

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	241900
Address:	Land South of Old Bath Road Sonning, RG4 6GQ.		
Proposal:	Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 220663 for the proposed erection of 57 dwellings suitable for older persons accommodation following demolition of the existing dwellings (Access, Layout, Scale and appearance to be considered). Condition 2 refers to approved plans and details and the variation is to change the site layout and associated details.		
Type of Development:	Major Dwellings (10+)		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No		

Summary Of Recommendations

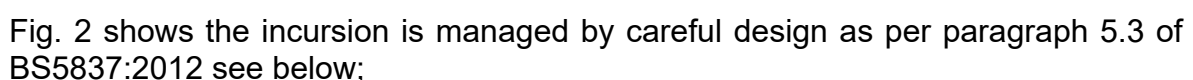
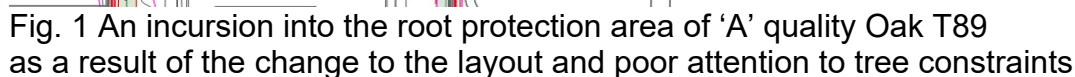
- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☒ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

The revisions to the layout are principally concerned with accommodating additional parking bays as a result of the change to the scheme description as not being specifically for older people. The proposals increase the number of parking bays from 66 to 80 – the figure includes 10 disabled bays. The change to the layout has resulted in increased impact on trees and a reduction in the amount of soft landscaping to hard which changes the perception of landscape setting of the site reducing usable space that could be called communal garden spaces.

Northern Sector

The changes to the layout in the north of the site have created an additional incursion into the rpa of an 'A' quality tree T89 both from the addition of a pedestrian path very close to the centre of the tree and further incursion into the rpa from the re-arrangement of the parking.



It is important to note that a plan showing root protection areas is described in paragraph 3.7 of British Standard 5837 (2012) as a :

'layout tool indicating the minimum area around a tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability, and where the protection of the roots and soil structure is treated as a priority'

So then the rpa is considered to be the minimum recommended area for retention of trees and is the area where protection of the roots and soil is a priority.

BS 5837 (2012), Section 5.3 'Proximity of structures to trees' states at 5.3.1 'The default position should be that structures are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained. However, where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the trees'

I see no overriding justification for the current proposals to develop within the RPA of important trees on site.

The re-design is poorly considered in relation to tree T87. An additional 8 parking bays are added to this area at the significant detriment of the existing and proposed landscape.

Central Sector



Fig. 3 – Central Belt of parking is preferable to the removal of the area of landscaping that helped to provide consistency in linking the 3 blocks across the site



Fig. 4 – the addition of the 2 rows of 7 bays has a catastrophic effect on the setting and potential of landscaping to knit the scheme together.

In this area there was originally 31 parking bays overall including 3 disabled, which has now changed with the addition of 5 more bays including 3 disabled. The redesign is at the expense of a decent amount of landscaping, and a curving of a

pedestrian path that may not actually be required where the driveway may serve as access to the space to the south.

There is no change to the southern sector – although there is scope to add an additional bay adjacent to the RPA of T16.

Summary

The fall back position should not be a reliance on ‘no dig’ just because it is available, but a well considered design that is based on the key site constraints, which is also a key asset of the site setting. T89 is an ‘A’ quality tree and it is possible to redesign this area of parking to avoid its root protection area.

A review of the central area to reinstate as much of the original landscape scheme is possible and I would like to see a better attempt as by removing the pedestrian path to the east there would be space to accommodate at least 2 if not 3 more bays, plus an additional bay to the west next to T16.

The redesign does not comply with the Local Plan Policy CC03; the scheme fails to protect and retain existing trees, successfully mitigate the impact of new development, as a result does not enhance the borough’s green infrastructure networks or promote the integration of the scheme with the adjoining public open space proposed. The scheme also fails to meet the criteria of Policy CP1 and CP3 as it fails to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, and does not create a sense of place.

I recommend a review of the parking layout where it is possible to protect T89 with no incursion into its RPA, and to reconsider the central area of parking that removes a key part of the landscape design, where the additional 5 bays may be accommodated within a different layout.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

See above

Date:	14.8.24	Signed:	B. Crafer
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