

6 November 2024
24.11.06 - Parkland Reserve - response letter to MSDC officer queries



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Dear Steve

Application DM/23/2867 – Change of use of farmland and woodland to Parkland Reserve

Following on from the queries received from you on 9th April 2024, regarding the documents submitted as part of the above application, the project team have prepared the following documents and responses to address those concerns, accordingly please find attached the following documents, and a summary of each matters set out below.

Document Name	Prepared by	Reference number
Heritage Statement	Turley	FAIH3019 May 2024
Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan	Tadorna Consulting	0106-LEMP-DGS (18 September 2024)
Beechy Bottom Parkland Reserve Stewardship Management Plan	Community Stewardship Solutions	(September 2024)
Transport Statement	Ardent	2207280-R27 (July 2024)
Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement	Arbortrack	Ref: jwmb/rpt2/BBPR/AIAAMS 3 rd July 2024
Access plan from A272	Ardent	2207280-010 Rev C
Full Biodiversity Net Gain Metric	Ecology Co-op	P2831 Beechy Bottom BIC 4.0 Rev0
Biodiversity Impact Calculation	Ecology Co-op	
Vision Document	Davies Landscape Architects	June 2024
Proposed Cycle Route (Woodland Section)	Davies Landscape Architects	DLA/2131//CR/RPT/03/V1 -
Technical Details Document	Davies Landscape Architects	Rev V5 25.06.24
Access & Framework Plan	Davies Landscape Architects	Ref 2131-DLA-DR-L-23-Rev P10
Detailed Masterplan	Davies Landscape Architects	Ref 2131-DLA-XX-XXX-DR-L-21 Rev P06

1. Missing a specific Heritage Statement for this development.

A standalone Built Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turleys to accompany the application (reference FAIH3019 May 2024). The Statement has found that the restoration of parkland and pond, alongside the retention and management of existing woodland, would better reflect the historic landscape character of this former part of the Cuckfield Park estate. In turn, the proposals would better reveal the significance of the Grade II* listed building Cuckfield Park at the heart of this estate and also closely associated grouping of other listed buildings including Gatehouse to Cuckfield Park. The

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significance of the other designated heritage assets within the surrounding area of the park would be sustained, and not harmed, by the proposals.

2. Detailed Management Plan and funding models to show how it would contribute towards HWAONB Management Plan.

A Framework Management Plan has been prepared by Community Stewardship Solutions. The Management Plan includes the ongoing management arrangements to maintain public open space (POS), the footpath network, and the ongoing management and stock checking relating to the 'constrained rewilding' taking place within the parkland reserve.

As set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan, maintenance of routeways (Objective R1), protecting and enhancing the ecological function of field and heath (Objective FH3), and *"increasing opportunities for learning about and celebrating the High Weald's character and aesthetic qualities, and to promote and facilitate contributions by communities and individuals to the conservation and enhancement of the High Weald"* (Objective PQ1) are all contributed to through the Management Plan, as are many more of the objectives. This is set out in greater detail in the Management Plan document.

3. Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan.

A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) has been produced that covers Beechy Bottom Parkland Reserve, and includes prescriptions for management and maintenance of existing and created ecology provisions and ecology habitats/landscaping for the post construction phase of the development. This ensures that a comprehensive strategy is both devised and implemented to ensure that the habitats and species within the Parkland Reserve are safeguarded and enhanced.

4. Transport Statement

A Transport Statement has been prepared by Ardent consulting engineers (Reference 2207280-R27) and is included as part of this submission. The transport statement (TS) sets out how the proposed development will enhance pedestrian and cycle access at the northern and southern ends of the site, and provides details of the surface applied through the site for cyclists. Given that the Parkland Reserve is intended to primarily act as a local recreation facility and not a destination, the TS also identifies how the proposals will not lead to an increase in vehicular trips.

5. Site specific drainage strategy.

Having discussed this aspect with the drainage engineer (Yellow Sub Geo Limited), a specific drainage strategy is not considered necessary as there is limited development. No substantial built form is proposed and all the proposed paths are made from permeable material and hence there are no impacts to consider as part of a drainage strategy.

