SOUTH WOKINGHAM PHASE 2B

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

for

MILLER HOMES & KIER VENTURES

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Checked By:	A. Bigg
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Revision:	
Ref:	PRI24132 Woodland Management Plan

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1. Introduction

1.1. ACD Environmental Ltd. (ACD) have been instructed by Miller Homes & Kier Ventures. to produce the following Woodland Management Plan (WMP) to address Condition 17 of the consented planning permission granted by Wokingham Borough Council (Application Number: 191068) for the development at Phase 2b of the South Wokingham Development Location (SDL).

1.2. For locations of existing trees and proposed development, reference should be made to the latest revision of the corresponding Tree Protection Plan for the site, ACD drawing reference: PRI24132-03 Phase 2 – SANG (7-sheets).

1.3. The Tree Survey Schedule for the site can be found at Appendix 2 of the corresponding Tree Survey Report for the site, ACD report reference: PRI24132ts SANG.

1.4. Condition 17 of the planning consent states: “Before landscaping of the (SANG) north of the Ludgrove drive commences a Woodland Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and woodland management shall be carried out in accordance”.

1.5. This objective of this report is to set out the long-term management and monitoring strategy for the parcel of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW), identified as W157 in the corresponding arboricultural package of works, and neighbouring parcels/groups which create the wider woodland, to ensure preservation, enhancement, safety and sustainability of the woodland in contrast to the new context of the adjacent land as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for the consented development.

2. Woodland Description

2.1. The parcel of ASNW identified as W157 consists of an area approximately 0.944 hectares (as specified on the online ‘Magic’ maps provided by the Government Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The woodland is made up of predominantly Oak specimens alongside Alder, Ash, Brich trees, with a Holly and Hazel understory.

2.2. Neighbouring the ASNW are two other woodland groups to the east recorded within the tree survey schedule as W161 & G170. W161 comprises of Ash, Alder and Willow specimen with an understorey layer of Hazel and Elder, whilst G170 is predominantly Willow, Blackthorn and Hawthorn.

2.3. Bordering the aforementioned woodland compartments a row of trees runs on the west and south sides directly adjacent to ‘Emm Brook’. The most notable species within this are Oak, Alder Birch and Lime. Although these trees aren’t within the area of ASNW these trees contribute to the wider landscape and overall quality of the woodland.

2.4. Comments recorded in the corresponding Tree Survey Schedule for the site identify a number of fallen and dead trees throughout the woodland and instances of waterlogged ground conditions observed.

2.5. Whilst fallen and dead trees are considered to be a natural occurrence expected as part of any healthy woodland, they can be a potential hazard to people using the proposed boardwalk/footpath proposed to the north of the woodland. Waterlogging can be of detriment to the ongoing vitality of otherwise healthy tree stock due to the anaerobic conditions created within soil structures and rooting mediums.

2.6. There is little evidence of historical management of the woodland, especially within the interior of the compartment.

2.7. There are currently no existing access routes directly into the woodland. There is a public footpath running west of the woodland from 'Gipsy Lane' to 'Ludgrove Path' and adjacent to 'Emm Brook'. The proposed boardwalk will link to this, creating no route into the centre of the woodland.

Figure 1: Overview of entirety of woodland area.

Figure 2: Overview of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland. As extracted from 'Magic Maps'.

3. Woodland Management Objectives

3.1. Although the woodland interior will not be utilised for public use directly, its maintenance as a landscape and ecological feature remains as an important part of the overall SANG. Due to the proposed boardwalk north of the woodland, there is a requirement to maintain and manage the woodland, to ensure the health, overall vitality and ASNW features are retained.

3.2. The objectives are as follows:

- Health and Safety
- Maintenance of semi-natural woodland character.
- Management of pollutants/rubbish
- Management of invasive non-native species.

3.3. Health and Safety

3.3.1. Due to the installation of a footpath/boardwalk north of the woodland, the volume of foot traffic will increase. Trees within falling distance/overhanging the footpath should be assessed every two years, or after severe weather events by a suitably qualified arboriculturist. With the aim of identifying risks and actionable defects and providing a schedule of remedial works to address and or mitigate the risks to acceptable levels.

3.3.2. The management company should walk the route of the path north of the woodland once a month to assess if there are any new noticeable defects or potential hazards in the trees within falling distance of the footpath. If it is deemed necessary for further detailed inspection outside of the routine detailed assessment, then a suitably qualified arboriculturist must be contacted.

