

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	261695
Address:	Luckley House School, Luckley Road, Wokingham, RG40 3EU.		
Proposal:	Full application for the expansion of school curtilage into adjacent land and creation of new sports pitches with associated external works		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
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

Site Setting and Landscape Character

The site is located on the south-east edges of Wokingham town, the majority of the school site is within the Wokingham Settlement Area but the site of the proposed development is within the countryside. The site is located within Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment – Area N1 ‘Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland’ – A moderate quality sandy pastoral landscape wet within the context of the urban areas of Wokingham to the north and forested areas to the south.

Key characteristics of the N1 LCA include; scrubby vegetation including narrow tracts of BAP priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland following small streams, broadleaved shelterbelts with gorse, bramble and bracken providing naturalistic cover and nature conservation interest including woodland near Ludgrove School which forms small area of wildlife importance. Open views across the flat landscape to the southern fringes of Wokingham due to the lack of enclosing elements.

The Landscape Strategy for LCA N1 is to ‘*conserve and enhance*’ the existing landscape character. There are opportunities to improve the condition, intactness and presentation of the farmed landscape with the potential for replanting and

management of field boundaries and enhancement of the ecological character. In terms of development the rural setting of Wokingham should be conserved and management of urban fringe activities on marginal land also required.

The site access is within Wokingham Major Development Location and the main proposed site development area is in the countryside adjacent to the Wokingham settlement boundary.

The site is not in the Valued Landscape.

Existing and Protected Trees

There are many protected trees on the site and around it. The protected trees that might be affected by development are;

TPO 1564/2017

Group - consists of Oak, Hawthorn, Holly, Hornbeam located on the northern edge of the main development area

On the west side of the main development area

Single Oak T28

Single Oak T27

Single Oak T26

On southern boundary of the main development area

Single Oak T25

Single Oak T4

On the NE corner of the main development area is
Woodland W4

Close to but off site is;

TPO 1420/2012

A1 - Area containing Oak, Ash, D. Fir,

Within TPO 1420/2012 area single trees protected by TPO 1062/2004;

Single Scots Pine – T3

Single Oak – T4 also WDTVA tree/ Ancient Tree Inventory 218457 Notable Oak

The site is located in an open field and the red line boundary occupies the western boundary and the area uses about a third of the overall field.

The protected trees are included within An Arboricultural Impact Assessment for the site – Ref. PB/AIA-25/06.06 submitted with the application. A Tree Survey Ref. PB/5837-25/06.06 including Tree Survey Schedule, Tree Survey Plan and Root Protection Area Plan.

There are 74 trees, and 4 tree groups. Of the 74 trees there are 10 'A2' category Oaks, one of which T32 has a 1210mm girth size and is a notable specimen in the landscape, it is likely to be T9 of TPO1062/2004, along with its sister tree T8 (T8 in

Tree Survey) also an 'A' category and 820mm girth. The trees are mostly category 'A' and 'B'.

Tree T32 from the survey is likely to be on the Ancient Tree Inventory recorded as a 'Notable' Oak tree Ref. ATI 218387. Tree T22 from the survey is likely to be ATI Ref. 218457 also a 'Notable' Oak. Neither of these trees are affected by the proposals, although some of the protected trees further to the south are.

The site is of even topography and contains mature Oaks, Ash, Douglas Fir, Sycamore, Holly and Hawthorn.

The Site Proposals

The proposed sports pitch is located south of the main school grounds in a large field to the south. The pitch is 110m wide and 133m long. A 3.5m acoustic fence is proposed offset from the boundary of rear gardens that back onto the site from Hart Dyke Close to the west. The western boundary also contains a 6.5m high ball stop. The east side of the pitch is proposed to place a 2m high green weldmesh fence against which a native hedge is proposed to the inside. The development uses about a third of the large field overall within which it uses the western portion.

The site entrance is via a new permeable access track between the existing and proposed sports fields. An existing tarmac path against an all weather pitch is to be extended in the direction of the new sports pitch area. The site plan includes new perforated land drains linked to the underwater harvesting tank to provide sustainable water source for pitch irrigation. Although there is only one outlined on the plan.

The new vehicle access is located between the RPA of T53 and T56, it is 14m long by 9m wide at each end reducing to 5m in the centre. To enable to vehicle access trees T52, T54 and a portion of G55 Hawthorn hedge will need to be removed. It will be important to replace protected trees within a landscape plan for the site, which can also replace – extend some of the hedgerow around T56 to prevent scuffing of the grass either side of the vehicular and pedestrian entrances. There are only minor incursions into the RPA.

A method of installing the pitch is described in the AIA, which is to be seeded with a sports pitch grass seed.

The vehicular path will be laid over cellweb, and the extension to the tarmac path is using a standard detail. I am concerned about what happens where the path and the vehicle access transitions to the grass and pitch and the expected wear and tear on approaching the pitch especially during wetter months. The use of Cellweb is acceptable where there are tree roots present and is a permeable hard landscape solution which is policy compliant. Will there be seating ?

The AIA does not discuss the mitigation aspects such as the installation of floodlights near trees, and installation of fencing within root protection areas. These will need to be covered in an Arboricultural Method Statement as a condition.

I note a native hedge is proposed to the eastern site boundary against a green weldmesh fence this is acceptable and will need to be included on a Soft Landscape drawing required as part of Condition CL5 – Landscape Proposals.

I note the acoustic fence is located along the west side of the pitch set back by about 6.5m from the rear garden boundaries of dwellings facing onto Hart Dyke Close. The view of an extended blank fence from these rear gardens will not be a pleasant view. The site is within the countryside and is characterised by mature tree and hedge planting to some of the boundaries. I recommend that within the 6.5m wide gap between fence and garden boundary a native hedge is planted between new native trees and to infill between the existing trees using species such as Oak, Hornbeam, Norway Maple, Lime, Field Maple, Cherry, Whitebeam. The hedge planting should be accessible for maintenance I suggest that trees should be planted within a timber triangle that is fenced with rabbit fencing and the hedge planted in front of the trees and maintained as a field hedge. This will create a visual intervention to the front of the fence and enhance biodiversity. Trees to be planted at 15-20m centres.

I have no objection to the proposals but need clarification regarding the edges of the pitch in relation to the vehicle and pedestrian access both of which appear to stop short of the actual pitch itself. Is a different treatment like grass reinforcement proposed?

I require an Arboricultural Method Statement to BS5837:2012 as a condition to include mitigation for installation of floodlights and posts where within the RPA and include an updated Tree Protection plan as appropriate.

I require a Landscape Condition which includes a soft landscape scheme that deals with enhancement of the existing trees lines affected by the proposals, and enhances the western boundary with new infill native trees and hedgerows to form an enhanced visual barrier to rear gardens on Hart Dyke Close. Also a new native hedge on the east side against the weldmesh fence.

Surface treatments, lighting, fencing, and addition of any furniture items to be included on a separate landscape plan in accordance with policies CCO3 and TB21 of the Local Plan

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
CL7 – AMS – Tree Protection			
CL5 Hard and Soft Landscape Proposals			
Date:	7.8.26	Signed:	BRC