is not clear from the information submitted associated with phase 1A drawing ref 20-CL4-SEGB-BWPI-02 and PI 1754-00-001-GIL-0102 how this has been brought forward through the design. This is an important thread that requires sowing through future phases to ensure the quality does not diminish as development phases progress.</p> <p>There are proposals brought forward by the developer from the masterplan that should be commended, such as the closure of Hermit Lane to vehicles, the play / green links proposed on the phase 1 application 2021 /1090 are positive alongside the use of SuDS integration and specification generally of appropriate natives and non-native species.</p> <p>Overall, the landscape design proposed plans broadly align to the Barnsley West Masterplan Framework (Nov 2019), the scale of the built development against the scale of the primary and secondary connections and the general arrangement is very consistent with some changes made around the eastern boundary with Gawber to allow for earthworks and integration/attenuation of the Employment Area, however there is significant development required to achieve the principles set out in the 2019 Masterplan framework (Nov 2019). The masterplan currently lacks cohesion and a strong landscape integrity. A more nuanced, place specific approach needs to be taken.</p> <p>A potential review of the architecture and urban design principles should be undertaken to understand whether these will deliver the principles set out in the 2019 Masterplan Framework.</p> <p>Alongside considering the workforce of the Employment Area, and their access to greenspace to provide opportunities for recreation, fresh air and exercise throughout the working day, which generally makes up one third of each day.</p> <p>Further earthworks and tree specification should be considered to reduce the visual impact of the Employment Area.</p>	
4	Suggested planning conditions.	

	<p>The development of public realm shall be in accordance with BS8300 Part 1 (2018)</p> <p>All trees/plants and planting should be in accordance with HTA National Plant Specification and BS 3936-1:1992 (Plant Nursery Stock), BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape Recommendations. All tree work in accordance with BS 5837: 2005 and BS 3998: 1989. All tree works/removals undertaken only after agreement with Tree Officer if trees are protected by TPOs or in Conservation Areas. Tree works not to be undertaken in bird nesting season without consent. All nursery stock in accordance with BS 3936 (Part 1). All landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces) in accordance with BS 4428:1989. Newly planted areas to be protected by temporary chestnut pale fencing in accordance with BS5837.</p> <p>BS 5489-1:2020 – TC -Design of road lighting - Lighting of roads and public amenity areas. Code of practice</p> <p>Formal playgrounds shall be constructed in accordance with BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177.</p> <p>Further information required: The below information shall be provided to the LPA for review by competent Landscape Planning Officer or appropriately qualified officer for review prior to commencement of the related phases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed planting plans - Details of the proposed planting areas (plant/tree species, size, and density) proposed for all landscape areas. - Detailed landscape / softworks specification. - Detailed softworks maintenance schedule. - Details of any irrigation systems proposed. - Construction of the employment area shall not commence until earthworks, and vegetation buffers are in place between the existing residential properties. These buffers shall have a large density of standard / semi mature trees to ensure instant impact. - Details and specification of all playground equipment / street furniture including fixings and surfacing details and maintenance information. - Methodology for the protection of and transplanting of hedgerows. - Details of any streetlighting, lux levels and spillage impact residential, ancient and proposed woodland. 	
5	<p>Policy Review</p> <p>In the context of the above review the following notes are provided:</p> <p>Policy DI High Quality Design and Placemaking – the retention of key landscape features including Craven Wood and Hermit Lane assist with the protection of local distinctiveness and landscape character, however there is further assurance required to demonstrate contextual design which is cohesive and of high quality.</p> <p>Policy LCI – to help retain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the LCAs as defined by the Barnsley Borough LCA (2002). This remains an area of disagreement. In from the information submitted it is clear there remains significant landscape and visual effects given the magnitude of change over a very significant area of the LCA.</p> <p>Policy BTC3 Public Spaces – ensuring all new public spaces make a positive contribution to their context and users, in accordance with wider strategy documents including the Barnsley Town Centre Public Spaces Strategy (Gillespies 2009)</p> <p>Policy GII Green Infrastructure and Greenspace – to preserve, maintain and improve the connected Green Infrastructure within the Barnsley area. The recent additions and adjustments to strategic GII at the site, alongside the retention of key features, have achieved betterment from the original scheme. POS connects existing features to the wider network and penetrates new development areas where previously it did not. The</p>	

loss of 4.5km of hedgerows at the site is significant from a landscape pattern as well as GI1 point of view and replacement should be a key requirement at the detailed design stage.

Policy GS1 Green Space – to improve and protect existing areas of green space. There are two areas of green space adjacent to the site, the Miner's Public House Recreation Ground and Harden Close to Pogmoor Lane. The Miner's Public House Recreation Ground has housing proposed along its eastern side with a triangular space.

Policy GS2 Greenways and Public Rights of Way – to preserve the character of Greenways and PRoW as well as the experience of their users. Whilst the retention of Hermit Lane for active travel is a key benefit of the revised scheme, the integration of the lane with wider movement connections are currently poor.

In the context of the Local Plan Allocation (page 121) MU land South of Barugh Green Road

Retain, buffer and manage the watercourse, grassland and woodland north-east of Hermit Lane; largely achieved.

Retain, buffer and manage the species-rich hedgerows and boundary features; loss of 4.5km of hedgerow would suggest that this has largely not been achieved. Proportion of 'important hedgerows' under the 1997 regulations tbc along with total existing linear features.

Create/ retain wildlife corridors through/ across the site – to be advised by ecologist.

Provide accessible public open space.

Ensure that any sustainable drainage system incorporating above-ground habitats is designed from the outset to serve the whole site.

and

Protect the routes of the Public Rights of Way that cross the site and make provision for these as part of any proposal'. Whilst the route between Pogmoor and Higham Common (via Hermit Lane) has been retained the experience to the user is significantly adversely affected changing from an open rural one to suburban. The routes along the field boundaries north of Hermit Lane have largely been integrated into the urban structure with the significance of these routes not clearly acknowledged or welcoming to users e.g. route across the Link Road and into Avon Close.