

MEMORANDUM

From:	Catherine Brimble Senior Landscape Officer		
Service	SDL Landscape and Trees	App No:	241962
Address:	Hogwood Farm, 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 18 no. dwellings, commercial floorspace (Use Class E) and public open space within the Neighbourhood Centre parcel together with associated access, parking, drainage and play infrastructure. 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

A number of documents and drawings have been submitted as part of this application and I comment as follows:

Drainage:

1. A Drainage Strategy drawing (C86557 JNP 92 XX DR C 7210 P05) is provided to support Drainage Statement. Although rain gardens are indicated on the drawing it is not clear how these will be incorporated into the scheme as there are no clear connections into the pipe network as shown.
2. It would be helpful to have a detailed drawing of the rain garden profile / section and how it relates to the surrounding parking area.
3. The tree pits for the trees in the car park should be designed so that these also contribute to the surface water drainage strategy by providing attenuation through the tree pit that will help store, clean and gradually release the water.
4. Further details will need to be provided as to how the pedestrian plaza area be drained. The trees and tree pits on the edge of this area can also help with surface water drainage as described in the point above.

Levels:

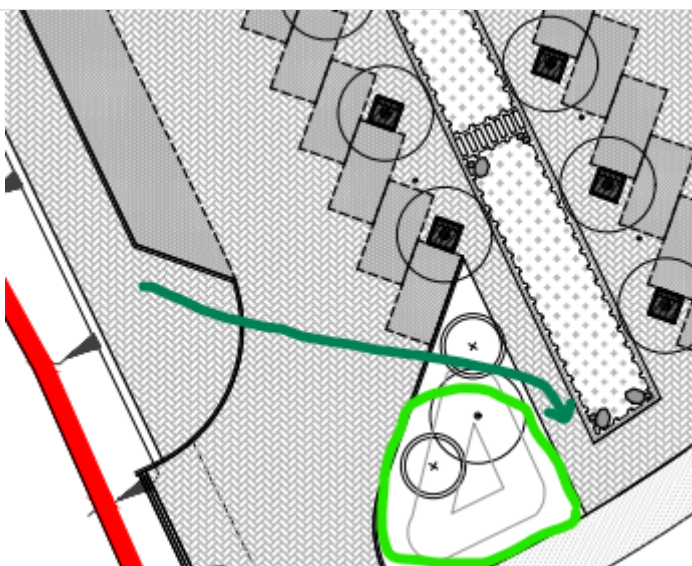
5. A Levels Strategy drawing (C86557 JNP 90 XX DR C 7211 P01) is provided with the application.
6. It is not clear how the proposed levels work with the rain garden in the centre of the parking area or drainage of the central plaza area.
7. It is not clear what the level changes are towards the edge of the site on the eastern corner adjacent to the roundabout.

Layout:

8. Pedestrian access into the plaza area from the north-east crossing by the roundabout is blocked by a planting bed. Part of which should be removed to allow a more direct route which people are likely to take anyway. See extract below showing the likely desire line. However, if the planting bed is located in this area to accommodate a change in level then this won't be such an issue, but as previously stated it is not clear what the levels are in this area.



9. The pedestrian access into the apartment block from the car park is not only restricted in width to less than 1m but is also off centre from the actual entrance door into the building. It would be preferable for the parking layout to be amended slightly to provide a more direct pedestrian access into the apartment block.
10. There is also likely to be some pedestrian movement from the layby on the western edge of the site towards the plaza area, therefore it might be appropriate to partially reduce the landscaped space at the car park entrance to include an extension of the paved pedestrian space. The desire line shown by an arrow in extract below.



