

P24-0702

11th December 2025

Kieran Neumann
Senior Planning Officer
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1BN

Dear Kieran

Application Reference: 251984 – Application for Approval of Reserved Matters Pursuant to Outline Planning Consent 223083 (as varied by 243190)
Land South of Bridge Farm, Reading Road, Arborfield

Following the receipt of statutory consultation responses, our client Tungsten Properties (the applicant), have been working with their consultant team to address the comments raised. In response to addressing the comments, we are instructed to submit an amended scheme to the Council for approval in respect of the Reserved Matters application (ref 251984) at the Land South of Bridge Farm, Reading Road, Arborfield. The amended scheme consists of the plans and documents set out within the table at Appendix A; where these duplicate those originally submitted, please supersede the original version.

This letter provides an overview of the amendments made to the scheme and how the comments made by the consultees have been addressed.

Amendments to Original Scheme

The documents and plans being submitted have been provided to address the comments raised in respect of the application. Note that the documents and plans have been updated to include the following changes:

- The substation has been relocated behind Unit 4
- Post and rail fences have been removed, and a timber fence has been added to proposed areas
- Surfacing of the footpath link from the side of Unit 5 has been amended
- 4 trees west of Unit 1 over the attenuation tank have been relocated

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- Additional tree planting proposed west of Unit 7
- Additional woodland planting along the full length of the eastern landscape buffer
- Building materials have been revised to a darker brown cladding
- Amendments to the proposed hedgerow mix

The updated drawings and documents which are being submitted to incorporate the amendments are included at Appendix A.

Please see below our response to the comments made by the WBC Landscape Officer, WBC Drainage Officer and Green Infrastructure Officer. Each officer's comment is in italics, followed by our response in red underneath.

WBC Landscape Officer Comments

Layout

"An Illustrative Masterplan drawing (3389/P403 K) has been provided showing the layout of the commercial units and associated parking. As a RM application we will need a site plan rather than an 'illustrative' layout as this application will be fixing the layout of the various features."

Illustrative masterplan renamed to 'Masterplan'.

"As previously identified in my comments for 243190, the parking areas have extended beyond the building line on the eastern boundary as previously shown on the illustrative layouts with several of the disabled bays extending into the landscaped areas including abutting the 15m buffer zone to the ancient woodland. Therefore, the landscape treatment along this edge needs to be robust and substantial (see comments below in landscape section)."

The disabled parking bays must be located close to the unit entrances and must have larger dimensions to comply with disability space requirements. This has resulted in slight encroachment of some of the disability bays into the landscaped areas. As requested, additional planting is proposed along the eastern landscaping buffer providing a robust and substantial edge.

"The footpath link from the side of Unit 5 into the 15m landscape buffer strip does not need to be surfaced. This can be an informal space and will need to be shown as such on the layout drawing."

The footpath link from the side of Unit 5 into the 15m landscape buffer has been amended and is now proposed to be compacted hardcore to link to the existing path.

"A sub-station is now included within the layout to the south of the forecourt and parking area for Unit 7. This extends development into the strategic landscape zone as identified on the Access, Land Use and Parameters Plan previously approved. The current location of the sub-station is therefore unacceptable and will need to be relocated adjacent to one of the commercial units but

not further reducing the areas of landscaping. It is also noted that the current location provides no access due to location of proposed parking and fencing relating to Unit 7."

The sub-station has been removed from the strategic landscape zone and relocated behind Unit 4. This central location reduces LV routes and helps avoid the tree roots and the landscaping being reduced.

Materials

"The DAS provided as part of the Outline application indicated that the units will comprise of high-quality materials consisting of dark facing brickwork, dark glazing frames, dark roof and cladding. The reason for this colour pallet was to ensure the buildings recede visually into the landscape when viewed from the west against the woodland behind. This was picked up as part of the LVIA and revisions made to the original outline application to ensure landscape impacts of the development was further reduced.

This RM application includes further details on material choice for the commercial units, and these are inherently different to the principles agreed through the Outline approval as it introduces lighter coloured timber type cladding and light grey roofing as indicated in the image below. This will make the units much more visible in the landscape and instead of visually receding, the lighter materials will visually stand out within landscape, which is not acceptable.

I also note the elevation drawings for the various units don't include any details for the lighter timber type cladding.

The materials will need to be revised in accordance with our expectations that were set out in the DAS approved under the outline application. These will need of consist of high-quality dark coloured materials."

The materials presented at Outline were indicative only. This reserved matters application deals with appearance, therefore the materials. For clarity, there is only one type of timber cladding proposed. As noted, the elevational drawings do not include the lighter timber type cladding, which is only reflected in the CGI (which would not form an approved plan). To address the response to use of lighter materials, the proposed materials have been revised to a darker brown cladding, comprising high-quality dark coloured materials. The choice of material has been carefully selected to ensure that the buildings and designs visually recede into the landscape, in line with the approved LVIA.

The unit elevations and 3D views have been updated to include the new cladding and are enclosed with this submission.

