



St Ann's New Neighbourhood Phase 1B & 2

Design and Access Statement
Volume 2 - Landscape
December 2023

N15302-A&S-XX-XX-RP-L-70021
Revision C01 - 30/11/2023
Status A3

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N15302-A&S-XX-XX-RP-L-70021:

First Issue	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed
C01	30/11/2023	Planning Submission	GS/CGG	GS
Revision Nr.				

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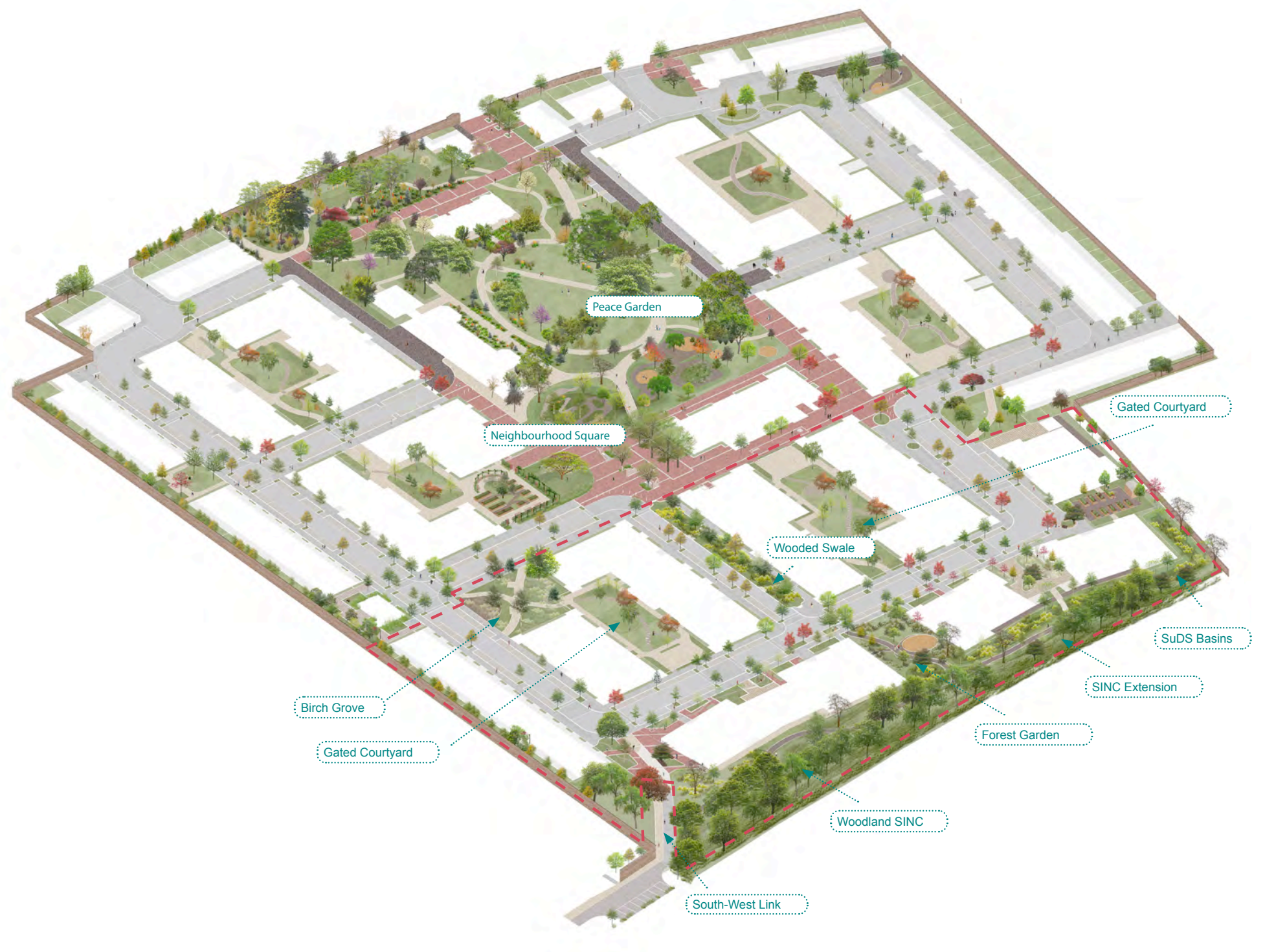
Executive Summary

The site wide landscape and public realm strategy is underpinned by a consolidation and extension of the important existing landscape assets of the Peace Garden and the Woodland SINC, combined with the retention of key mature trees across the site. This reinforces the existing distinct spatial character whilst also ensuring that there is sufficient mature landscape amenity to support and enhance the development. This approach guides development across the whole site, informing character, providing amenity, and delivering ecological outputs.

