

Memo

To: Alison Amoah

From: Cathy Holwill (RBC Ecology Consultations)

CC:

Date: 4 April 2024

Re: Planning application ref: 240218

Address: Zoar Strict Baptist Chapel South Street Reading

Description: Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (Materials), 4 (Construction Management), 5 (Cycle Parking), 9 (Hard and Soft Landscaping) and 13 (Birds and Bats) of application 211063

This application is for the discharge of conditions 3 (Materials), 4 (Construction Management), 5 (Cycle Parking), 9 (Hard and Soft Landscaping) and 13 (Birds and Bats) of application 211063 [Erection of a block of 8 apartments (C3 use)]

Condition 9 reads:

No development shall commence on site until a comprehensive scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- a. Proposed finished ground and floor levels or contours, means of enclosure (including mammal gaps where appropriate), car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;*
- b. Hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and other ancillary structures (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc);*
- c. Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, details of the green roof, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), tree pit specifications, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable;*
- d. A maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting;*
- e. routes and details of proposed and existing functional services above and below ground including foul and surface water drainage, soakaways and SUDs details, power, communications cables and water and gas supply pipelines, including access points;*

The approved hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting

season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required prior to commencement of development because of insufficient information contained within this submission and in the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

The landscaping drawing (Colony Architects, 11/2023) shows the location of four new trees at the front of the development (all *Acer palmatum*). A small area of lawn is proposed for the community garden area to the rear of the building with 2 small strips of native hedging and a short strip of shrub planting.

The areas surrounding the trees is shown as a black speckled pattern on the drawing which is not included in the key and it is therefore unclear what the plans for landscaping are in these locations. Other planting is shown at the front of the building and is simply referred to as “assorted potted plants” although no details of species, numbers, maintenance and management have been supplied. Both the condition and key refer to a ‘green roof’, but there are none shown on the plans and no details of the green roof planting are provided.

All of these details together with tree pit specifications and an implementation timetable will need to be supplied as part of the submission for this condition before the condition can be discharged.

Condition 13 reads:

No development shall commence beyond foundation level until details of 8 x bat/bird boxes or tiles have been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These shall be incorporated into the development and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To enhance biodiversity on site in accordance with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

The applicant has submitted a drawing (Colony Architects, 11/2/2023) showing the location and details of elevation of four bat boxes and four bird boxes. The specifications provided indicate that these will not be integrated into the development and instead will be attached to external walls. However these should be integral boxes built into the wall because if they are not, over time they will fall off or be removed and will not provide sustainable long term habitats for bats and birds. (A good example of a universal nest brick can be seen here: https://www.swift-conservation.org/universal_swift_nest_brick02.pdf.)

In summary, insufficient information has been submitted to discharge Conditions 9 and 13.

Conditions 3 (Materials), 4 (Construction Management), 5 (Cycle Parking) are unrelated to ecology and there are no ecological objections to the discharge of these conditions