

# MEMORANDUM

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| <b>From:</b>                | Catherine Brimble<br>Senior Landscape Officer                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                |        |
| <b>Service</b>              | SDL Landscape and Trees                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>App No:</b> | 241861 |
| <b>Address:</b>             | Land At Church Lane And Hyde End Road, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross, Reading, RG7 1HB.                                                                                                                                                                    |                |        |
| <b>Proposal:</b>            | Application for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent O/2013/0346 (130162) for the erection of the primary school building sub-phase of the development. Details of Layout, Appearance, Landscaping and Scale to be determined. |                |        |
| <b>Type of Development:</b> | Major All other developments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                |        |
| <b>Site Visit Made:</b>     | 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 plans and documents have been submitted to support this application which are listed in the covering letter and include a Design and Access Statement (DAS), Landscape Approach and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan.

### Landscape

I have no objection to the landscape approach as set out in the document and shown on the Overall Landscape Plan, and detailed in the planting strategy and hardscape strategy. This document provides details of the range and variety of planting relating to the different proposed play spaces.

The Landscape Plan and Planting Strategy in the document both show the area between the existing footpath outside the eastern boundary of the site and the red line of the site (as shown on the location plan) to be planted with trees. This area is currently fenced off and appears to be within the site boundary as seen in the site photos within the DAS but is outside the site red line. It is important that this strip of land is also included within the actual red line of the site and planted up as part of this development otherwise it will get overlooked. See extracts below showing this

area highlighted in yellow with planting included on the Landscape Plan and Site Plan.



Landscape Plan



Location Plan

Site Plan

The red line will need to be amended to include this area.

The Drainage strategy has been provided with this application which I feel falls short of the possible innovative SuDS solutions that could be employed to help make a

stimulating play space for children, but also address some of the surface water challenges across the site. It is essential that the Landscape Architects work closely with the drainage engineers to create a SuDS scheme which incorporates many of the features I have listed under the drainage section below.

#### Arboricultural Information

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan has been provided for the development. The proposed development will not have any detrimental impact on the trees growing outside the site and adjacent to Hyde End Lane.

A number of the trees are identified as veteran within the tree schedule; however their girth is not particularly large for the species. We would normally expect veteran Oaks to be at least 1300-1400mm girth. Therefore it would be helpful if the AIA contained further comment / information as to why these trees have been given veteran status such as whether there are other features that would identify the trees as veteran.

#### Design and Access Statement

It is not clear from the DAS if the sprinkler tank is located within the building or, space will need to be found outside the building for the sprinkler tank. If outside the building, this will have an impact on the areas of play space and planting.

It would be helpful to have further information and discussion within the DAS on the material choice and design of the school. The section on material experimentation indicated the option of textured cream bricks, dark grey render and gold elements is the one that was most successful, however there is no background information on why these elements in particular have been chosen (i.e. what is the design precedent / reference). The 3D visualisations don't seem to fully correspond to the information in the materials section as dark grey render cannot be seen and the use of the type of materials proposed for the slatted canopy and cladding at western end of the school is not identified.

The building design should also incorporate possible alternatives to standard downpipes such as rain chains to enhance the SuDS provision across the site, see section below.

#### Drainage and SuDS Strategy

A Drainage and SuDS Strategy by Jomas Associates and dated July 2024 has been submitted in relation to this RM application.

Based on the Site Areas in Table 4 of the document and the Proposed Drainage Plan, this information appears to assume the external play areas for all year groups have been assessed as free draining, green areas. However in the Landscape Proposals document these areas are indicated as having a tarmac surface, so is likely to be impermeable, unless otherwise specified. Therefore the surface water drainage scheme will need to account for additional runoff from these areas.

It is extremely disappointing that a more innovative SuDS solution has not been combined with the landscape scheme to use surface water in a fun and educational

way as part of the play resource for the school and to inspire children to make connections between the weather, landscape and nature. The aim should be to take roof and surface water drainage and to slow the flow as much as possible before it enters a piped system. This can be done by including the following:

- Water butts.
- Rain gardens, either close to the building to take water from the roof or using the landscape features and tree pits within or on the edge of the play area.
- Alternative to downpipes such as rain chains which can then feed into a rain garden. (This can be a feature of the building design).
- Using shallow channels and rills to create a temporary water and play feature.
- Planted swales.
- Ponds.

We will want to see an integrated SuDS and landscape scheme to provide a stimulating play space and an innovative solution to surface water and roof runoff and I strongly encourage the Drainage Engineers to work with the Landscape Architects to achieve this. There are a number of good examples of how schools have incorporated SuDS features with their grounds and as part of their play space on the Susdrain website, the Landscape Institute website and GreenBlue Urban website, as a suggestion.

#### **Conditions & Reasons (if required)**

Possible additional conditions once the additional information have been provided.

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| <b>Date:</b> | 23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2024 | <b>Signed:</b> | C. Brimble |
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