In Phases 1B&2 a new green link running north-south through the Forest Garden and Wooded Swale creates a site-wide ecological connection between the expanded Woodland SINC to the south of the site and the Peace Garden in Phase 1A. Site-wide biodiversity is enhanced through the creation of a mosaic of different habitats and is enriched by a sustainable drainage strategy which results in rain gardens and retention basins in the south-east corner of the site. New streets are tree lined, pedestrian and cycle friendly and animated by streetside planting and adjacent green spaces. Play spaces within semi-private courtyards are complemented by play-on-the-way within the public realm and a larger playground in the Peace Garden.

A total of 176 new trees, of almost 60 different species, are proposed in Phases 1B&2. The Woodland SINC will be extended by 45% with a variety of habitats. Across Phases 1B&2 just over 5,000m² of a variety of new soft landscaping and 4,500m² of pedestrian hardscape are provided. Of this 870m² is distributed over 4 dedicated play spaces. In addition, over 7,000m² of green roofs, of a mix of types, will be created.

Volume 2 of the Design and Access Statement for RMA1 Phase 1B&2 sets out the approach to the landscape in four sections. In Section 1.0 'The Site' a detailed site analysis sets out the ecological and arboriculture context. The subsequent sections, 2.0 Strategies, 3.0 Public Open Spaces, 4.0 Residential Amenity Spaces and 5.0 Streets all follow the approved Design Codes structure and demonstrate compliance in detail.



Overview of Landscape and Public Realm proposals (Phases 1B&2 outlined in red line)

1.0 The Site



1.1 Wider Landscape Context

The St Ann's Hospital site lies within formerly farmed land draining towards the Lea Valley. A grid of important ecological corridors, following railways, watercourses and connected open spaces and gardens, crosses this area of North London.

The site is bounded to the south by one such rail corridor, designated as a SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation). To the north of the site lies Chestnuts Park, a significant recreational open space. Further afield lie important open spaces including the Lea Valley Park, Walthamstow Wetlands, Woodberry Wetlands and Finsbury Park.

The landscape proposals seek to protect and extend the open spaces within the site, providing a green link between Chestnuts Park and the railway SINC, thus integrating the site within London's wider landscape and ecological context.



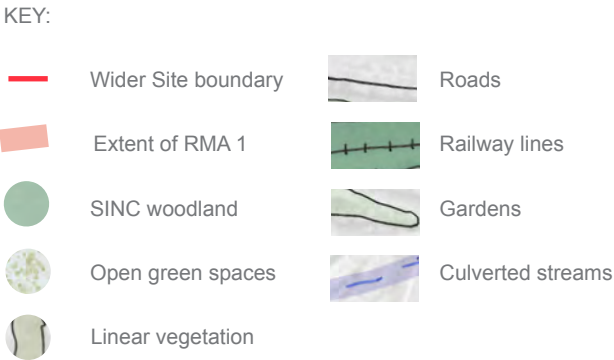
1.2 Wider Ecological Context

The masterplan site is located on the edge of an important east-west ecological corridor, following the adjacent railway line. Continuous linear SINC woodlands follow the railway, extending into the site boundary. Further west, beyond Green Lanes, the rail corridor becomes Railway Fields Local Nature Reserve.

Crossing the railway corridor is a north-south ecological corridor, stretching up through the site along its western boundary up towards Chestnuts Park. Fairly broad shrub belts along the site boundaries provide good commuter routes and habitat for wildlife such as bats. Further to these ecological corridors there is also a network of gardens and streets, forming smaller but also valuable links and parcels of habitat across the local area.

Within the whole site there are a range of notable green spaces, the key one being the Peace Garden which provides a significant local open space featuring a wide selection of valuable mature trees.

To the north of St Ann's Road, Chestnuts Park is an important recreational space occupying the grounds of a former house and watercress beds. The culverted Stonebridge Brook lies beneath, one of a number of eastward culverted flowing streams that run towards the Lea Valley.



1.3 Existing Trees

Mature existing trees create a distinct and characterful landscape setting on the site and are recognised as an important part of the site's landscape heritage. Although concentrated in the retained Peace Garden and the SINC there are also many trees across the whole site positioned between existing hospital buildings. The Scheme builds upon this landscape character and seeks to retain and protect existing high quality trees and to mitigate as much as possible the impact of significant construction across the site, including ensuring that, in time, with new tree planting, the amount of tree canopy cover will not be reduced. The St Ann's New Neighbourhood will greatly benefit from and be, in part, defined by this existing landscape of trees.

An Arboricultural survey was undertaken by TEP in May 2021 (submitted with the 2022 hybrid application), significantly updating an earlier survey from 2012 which accompanied the previous planning application and was available at bid stage. Further amendments were made in April 2023. The existing trees are locally renowned, attract many visitors and have been the subject of regular walks by tree enthusiasts and experts. In 2011 a booklet, the 'Trees of St Ann's Hospital – Guidance Notes and Map' written by David Bevan and Russell Miller was published. Although it covers the whole hospital site and is now outdated, it remains a useful resource. Some trees were highlighted in this report as of particular value and are annotated as 'Bevan' trees. STAGS (The St Ann's Green Spaces Group), an active local community group, is a vocal advocate for nature on the site. STAGS and not-for-profit organisations such as TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) have been instrumental in ensuring the local SINC is protected, maintained and managed for biodiversity by organising regular light touch maintenance sessions of the woodland area.

