

25/00486/OUT - Hallam Land, Knowsley Village - Design Team Response to ESS Consultation Comments 20/01/2026

Comment Numbering	KMBC Comments "(Comments on the design from the perspective of the key priorities above)"	Design Team Member	Design Team Response
Ancient woodland			
1	The Ancient Woodland appears to have been surrounded by a 15m buffer around the boundary of the woodland in which no development is allowed to occur which is welcomed and it has been noted that the 15m buffer zone has been used as public open space, as advised at outline design.	Howard Stannard (Landscape)	Noted. No response required.
2	It has been noted that the ancient woodlands themselves can't be classed as POS as public access should be controlled to protect this important habitat. The relationship of the development with the ancient woodland, including how it is to be managed and preserved needs to be outlined within a management plan document which will be approved by the LPA prior to implementation.	Howard Stannard (Landscape) Emma Telfer (Ecology)	The ancient woodlands have not been classed as POS, with their management to form part of a LEMP, which is likely to form part of a future reserved matters application. Additionally, a detailed HMMP will be required as part of the BNG condition at reserved Matters.
3	To prevent degradation of the ancient woodland as a result of recreational harm formalised access routes should be developed based on the current desire lines, this will ensure the public can positively use the woodland whilst limiting degradation due to public access, rather than having free informal access which can ultimately do more harm.	Emma Telfer (Ecology)	Agreed. However, the current condition of the woodland is 'poor'. Enhancement to the woodland is proposed as part of the Biodiversity Net Gain(BNG) strategy for the development. At the detailed design stage, a detailed Recreational management plan and Habitat Maintenance and Management Plan (HMMP) will provide details of woodland management to ensure the target condition is met as outlined in the BNG strategy. Additionally, these enhancements along with any required monitoring and management, can be secured via the BNG condition for a minimum of 30 years.
4	Ongoing management of the pond at the centre of the woodland and the surrounding ancient woodland needs to be confirmed. The pond has previously been used for angling by the community therefore confirmation of the relationship between the development, the ancient woodland and the pond needs to be confirmed. The ancient woodland's integrity should be prioritised over management for angling in Knowsley's Pits (Spooky Wood), however any use by the public should not be ignored and positive management is required. Consequently, it would be good to know how this matter is going to be addressed or accommodated.	Emma Telfer (Ecology)	As with comment 3 above, the ponds and surrounding woodland will be managed in line with the HMMP and BNG strategy to be agreed at detailed design stage, and this will ensure the condition of the woodland is maintained.
Tree and Hedgerows			
5	It is noted that the development document is seeking to minimise impact on the trees and hedgerows and protecting their roots. However, to fit the development into the site the proposals need to remove a significant stretch of hedgerow along Knowsley Lane to create the main vehicular access points and associated sightlines and highway infrastructure, as well as some small sections of hedgerow internally to fit in the proposals as is. The proposals have attempted to reduce the hedgerow loss by bringing the two new junctions closer together, but this will involve the loss of most of the hedgerow along Knowsley Lane, this has not been picked up in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report.	Edward Cole (Arboriculture)	The submitted Arboricultural Assessment had not considered additional loss of hedgerows which conflicts with visibility splays for the proposed new junctions and additional footpath links not identified on the Parameters Plan. This omission would be rectified within a revised Arboricultural Assessment which would include the attached Tree Retention Access Plan (10793-T-07 - attached to this submission) which includes an overlay of the detailed access proposals with the tree survey information and accurately shows the loss of hedgerow necessary to implement the proposed detailed access arrangements. While the loss of a greater length of hedgerow from along Knowsley Lane to facilitate access to the site, was not identified or assessed within the submitted Arboricultural Assessment, this additional loss would not alter the conclusion reached within this report, with this loss of hedgerow not considered a significant arboricultural impact which could not be mitigated for through new hedgerow planting along Knowsley Lane and elsewhere on the development, which would be necessary to achieve a biodiversity net gain.
