

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	250415
Address:	Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Shinfield, Wokingham, RG2 9FW.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed redevelopment of site for flexible employment use (Use Class E(g)(ii)-(iii)/B2/B8) together with servicing areas, parking, landscaping and other associated works, including demolition.		
Type of Development:	Major Heavy industry/storage/warehouse		
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

Final submitted Plans here reviewed;

Proposed Site Layout Masterplan – Dwg. No. 5704-CA-ZZ-00-DR-A-00051-P6 10.4.25

Overall Landscape Reference Plan – Dwg. No. 333101463-RG-L-100-P2 - 13.2.25

Landscape Hard and Soft General Arrangement Plans – Dwg. Ref. 333101463-RG-L-203-P2 - 4 drawings complete this set. 28.1.25

The Proposed Site Layout Masterplan shows a final layout of the buildings which has taken on board the previous comments from the Council during the design process.

Sketched sections in Section 6 of the DAS show the arrangement of the landscape buffer to the B3270 and includes the re-orientation and reduction of the building frontage of Unit 4 facing the B3270.

The location of the **retaining structures** around the different units is clearly shown with a bold coloured line on the plans, and the treatment of these retaining walls is detailed on the Engineering Drawings according to the key on the masterplan – however, I cannot see any detailed section drawings of the retaining walls, other than the sketches in the Landscape Section of the DAS at Section 6, or submission of Dwg. Ref. 40237-BGL-XX-XX-DR-C-00206 P08 submitted and reviewed in 11/24 which may be the Engineering drawing referred to which provided more detail of the retaining wall structures. We should have the current version of this drawing with the pack.

The retaining wall materiality is also shown in the CGI illustrations in Section 5 of the Design and Access Statement followed by cut and fill sections. I cannot see a 'final' drawing (s) detailing the retaining structures with any more information other than that discussed in my pre-application comments recently.

Please confirm if there is another drawing that supercedes Dwg. Ref. 40237-BGL-XX-XX-DR-C-00206 P08 or if a revision will be issued as a condition. This drawing is required to further understand the relationships between the retaining structures against the buildings and landscaping in more detail, and their landscape maintenance in the LEMP.

The **buffer zone** to the ancient woodland is clearly shown at its 15m width – except where the position of the high voltage cable for 80m approximately along the northern side of Unit 1 is located and will be retained through a part of the buffer zone as shown on Dwg. Ref. 5704-CA-ZZ-00-DR-A-00051-P6 10.4.25 Proposed Site Layout masterplan. All other development in the Veteran Tree Buffer zone is to be removed. – See Arboricultural Impact Assessment for further information.

The **parapet heights** of the building are reduced which virtually screens the buildings in medium and long distance views around the site where they appear to merge into the surrounding wooded landscape.

Previous design iterations had maintained the roundabout north of the access road which proved to be a constraint to the optimal layout and this has been reconfigured to provide an **alternative access to the car parking for Unit 5**, as well as providing a focal seating and focal area, and orientation point and includes enhanced landscaping with large species trees and other landscaped treatments that reinforce the landscape character of the site and the new buildings.

The Overall Landscape Reference Plan – Dwg. Ref.. 333101463-RG-L-100-P2 includes the **Landscape layout**, arrangement and hierarchy of hard materials, and hierarchy of landscape spaces and treatments, including a SuDS train which extends from the north of the site towards the retained ponds in the SW (offsite).

Hard materials include concrete to service yards, black bitumen for access roads, a black bitumen with limestone chippings to footways. 'Doorsteps' spaces are block paved in stretcher bond, car parking bays comprise of a permeable block paving laid in herringbone, and maintenance footways in concrete flag paving. Self binding gravel to informal paths. The existing PRoW where it runs through the site will be made good and hedgerow planting enhanced. Sudpave 40 permeable pavers sown

with a flowering lawn mix to overspill parking to the north of the site will help to temper the amount of hard surfacing in this large area that backs onto public open space between the site and existing residential.

Green roofs are proposed to cycle shelters.

Regarding the **soft landscape design** large areas of proposed woodland planting with native understorey is proposed around the site which will contribute to replacing trees lost to development along with the specimen trees located elsewhere across the site. More formal hedges using Portugese Laurel and Hornbeam maintained at 1.2m high are proposed within built development. Native species hedgerow is mostly located in the northern part of the site screening the PRow from service yards where existing trees will also contribute to the screening. AM2 is proposed along here but not clear what AM2 is.

Its not clear from the Planting Schedule what Proposed Amenity Mixes AM1 – AM4 consist of – please clarify.

Rain Gardens are included as features in the landscape design which link the buildings together providing a continuous landscape structure and attractive frontages to the different building units. The northern edges of the site transition from the wooded PRow into the site as open meadow mixes starting with a hedgerow mix close to the ASNW / Woodland followed by swathes of wild flower mix and native shrub mix towards the buildings including some scattered tree planting that concentrates around the staff amenity area and goes onto the provide further landscape links across the site.

