

Technical Note

Thamesfield Retirement Village

11th November 2025

Wokingham Borough Council's Landscape and Trees Response

1. In response to the full application for Thamesfield Retirement Village, the Senior Landscape Officer from Wokingham Borough Council's Landscape and Trees team provided the following comment:

...Although there are some small ornamental trees growing within the Remenham Row site along the site boundary, which are picked up in the Arboricultural Report, this is not as extensive as suggested on the landscape drawings. It is therefore important that a number of additional medium / larger species specimen trees are included along the whole length of the boundary with Remenham Row and within the blue line part of Thamesfield, adjacent to the River Thames. These additional trees will help to further soften the glimpsed views of the larger building and reinforce the landscape structure and landscape setting of the building within this sensitive landscape. A revised landscape strategy document will need to be provided indicating these additional trees.
2. This request for additional tree planting has been carefully considered alongside the site constraints and design intent of the proposals. The following issues have been identified which restrict the potential to introduce tree planting in these areas and/or reduce the need:
 - A substantial number of existing trees (comprising three lines) already exist along the boundary with Remenham Row (as illustrated in Figures 1 - 3 below). These trees would provide substantial filtering of views between the existing properties on Remenham Row and the proposed apartments.



Figure 1: Aerial photograph illustrating presence of three rows of existing trees between residential properties in Remenham Row and Thamesfield.



Figures 2- 3: Site photos (Oct 2024) illustrating brick boundary wall and adjacent trees in the Remeneham Row estate

- The existing trees have not been formally surveyed; therefore, their species, dimensions, and root protection areas remain unconfirmed but it is likely that the tree roots extend into the

Site. In accordance with best arboricultural practice, new tree planting should be avoided within the potential root protection zones of existing trees to prevent damage or long-term decline.

- The space between the retained boundary wall and the retained basement (proposed as a raised patio area), together with the proposed building footprint, is constrained - ranging from approximately 1.9 metres at its narrowest point to 5.65 metres at its widest (see Figure 4). Within this space, a 1.1-metre-wide footpath (for resident's outdoor physical activity) is also proposed. The presence of both existing and proposed foundations in close proximity would further restrict the available rooting area, as below-ground structures would act as physical barriers to root development and limit soil volume. These constraints would inhibit healthy tree growth, prevent the establishment of larger species, and increase the likelihood of conflict between roots and built elements over time, making this location unsuitable for medium or large-scale tree planting.



Figure 4: Site photo illustrating narrow width of potential planting strip

- The space between the proposed building and the retaining wall, which borders the existing trees along Remenham Row, would experience consistently low light levels due to its north-facing orientation and surrounding built and vegetative elements. The proposed building rises

to 2.5 storeys in height, while the existing boundary wall varies between around 1.8 and 2.2 metres, and the boundary trees along Remenham Row appear to range between 4 and 6 metres in height (estimated). The combination of these vertical elements would create a heavily shaded environment and limited direct sunlight throughout the day. The north-facing aspect would further exacerbate this condition, keeping the area shaded for most of the year. These factors would significantly reduce the potential for successful tree establishment and growth, particularly for medium and large species, which require adequate light for healthy canopy development and long-term vitality.

- Introducing additional medium to large trees along the boundary with Remenham Row, alongside the existing trees, would result in increased overshadowing of the proposed building. The combined height and canopy spread of these trees would cast significant shade over ground- and upper-floor apartment windows, reducing natural daylight penetration into habitable rooms and potentially impacting the internal amenity of future residents.

3. Notwithstanding the constraints identified above, it is considered that there is potential to incorporate some additional tree planting to the north-east and south-west of the proposed building and along the River Thames frontage of the wider site. These areas are situated outside the root protection zones of existing trees, do not fall between the retained boundary wall and the proposed building, and offer more generous space with improved light availability. For reference, please see the revised Soft Landscape Plan (RETH3002 Thamesfield_04_Courtyard and Patio Soft Landscape Plan RevD), which now includes 7 additional trees. These additional trees would help further soften the glimpsed views of the proposed building and reinforce the landscape structure and landscape setting of the building within this sensitive landscape.

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