Key:

- Tree - Category A
- Tree - Category B
- Tree Category C
- Tree - Category U
- Hedge
- SINC and Western Boundary
- Existing SINC Boundary
- TPO Trees
- Bevan & Miller Trees



There are a number of ways of understanding and valuing the complex layers of the existing landscape of trees. The arboricultural surveys have identified over 50 species with 226 individual trees and 32 groups or clusters of smaller trees. In addition there are many young trees and shrubs across the site. All the trees have ecological value but the native woodland in the SINC, a continuation of the east west railway embankment ecological corridor is of special value. 29 Category A trees have been identified and there are 9 Tree Protection Order (TPO) trees, as well as many of local significance including one highly valued veteran tree, the Spotted Thorn.

The site has a range of productive fruiting trees. The trees were carefully planted to enhance the hospital grounds and have always had a therapeutic role, reflected by the naming of the 'Peace Garden'. One groundsman in the 1920's was clearly particularly interested in trees and the range of species planted then has led to the site evolving into an arboretum of sorts. There are a number of rare and more exotic species as well as very good examples of more common and UK native trees.

In order to achieve a balance between successful built development and minimising the impact on the existing trees, the establishment of a clear overall tree narrative is essential. This has been undertaken with input from the borough tree officer.

The tree report identifies a number of high quality tree (Category A) within the development boundary. Many of the finest trees are located within the current extent of the previously approved Peace Garden. However, in addition to those in the SINC, there are two areas of Category A trees within the RMA1 Application boundary. - the Holm Oak (T128) and the clump opposite the Water Tower consisting of a Silver Birch (T135), Horse Chestnut (T138) & Hawthorn (T140). There are no TPO trees within the RMA1 boundary.



Flowering trees in the Peace Garden



Mature trees in the Peace Garden



Ecological Value

- Trees within the SINC
- Native species
- Woodland



Mature trees

- Veteran (Spotted Thorn)
- TPO's
- Category A trees



Locally valued and significant trees

- Successful fruiting species
- 'Characteristic' trees
- A sensory 'therapeutic' tree palette



Arboretum

- Rare species (True Service Tree)
- Unusual exotic species
- Strengthening a collection

Examples of fruiting and nut trees on site:



Hazelnuts



Pears



Figs



Strawberry tree



Apples



Plums



Mulberries



Cherries

1.4 Existing Soft Landscape

Traces of the historic gardens are present throughout the site, with flowering ornamental shrubs, fruit trees and significant mature tree specimens. These features form a vital part of the character of the various green spaces and provide foraging areas and nesting/breeding sites for a range of local wildlife.

The most significant open space on site is the Peace Garden, a well preserved green space held between historic buildings, featuring a valuable 'arboretum' of existing mature trees, good stands of shrubbery and sweeping lawns. There is a great variety of fruiting trees and shrubs across the site, some of which are very old and are harvested by the local community. Many of the edible plants are located within the Peace Garden. Another notable category of the existing greenery are plants with sensory qualities such as bamboos and birch trees for sound, roses, lilacs and mock oranges for fragrance and bright flowers for visual stimulation which all contribute towards the 'therapeutic' qualities of the landscape, enjoyed by NHS staff and patients historically and to the present day.

Several areas of the site have been recently decommissioned, allowing the adjacent landscapes to naturally rewild. As a result the existing green spaces within the site are at various stages of colonisation/ecological succession, creating a diverse range of environments. Some of the lawns have grown taller and are relatively species rich, allowing constituent flora from the original agricultural soils to emerge and self-colonisation by local native flowering herbs. There are also a number of overgrown ornamental planting beds that have resulted in untypical mixed tall ruderal herb communities which are non-native but flower rich.

The SINC to the south of the site provides a key area of wildlife habitat, directly linked to the wider landscape via the railway corridor. This is predominantly made up of woodland with parcels of tall mixed herbs, ivy, blackberry and grassland.



Dense ivy cover and tall herbs along St Ann's Road



Self-heal, buttercups, white clover, cinquefoil



Mix of flowering herbs and moss in the Peace Garden



Lilac shrubs in flower



Rose shrubs are dotted throughout the site



Mulberries



The SINC along the southern site boundary



Sweeping lawns and mature trees define the Peace Garden, within a frame of ornamental shrubs



Blackberries form groundcover within the woodlands

1.5 RMA1 Site

This first Reserved Matters Application (RMA1) comprises Phase 1B&2 the southern part of the Approved St Ann's New Neighbourhood Masterplan.

The most important aspect of the site in landscape terms is the protected SINC woodland along the southern railway boundary. This application also continues the previously approved South West Link – a cycle and pedestrian route through the SINC, connecting Warwick Gardens with the new development and delivering a significant improvement in local connectivity.



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