In terms of additional information – please clarify the planting mixes / distribution.

The Plant Schedule has a couple of errors – Cytisus (Broom) . Is Ligustrum and Crab Apple being included in the Native Mixed Species Hedge?

Where there is planting against the 2.4m high paladin fencing what is the character of the planting does it include planting that is low or is there space to graduate the heights to 1.8m for example or to use climbers – how will these areas work? The Paladin fencing at 2.4m height despite being in green weldmesh is still a noticeable enclosure and it is important that the planting scheme works hard to mitigate the effect of enclosure so that the focus is on the landscape and not on the fence. This effect is particularly noticeable in VPP17 at Yr. 1, and at Yr. 15 there is little difference. Is it possible to create 'green walls' out of the Paladin fencing by planting climbers? Please clarify

Arboricultural Information

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) – Aspect Arboriculture Document Ref. 12218_AIA.001 Feb, 2025 was received with the application and identifies trees for retention and removal, and trees where excavation within their root protection areas is unavoidable to implement development suggests an approach for mitigation to manage the impact. In some cases areas of existing hard landscaping will be returned to soft landscaping. Table 2 in the AIA lists the trees where supervised

excavation is required, where Cellweb is proposed, where hard surface and hard surface to soft is proposed. Some fencing is located within the RPA such as the Paladin fencing – mitigation will be required for types of fencing as appropriate.

The Tree Survey Schedule includes 158No. trees, 15 groups of trees, 2 hedges and 1 area of woodland. Of this number 41 individual trees will be removed including 1 Cat. 'A' tree, 33 Cat. 'B' trees, 8 Cat. 'C' trees, and parts of the W1 woodland that surrounds the site to the NW, W and SW.

Part of G10 will be removed , and all of G15 which are 'B' cat. All of the 'C' cat. Groups. (5No.) will be removed.

The removal of 41 individual trees is an improvement on the previous number of 69 trees that had previously been identified for removal.

The survey includes 1 Veteran tree T18 Oak which is an offsite tree to the west of the site and a 15m buffer zone will be applied to this tree. In addition to T18, there are other high quality trees identified across the site 3 No. Field Maples which are memorial trees (T66-T68), and 3 No. Silver Maples(T90-T92), also memorial trees of high commemorative value. There are several London Plan trees (T85-92) of which trees T85-T87 are companion trees of high collective value. T88 is a stand alone specimen and T89 which is the dominant component of the collection. Of these T87, T89 will be removed.

T153 is an Oak with a 1250mm girth categorised A2 and a prominent boundary feature – why is this not recognised as a Veteran tree when it has features of veteranisation?

T157 and T158 are both 'A' quality trees within the W1 woodland which will be retained. Prominent boundary trees along the northern edge of the site and the southern edge of the ASNW woodland have been identified with letters A-Z of which A,C,D,P will be removed – small insignificant trees within the mix, which constitute the removals within W1 identified in the AIA (I think!) .

Trees are retained in key locations such as the northern overflow car park, and the ASNW woodland to the NW, W , SW. Trees on the approach road will be largely retained and subject to a lot more tree planting, Screening trees to the SE and SE of Unit 5 that help to maintain the character are retained.

The existing trees can be divided into 2 groups; the ASNW and those trees associated with it, and the internal trees which are associated with development of Shire Hall, the existing building on site. Half of the species comprise of English Oak, London Plane, Field Maple, and Silver Maple. These trees contribute to the site amenity and cultural character. Most of the trees associated with Shire Hall cannot be retained with the proposed layout. But there are many new trees included in the soft landscape scheme, and areas of woodland, that builds on the existing woodland character and introduces a new scheme to complement the proposed building layout. 289No. new specimen trees are proposed and many others within the proposed woodland.

In addition to mitigation works proposed, some pruning work is also required.

I accept that the number of trees being removed has reduced from 69 to 41 and many more trees are proposed within the new scheme of which there will be 289 specimen trees at a mixture of specifications including; Extra Heavy Standard, semi-mature, Multi-stem, Advanced Heavy standard. All of these trees will require to be planted and maintained in accordance with BS8545:2014 in order that they can thrive and realise the vision of the landscape scheme. The maintenance schedule must be extremely vigilant and a very tight regime of watering and care carried out. Please submit an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) to BS5837:2012 which details the exact methods for mitigation and protection of existing trees on the site, in order to comply with Policies CC03 and TB21 of the Local Plan.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Document Ref. 333101463 A5 – Feb. '25

I agree that the WBLCA J3 :LCA – 'Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay' has a medium sensitivity.

I agree with the selection of the Landscape Receptors in relation to the site and the assessment of their sensitivity to the development proposed. I agree with the evaluation of the existing building on the site and its function as a landmark building but also that Shire Hall is a stand alone building in the context of the immediate site and its surroundings. The landmark status of the building will not be replaced with this development however, I do think that due to the landmark status being lost the sensitivity to change is probably medium /high or high at least for a while – as it will be missed as an orientation point / landmark whereas the proposed development will not be visible in the view.