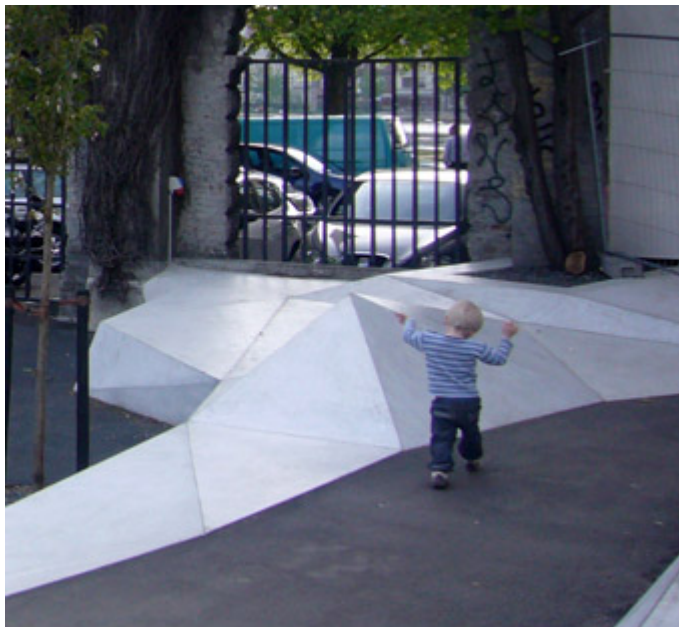
11. I'm not convinced that the form or design of the play space in the plaza area is appropriate for this space as it seems at odds with the formal area of paving. I will comment more about this feature in the section on the hard and soft landscape details below.

Hard and Soft Landscape Proposals:

12. A number of landscape drawings have been provided including a Landscape Masterplan (CSA/6689/131), Landscape General Arrangement drawing (CSA/6689/132) and Neighbourhood Centre Planting Proposals drawing (CSA/6689/133 Rev A).
13. We will need to understand the form and profile of the rain gardens including edging and informal pathways through the rain gardens. Cross-sections and axonometries would be helpful in showing all these details as proposed on the general arrangement drawing and how they relate to each other.
14. It will not be acceptable to use the standard tree pits specified for trees in the soft planted areas, to be used within hard paved areas. All tree pits in hard surfacing will need to include underground soil cells such as GreenBlue Urban RootSpace in order to provide sufficient rooting volume for the trees in these areas to thrive and mature but will also prevent roots from lifting the paving as the trees mature. Details of the type and form of the tree pits for hard surfaced areas will need to be provided. As indicated in comments on drainage, it is possible to combine underground soil cells with a surface water attenuation and recommend tree pits are used in this multi-functional way.
15. It would be more appropriate to edge to the plaza space with the Tobermore Pedesta (P4) block where it adjoins the tarmac footpath, rather than use a precast concrete edging.
16. There doesn't appear to be any form of boundary fencing around the parts of the apartment car park adjacent to either the future school site or the Nine Mile Ride Extension. Railings should be considered in combination with the proposed shrub planting as indicated on the soft landscape drawing. The fencing will define the boundary and prevent unauthorised access from the adjacent footway.
17. It is not clear how the village square / plaza will be lit at night or in the afternoon during the winter. Lighting columns are shown on the edge of the pedestrian

plaza or around the parking area so it's not clear how the main pedestrian space will be lit when dark.

18. The play space is disappointing in terms of its form and equipment provided and seems incongruous for its location in a central urban square. The main element of the LAP is shown with two trampolines and a small slide which I consider to be uninspiring. A better use of space would be to include more ambiguous elements that could be used in a number of different ways and encourage children to use their imagination but also help to define the space. This could be achieved by mounding incorporating play elements such as stepping stones, bridges etc, integrated seating, platforms or sculptural forms that can be sat on climbed on. I have included a number of images below to show the type of elements that could be used in this area but adjusted to fit the space.









19. The position of the trees in the verge as shown on the general arrangement plan is different to those on the planting proposals plan. This will need to be amended so they are not in the visibility splays of vehicles exiting the car park.
20. A number of the tree species shown within the verges of the adjacent road have ultimately broad canopies which could as they mature impact the highway. This especially relates to the tree on the southern side of the road and Quercus Ilex on the northern side as this tree species can get very large. The choice of trees species in the verges will need to be reviewed and amended to avoid large, broad spreading trees. In some cases where narrower canopy cultivars are available, these can be used instead.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Possible conditions to be included following submission of further information.

Date:	30 th September 2024	Signed:	C. Brimble
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