

MEMORANDUM

From:	Catherine Brimble Senior Landscape Officer		
Service	SDL Landscape and Trees	App No:	251263
Address:	Parcel 6, Finchwood Park, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG40 4QY.		
Proposal:	Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2179 (as varied by 181194, dated 14/11/2018). The Reserved Matters comprise details of 140 dwellings, together with associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, footpath and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS). Details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered.		
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

Revised drawings have been provided in December 2025 including Site Layout drawing Rev T (please note Rev S was also submitted at the same time) following officer comments. My revised comments are in green so it can be clearly seen which comments have been addressed and which need further information.

The site layout provided on the Site Layout drawing Rev R correlates to the layout provided and amended as part of the earlier pre-app discussions, therefore there are no significant concerns that haven't been previously addressed. In addition, other landscape comments that were raised as part of the pre-app comments seem to have been addressed as part of this RM application.

Having reviewed the information provided with this application, I have the following comments or queries:

1. It appears from the Engineering Layout drawings that the difference between the proposed development platform and existing ground levels along the

edges of the parcel with the woodland belts is not significant and therefore not requiring large batters within 15m buffer zones around the woodlands. This will need to be confirmed by the applicant. **This is now confirmed by the applicant in the cover letter dated December 2025.**

2. Both the Engineering drawings and Drainage Layout drawings include hatched areas between permeable surface drives and swales in the open space. These are not indicated on the key, and we will need to understand what these features are. If they relate to embankment batters we will need to see levels at the top and bottom of the slope as well as proposed gradients. **It is still not clear what the hatched areas represent, but assume this is a gradual embankment from the development platform to the public open space now that proposed levels have been provided along this edge,**
3. The Drainage Layout drawings don't appear to show connections from the rain gardens and swales into the surface water system and will need to be included. **Drainage connections are now shown from the rain gardens but not the swales. However, this can be shown through revised drainage drawings submitted through a conditions application.**
4. It's helpful to have the SuDS Construction Details drawing showing typical swale and rain garden cross-sections. Where the rain gardens contain trees, the soil volume will need to be increased which will require the impermeable liner to be moved to the back of the kerbs. I would like to see an additional cross-section for a rain garden with trees, and which should be developed in conjunction with the Landscape Architect. **Additional details have been provided in the Typical Tree Pit and Rain Garden Details drawing and this is acceptable.**
5. It is noted that the existing headwall close to the southern boundary of the site linking the existing surface water drainage to the SuDS basin in the SANG to the south, will be relocated in the open space. We will need to understand what this will look like especially within its contextual relationship with the open space. **I don't believe we have any additional information regarding this headwall and will require these details through a conditions application.**
6. We will need to understand the location of the lamp columns as this may affect the possible location of trees in the street. Locations should be indicated on the Engineering drawings. **The location of lamp columns are shown on the landscape drawings which addresses this point, however see landscape comments regarding the implications of the location of the lamp columns.**
7. The landscape proposals for the public open space are shown on the Detailed Landscape Proposal for Public Open Space (Rev B) drawing. I suggest the following amendments: **A revised Detailed Landscape Proposal for Public Open Space (Rev D) is now provided.**
 - a) There are significant numbers of Hazel, Hawthorn and Birch trees proposed in the open space. I would like to see these reduced in number and replaced with some larger growing tree species and a greater diversity of tree species such as Wild Cherry, Elm (disease resistant), Hornbeam, Lime and Rowan, for example. **A greater diversity of tree species is now included and is acceptable.**
 - b) Several of the trees are located very close to, or within the hoggin path and will need to be relocated. **This has been resolved on the revised drawing and is acceptable.**

- c) There is an opportunity to include feature trees in the open space at the end of the shared surfaces on the south-eastern boundary to reflect this design feature on the western boundary. Locations shown below with red crosses: **These have been included.**



- d) There is an opportunity to include an additional feature tree on the open grassed area to the fronts of plots 226 & 227 as shown below. **This has not been included and consider the landscape response to this area will need to be resolved as there is an opportunity to do more in this area. Further details can be provided through a conditions app.**



- e) There are a number of locations where a small area of native shrub mix is proposed between the edge of the private drive and the swale. Two examples are shown below. I consider that this type of planting is not appropriate in this area and suggest that in all locations such as this, the native shrub planting is replaced with prairie style planting with an emphasis on the use of ornamental grasses and perennials. It will provide a transition between the development edge and the more informal open space. **The native shrub mix has been removed; however, this has been replacing with grass rather than the suggested prairie style planting to provide a transition as indicated above. I would like to see this included but can be addressed through a conditions application.**

