

P24-0702

4 February 2026

Kieran Neumann
Senior Planning Officer
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
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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
Response to consultee comments

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:

Masterplan

- Note to the new link to the existing footpath to “New link to existing footpath to be unsurfaced” rather than “hardcore” that was previously noted.

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- Doors to bin stores added to show how they will be accessed.
- Unit 7 cycle shelter relocated to the yard area positioned next to a footpath.
- Unit 2 parking move slightly down to add a hatched area to access the cycle shelter.

Landscape Proposals

- Extent of the tree pits added to the planting plan

Boundary Treatment

- Proposed timber fence reduced to 3 meters

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, Green Infrastructure Officer and Thames Valley Police Designing Out Crime Officer. Each officer's comment is in italics, followed by our response underneath.

WBC Landscape Officer Comments

Layout

"The footpath link from the side of Unit 5 into the 15m landscape buffer strip is still shown as being surfaced with compacted hardcore on the Masterplan, although this has now been changed on the detailed Landscape Plans in line with my request. These drawings will need to co-ordinate with each other."

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

"The sub-station has now been relocated to the west of unit 6. This is now outside the strategic landscape zone as identified on the Access, Land Use and Parameters Plan previously approved, but does still reduce the area of landscaping around the units which was to provide some visual mitigation from the countryside to the west"

The Applicant Team undertook an exercise where multiple alternative locations for the substation were explored. The proposed location was determined as the best option to ensure it functions effectively, while minimising any effects on the strategic landscape zone. This is on the basis that the amended location is outside of the strategic landscape zone as requested. It is acknowledged that the substation does result in a small reduction of landscaping, however this was to be the case in all potential locations. The proposed amended location is therefore considered to be the most appropriate to efficiently serve the Units.

"I have noted on the plan showing the cycle and bin store details that in some locations access to these will be through the adjacent parking. It is not clear how this will work if cars are parked in these spaces. Extracts are given below with green arrows I have added to show what I assume to be the access in these locations. I'm concerned that this lack of access could impact on the proposed landscape behind these structures which ultimately will need to be removed to allow access. The routes into the bin stores and cycle sheds will need to be clearly marked to ensure the small amount of landscape planting within the car park areas will be maintained".

We have updated the layout to include the doors for the bin stores, demonstrating how they would be accessed. Furthermore, the parking space for Unit 2, has been slightly relocated downwards to create a hatched area to access to the cycle shelter. All of the bin stores can be sufficiently accessed for each Unit and will be managed by the future Occupiers.

Materials

"I have no objections to the proposed dark brown cladding now specified on the Elevation drawings for each of the units. I would prefer to see the roof colour to be a darker grey which is more recessive in the landscape than the lighter grey as indicated on the drawings (RAL 7038)."

The lighter cladding colours are used on the roofs of the buildings as an institutional norm to mitigate solar / heat gain through the roof into the building. We would not propose a darker cladding colour for the main roof covering due to potential overheating within the buildings. This would result in a decrease in energy efficiency which would affect the performance of the building. The proposed grey colour is considered acceptable in this context and within the wider industrial as an appropriate roof colour.

Drainage

"It is disappointing that the underground geocellular storage area to the west of Unit 1 as identified on the Drainage Plans provided in Appendix V of the Foul and Storm Water Drainage Strategy document (Rev C), cannot be relocated. As previously indicated this is located under a strategic landscape space and therefore limits tree planting over the underground storage crates."

This has been reviewed by the PRP, the technical drainage engineers, and unfortunately the currently proposed position for the geocellular storage area is the most appropriate. This has been balanced against the proposed landscaping scheme, and 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. In addition, this area is still proposed to be landscaped. It should also be noted that the overall number of trees to be planted across the site has been increased.

Landscape

"The cumulative effect of the location of the sub-station and underground storm water crates at the ends of the units is to reduce the land available even further for appropriate landscape mitigation planting which will help reduce the visual impact of this group of commercial units in views from Observer Way and the countryside to the west. These areas were highlighted in the

L VIA as essential to the landscape scheme including tree planting and therefore these additional features have weakened what can now be achieved through the landscape mitigation."

Landscape features have been carefully considered as part of the scheme and have been maximised where possible, resulting in an overall increase in tree provision. The landscape scheme will provide sufficient mitigation planting which is appropriate for the scheme. It is noted that the sub-station results in a relatively minor removal of a small part of the wider landscaping scheme, however the substation is required for the proposed development to be feasible. Additionally, as set out above, the geocellular tank is required to ensure sufficient drainage across the site, and is an underground feature. As noted above this area is proposed to be landscaped.