6. Route of cycle path and all footpaths need to be clearly shown on plans of an appropriate scale so that their exact route can be assessed (this is a full application where the routes are being agreed)

The proposed cycle route and footpaths are set out in the accompanying access and framework plan (Ref 2131-DLA-DR-L-23-Rev P10). To support the proposed cycle route, additional documents are provided in the form of *Proposed Cycle Route (Woodland Section) - DLA/2131//CR/RPT/03/V1* – and an updated *Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement - Ref: jvmb/rpt2/BBPR/ALAAMS*. These documents provide a greater focus on the cycle route, and specifically identifies the cycle route and its potential impacts, and have found that the construction method, route, and general approach are all acceptable.

- 7. Detailed access arrangements from the A272 to the south need to be shown, and included within this application. This includes any pedestrian crossing and the relationship of the access route with Old Mill Cottage's access road**

Detailed access arrangements to the A272 have been included as part of the Transport Statement and are shown as part of the package of drawings included, namely in drawings 2207280-010 Rev C and 2207280-015)

- 8. Full BNG Metric needs to be provided**

Please find submitted alongside this document the required BNG Metric (excel file P2831 Beechy Bottom BIC 4.0 Rev0)

- 9. Further Bat information is required**

Given that the proposal appears to show conversion of an existing building, MSDC's Place Services Ecological Response notes that further surveys are necessary to understand the level of importance assigned by Ecology Co-Op as Parish level for bats. However Savills on behalf of Fairfax can confirm the proposals do not include any proposals for the existing building. On this basis, it is considered no further surveys are necessary.

- 10. Any upgrading of existing PRow's, including bridleway to the south of the site, need to be included within this application**

No upgrading of Public Rights of Way is proposed. A new pedestrian route – separate to the public right of way that runs up by Oldmill Cottage – is proposed within the site. There will therefore be two options of route at the southern end of the site for cyclists and pedestrians, and owing to the provision of the route within the site boundary no off-site works are proposed.

- 11. The extent of Ancient Woodland does not appear to be clearly/fully shown on the submitted plans – e.g. the area to the east of, and including the cycle route, are classified as Ancient Woodland**

An updated Access and Framework Plan (Ref 2131-DLA-DR-L-23-Rev P10) is provided with this letter that clearly sets out the area of ancient woodland within the site

- 12. Impact on increased risk of pedestrian harm to sensitive habitats on site, including Ancient Woodland – How is this to be controlled ? Proposed fencing plans not clear (need to be provided at an appropriate scale)**

Pedestrian access to areas of ancient woodland (and other areas of the site that are restricted) will be controlled through the installation of wooden fencing. The updated Access and Framework Plan (Ref 2131-DLA-DR-L-23-Rev P10) provided with this submission sets out the areas of the site where public access will be achievable. The updated technical details document (Rev V5 dated 25.06.2024) now identifies the technical details of the fencing, gates, and signage, along with providing a clear indication of where each type will be located.

- 13. Construction of cycle path through Ancient Woodland – potential impact is not clear in submissions (also not clearly shown on plans)**

The cycle path is intended as a leisure route, and therefore will be 2.5m wide and constructed as a Hoggin path (as detailed in the updated technical details document (Rev V5 dated 25.06.2024). This will allow construction from a suitable method such as a sub-base confinement system that will prevent the need for excavation. Further details of this approach can be found in Appendix E of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement.

It is intended that a 1m verge will be kept clear of vegetation (other than grass should ground conditions be suitable for grass growth) on either side of the path, so that the verge could be accessed by pedestrians or cyclists should the need arise.

As clarified above, the cycle route can be seen in detail in the updated Access and Framework Plan (Ref 2131-DLA-DR-L-23-Rev P10), as well as a close examination of the woodland section in both the *Proposed Cycle Route (Woodland Section) - DLA/2131//CR/RPT/03/V1* – and the updated *Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement - Ref: jwmb/rpt2/BBPR/AIAAMS*

14. What is meant by ecologically restricted access ? – Does this mean that there will be no public access ? If public access, how does this impact on the BNG proposals ? In reality is the total extent of public access only to areas 1-3 ? , if so how big is this area ? and does this need to be made clear in the submissions ?

We can confirm that your interpretation is correct – ‘Ecologically Restricted Access’ means that there will be no public access to those parts of the site. As a result there will be no impact on the BNG proposals as this is not an area of public access or impact. The total extent of the public access is shown on the Access and Framework Plan (Ref 2131-DLA-DR-L-23-Rev P10), which identifies approximately 33.5ha of publicly accessible land, and 65.5ha of area with no public access.

We hope the above responses and accompanying appendices address the questions / concerns you expressed within your email. We would welcome a meeting to discuss the above as well as any further comments/concerns raised by other key consultees.

Yours sincerely



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