Drainage

"The Drainage Plans provided in Appendix V of the Foul and Storm Water Drainage Strategy document indicates a number of underground geocellular storage areas mainly within the parking or access roads, however a smaller area to the west of Unit 1 is located under a strategic landscape

space. Based on the depth of the cover level minus the invert level but allowing for the depth of the crates, it appears there will only be approximately 0.3m soil coverage over the top of the crates which is not sufficient to allow for any tree or shrub planting. I'm not sure if I have understood this correctly and the drainage engineer will need to confirm how much soil coverage there will be over these crates. In any case underground geocellular storage in this area is unacceptable as it will limit the type of planting that can be planted in this location. It is essential that trees are planted on the western end on Unit 1 to reduce the visual impact of this group of commercial units in views from Observer Way and the countryside to the west. I request that this small area of underground geocellular storage is relocated outside the area of strategic landscaping."

PRP, Blade, and HTC Architects, have worked collaboratively to explore the most appropriate options to best address the comments raised. As a result, 4 of the trees initially proposed over the attenuation tank have been relocated. Due to site constraints and the necessary placement of the tank, it has not been possible to amend its positioning, as that would significantly alter the site's levels. Whilst the trees have been removed from this part of the site, the remaining trees still help to minimise the visual impact of Unit 1. It should also be noted that, the number of trees proposed across the site has been increased.

Landscape

"It is unclear what the proposed levels will be across the site. An existing topographical survey is provided but I am unable to find any details regarding proposed levels changes, and this will need to be provided as required by the landscape condition to understand possible level changes."

Proposed and existing levels have been added to the Detailed Landscape Proposals (Sheets 1 & 2).

"Detailed Landscape Proposals (Sheets 1 & 2) have been submitted with the application showing the landscape details proposed across the site. The following will need to be addressed:

1. The details provided on the approved Landscape Strategy Plan submitted for the outline application indicated that the 15m landscape buffer to the ancient woodland on the eastern edge of the site will include 7-8m of new woodland planting with the remaining outer edge of 5m, wildflower grassland, leaving a clear corridor for the Public Right of Way. This is not what is shown on the submitted landscape plans with a shrub only mix varying in width from between 2.5m to a maximum of 6m wide. There is also no buffer planting to the east of Unit 7 and part of the car park to the north of this unit. The landscape plan will need to be amended to show a substantial woodland buffer as previously agreed."

We initially proposed tree planting over understorey scrub to create a woodland buffer; this has now been amended to a complete mix and named 'woodland mix' with an example planting grid also provided. This has been provided in a strip as wide as possible whilst avoiding public rights of way (PRoW) routes.

Due to the existing PRoW route along the eastern boundary, it is not possible to achieve the full 7-8m of proposed woodland planting along the full length of the buffer. Nevertheless, we have provided an 8m width where possible and have provided woodland

of varying widths along the whole length, except where the PRow and footpath connection pass through the buffer. This has been supplemented with individual tree planting either side of the PRow route, thereby creating a buffer along the length of the route through the site. A planting grid has been added to Sheet 2 of the landscape proposals demonstrating how the woodland planting mix proposed can be set out.

2. *"There will need to be a greater number of Oaks and other large-scale trees such as disease resistant Elm, proposed as specimen trees across the site in areas where space allows.*
3. *Birch is not a tree species that is locally found and therefore will need to be removed from the species list and drawings.*
4. *The ornamental tree planting within the car parking areas will need to be more diverse. At present the only tree species shown is Pyrus calleryana 'Capital'."*

Birch has been removed from the proposed tree planting and large-scale trees have been increased including oaks and disease resistant elms. Additional species have also been added into the car park for diversity. This is shown on the Detailed Landscape Proposals (Sheets 1 & 2).

5. *"There are two locations with the parking layout (to the fronts of Units 1 & 4) where trees are shown between the parking bays and not in any soft planting bed, as shown in the extract below. This tree planting is essential, and I would preferably like to see these trees within a 2m landscape strip as with all the other tree planting within the parking areas. If this cannot be achieved, then the trees will need to be supported by underground soil cells to the extent I have highlight in orange below, with associated tree grilles. There will also need to be some form of above ground protection for the tree otherwise these will easily get damaged by vehicles using this space."*

The parking areas for Units 1 & 4 cannot be moved over by 2m due to limited yard space and the fact it would be practically unachievable due to their proximity to the loading doors. However, trees can be planted in these areas using Dimond Pits method. A tree pit detail for the trees proposed in hard landscaping areas has been added including tree guards. This is shown on Sheet 2 of the landscape proposals.

6. *"A greater number of trees will need to be included to the south of Unit 7 to provide better visual screening from views from the wider landscape and Observer Way to the south."*

Additional tree planting has been added south of Unit 7.

7. *"The planting plans show a number of different mixes, however these are not replicated in the Plant Schedule. We will need to understand what species and their percentage mix, are in which mixes.*

8. *I presume mix A1 & A2 are a hedgerow mix which will need to be separately identified as such. Hedgerows will need to include Hawthorn and Hazel in the mix with a reduction in the percentage of Blackthorn as this species is already very prevalent in the area and will find its way into the hedgerow naturally. Hedgerows will need to be specified as a double staggered row with 5 plants per linear m."*

The schedule has been amended to show mix groups and the corresponding percentage mixes. Mix A, the hedgerow mix, already includes Hawthorn and Hazel. The percentage of Blackthorn in the mix has been reduced. The drawing notes state the specification of the hedgerow planting, which is already in line with the suggested approach.