"Existing and proposed levels are now included on the landscape drawings which is helpful. I presume that the finished floor levels that are indicated for each of the units should give the level +/- 50mm rather than 500mm as indicated. This will need to be amended on the landscape plans."

500mm is the correct level.

"Revised Detailed Landscape Proposals (Sheets 1 & 2 V3) have been provided to address my earlier comments the majority of which are acceptable. The following issues are outstanding and require further information / explanation:

- a) It is not clear why the native woodland mix (Mix E) in the 15m landscape buffer narrows down and to a point to the east of Unit 7 and also includes a staggered break in the woodland. The 7.5m width should be continued along this edge without narrowing and without the gap between E2 & E3. There is canopy overhang from the existing woodland but not as extensive as shown on the landscape drawings and the new woodland mix can be planted in this area.*

Due to the need to retain the route of the PRoW as located on legal drawings as well as the PRoW route as it currently exists along the eastern boundary, we are unable to achieve the full 7-8m of proposed woodland planting along the full length of the buffer. An 8m width has been provided where possible, and there is also woodland of varying widths along the whole length alongside where the PRoW and footpath connection pass through the buffer.

- b) It's good to see that underground soil cells are proposed for the tree pits where there is no space for an appropriate planting bed in between the parking bays. The location of these and their extent will need to be indicated on the planting plan by a dashed line, so it is clear where these are located.*

A dashed line has been added to the Landscape Plans to show the location of tree pits.

- c) A full landscape specification will need to be provided in order to comply with the landscape condition and can be submitted separately through a conditions application. As this is a rural location the plants will need to be protected from rabbits and possibly deer by guards and or fencing or a combination of both. Details of this will need to be included in the specification.*

This is noted and a full landscape specification will be provided with the relevant discharge of condition submission.

- d) *The boundary details as shown on the Boundary Treatment Plan (3389 P407 C) have now been amended and updated to remove all the post and rail fencing and to be replaced with 4m high solid timber fencing to the back of the parking bays between Units 3 & 5 and 6 & 7. This is completely unacceptable from a landscape perspective as this is not only an incongruous feature within the landscape but it significantly reduces visual permeability to the ancient woodland behind the site which was the reason why the units were orientated east /west to allow some views to the woodland to be maintained. This fencing will need to be removed and replaced with paladin fencing which is visually permeable."*

The primary purpose of this fence is to preserve residential amenity by mitigating noise impacts. This was recommended by the Applicant's Acoustic Engineer, Hoare Lea, as a form of barrier screening, to reduce the level of external plant noise impacts from the service bays, where appropriate to the nearest proposed residential dwellings to the east. This arrangement also effectively reduces the impacts of existing traffic noise.

Furthermore, the proposed fence will not obstruct the view of the ancient woodland when walking along the PRoW east of the site. The height also ensures an unimpeded view of the woodland when walking along the road. The timber fence can also be made greener to make a wooded effect blending into the surrounding landscape.

However, given the comments provided, we have discussed the points above with the case officer, and the officer accepts the proposed fence would be acceptable providing the height of the fence is reduced to 3 metres to ensure visual permeability to the east. This was discussed with the Applicant's Acoustic Engineer who has assessed the performance of a 3m fence against a 4m fence and has concluded that this would still be sufficient for mitigating noise impacts to the residential dwellings to the east. The drawings have therefore been updated to reflect the 3m fence height.

Green Infrastructure Officer

"Revised Detailed Landscape Proposals (Sheets 1 & 2 V3) show some improvements to the planting scheme across the site and on the eastern boundary. However, it is unclear why there is a narrowing and a break in the woodland planting mix in the ancient woodland buffer zone behind unit 7.

This either needs to be explained, and/or the scheme adjusted so that Mix E3 is planted contiguously (excluding the deliberate break for the footpath connection) at a depth of 7.5m for the length of the buffer zone."

As per the response above, due to the need to retain the route of the PRoW as located on legal drawings as well as the PRoW route as it currently exists along the eastern boundary, we are unable to achieve the full 7–8m of proposed woodland planting along the full length of the buffer. An 8m

width has been provided where possible, and there is also woodland of varying widths along the whole length alongside where the PRow and footpath connection pass through the buffer.

