

MEMORANDUM

From:	Catherine Brimble Senior Landscape Officer
Service	SDL Landscape and Trees
App No:	250931
Address:	Finchwood Park, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG40 4QY.
Proposal:	Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2179 (as varied by 181194, dated 14/11/2018). The Reserved Matters comprise details of 161 dwellings within parcels P11, P12a & P12b together with associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, footpaths and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS). Details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered.
Type of Development:	Major Dwellings (10+)
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
☐ No objection
☒ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
☐ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

Revised information has been provided in response to previous officer comments, and I amend my comments as follows:

Layout

- Detailed Site Layout Sheets 1-3 are provided with this application in association with the Presentation Layout (Rev E) and it is noted that changes have been made to the route of the footpath through the linear public open space adjacent to the south-eastern boundary. I have no objection to these changes as I consider these improvements to the layout.

Levels

- The Proposed Levels Sheets 1 (Rev P07) & 2 (Rev P06) have now been amended to include retaining walls and heights to accommodate level changes between plots. The heights of the retaining walls range from 1m – 1.35m high so suggest some on-plot landscape mitigation is provided on the properties with the wall visible to the rear of their garden, to reduce the visual impact of the combined height of wall and 1.8m boundary fence.

3. Some additional levels information is provided for the proposed ground levels around the three storey apartment blocks on the western side of the development parcel. However, the levels will need to be refined through the condition's submission for completeness.

Drainage

4. The surface water drainage for Parcels 11 & 12 are indicated on Proposed Drainage Sheets 1 (Rev P06) & 2 (Rev P05) with the details of the basins shown on the Basin Section Sheets 1 (Rev P04) & 2 (Rev P04). I have no further comment to make on these drawings.
5. We will need to understand construction details of the tree pit rain gardens associated with the permeable paving as well as the bio retention strips. All tree pits operating as rain garden will need to be in the control of a management company rather than individual ownership. These details can be provided through a conditions submission.

Landscape

6. A separate Landscape Strategy for the site including the Linear Park and Public Open Space has now been provided. Changes have been made to this space and now include a number of different elements and spaces along the route that help to create a more formal parks and garden type of space. I consider this is suitable balance of some formal spaces within an informal setting but linked with a strategic route, to enhance visual interest. This is an improvement to what has previously been proposed, and I have no objection to the principle of the proposed form of the Linear Park. We will however need further discussion through a condition's application regarding the choice of equipment in the play area (Green Infrastructure Officer to comment on this detail) and also exact details of the boulder play area, which could also be improved, and the more formal linear garden space which perhaps should include the beds as being raised to emphasise that definition of the formality of the planting beds.
7. Revised combined Hard and Soft Landscape Plans (Sheets 1 - 5) (24.1992.L104 D, L105 D, L106 D, L107 D & L108 B) and Planting Schedule (24.1992.L109 C) are provided with this application and shows the types of planting proposed across the site. Generally, this is acceptable and previous requested changes have been made, however there are several issues that I have spotted that need to be included as part of more detailed landscape drawings to be submitted through a conditions application. These are:
 - The Planting Schedule doesn't include a number of small garden trees that are identified on the plans (abbreviated as: C k, A lam, M x s & M R s), or tree M 'E' indicated in the open space.
 - The hedgerows species (native and ornamental) are not indicated on the Plant Schedule. Spacing for each type will need to be given preferably a double staggered row / 5 plants per linear m.
 - There is space to include additional trees in the planting beds to the rear of plot 75 in the parking court, and to the fronts of plots 113 & 115.
 - Additional planting in the rear gardens of those dwellings which have a retaining wall of 1m + forming the rear garden boundary.
8. The post and rail fencing is shown around the attenuation basins which is not ideal as these features should be designed to avoid the need of fencing. Of

concern is the need for a double row of fencing for the smaller basin opposite plots 87 – 90. It would be helpful to have further explanation as why this is considered necessary as these features are not excessively deep or steep sided. Details can be provided through the condition's application.

9. As previously requested, tree pits details will need to be provided, and those trees planted in small or narrow planting beds we will need include underground soil cells as part of the tree pit, under adjacent hard surfaces to provide sufficient rooting volume and to ensure the long-term health of the tree. In some locations this may be combined with the rain gardens proposed as part of the drainage strategy.
10. Even with the requested changes discussed as part of these comments, we still require a landscape condition to be included in any RM approval as this wasn't included as part of the original Outline approval (suggested landscape condition given below). Additional specific details that will need to be provided through a landscape condition are a detailed landscape specification, and detailed landscape drawings which should indicate the individual plant species, location and numbers on the drawings and in the schedule.

Arboricultural Information

11. A revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment by RPS and dated 7th October 2025 has been submitted with this application which addresses the revised layout. This is acceptable.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Landscaping

- i) No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. The details shall include, as appropriate:
 - a) scheme drawings;
 - b) soft landscaping details including planting plans, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;
 - c) a Landscape Specification document covering soft landscaping (including site preparation, cultivation, plant handling and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment) and hard landscaping including all construction works such as paths, bridges and retaining walls;
 - d) hard landscaping materials including samples;
 - e) minor artefacts and structures (e.g. play equipment, street furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs, external services) including specifications for the product and its installation;
 - f) specification for tree rooting systems and use of structural soils under paving or where rooting volumes are limited;
 - g) all boundary treatments, and other means of enclosure or controlling access such as gates, bollards and vehicle restraint systems, which shall include consideration of ecological permeability;
 - h) measures required for ecological mitigation and biodiversity net gain;
- ii) Details of quality control measures, including supervision of landscape contract(s) by a suitably qualified landscape specialist and annual landscape

audits for the five-year period from completion of the landscaping for the Landscape Phase or until adoption (whichever is longer). The annual Landscape Audit shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for information prior to the next planting season and replacement planting undertaken in accordance with the landscape audit and iii) below.

- iii) Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Landscape management

Prior to the commencement of the development a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic gardens, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

Date:	3 rd November 2025	Signed:	C. Brimble
--------------	-------------------------------	----------------	------------