

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	241900
Address:	Land South of Old Bath Road Sonning, RG4 6GQ.		
Proposal:	Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 220663 for the proposed erection of 57 dwellings suitable for older persons accommodation following demolition of the existing dwellings (Access, Layout, Scale and appearance to be considered). Condition 2 refers to approved plans and details and the variation is to change the site layout and associated details.		
Type of Development:	Major Dwellings (10+)		
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

The revisions to the layout are principally concerned with accommodating additional parking bays as a result of the change to the scheme description as not being specifically for older people. The proposals increase the number of parking bays from 66 to 80 – the figure includes 10 disabled bays. The change to the layout has resulted in increased impact on trees and a reduction in the amount of soft landscaping to hard which changes the perception of landscape setting of the site reducing usable space that could be called communal garden spaces.

Northern Sector – Drawing No. 8399-BOW-AD-A0-ZZ-DR-A-003 (rev. A)

The changes to the layout in the north of the site have created an additional incursion into the rpa of an 'A' quality tree T83 in order to accommodate an additional car parking bay. The number of larger parking bays (mini buses?) has been reduced to 2 from 3 in order to increase the standard bays to 7 (from 6) . This increases the number of parking bays in the northern sector from 24 to 26. The pedestrian path from Bath Road has been removed from the scheme completely and the visual quality of 'front of house' arrangement has been reduced to look very much like a car park rather than seeking to retain some of the gardenesque character of the

front garden area as it was by included a pedestrian path and the possibility of creating a part garden part parking area.

The drawing does not include the root protection areas of the trees – which means cross referencing with the Tree Retention and Protection drawing as this has not been overlaid on the revised proposals.



Fig. 1 An incursion into the root protection area of 'B' quality Oak T83 a protected tree from the additional parking bay. No RPA on this drawing to fully assess the impact.

I reiterate the following;

It is important to note that a plan showing root protection areas is described in paragraph 3.7 of British Standard 5837 (2012) as a :

'layout tool indicating the minimum area around a tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability, and where the protection of the roots and soil structure is treated as a priority'

So then the rpa is considered to be the minimum recommended area for retention of trees and is the area where protection of the roots and soil is a priority.

BS 5837 (2012), Section 5.3 'Proximity of structures to trees' states at 5.3.1 'The default position should be that structures are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained. However, where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the trees'

I see no overriding justification for the current proposals to develop within the RPA of important trees on site.

The re-design between Blocks A and B has been reconsidered

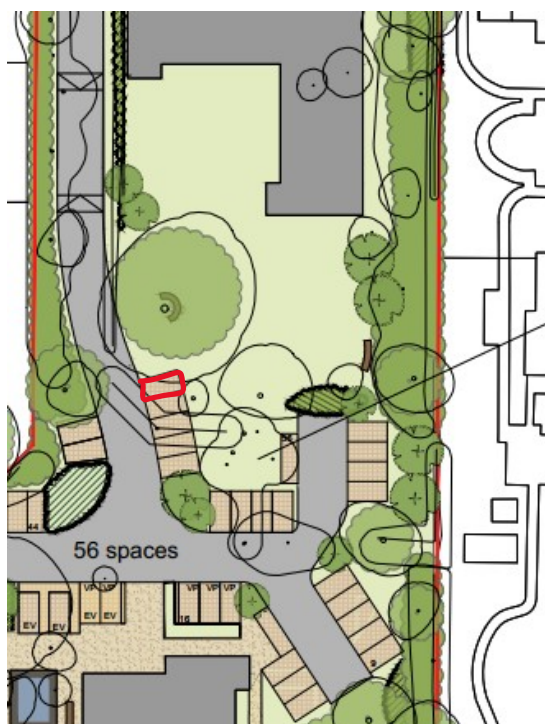


Fig. 2 – Re-configuration of garden area between Block A and B and revised parking arrangement, showing 5th parking bay and impact on T68

This is an improvement on the previous arrangement but there is still more of an incursion into the RPA of T68 by the northern parking bay of 5 – and this is more incursion into another protected tree which is unnecessary and needs to be reviewed.

Blocks B and C

I note the rearrangement of the paths through the RPA but to the outer edges. A suitable pathway material such as that used on the Council's Greenway networks is preferable in RPAs.

Summary

The fall back position should not be a reliance on 'no dig' just because it is available, but a well considered design that is based on the key site constraints, which is also a key asset of the site setting. T83 and T68 quality trees that are protected by TPO. Please review – which would be easier with the design overlaid with the 'Tree Retention and Protection' plan.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Date:	9.10.24	Signed:	B. Crafer
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