Thames Valley Police – Designing Out Crime Officer

Boundary Treatment

“The strategy for the proposed boundary treatment is not clear. Only the two southern units (units 6 and 7) will have boundary treatment that will provide security to their associated yards. The proposed 1100mm timber post and rail fence running along the eastern boundary will not provide any physical security and is only useful as a demarcation of ownership. However, even this would not be clear since the fence would be publically accessible from both sides. In addition, it is not clear how or why the fence is proposed to block the public right of way that runs along the eastern boundary of the site.

Further consideration needs to be given to the purpose of the boundary treatment and then the most appropriate fence/barrier can be provided.

It is noted that none of the rear, or side blank elevations are protected. This leaves them vulnerable to graffiti and anti-social behaviour. The doors located on these elevations (presumably emergency exit doorways) will be accessible and their lack of natural surveillance could leave the units vulnerable to unauthorised access and burglary through forced access from these doorways. It is therefore recommended that security fencing is extended to cover the rear of buildings.

The gates into any secured area should be electronically controlled, with automatic closers. Manual operation can lead to gates being left open/unlocked which undermines the security provided by boundary treatment. Requirements for emergency egress will need to be considered alongside the security requirements.”

The proposed timber fence is proposed to mitigate noise from the yard areas to the residential properties situated to the east. This measure has been agreed upon following discussions with the case officer, and taking into consideration the Landscape Officer comments. All units will have the ability to install CCTV to all elevations of their unit (to specific occupier requirements) to ensure that they provide adequate security. Additional details of boundary treatments will be submitted under the outline condition No.20 requiring this. Any security features will be managed and brought forward by future tenants. These measures offer a robust security system for the development and allow occupiers to bring forward measures to suit their specific requirements and provides a more tailored and appropriate approach to security measures.

Amenity Open Space

“It is appreciated that the general layout of the development has been approved as part of the outline planning permission. However, I am not clear on how the amenity open space at the southern end of the site is intended to be used.

The amenity open space appears to be available for use by the general public with access via the public right of way. However, the lack of overlooking of the space, and secluded nature, could leave the area vulnerable to antisocial behaviour. It therefore may be beneficial if unit 7 is handed, so that the windows on the side elevation could overlook the space. This would not only provide the potential for natural surveillance, it would also have the positive benefit of an improved outlook for Unit 7. This would take away overlooking of the Unit 6 yard. However, the overlooking would not be from the same unit as the yard, and the yard is protected by boundary treatment in any case."

The amenity area was designed as part of the outline planning approval. Given the context of the site, it helps to soften and integrate the development within the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, it's addition to the scheme has helped to ensure a biodiversity net gain across the site of a +2.16 (21.91% gain) habitat unit gain and a +1.34 hedgerow unit gain.

The amenity space is visible from the main road, and from the yard of Unit 7. Unit 7 and all other units will have the ability to install CCTV to all elevations of their unit (to specific occupier requirements) to ensure that they provide adequate security.

Cycle Stores

"Generally, cycle storage should be located as close as possible to the building entrances as possible and overlooked from the associated building. This has not been achieved for the majority of units on site and it appears that cycle storage could be better located to achieve this. The location of cycle storage should therefore be reviewed."

All cycle storage facilities have been located with a focus on accessibility, security and safety. We have examined the location of cycle storage to assess if any can be moved without having substantial impacts on the overall site layout. As a result of this, we have repositioned the Unit 7 cycle shelter adjacent to the yard area positioned next to a footpath. All units will have the ability to install CCTV to all elevations of their unit providing additional security.

CCTV

"I could not find any details with the reserved matters submission of any proposed CCTV system. Given the limited natural surveillance for the site, particularly at night, CCTV will be necessary for the security of all proposed units. An overall strategy for CCTV, including locations for cameras and proposed management should be able to be provided with the reserved matters. However, it is appreciated that end users may have their own operational requirements for CCTV and this information may not be available now. In which case, a planning condition may be required to ensure that appropriate CCTV systems are in place prior to occupation of any individual unit."

As a general point, and for any future specification for the development, I would recommend the applicant consults the guidance provided by Secured by Design Non- Residential Guide 2025. This includes guidance on the provision of CCTV. "

This is understood and as per the above, details of CCTV will be occupier led which allows for a more bespoke and appropriate security measure provision which is suited to each occupier.



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

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Appendix A – Amended Submission Documents

Plan/Document	Reference	Author
Masterplan	3389-P403N – Masterplan	HTC
Boundary Treatment Plan	3389-P407F – Boundary Treatment Plan	
Landscape Proposals	1628-L-D-PL-201-V4-Sheet 1	Blade
	1628-L-D-PL-201-V4-Sheet 2	