9. *"Boundary details are shown on the Boundary Treatment Plan (3389 P407 A). The post and rail fencing is shown to cut through the 15m landscape buffer and the PROW which is not acceptable. These two parts of the fenceline should be removed from the drawing and a gap left in the fence where there is access to this space adjacent to Unit 5."*

Post and rail fencing cutting through the 15m landscape buffer and the PROW has been removed. A 4-metre-high timber fence has been added east of the parking areas of Unit 3 and Unit 6 to mitigate noise impacts.

Arboriculture

"The AMS will need to include guidance and a method statement as to how the woodland plants will be planted within the 15m ancient woodland buffer zone to avoid damage and harm. Vehicle access and movements in this area will not be acceptable as this will cause soil compaction. Delivery of all plant material will need to be from the proposed parking area and transported by hand."

The AMS has been updated to include details of working methods for planting within the woodland buffer zone. The updated AMS is included with this resubmission.

Green Infrastructure Officer

"The Landscape Strategy Plan provided in the outline application proposed 7-8m of new woodland planting and 5m of wildflower grassland in the 15m buffer zone for the ancient woodland to the east. This is not reflected in the detailed landscape proposals. This should be addressed in line with the original Landscape Strategy Plan to ensure the ancient woodland is suitably protected by a substantial woodland buffer, and the user experience for the existing PROW path is not unnecessarily urbanised by insufficient visual shielding from the development."

As mentioned above due to the existing PROW route along the eastern boundary, the proposals are unable to achieve the full 7-8m of proposed woodland planting along the full length of the buffer. Nevertheless, we have provided an 8m width where possible and have provided woodland of varying widths along the whole length, except where the PROW and footpath connection pass through the buffer. A planting grid has been added to Sheet 2 of the landscape proposals demonstrating how the woodland planting mix proposed can be set out.

WBC Drainage Officer

A response note (ref. L – 64120-03-A-2025.11.18 – Observer Park – LLFA Response) prepared by PRP addressing each comment raised by the Drainage Officer is included with this resubmission. A detailed drainage strategy report was submitted with the reserved matters application and has been included with this response for clarity.

To ensure consistency across all drawings the drainage plans within the drainage reports have been updated to include the revised masterplan. The updated reports are enclosed with this submission.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

The amendments to the landscape proposals have resulted in an updated Biodiversity Net Gain Report and updated Biodiversity Net Gain Metric being required, which are both included in this submission.

Since the previous Biodiversity Net Gain Report, the Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been published. The following proposed habitats have therefore been upgraded to achieving 'high strategic significance' under "Priority 1: Improve the quality of habitats in agricultural land and the wider countryside":

- Other Neutral Grassland as part of PM06: *Convert arable land and species poor amenity areas to wildflower-rich grassland.*
- Mixed Scrub as part of PM57: *Create and maintain pockets of diverse scrub on grasslands as suitable. Prevent invasive scrub on existing species rich wildflower areas.*

Subsequently, the development is now achieving a biodiversity net gain of 21.91% onsite. This is a 9.21% increase compared to the originally submitted scheme.

Conclusion

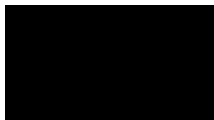
In summary, the amended scheme has sought to address all matters raised by statutory consultees. Where this has not been entirely possible due to balancing multiple conflicting requirements, amendments have been made to ensure the scheme responds as far as possible.

If you require any clarification relating to the amended information, please do not hesitate to contact us. We trust the application can now be approved without delay and we look forward to hearing from you.



Yours sincerely,

Emily Hubball



Planner



Appendix A – Amended Submission Documents

Plan/Document	Reference	Author
Masterplan	3389-P403M – Masterplan	HTC
Boundary Treatment Plan	3389-P407C – Boundary Treatment Plan	
External Furniture Plan	3389-P406C – External Furniture Plan	
Elevations	3389-P1-3 200D – Unit 1-3 Elevations	
	3389-P4-5 200D – Unit 4-5 Elevations	
	3389-P6 200D – Unit 6 Elevations	
	3389-P7 200D – Unit 7 Elevations	
3D Views	3389-P1-3 210D – Unit 1-3 3D Views	
	3389-P4-5 210D – Unit 4-5 3D Views	
	3389-P6 210D – Unit 6 3D Views	
	3389-P7 210D – Unit 7 3D Views	
Landscape Proposals	1628-L-D-PL-201-V3-Sheet 1	Blade
	1628-L-D-PL-201-V3-Sheet 2	
Arboricultural Method Statement	392_T_RP_PL_AMS	
BNG Metric	Biodiversity Metric 3.1_Arborfield_s.73_Application CC	
BNG Report	201-E-RP-PL-1902BNG-V3-Arborfield	
Drainage	R – 64120-01 C – 2025.12.10 – Observer Park – FRA	PRP
	R – 64120-02 C – 2025.12.10 – Observer Park – DS	