The site is located completely in J3 LCA Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay – however there are views form the neighbouring higher value LCA of River Loddon Valley, as well as the medium value Grazeley Farmed Clay Lowland, but the long distance views are of the landmark building and the new development will only be visible in closer views.

The boundaries and name of the 'River Loddon Valued Landscape' has changed and is now the 'Ridge and Rivers Valued Landscape' (Valued Landscapes Assessment 2024) with the adjustment to the boundary there is some limited visual impact of the Loddon River Valued Landscape but these views are distant and transient from PRoW SHIN30 and mostly screening by intervening vegetation.

Views are grouped at up to 100m from the site, 100-500m and over 500m. I mostly agree with the evaluation of the views of the site at these distances within the LVIA.

I agree with the assessment of the Visual Receptor Sensitivity – with those of high sensitivity being users of PRoW SHIN10 which passes through the site and has views of and is within the ASNW, and users of PRoW in publically accessible land passing through the River Loddon Valued Landscape and the Ridges and Rivers Valued Landscape.

There are 9 Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) which include 4 rendered AVRS for site context photos 1, 2 and 18, and there are 4 wireline AVRs which are for site context 4,7,8,11,14,15. Rendered AVRs show Yr. 1 and Yr. 15 planting.

The Overarching Landscape Design Principles are set out in Section 6 of the Design and Access Statement and demonstrated on Figure RG-LD-100: Overall Landscape Reference Plan. In order to implement the principles there are strategies for key areas of the site which include; Built form, Site frontage, Access Gateway and Central spine, Linear Park, Northern Car Park, PRoW corridor and Green Edges.

I mostly agree with the assessment of sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the significance of effect of them at Year 1 and Year 15. I agree with the choice of viewpoints and the sensitivity of the visual receptors at Year 1 and year 15. The record of the effects are included in Tables 8.1 and 8.2 of the LVIA.

I agree with the points included in the report Conclusion at paragraph 8,2 that the

'Proposed Development will lead to tangible long term benefits on the character and features of the Site and the character and general amenity of the local area'.

I require no further information on the LVIA.

Queries

- Please check Plant Schedule naming of Cytisus and Hawthorn – a typo and clarify AM mixes what they are and consist of and submit as part of Landscape Condition that must include – see below;

I require the conditions below in accordance with Local Plan Policies CP1, CP3, CC03, TB21

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Detailed Landscape Condition for Major sites

- i) No development shall take place in any phase of the development until full details of both hard and soft landscape works for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. The details shall include, as appropriate:
 - a) scheme drawings;
 - b) proposed levels and contours;
 - c) hard landscape details/method of installation such as fencing, retaining walls, steps, railings, street furniture etc including detailed landscape drawings, installation of hard landscape features including construction in tree root protection areas – (cross refer AMS).
 - d) detailed design of SuDS features such as Rain Gardens and other SuDS features in accordance with the SuDS Strategy, demonstrating how they will be integrated into the wider landscape allowing them to fulfil amenity, ecological and drainage functions;
 - e) soft landscaping details including planting plans, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;
 - f) a Landscape Specification document covering soft landscaping (including site preparation, cultivation, plant handling and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment) and hard landscaping including all construction works such as paths, bridges and retaining walls;
 - g) details of the street tree planting pits in combination with the roadside swales/raingardens, and tree planting in soft ground demonstrating that the trees have sufficient rooting volume to enable their successful retention long term health;
 - h) hard landscaping materials including samples;
 - i) minor artefacts and structures (e.g. play equipment, street furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs, external services) including specifications for the product and its installation;
 - k) specification for tree rooting systems and use of structural soils under paving or where rooting volumes are limited;
 - l) all boundary treatments, and other means of enclosure or controlling access such as gates, bollards and vehicle restraint systems, which shall include consideration of ecological permeability;
 - m) measures required for ecological mitigation and biodiversity net gain;

- ii) Details of quality control measures, including supervision of landscape contract(s) by a suitably qualified landscape specialist and annual landscape audits for the five-year period from completion of the landscaping for the Landscape Phase or until adoption (whichever is longer). The annual Landscape Audit shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for information prior to the next planting season and replacement planting undertaken in accordance with the landscape audit and iii) below.
- iii) Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Condition C8 Protection of trees – Major Sites

a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until a scheme which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority (the Approved Scheme); the tree protection measures approved shall be implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme for the duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery.

b) No development (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme on-site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

R8 - To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place

before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

CL9 – Landscape Management Plan Required

Prior to commencement of the development a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic gardens, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved

RL9 In order to ensure that provision is made to allow satisfactory maintenance of the landscaping hereby approved. Relevant Strategy Policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC03 and TB21

Date:	12.5.25	Signed:	B. Crafer
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