

# MEMORANDUM

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| <b>From:</b>                | Catherine Brimble<br>Senior Landscape Officer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                |        |
| <b>Service</b>              | WBC Landscape and Trees                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>App No:</b> | 243190 |
| <b>Address:</b>             | Land south of Bridge Farm, Reading Road, Wokingham, RG2 9HT.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                |        |
| <b>Proposal:</b>            | Application to vary condition 2 of Outline planning consent 223083 for the erection of up to 11 no. commercial units to provide 6,986sqm GIA commercial / employment development predominantly within Class B8 and/or Class E(g) uses with supporting facilities within Class E uses comprising ancillary offices, trade counters and food/drink facilities with highway works and strategic landscaping. Matters of Access, Siting and Scale to be considered only. Condition 2 refers to the approved details and the variation is to change the site layout. |                |        |
| <b>Type of Development:</b> | Major Heavy industry/storage/warehouse                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                |        |
| <b>Site Visit Made:</b>     | 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

I am unable to support this application.

In my comments for the Outline application I recommended refusal of the application due to the impact that the proposals will have on the open rural countryside outside the settlement boundary. I considered this was not only contrary to Core Strategy policy CP11 but also Local Plan policy TB21 as the proposals cannot retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape in this particular area, specifically the requirement in the landscape strategy for landscape character area J2 to retain the open and rural character of the landscape between settlements and C1, to conserve the sparse settlement pattern.

The Landscape Strategy Plan approved under the Outline permission indicated there would be a layering of the landscape proposals to help reduce the visual impact of the commercial units from the open countryside to the west. These elements

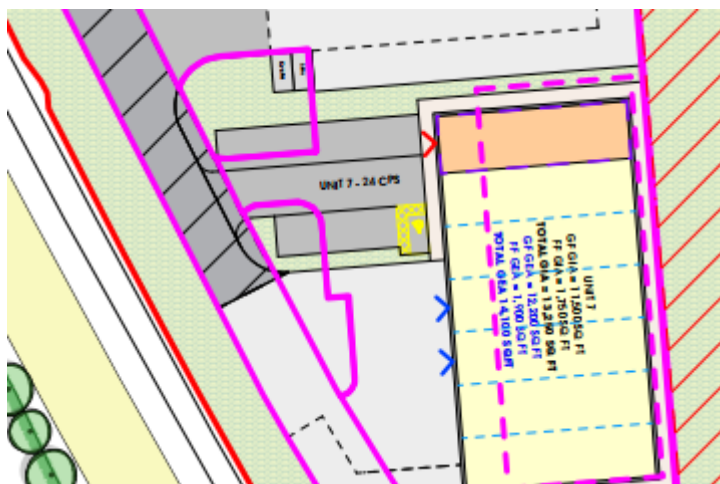
included an off-site hedgerow with trees to the west of Observer Way, a native hedgerow and tree planting within the site to the west of the proposed access road, proposed planting to the ends of the units or in the case of Units J & K (now unit 7) planting was proposed to the fronts of the parking areas and unit. We had also agreed that there would be proposed pleached tree planting between parking bays.

This current proposal seems to not only increase the footprint of a number of the units but also reduces some of the integral areas of structural planting close to the units, thereby the changes will have a greater visual impact on the surrounding landscape which is unacceptable.

It is difficult to fully compare the footprints of the units as shown on the original Illustrative Masterplan and, Access, Land Use and Height Parameters Plan with the information provided with this application as the information provided on the Outline / S73 Comparison Plan shows all areas of the units in square feet rather in square metres in which they were originally shown. This is unhelpful and the comparison plan will need to indicate all areas in square metres.

Based on the information shown on the comparison plan I note the following:

- Units 4 & 5 (previously D, E & F) are shown to be increased in width by approximately 3.6m.
- Unit 6 (previously G & H) are shown to be increased in width by approximately 7.5m.
- Unit 7 (previously J & K) are shown to be increased in width by approximately 5.5m although slightly reduced in length.
- The increased area of hardstanding has decreased areas of tree planting between the areas of the parking.
- Some of the disabled bays are now shown to extend into the landscaped areas including abutting the 15m buffer zone to the ancient woodland.
- Bin and cycle stores are also now located in the landscaped spaces reducing areas for strategic landscaping. Some of the bin and cycle stores are not conveniently located, either for bin collection or for cycle parking.
- A substantial area of landscape planting (outlined in pink) to the front of unit 7 as now been considerably reduced and replaced by parking or hardstanding (see extract below).



In conclusion, I am unable to support this application as I consider the proposed changes will have further additional harmful impacts to the countryside in which the site is located in conjunction with a reduction in proposed landscape mitigation. This is contrary to Core Strategy policy CP3 and MDD Local Plan Policies CC03 and TB21.

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| <b>Date:</b> | 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 | <b>Signed:</b> | C. Brimble |
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