6	The Arboricultural Impact Assessment shows that all the Sycamore and Goat Willow on the site are trees that are not going to provide long term benefits, as such, it is considered better to manage the tree stock, removing these trees and replacing them with trees which will provide long-term benefits.	Edward Cole (Arboriculture) Howard Stannard (Landscape)	The trees are shown to be retained, however, their management will form part of a LEMP, with the condition of trees to be monitored at an appropriate frequency to ensure longevity of all trees and recommendations for replacement should this be appropriate.
Fronting onto greenspace			
7	There are too many rear and side facing properties against the POS, especially in relation to the ancient woodland on the north and southern sides, the layout as it is will only cause problems on the estate moving forward with the lack of natural surveillance.	James Bush (Stantec)	It is noted that the supporting plans (other than the Parameters Plan) are all illustrative at this outline stage so are not to be approved/ commented on in detail. Notwithstanding this, the testing layout that has informed the plans (Extract of plan included to side/ below - which is again illustrative and does not form part of the application submission), includes 96% front/side facing properties which would naturally be corner turners (side elevation is the primary elevation (a front) with very limited rear (3 units of 700) with the ecology corridor updated in the south-east corner. Pink on the plan illustrates frontages (this includes corner turner units as their primary elevation is the side, so a front). Blue illustrates rears which are nominal. Accordingly the proposals do seek to maximise outward facing development ensuring good levels of natural surveillance.

Protecting and enhancing habitats			
8	Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources report highlights that the land is mostly only Grade 3b and so argues that the loss of this type of grassland and agricultural land is nothing to be concerned about. However, this is the typical ground condition throughout Knowsley and it's chiefly because the land has been modified by drainage systems to enable them to be more productive for farming. This being the case, it's this native wetland and deciduous woodland habitat which has been prevented from reverting due to agricultural activity. So, it is considered the loss of this type of land does need to be recognised in some form, whether via compensation to help mitigate its loss whether on site or mitigated off site, particularly with regard to local biodiversity and habitat provision for species such as the Brown hare.	Emma Telfer (Ecology)	The assessment has followed established current guidance for both Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in the UK. The guidance is clear in that the baseline habitat is the habitat that exists at the time of assessment unless activities have been carried out prior to the date of application (or proposed date), that result in loss of on-site biodiversity value (degradation). Therefore as the current agricultural use is lawful, and there has been no habitat degradation (e.g. drainage or clearance post 30th January 2020) or unauthorised practice that would trigger a retrospective baseline, the baseline has been taken as that at the time of the habitat survey. The assessment has considered change caused by the proposal, not change caused by continuation of lawful use. There is no policy duty to assess impacts against abandonment scenarios and ecological harm must be actual or reasonably foreseeable, not hypothetical.
Wildlife corridors			
9	In the Strategic Design Code document, Section 6.5 focuses on Ecological corridors. The problem is that to be a corridor the habitat areas need to be connected. To enable the wildlife to safely pass through the site. It is requested there was a strong corridor from west to east. Presently, the development allows for a connection from the east to the centre, but there is no connection for wildlife to the northwestern corner of the site where an attenuation basin is proposed and to the woodland to the west. The width of this corridor needs to be as wide as possible, ideally 20m but 10-15m is better than what is presented at present.	Emma Telfer (Ecology)	There is a proposed 20m corridor providing connectivity west to east adjacent to the southern boundary in line with ESS aspiration. This has been proposed in order to strengthen and buffer the existing corridor between Knowsley Park and Little Wood, rather than creating a corridor where no previous connection exists. A corridor along the southern boundary will be of higher value to wildlife as it can be more effectively buffered from lighting and disturbance impacts than a central corridor bounded by residential areas.
