

MEMORANDUM

From:	Catherine Brimble Senior landscape Officer		
Service	SDL Landscape and Trees	App No:	242653
Address:	Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG40 4QY.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 48 residential dwellings with associated access, internal roads, parking, landscaping, drainage and cycle storage.		
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

This application for 48 dwellings has been submitted in conjunction with a RM application for the Sports Hub area, therefore some of the comments for this application may also relate to the Sports Hub application.

Layout

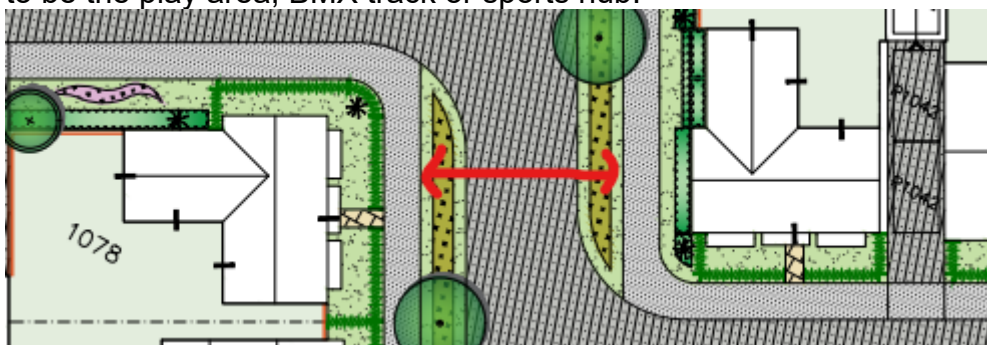
I have the following comments to make regarding the layout:

- The DAS references the design process with option 4 being the preferred option and the basis for the submitted layouts in relation to this application. A number of reasons were given including the incorporation of a 20m buffer along the entire eastern boundary to provide a strong green edge. The layout as provided does incorporate a landscape buffer, however this is not the 20m as originally identified. The proposed buffer along the eastern edge of the housing development ranges from 7.4m – 14m reducing where the width is constricted due to the four parking bays encroaching into this area. I would have expected this area to be wider and suggest a reduction in the number of visitor spaces.
- I welcome the incorporation of the street trees in verges along the main route to the pavilion car park. I would like to understand if these verges and tree planting could also be incorporated into the drainage strategy as rain gardens.
- The layout will need to incorporate a pedestrian link from the residential parcel to the bridleway and the proposed play area beyond. The best location for this

connection to avoid existing offsite vegetation and a major level change will be where the current visitor spaces are located on the western boundary as shown below. The layout will be amended to show this pedestrian connection.



- There will need to be a pedestrian crossing point added in at the site entrance by plots 1038 & 1061 to enable pedestrians to cross the site entrance road when following the footway running along the northern boundary of the site.
- A pedestrian crossing point will also need to be added opposite the front of plot 1078 to link to the footway on the opposite side of the road. This is to enhance the east / west movement of pedestrians especially when the destination is likely to be the play area, BMX track or sports hub.



Hard and soft Landscaping

- I am unable to find details of the location of street lighting as part of the layout and this will need to be shown on the landscape drawings to ensure there is no conflict with the landscaping details including street trees.
- The rear boundary treatment of individual plots adjacent to the public realm or semi-public spaces will need to be defined by a brick wall. This will also need to apply to the rear garden boundary to plot 1031 which is currently shown as fencing.

- It is helpful to see that hedgerow boundary treatments on vulnerable corners of some plots or other high trafficked areas will consist of instant trough grown hedgerow 1-1.25m high, this is welcome and will provide a robust boundary treatment in these areas.
- The three trees to the fronts of plots 1055 – 1058 will need to be labelled on the planting plan.
- I would like to see more Oak tree specimens planted in the eastern and western landscape buffers.
- I suggest the use of silver birch is reduced and alternative sought in some locations as we are finding many of the tree failures on new sites are birch species.
- Due to the likely infrequent use of the parking space adjacent to the substation I would like to see the surfacing changed to reinforced gravel or grass, therefore reducing the impermeable surfacing in this area.
- All of the parking bays including visitor spaces within green buffers are indicated as being a tarmac surface. There should be a change in the material for the surfacing of visitor spaces and perhaps some of the on-plot parking on the settlement edge to something less urban and to reduce the extent of tarmac surfacing.
- Does there need to be a footway to the front and side of plot 1053? As far as I can see there is no need for this to be a tarmac footway and suggest a grass verge instead.
- If we are to approve the detailed planting associated with this application we will need to see details of all the types of tree planting pits and supports. We will be expecting to see the use of underground soil cells in areas where rooting volume is limited, such as in smaller sections of verge or between parking bays.
- Although I welcome the proposed wildflower seeding in the highway verges, the seed mix proposed does contain a mix of plants which will attain a greater height of 60cm high which is the maximum height highways will allow to maintain sightlines. A revised wildflower seed mix will need to be sought containing lower growing plants.
- I note the thicket planting is to be surrounded by post and wire fencing. It is not clear why this is necessary as it doesn't include rabbit protection. If it's a temporary measure to prevent public access into this planting there will need to be some form of access to allow for maintenance visits.
- The planting specification is provided on Soft Planting Proposals Sheet 2, however it would have been preferable to have this in a separate document rather than on the drawing which is difficult to read at this scale.
- The specification will need to refer to the relevant British Standards for Trees from Nursery to Landscape (BS 8545:2014)
- It would be helpful to include the location of the root barriers shown on the planting plans.

Trees

A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated 4th October 2024 has been provided, however the only trees that relate to this site are the off-site trees adjacent to the western boundary.

The proposed works associated with the development parcel will be outside the root protection areas of the three category A trees adjacent to this boundary.

Levels

I would like to see a cross-section at the southern end of the site through the ditch and plots 1073, 1074, 1075 & 1076 as at this point the development platform is approximately 2m high. Therefore the detailing as to how the levels are addressed in this corner of the site will need to be further considered to provide a smooth transition between the housing site, sports hub site and ditch area.

Sections F-F, G-G & H-H appear to have the wrong plot numbers indicated on the drawing as these don't relate to the layout plot numbers. This will need to be amended for clarity.

Drainage

I note that the Drainage Strategy will convey surface water from the housing development site in pipes to the SuDS basin to the south of the of the allotment site. I would like to understand if the road verges and tree planting could also be incorporated into the drainage strategy as rain gardens as this would seem an ideal opportunity to incorporate these features as part of the SuDS train.

Other drainage comments will be discussed as part of the RM application for the Sports Hub.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Conditions to be provided following the requested changes and additional information being submitted.

Date:	11 th December 2024	Signed:	C. Brimble
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