3.3.3. Typical hazards to identify as part of a safety assessment include:

- Dead, failed or hung-up trees and branches.
- Deadwood overhanging the path.
- Structural defects or damage of a stems and branches.
- Identification of pests, diseases or fungal infections that may have wider health implications to woodland users or residents. (e.g. Oak processionary moth, Ash Dieback Disease).

3.3.4. Any pruning work specified should be in accordance with the British Standard BS3998:2010 - Tree Work – Recommendations.

3.3.5. Any trees with cracks, splits, hollows and climbing plants on the stem and/or in the crown that require pruning or felling should be inspected by a licensed bat ecologist for roosting bats before works are carried out.

3.3.6. Where possible retain all tree debris on site, habitat stack log piles and recycle mulch into woodland or onto existing internal paths.

3.3.7. Carry out an inspection of woodland trees every year to check for signs of Ash Dieback and Oak Processionary Moth (OPM). If either are found or suspected, report to the Forestry Commission and take appropriate action and advice.

3.3.8. If OPM is discovered or suspected, a report should be filed on the Forestry Commission website, following this link: https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk/. OPM will be found in the section ‘Pest of Disease Specific Reports’ under ‘Submit a Report’. This section is also appliable to reporting on Ash Dieback Disease, under ‘Chalara Dieback of Ash’.

3.3.9. Due to the unmanaged and wet conditions of the interior of the woodland, coupled with the ASNW designation. Signage deterring people from entering the interior of the woodland due to the associated trip hazards and wet conditions, should be installed adjacent to the boardwalk, also educating people on the value of biodiversity of ASNW. This will further protect the woodland character and biodiversity.

3.4. Maintenance of the semi-natural woodland character.

3.4.1. As ASNW are adjudged to have been left undisturbed by human interaction, no proposed pathways will lead into the woodland, with the understorey and landscape/wet conditions of the woodland being retained. This should deter people from accessing the interior of the woodland.

3.5. Management of pollutants/rubbish

3.5.1. The woodland must be maintained to ensure it remains free of rubbish and harmful pollutants i.e dog foul. Regular litter bins and dog foul bins are to be situated at each point of the footpath to help ensure that dog foul and litter do not accumulate within or on the edge of the woodland.

3.5.2. These bins must be changed cyclically as needed by the management company to ensure overflow and littering does not occur.

3.5.3. Where bins are to be permanently installed within either RPAs or the 15m woodland buffer, a sensitive methodology must be implemented protect the rooting area of the trees. Any installation of such infrastructure within the woodland should utilise a sensitive foundation design, excavated using hand-tools and lined with a non-permeable membrane to prevent harmful chemicals from poured cement products leeching into the surrounding soil structures and rooting systems, or through using posts firmly pushed into the ground.

3.5.4. Root severance should be avoided during any excavation. In the case of any discovered significant roots preventing installation of any feature, realignment of the feature to avoid significant roots should be attempted in the first instance.

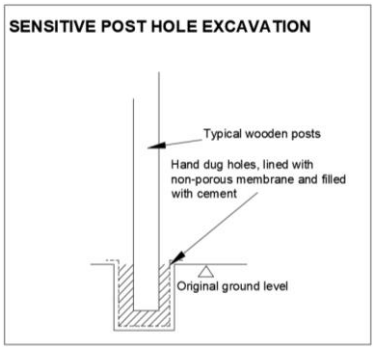

Figure 3 – Methodology for hand excavated post holes.

3.6. Management of non-native invasive species.

3.6.1. The management company should inspect the woodland edge at least once a year to identify non-native invasive species. These should be removed as a matter of urgency due to their fast growing and hardy nature.

3.6.2. Typical invasive species are:

- Japanese knotweed *(Fallopia japonica)*
- Rhododendron *(Rhododendron ponticum)*
- Himalayan balsm *(Impatiens glandulifera)*

3.6.3. Japanese knotweed will require removal through a specialist company, which should be appointed by the management company. Attempting to remove this without the correct precautions could lead to breaking the law due to incorrect disposal.

3.6.4. Rhododendron should be removed through cutting and removal of above ground material from the stem to as close to ground level as possible, and treatment or removal of the remaining underlying root-structure to prevent regrowth. Given the time-intensive nature Rhododendron removal, this work should be phased as appropriate and reviewed and repeated on an annual basis to monitor any regrowth from rootstock or dormant seedbank to ensure the species is effectively managed or removed from the area.

3.6.5. Himalayan Balsam is a fast growing, tall, upright annual which can outcompete native plants for space, light, moisture and nutrients. This will need to be removed prior to flowering and setting seed, of which can remain viable in the soil for two years. Consider utilising a specialist weed control contractor to seek further advice on full maintenance to successfully remove this.