Active Travel routes			
10	In the Strategic Design Code document, Section 3.5 focuses on the active travel links and have proposed direct offroad route connections within surrounding POS areas, for example public right of way and The Sanctuary to the west and Syders Grove to the north. However, the lack of having an ecological corridor to the north-western corner has also resulted in the same problem with the Active Travel route, this needs to be rectified. It is also recommended that the active travel route also connects to the eastern side of the site in the south-eastern corner.	Graham Lamb (Planning) James Bush (Stantec)	There is a proposed active travel route along the primary street that leads directly to the north-western corner of the Site from the central play space and ancient woodland. This is then interconnected with other routes giving great permeability to site. Routes around the south-eastern corner are limited for ecological and Bio-diversity reasons.
Street Trees			
11	Street trees need to be incorporated into all the different streetscapes, with enough depth to the verges to enable the trees to successfully establish. To ensure provision of these trees there is a need to make sure their priority is not lost as the development design develops. Consequently, these trees need to remain in the highway verges not in private properties.	Howard Stannard (Landscape)	As set out in the Strategic Design Code supporting this outline application, street trees would be limited to locations along the Primary Loop Road, with trees in other streets located within front gardens, where space allows. This detail would then be confirmed as part of a future reserved matters application.
Tree planting			
12	Proposed Tree species are still awaited, so comments to guide species selection: a. Tree species to be dominated by climax species wherever possible. The planting layout should start with setting out climax species first, giving them space to grow to maturity and then interplanting them with smaller and shorter-lived species. b. Unless planting tree avenues requires the same species, don't group the same larger tree species together, mix them up, for example Fagus is a longer lived tree, so should be spaced out to eventually let them grow to size, then plant the smaller 5 Page or shorter lived varieties in between, this provides a better mix and diversity and makes the scheme fit better into the landscape. c. Avoid Salix and Poplar species (unless black poplar). d. Limit the amount of Betula and Sorbus species planted, as they tend to be over planted by developers, but are short lived. Sorbus sp. typically also have poor structural form although they provide a benefit by being a food source. e. Trees within the Arbor cells need to be climax species, if required due to spreading tree canopy concerns, plant them in their fastigate forms. f. In native scrub mix it's important to include some climax species within it, like oak, so that they can after a long time emerge and take over. g. With the native hedgerow should have hawthorn dominating (60%) on a double staggered row (5/Lm) resulting in a continual line of hawthorn. Also have a good percentage of holly to provide winter cover for the birds (say 20%).	Howard Stannard (Landscape)	This is very helpful feedback and can form part of the information provided as part of a future reserved matters application. The principles of proposed trees and planting within different areas of the site is set out in the Strategic Design Code.

SuDS Designs			
13	Within the proposed surface Water drainage design there is a total reliance on attenuation basins. The use of surface water to help create positive habitat spaces which can be utilised by both wildlife and enhance the setting of the development is welcomed, however, this needs to be part of a drainage strategy which starts where the rain falls and looks to reduce the rate that water takes to get to the surrounding network. Over reliance on an engineered 1 in 3 sloped drainage basins will not be accepted, as this design is currently showing. These basins designed as shown are not considered positive features within public open space environments and are not to be classed as part of the public open space. As such there needs to be a lot more consideration towards: a. Permeable hard surfaced areas; b. Capturing the water at point of contact with the surface and take into features to slow transfer into surrounding surface water network (such as rainwater butts, attenuation systems which are integrated into tree pits, rain gardens, etc); c. SuDS pond features will only be considered once all other mitigation strategies have been adopted. If required, they must be natural in their form, with gradual slopes at 1 in 6, with different shelving to encourage different types of habitat and be more like swales than craters!	Dan Hodson (Drainage)	SuDS measures upstream of attenuation basin for water quality and interception have been suggested in section 6.2.9 of the FRDA report, however it is not possible to design these features at this stage, as it is an outline application with no detailed layout to work from. Basin side slopes of 1:5 have been shown on the drawing per discussions with the LLFA.
