

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	242665
Address:	Land west of Kingfisher Grove, Three Mile Cross.		
Proposal:	Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent 201002 (approved under appeal ref. APP/X0360/W/22/3304042 dated 31/01/2023) for the erection of 49 no. affordable dwellings with associated drainage and attenuation, open space and landscaping. Details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered, plus details for discharge of conditions 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16 from the Outline permission.		
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

Condition 1 – Reserved Matters - Landscaping

A Landscape Masterplan is submitted Drawing Reference – 3249-5-2-DR-5000-P5 dated 4.10.24

The masterplan includes 2 SuDS basins to the western boundary adjacent to the existing hedge planting which will also be enhanced. There is also a permanently wet pond at the entrance which together with the specimen trees will make a lovely entrance feature. There is an existing pond in the SW which will be enhanced.

There are 2 Veteran trees in the south of the site and these will have a hedge planted (which must be of native species) to perimeter just outside of the Veteran tree buffer zone (see Government Standing Advice on Veteran Trees). There is a gate included in the 1.2m high fenced perimeter for maintenance – but there is no indication of how this area beneath the canopy will be managed and what if anything will be grown underneath the trees. Mowing this area would not be appropriate but the

sward left to grow and then die back in winter might be, with perennial invasive weeds weeded out be hand. It is sensible for management to be extremely minimal – but the PPG does say that buffer zones can be planted with appropriate species. The planting of the hedge may help the trees to merge into the wider retained landscape, so that they just appear as part of the landscape rather than drawing attention to them e.g. the hedge to screen the fence. Placing a gate within the fence may encourage den building and lighting of fires. Maintenance of these areas beneath Veteran trees need to be included in Condition 13e)

The areas of bulb planting and the grouping of trees around the edges of the development will really help it to merge into the wider landscape.

Incidental landscaping has been included where possible in the layout; to corners and to highlight a central E-W axis with the addition of focal trees. There is a play area to the SE corner of the development and incidental play along the western boundary. The large open spaces to the east and south provide spaces to play, exercise, dog walk and connect to the SANGS south of the site the wider areas around Three Mile Cross.

I have just one query; please clarify the function of the ‘hairy’ magenta coloured lines along the entrance road, and the blue lines next to Plot 8.

Hard Surfaces and Furniture Proposals – Drawing References;
3249-5-2-D12-5008 and 5009 – 9.10.24

There are raised tables around the loop road and a short cul de sac to access Plots 13-20. The access road and footway will be tarmac and there are block paved driveways and raised tables in cols. Brindle and Grey. There are what look to be bound gravel paths adjacent to the attenuation basins on the west side, and there are mown grass paths around the large areas of POS to the west and south.

Boundary features

Close board fencing at 1.8m is proposed to garden outer and inside boundaries, this appears universal across the site with no variation. I suggest that using 1.5m close board with .3m trellis tops will allow more sunlight between gardens and provide more permeability and contrast, as well as spaces to train climbing plants.

Kneerail is proposed at .45m high along both sides of the entrance road.

Post and rail fence is proposed at 1.1m high, to the perimeter of the Veteran tree buffer zone.

Black estate railings at .9m high are proposed to the green route through the centre of the site and around parts of the play area.

Timber bollards and some seating is located around the site.

The hard landscape materials are a restrained palette. I have no objection to the proposals.

Planting Proposals – Drawing Nos. 3249-5-2-DR5001 – 5007 – (7 drawings)

I have no objection to the proposals, which includes a wide range of different styles of planting including;

- Retaining some existing meadow, and sowing new to create a mosaic of species rich grassland.
- Amenity grass areas and lawns
- New tree planting and enhanced native hedges and scrub
- Wetland planting to basins and to enhance existing water bodies
- Ornamental hedge species to front gardens and the side of plots, and at entrance
- Large areas of bulb planting

The Planting Scheme is good and includes a great range of native trees across the site including feature trees *Gleditsia triacanthos* to the site entrance and the Liquidamber nearby will create a stunning entrance feature. I note the use of Horse Chestnut (is it proposed to use a cultivar that is resistant to leaf miner – or is it proposed to try *Aesculus hippocastanum* and monitor them? Alternatively, *Aesculus indica* may be a good alternative.

The hedging species are a good range and use of *Griselinia* with its apple coloured shiny leaves will be refreshing and attractive. *Escallonia* is also selected, another good evergreen plant that flowers.

There is just one area of native scrub planting which is an appropriate native mix, but it would be good to add some additional areas of similar size – another 2 or 3 around the W, SW and S boundaries, as it creates such a good habitat, as well as helping to blend into the rural landscape. Using a hedgerow seed mix is a good idea beneath on the hedge/scrub perimeters is well placed.

Native hedge planting is proposed to the veteran tree buffer zone perimeter.

I have no objection to the Planting Proposals, and no objection to the Tree Pit details.