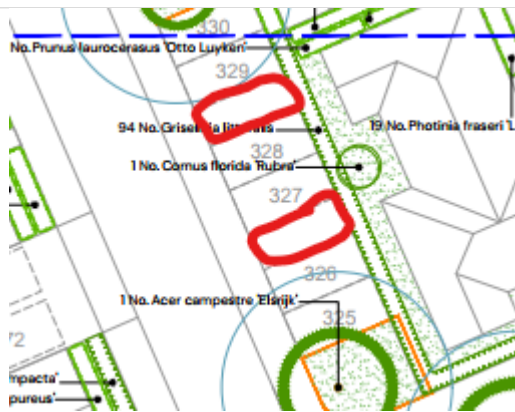


- f) I note that the location of the 'Play on the Way' is shown on the drawing to which I have no objection. Details of what this consists of will need to be provided through a conditions submission. I presume the 'play on the way' is area of boulders only and no other features in any other area. The Green Infrastructure officer will need to confirm he is happy with this proposal.
- g) I note that some native hedgerows are included on the edge of the proposed development including those adjacent to properties. One is shown around the outside edge of the access to the dwelling on plot 285 on the north-western corner of the site, however this is not labelled and will need to be.
- h) A similar hedgerow was shown around the outer edge of plot 255 on the previous landscape drawing which is now been removed on this latest revision. I would like to see the proposed hedgerow retained to ensure it is clear to users of the adjacent public open space that the space adjacent to the dwelling is private and can't be used as a cut-through.
- i) I note that a 750mm retaining wall is shown on the Engineering drawing to the north of the rear garden for plot 225. As this will face onto public open space some planting in the public open space adjacent to this boundary will be required to visually soften the combined height of the retaining wall and boundary wall.

Several minor changes / additions are required Detailed Landscape Proposal for Public Open Space (Rev D) drawing and suggest these are submitted for approval as part of a conditions application.

- 8. The landscape proposals within the development site are shown on Detailed Soft On-Plot Landscape Proposals Sheets 1 – 5. I suggest the following amendments: Revised Detailed Soft On-Plot Landscape Proposals Sheets 1 – 4 Rev A, Sheet 5 (no revision), are now provided.

- j) Sheet 4 doesn't show any soft planting in the gaps between parking bays for plots 326 & 327 and 328 & 329 as identified below in red. I presume should be planted and suggest a small tree could also be included in each of these beds. These areas are now shown with planting and is acceptable.



- k) Is it possible to include an additional small tree in the planting beds just outside the garden boundary walls of plots 240 & 241 as indicated below: I note this area has a lamp column so a tree can't be included, however I still would like to see climbers included on the garden fences which have now been removed.



- l) Is it possible to include an additional small tree in the planting bed between car parking spaces 279 & 280? I note this area has a lamp column so a tree can't be included.
- m) Any hedgerow that's forming a boundary to a property will need to include a temporary post and wire fence to aid establishment and to provide a secure boundary whilst the hedgerow matures. This is included in the submitted landscape specification.
- n) Tree pit details will need to be provided. As discussed in point 4 above we will need to understand tree pit details in relation to rain gardens. This has been provided, see additional comment on Point 4 above.
- o) It is disappointing that with the inclusion of the lamp columns and an additional visitor parking space outside plot 323 a number of street trees have been removed. This will need to be reviewed to see whether smaller trees can be accommodated within these spaces, or the location of the lighting column amended slightly in order to allow a tree to be planted. We have gone from 14 street trees down to 6 street trees under these revisions which is not acceptable and more will need to be accommodated as previously proposed. If lighting columns could be located to the back of visitor spaces rather than in verges this would allow the street trees to be included and provide lighting where required.
9. We will need to be provided with hard landscape details across the site. This can be provided as part of a conditions application. This will still need to be provided.
10. A planting specification is provided on Sheet 3 of the on-plot soft landscaping; however the landscape condition (given below) requires a full landscape

specification for all parts of the site including hard landscape elements. This will need to be provided as a separate document and covering all elements of the landscape scheme. A landscape specification has been provided.

A number of changes have been made to address my previous comments, however there is still a number of landscape issues that will need to be resolved as detailed in green above. These can be addressed at the conditions stage through revised landscape plans. The landscape condition will need to be included as detailed below.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Detailed landscape condition

- i) No development shall take place in any phase of the development until full details of both hard and soft landscape works for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. The details shall include, as appropriate:
 - a) scheme drawings;
 - b) proposed levels and contours;
 - c) detailed design of SuDS features in accordance with the SuDS Strategy, demonstrating how they will be integrated into the wider landscape, with attenuation basins having a natural shape and shallow profile (not requiring lifesaving equipment and fence barriers), allowing them to fulfil amenity, ecological and drainage functions;
 - d) soft landscaping details including planting plans, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;
 - e) a Landscape Specification document covering soft landscaping (including site preparation, cultivation, plant handling and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment) and hard landscaping including all construction works such as paths, bridges and retaining walls;
 - f) details of the street tree planting pits in combination with the roadside swales/raingardens demonstrating that the trees have sufficient rooting volume to enable their successful retention long term health;
 - g) hard landscaping materials including samples;
 - h) minor artefacts and structures (e.g. play equipment, street furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs, external services) including specifications for the product and its installation;
 - i) specification for tree rooting systems and use of structural soils under paving or where rooting volumes are limited;
 - j) all boundary treatments, and other means of enclosure or controlling access such as gates, bollards and vehicle restraint systems, which shall include consideration of ecological permeability;
 - k) measures required for ecological mitigation and biodiversity net gain;
- ii) Details of quality control measures, including supervision of landscape contract(s) by a suitably qualified landscape specialist and annual landscape audits for the five-year period from completion of the landscaping for the Landscape Phase or until adoption (whichever is longer). The annual

- Landscape Audit shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for information prior to the next planting season and replacement planting undertaken in accordance with the landscape audit and iii) below.
- iii) Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Date:

20th January 2026

Signed:

C. Brimble