Environmental Statement comments			
14	The Environmental Impact Screening also needs to include the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment for winter, when vegetation is at its minimum and so when visual impact is at its greatest. This will enable the visual impact of the proposals to be considered in its fullest extent.	Howard Stannard (Landscape)	The Landscape and Visual Amenity Chapter (Chapter 6) confirms in paragraph 6.2.28 that ' <i>Although the photography shows vegetation in leaf, the Site was visited in the winter months, with these conditions considered within the LVIA.</i> '
15	noted that the visual envelope has been quantified through the Zone of Theoretical Visibility and has therefore done the visual impact assessments based on this.	Howard Stannard (Landscape)	Table 6.2 of the Landscape and Visual Amenity Chapter (Chapter 6) states ' <i>The SZTV is used as a tool to guide site work, with all visual receptors visited, where possible.</i> '
16	Noted that the types of buffer planting have been proposed in the way of landscape screening in to respect the setting of Knowsley Hall Boundary and the existing woodland, the details of which are expected to be included within reserved matters.	Howard Stannard (Landscape) Joseph Empsall (Heritage)	Further information and clarification on the types of buffer planting proposed for Knowsley Park can be included within the heritage reporting produced in support of any reserved matters application.
17	Would still like to explore ownership / management of the POS / play elements and if KMBC would be involved with this in some way. It is assumed that a LEMP will be included within reserved matters.	Anna Chew (Hallam)	A LEMP would be provided as part of a future reserved matters application. Future management arrangements of the POS/ play elements can be discussed and dealt with via conditions and s106 agreement.
18	Noted that one centralised larger play facility set within a greenspace is proposed and welcomed.	Graham Lamb (Planning) Howard Stannard (Landscape)	Noted. No response required.
19	Noted and welcomed that attenuation basins have not been included within in the central area between the woodlands.	Graham Lamb (Planning) Howard Stannard (Landscape)	Noted. No response required.
Landscape infrastructure / hard surfacing			
20	Confirmation is required over what surface is proposed for what area, as suggested above, there permeable surfaces should be used wherever possible to reduce the amount of water getting into the Surface water systems. But the active travel routes and connections need to have a more durable surface than crushed / self-binding gravel surfaces.	Howard Stannard (Landscape) James Bush (Stantec)	The proposals shown on Figure 6.7 Illustrative Landscape Masterplan are indicative only, with all details, including specification of surfaces, would be provided as part of a future reserved matters application. Select surfaces would need to meet the relevant standards of the highway authority.
21	Clarification is also sought over what street furniture (location and specification) is proposed as well as directional signage, information boards, external lighting (if any) etc.	Howard Stannard (Landscape) James Bush (Stantec)	The details of street furniture, signage and lighting would be provided as part of a future reserved matters application. The principles of street furniture within different areas of the site is set out in the Strategic Design Code.
LEMP			
22	A detailed regime for the ongoing and longer-term maintenance of all landscape furniture and hard and soft landscape works is required in the form of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP). This Plan should include how the development is going to care for the landscape features within the site, including the management and care of existing and proposed trees and hedgerows, the wildflower and amenity grassed areas, the vegetation along the brook, the maintenance of the bird and bat boxes and habitat piles the maintenance of the hard infrastructure. To enable the contractor carrying out the work to understand what is required on a month by month basis and which would clearly set out: a. What areas are in private ownership and what is under a maintenance contract? b. The responsibilities of the private owner to ensure that the BNG of the site is kept. c. Who is to be the responsible body for managing the maintenance? d. Who is the contractor to carry out the works directed in the LEMP? e. A maintenance schedule of what is to be carried out and when (I have attached a generic example of a schedule table). Provide details on how the site is going to be managed and which areas of the site are covered within this site management and what the scope and frequency of operations are going to be used. It is expected this will be a live document as such will be used by the managing agent in employing the maintenance contractor and also by the contractor when regularly maintaining the site.	Howard Stannard (Landscape)	A LEMP would be provided as part of a future reserved matters application. The response provides a useful brief for the production of the LEMP.

Plan Illustrating how Proposed Plots will Front onto Greenspace (Comment 7)