Section Plans and Drawings

Drawing Refs. – Development Site Plan 2 sheets; 24009-DWC-SP003-01 and 02 in-DR-A-0010-J (shows section lines) A-E

Site Sections and Street Scenes

Drawing Refs. – 24009-DWC-SP15-01-DR-A-0100-A, and 24009-DWC-SP15-02-DR-A-0100 - D

Finished floor level plans Indicative – Drawing 24009-DWC-SP006-01-DR-A-0010D

Section line A-A – no issue

Section line B-B – Potential overlooking from Plot 16 to Plot 40 due to level change dwarf retaining wall

Section line C-C – gradual level changes between Plots 2 – 8 no retaining walls shown, but potential overlooking.

Section line D-D level change between Plots 26-24 are significant, potential overlooking – is there a retaining wall in rear garden – how is the level change managed?

Section line E-E – Plots 28-27 how is level change managed?

Condition 11 - SUDS – SuDs features include permanently wet pond at entrance and 2 attenuation basins at 60m and 90m in length, that run N-S along the western boundary. There is an existing pond to the south that will be retained and enhanced. Please see comments regarding the attenuation basin edges below.

Condition 13 – Tree Protection

As well as tree protection measures, Condition 13 e) requires a Veteran Tree Management Plan;

- e) Prior to occupation of the first dwelling, a Veteran Tree Management Plan shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority. This Plan shall include: Specialist Survey Method assessment of the trees;
- Individual tree management programme geared towards maximising longevity;
- Provision and maintenance of knee-rail style fencing beyond crown driplines, enclosing access-deterrent planting; and
- Regular review by a competent person of veteran trees' condition, with follow-up management works being implemented as recommended.

No such document has been submitted with this RM application that I can see.

The following trees are provided with a Veteran tree buffer;

T60 Oak has a stem diameter of 1360mm x 15 = 20.40m buffer zone (only 19m has been provided)

T56 Oak has a stem diameter of 1730mm x 15 = 25.95m buffer zone (25.29m has been provided)

T41 Oak has a stem diameter of 1140mm x 15 = 17.10m buffer zone (only 16.5m has been provided) . This discrepancy might only be due to the accuracy of reading the drawing scale off a PDF copy on the computer, and the area around the Veteran trees is countryside with no development, other than a few trees planted on the edge of T60.

The Veteran tree buffer zones have been incorrectly calculated according to the Government Standing Advice. Paragraph 186c of NPPF states that *“a buffer zone around an ancient or veteran tree should be at least 15 times larger than the diameter of the tree. The buffer zone should be 5m from the edge of the tree’s canopy if that area is larger than 15 times the tree’s diameter.”*

I am not clear what method has been used to calculate the Veteran tree buffer, and there is no reason why the buffer zones cannot be correctly calculated and re-drawn on the plans, which can then be included in the Veteran Tree Management Plan which is still outstanding.

Although there are references to the treatment of the buffer zone in the landscape and planting plans there is nothing in the LEMP or the AIA/AMS.

It is proposed to put a fence around the outside edge of the Veteran Tree buffer zone and plant a hedge on the outside of that. It is not necessary for a fence to be erected in my opinion or could be removed once the hedgerow is mature. The species proposed for the hedge are acceptable but a prickly plant such as Holly would also be useful.

A Tree Protection Plan across 2 drawings is submitted with the application; Drawing Ref. PR124594 – 03 North and South.

The Tree Protection Plans are accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment / Arboricultural Method Statement.

No trees are proposed to be removed to facilitate development other than a short section of G72 – boundary vegetation to for the access to the north.

The sylvan character of the site is an open field with trees and hedgerows mostly to the edges. Lots of new trees are proposed within the site to create buffers to the built development and provide tree lined streets. Are these trees within the public realm for maintenance purposes? This would be preferable to trees being located in private residential gardens.

The root protection area of T60 'A' quality Oak is slightly within the SE corner of the rear garden of Plot 8. The row of dwellings could have moved slightly to the north to avoid this

I note the Tree Protection Plans show an area of scrub alongside the western boundary but with no root protection area, just the canopy line. Within this area of scrub are single trees and root protection areas drawn that are all within or on the line of the proposed attenuation basins where there will the edges built up. There are existing levels on the plan but its not clear how high the edges of the basins will be and the falls which should be no steeper than 1 in 3m. There is about a 2m wide gap between the edge of the attenuation basin and the edge of the woodland. There should be no piling up of soil over the rooting areas of the scrub, but with no root protection area shown for the woodland this is difficult to assess the impacts. The tree protective fencing is against the edge of the scrub/woodland line.

The Tree Protection Plans and AIA/AMS is broadly acceptable save for the Veteran Tree Management Plan and the proximity of the attenuation basin to the scrub and potential issues with levelling soil over 100mm over tree features.

Summary

Please clarify details of the attenuation basins with cross sections and heights of bund edges to basins in relation to the root protection areas / edges of the woodland scrub to the inside of the western boundary to ensure there is no conflict / issues with soil levels beyond 100mm

Please submit the detail of the veteran Tree Management Plan as per the Inspectors Report - Appeal Decision APP/X0360/W/22/3304042 and wording included above at 13e)

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
See Policies CC03d, NPPF 186c			
Date:	16.12.24	Signed:	B. Crafer