

Technical Note

Project:	Finchwood Park Parcel 13	SMA Ref:	7292.TN06
Subject:	Response to WBC Landscape Comments Revised:		–
Prepared by:	Tyler Andrews	Date:	22.07.2025
Checked by:	Kate Marshall	Date:	23.07.2025

INTRODUCTION

This Technical Note (TN) has been prepared by Stuart Michael Associates Limited (SMA) on behalf of Vistry Homes to address the levels comments received and information requested from Wokingham Borough Council SDL Landscape & Tree Officer dated the 10th June 2025 on Application No: 250819.

RESPONSES TO WBC COMMENTS:

Comment 1:

Existing levels are shown across the site, with a Topographical Existing Site Survey provided showing the levels of the as built NMRE and associated footway adjacent to the site. However, it appears that there is a disparity between the as built levels and the proposed levels of the site on these boundaries, whereas I would assume these will need to correlate. This will need to be clarified as we will need to ensure the proposed site levels correspond with the ground levels of the NMRE at the back of the footway.

Response to Comment 1:

Existing spot levels have been shown to the back of footway along the site boundary around the as-constructed NMRE to the south and west of the site. The finished floor levels of the plots that front onto the NMRE have then been determined using these existing levels to ensure that the proposed site levels and NMRE levels are coordinated. These levels can be seen on the revised levels drawings included under **Appendix A**.

Comment 2:

We will need to understand the existing ground levels around the boundary of the terminal pylon compound. The levels drawing seems to imply there will be a levels difference of at least 1m between the proposed site levels of the adjacent visitor spaces and the boundary of the terminal pylon. Also there seems to be a disparity with proposed levels for the property on plot 16 and boundary with the terminal pylon. If this information is correct, we will need to understand how the change in level will be addressed on site

Response to Comment 2:

As part of a recent site layout update to address this comment amongst others, the road alignment has been shifted and visitor parking laybys removed to provide additional space between the proposed road and terminal pylon compound. The road has also been lowered as much as possible to still allow the drainage to work as well. This has allowed for sufficient space to bank down at 1:3 from the road to tie

into the pylon compound levels without the need for a retaining wall. Additional information has also been added between plot 16 and the pylon compound, to show the relationship between existing and proposed levels in this area too. It should be noted that following comments from WBC during a meeting on 16th July** between where the revised proposal was tabled, some of the 1:3 banking has been regraded to be flatter where space allows. The latest arrangement & banking can be seen on the revised levels drawings included under **Appendix A**.

Comment 3:

There are also level differences in relation to the existing ground levels along the site boundary (and associated vegetation) and the proposed ground levels in the area to the fronts of plots 53 & 54 and the end of the road. Again, we will need to understand how this will be dealt with especially how this may impact on the adjacent RPA's of adjacent trees.

Response to Comment 3:

Banking and retaining walls have been shown across the site where required, to address any change in levels and show how the proposed levels will tie back into the existing ground levels. All trees are proposed to remain as part of the works and where there is insufficient space for banking, retaining walls have been shown. These retaining walls & banking can be seen on the revised levels drawings included under **Appendix A**.

Comment 4:

The Generally we will need to understand how the changes in levels will be addressed along the north-eastern boundary in relation to the trees and vegetation which are shown to be retained.

Response to Comment 4:

As above, banking and retaining walls have been shown where required. These retaining walls & banking can be seen on the revised levels drawings included under **Appendix A**.

**Meeting on 16th July 2025 was between the Vistry Design Team & Wokingham Borough Council (including the landscape officer Catherine Brimble of which these comments originated)

Appendix A

REVISED DRAWINGS

Appendix B

SDL LANDSCAPE & TREE OFFICER COMMENTS

MEMORANDUM

From:	Catherine Brimble Senior Landscape Officer
Service	SDL Landscape and Trees
App No:	250819
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 56 dwellings within parcels P13a and P13b with access via the Nine Mile Ride Extension spur road (primary) and Park Lane (secondary), associated internal 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

Levels

1. Parcel 13 Proposed Levels drawing (7292.025 P04) is submitted providing details of proposed levels.
2. Existing levels are shown across the site, with a Topographical Existing Site Survey provided showing the levels of the as built NMRE and associated footway adjacent to the site. However it appears that there is a disparity between the as built levels and the proposed levels of the site on these boundaries, whereas I would assume these will need to correlate. This will need to be clarified as we will need to ensure the proposed site levels correspond with the ground levels of the NMRE at the back of the footway.
3. We will need to understand the existing ground levels around the boundary of the terminal pylon compound. The levels drawing seems to imply there will be a levels difference of at least 1m between the proposed site levels of the adjacent visitor spaces and the boundary of the terminal pylon. Also there