4. Woodland Boardwalk

4.1. The development proposals include the creation of a board walk and footpath north of the woodland and within the 15m buffer zone. Where the footpath is located within the Root Protection Areas (RPA) of trees a bespoke low impact methodology has been shown.

4.2. The bespoke methodology can be found within the Arboricultural Method Statement for the Phase 2B SANG application ref. PRI24132ams.

4.3. Due to the dense nature and wet conditions of the interior of the woodland, there are no plan to include an internal path.

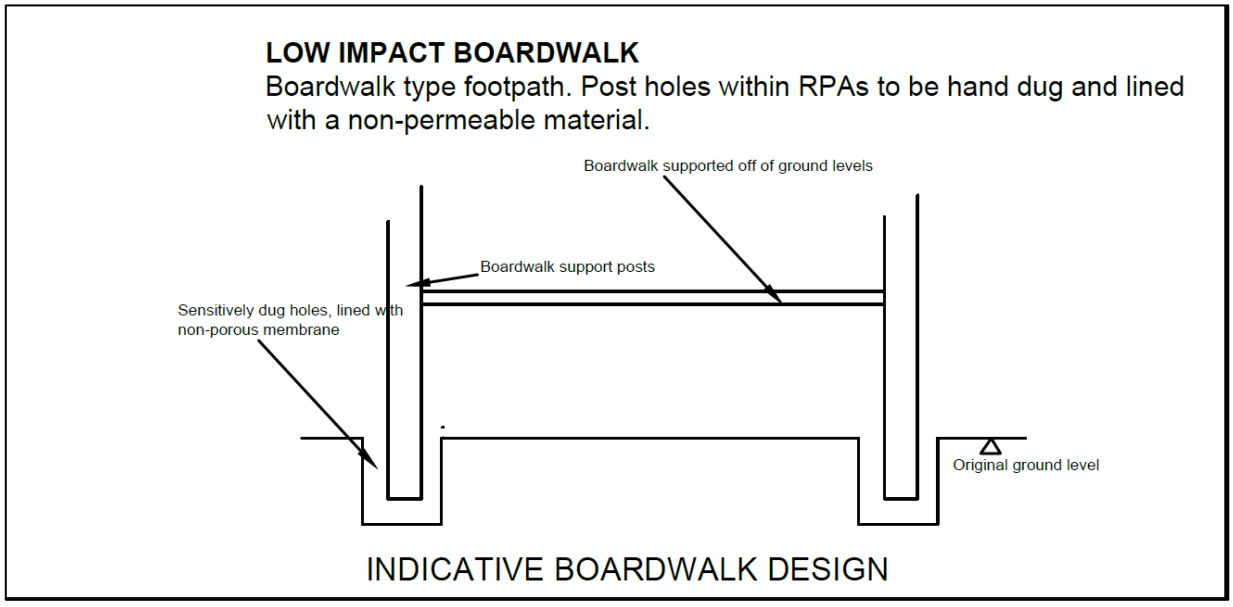

Figure 4 Indicative boardwalk design.

5. Management Plan Review

5.1. The Management Plan will be reviewed after 5 years. The management company will continue the management after the 5-year period.

5.2. Revisions to the aims, objectives, and prescriptions will be made in agreement between the management company and the homeowners, either directly or via an appointed residents' association. Areas of soft landscape maintained by the management company are jointly owned by the homeowners, and any changes to their management will be subject to mutual agreement.

Image 1 Diamond shape lesion found on infected trees with Ash Dieback Disease. Source – Woodland Trust website. Credit David Mark / Alamy Stock Photo.

Image 2 Nest and caterpillars found on Oak Processionary Moth. Source – Woodland Trust website. Credit Hilda Weges / Alamy Stock Photo.

Image 3 Japanese knotweed. Source – Woodland Trust website. Credit John Bridges / WTML

Image 4 Rhododendron. Source – Woodland Trust website. Credit Niall Benvie / WTML

Image 5 Himalayan Balsam. Source – RHS website. Credit Shutterstock

6. Summary of Management

Type of Assessment	Conducted by	Review period
Visual Health & Safety	Management Company	Regular (Monthly)
Detailed Health & Safety	Arboriculturist	Cyclical (2 Years)
Identification/Removal of Invasive Species	Management Company/Specialist Contractors	Cyclical (1 Years)
Clearance of Litter/Dog Foul Bins	Management Company	Regular
Review of Woodland Management Plan.	Management Company	5 Years.

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