

M E M O R A N D U M

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect	To (Case Officer):	Connie Davis
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	250267
Address:	31 Barkham Ride, Wokingham, RG40 4EX.		
Type of Development:	Major All other developments		
Proposal:	Demolition of the existing dwelling and material change of use of land as an extension to Victoria Gardens Residential Park Home Estate for the siting of 31 park homes (permanent C3 use class accommodation) and the construction of an ancillary community building (use class F2(b)) and park office (use class Eg(i))		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☒ Recommend approval but with condition(s) & reason(s) **stated below**;
- ☐ Recommend approval with no conditions
- ☐ Recommend refusal for the reason(s) **stated below**;
- ☐ Negotiate the amendments **stated below**; or
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**.

Comments On Proposal

The Revision B proposals have reduced the dwellings from 35 park homes to 31.

Key Issues highlighted in my previous comments relating to Rev. A of this application on 28.3.25;

1. Trees

The trees are the key characteristic of the site being mature native trees mostly confined to the site boundaries, particularly to the western and southern boundaries. They include several 'A' quality Oaks, groups of Lombardy Poplars 'B' quality, an off-site woodland to the north that influences the site character and several individual and groups of trees. The trees contribute to the screening of the site from Rooks Nest Farm, and Barkham Ride.

In the tree survey T20 Poplar covers 6 stems, whereas other Poplars further south along the boundary are individually numbered T34 – T37. There are 2 Lombardy

Poplars B category along the western site boundary that are included in the Ancient Tree Inventory as 'Notable trees'; T34 – ATI Ref. 66156, and T20 – ATI category Ref. 66170. The revised Tree Report states that none of the 3 trees are actual veteran trees but has provided a Veteran tree buffer for T20 and T47 to future proof these trees as I requested. This provides an acceptable distance between the edge of the development and the trees along the western boundary.

Tree T47 Oak A1 in the SW corner is a notable tree of the site and in the landscape and a future Veteran. The revised Site Layout 2680/06F, and the Landscape Masterplan Drawing No. 447-PO1 shows the RPA of T47 and space beyond it as an area of incidental landscaping that will protect the RPA of T47, and increase the planted setting of the site and responds to my previous request.

The Rev. F Site Layout leaves plenty of space between the trees and the edge of development but an agreement should be made for no built development within the RPA which includes gardens sheds, paving, bonfires etc.

I note that the Revision B Tree Protection plan does not show the full extent of the canopies / root protection area of T47.

2. Site layout

The current site access will be stopped up – there is an Oak tree in this location that needs felling, and should be replaced once the engineering works are complete. The site will be accessed using the existing Victoria Gardens access, and this road will be extended as a spine road with distributor roads west into the site. The new roads provide an opportunity for street tree planting and species proposed include Maple, Cornus mas, Amelanchier, Crab apple and Cherry. The species and cultivars selected are smaller mix of native and ornamental cultivars with small to medium sized canopies which is acceptable in the locations close to the road. They will provide an attractive avenue effect.

By removing 3 units from the scheme, has enabled a green link roughly through the centre of the site including a garden in the residents community space, and a pocket park which will enhance the view from Victoria Gardens.

At the west side of the entrance has been enhanced with an area of native woodland and scrub planting with native feathered trees which will enhance views from Victoria Gardens as well as the entrance into the western side of the park. The space around T47 has been enhanced with the same type of planting which leads the eye naturally towards the western boundary and blends in with the character of this part of Barkham Ride and Rooks Nest POS.

To the NW corner of the site is an enlarged pond with new native hedgerow to screen it from Plot 13, which extends into another residents pocket park. The introduction of the pocket park and enlargement of the pond gives this space much more meaning within the design layout. The pond should be included in a SuDs train – although it's not clear what the drainage strategy is for the site – whether the pond is the single SuDs feature.

The Tree Protection Plan shows the Leyland cypress hedge as being retained in the Landscape Masterplan, and on the TPP, but removed on the Site Layout Rev. F drawing. The hedge is surveyed as 7m in height and has a stem diameter of 200mm. The hedge is substantial at 6m wide and is pushing out the close board fencing to the rear of the site adjacent to the wet ditch beyond. Maintaining a hedge of this size over time is difficult especially as this species cannot be cut back to the wood or it dies off and goes brown. It means that the hedge will continue to grow wider over time. I recommend that the hedge be removed and replaced with a native hedgerow with hedgerow trees at 15m centres and planted with species found in the western hedgerow. The hedgerow, must be set back from the edge of the ditch sufficiently to allow maintenance on the northern side. The close board fence removed. Please adjust and add to future plans.

3. Landscape Visual Impact Assessment – Additional Views

The Landscape Architect has assessed the views from within Victoria Gardens as I had suggested in my previous comments. I agree with the assessment.

Summary and Conclusion

In assessing the Landscape Masterplan against the Landscape Guidelines for the Local Landscape Character Area 'Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands' I am persuaded that the development will be less of an intrusion into the landscape setting of Barkham Ride. The Masterplan conserves and will enhance the wooded skyline of the site and Barkham Ride. The introduction of small areas of thicket woodland is an important contribution to the biodiversity of the area and promotes the wooded character of the site. There is provision for enjoyment of the immediate landscape of the site within the pocket parks and around the pond, and a connection with Rooks Nest if possible will enhance that. The existing and proposed landscape will help to integrate the urban edge by creating a sense of place through careful planning and design. Tree planting along the internal roads and the addition of incidental landscaping will help to integrate them within the wider site and provide visual delight and biodiversity opportunities.

The tree information is acceptable – although please check RPA of T47. Although 24 trees will be lost these will be replaced and there is additional tree planting around the site.

Provided the landscape enhancements and tree protection is carried out as per the drawings submitted, the scheme is acceptable in terms of Policies CP1, CP3, CC03, TB21.

I require an updated tree protection plan, and Arboricultural Method Statement – (I agree that TPF recommended by the Arboriculturalist is acceptable). – Condition CL7

I require Landscape Proposals – detailed hard and soft landscape plans, updated SuDs information that is consistent with the Landscape Masterplan 447-P01 7/25

I require a Landscape Management Plan. – I assume that the landscape features such as the pond, planting in pocket parks, street trees, etc. will be managed by a Landscape Management company. The pond must be a wildlife pond and not contain fish.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
See above			
Date:	7.8.25	Signed:	B. Crafer