

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	243228
Address:	Reddam House, Bearwood Road, Sindlesham, Wokingham, RG41 5BG.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. two storey building to form a boarding house with associated plant equipment, landscaping, highway and other related works, following demolition of existing outbuildings.		
Type of Development:	Major All other developments		
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 'Planning Response 01-App. 243228 24.2.25 has been received and includes a response on the previous landscape comments made on 6.2.25. I have reviewed the document and have the following comments to make;

Existing Site Conditions

It is accepted that tree T56 Atlas Cedar is a Veteran tree by the parties. It is clear from the site visit photos that this tree and the other trees within the site have been adversely affected by the historic installation of buildings and footpaths, and heavy footfall across the areas of soft landscaping which in combination have clearly amounted to a *high level of compaction within the growing environment of the trees and multiple incursions into the combined root protection area of these trees from the built development.*

It is proposed to build a new student residential block on the west side of a site of existing student accommodation, outbuildings, parking and footpaths. The existing residential block will remain in situ whilst the new is being constructed.

Tree retention and loss

In order to facilitate development it is *proposed to remove 19 single trees and 3 groups of trees, some of which are 'B' quality which would normally be retained, however some of these B quality trees conflict with the location of the proposed development.*

Aside from trees being lost to development there are several trees being retained and of these 3 'A' and 'B' quality trees (T16, T21 and T56) *that are the key arboricultural features of the immediate garden space which together with the other retained trees around the site will help to maintain the setting of the Historic Park and Garden.* It is regrettable that so many trees will be removed, but I am satisfied that there is plenty of scope to replace these trees in and around the wider site but in close connection to it.

Taking the retained trees including the Veteran Cedar T56; *it is important that there is a betterment to their growing environment as an essential part of the mitigation of development and the landscape design.* Further compaction of the combined RPA will need to be avoided and very carefully managed throughout the demolition (buildings, roads and footpaths) and the construction process, and separate demolition and construction tree protection information will be required.

Special Engineered Mitigation

Page 12 of the response document states a range of *special engineering solutions* in order to protect the RPA specifically of T56 but should also include for T21 and T16 as well as other retained trees where there is incursion into the RPA from the proposed building. The measures may be different, depending on the impact of development, *it must be clear exactly what is the most appropriate type of mitigation being proposed for which tree/individual situation* and the method clearly documented and including illustrative drawings in a revised and updated AIA/AMS.

Levels and Drainage

We need to know how the drainage will work around the building and how run off will be captured and diverted to the combined RPA, and the specific measures around T56 which could include rain gardens close to the edges but also other measures such as diverting run off into the void beneath the building.

Clearer information on existing and proposed levels should be provided especially around the entrances to the building, FFFL etc.

The detail of the mitigation information is required as 'additional information' to the planning application and must included within a revised and updated AIA/AMS, and reflected in the Site Layout, (as well as the Hard and Soft Landscape Plans-see below) as appropriate, so it is clear the proposals for the mitigation into the RPA of T56 and the other affected trees are possible.

The type of mitigation proposed may differ depending on the relationship of the proposed building/hard landscape to a specific tree but all need to be detailed prior to a planning permission being made to ensure that the proposals can work.

New Parking Area to the North

The approach to mitigating the impact of the new parking area to the north on the RPA must also be included.

Once agreed, a building foundation design will be required as a condition of planning permission.

Hard and Soft landscape Design

It is important that all the roads and footpaths as well as temporary buildings are removed from the combined RPA (method included in AIA/AMS) and the landscape design is outside of it – this will help to inform the design layout.

The hard landscape design must be carefully considered to ensure improvement to the growing environment of the trees including access to water as well as protection of the RPA.. All surfacing must be permeable and in most cases a 'No Dig' approach is expected.

The soft landscape proposals will include details of improvements to the growing environment, and management of vegetation in the retained and combined RPA.(Please refer to Government Standing Advice for planting in Buffer Zone). We will need to see the plans prior to a decision being made to ensure that the proposals are acceptable in principle.

Structures (such as seating) need to be on the outer edge of the RPA facing outwards. Proposals for ameliorating the RPA need to be included, that will also naturally form part of the soft landscape design.

We need to understand how the RPA will be protected within the landscape design and it needs to be shown how the existing landscape can be improved upon across the whole of the area within the redline boundary and the additional area for the RPA.

The visual focus of the site /seating area shown on page 25 of the response report centred around T56 is not sustainable and is development within the Veteran tree Buffer Zone which needs to be avoided. The visual focus of seating / congregational area needs to be located elsewhere.

An important part of the garden design will be to consider how people will be directed through the space and how cross cutting and erosion from excessive footfall will be avoided using landscape features such as raised beds, rain gardens, play equipment or other features. These elements will need to be managed whilst improving the growing conditions of the RPA and amelioration of the soil. It is a good opportunity to re-organise the desire lines between the buildings and improve the landscape setting whilst being mindful of the character of the site and how it relates to the wider environment.

I can see the design intent for the improvement of the garden and the arrival spaces in the approach and although these will need to be developed further to meet with the constraints I am confident that sensitive redevelopment of the space that includes a betterment of the growing environment of the retained trees, including the Veteran Atlantic Cedar is possible.

The site constraints provide opportunities to preserve the existing tree features and provided specialist engineered mitigation to avoid adversely affecting the combined RPA. The creation of new desire lines will help to inform the structure of the garden spaces and provide opportunities for new planted features. The new area of parking to the north must have the effect of relating to the main garden area.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
Date:	5.3.25	Signed:	B. Crafer