- seems to be a disparity with proposed levels for the property on plot 16 and boundary with the terminal pylon. If this information is correct we will need to understand how the change in level will be addressed on site.
4. There are also level differences in relation to the existing ground levels along the site boundary (and associated vegetation) and the proposed ground levels in the area to the fronts of plots 53 & 54 and the end of the road. Again we will need to understand how this will be dealt with especially how this may impact on the adjacent RPA's of adjacent trees.
 5. Generally we will need to understand how the changes in levels will be addressed along the north-eastern boundary in relation to the trees and vegetation which are shown to be retained.

Drainage

6. Parcel 13 Proposed Drainage drawing (7292.026 P03) is submitted providing details of the proposed drainage across the site.
7. I have no concerns regarding the proposed drainage solutions as these details will have no effects to the proposed landscape features.

Layout

8. Detailed Site Layout Sheets 1 & 2 are provided with this application.
9. I recognise that this site has a number of constraints, and a number of changes have been made to address issues raised though the pre-app process. However now that we have received the levels information it is important that the layout addresses level changes in a positive way and changes will need to be made to the layout where this cannot be achieved.
10. There is no space for any meaningful planting to be provided around the pylon terminal compound to the back of the visitor spaces especially as there is likely to be a change in level here. I would prefer both visitor spaces to be re-located to allow the space for appropriate planting to provide the visual screening as set out in the DAS, however I understand that this could be difficult. A solution will need to be found that provides the screening of the pylon compound especially as there will be direct views from the NMRE along the easement to this area.

Landscape Information

11. Combined Hard and Soft Landscape Plans (Sheets 1 & 2) (24.1992.L101 01 & 24.1992.L102 01) and Planting Schedule (24.1992.L103) are provided with this application.
12. It would be helpful to have the full species names of the trees provided on the drawings as the abbreviated labels are difficult to read.
13. Native shrub planting is appropriate where located adjacent to the existing hedgerow along Park Lane, around the boundary of the pylon compound, and in the eastern corner around the pill box (although see comments above regarding space and levels around pylon compound area). However all other locations of the native shrub planting within the site including between plot one and the connecting footway, are not appropriate due to lack of space or closeness to buildings. These areas will need to be replaced with ornamental type planting. I suggest the planting proposed in the easement gap to replace the native shrub planting should be perennial / prairie style planting with

- grasses which is well suited for this space and provide much more interest than native shrubs.
14. There is space for additional tree planting in the following locations, and this will need to be shown on the landscape drawings.
 - In planting bed between the unallocated parking bay to the rear of plot 1 and the footway.
 - In planting bed between the access road and parking to the rear of plot 6.
 - Two trees to the south of rear garden of plot 50.
 - In the planting bed to the west of parking bay for plot 50.
 - Two trees to the south of rear garden of plot 56.
 15. The visual amenity of the site entrance is important and therefore suggest that ornamental hedgerows are provided to the fronts of plots 9, 10 & 11.
 16. A new hedgerow will need to be included to the south of the access drive between plots 36 & 37 following removal of native shrub planting discussed in point 13 above.
 17. All new hedgerow planting should include temporary post and wire fencing to aid establishment and provided a secure boundary while the hedgerow matures.
 18. The landscape drawings indicate the location of timber fencing in rear gardens; however it is not clear where the post and rail fencing is located which is also indicated within the key.
 19. We will need to understand whether there are any other enclosures proposed either along the front boundaries of properties or whether some garden boundaries will be brick walls. There may also be a requirement for some form of low barrier to the ends of some driveways or parking bays where adjacent to green space. An enclosures plan should also be provided and can be provided though a conditions application.
 20. Where tree planting is proposed in small or narrow planting beds we will need to have details of tree pits that will need to include underground soil cells.
 21. The location of some of the benches should be amended due to changes I have requested regarding the removal of the native shrub planting.
 22. Even with the requested changes for the landscape details, 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 are a detailed landscape specification, and detailed landscape drawings which should indicate the individual plant species, location and numbers on the drawings.

Arboricultural Information

23. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment by RPS and dated 11th March 2025 is submitted with this application.
24. The AIA will need to consider the possible ground level changes proposed as identified above and whether these will have any detrimental impact on the RPA's of some of the trees along the north-eastern boundary with Park Lane. Mitigation measures will need to be proposed.

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:	10 th June 2025	Signed:	C. Brimble
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