

Our Ref: 22049/CPJ/am
Your Ref: PP-12493597; 230654
Email: cjones@firstplan.co.uk
Date: 3 October 2023

Planning Department
Reading Borough Council Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Dear Sir/Madam,

**DETAILS PURSUANT TO THE DISCHARGE OF CONDITION 4 OF PLANNING PERMISSION REF:
230654**

3-5 CRAVEN ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE RG1 5LE

We are instructed by our client, N Family Holdings Ltd (trading as N Family Club), to submit the enclosed application for the discharge of Condition 4 (Landscaping) attached to Planning Permission ref: 230654 granted by Reading Borough Council on 24 August 2023. Permission was granted for:

“Removal of timber extension to rear of no.3 Craven Road and replacement extension including 2no. roof lights. Removal of lean-to extension to rear of no.3 Craven Road and construction of 2no. external stores. Removal of existing rooflight to no. 3 Craven Road and repair of slate roof to match existing. Removal of escape stair to rear of no.5 Craven Road. Minor alterations to roof and new double doors to link building. Landscaping to rear garden, including cycle and buggy stores.”

This application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-12493597) alongside the required application fee of £116 and portal admin fee of £64.

The following documents are included with this submission:

- Completed Application Form;
- Cover Letter prepared by Firstplan; and
- Landscape Plan prepared by Marcus Foster (ref. L001); and
- Landscape Management Plan prepared by Marcus Foster (ref. LA/MF/0177/23).

Details reserved by Condition 4

Condition 4 states:

“Prior to first occupation/use of the development hereby approved, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall specify means of treatment for hard surfaced areas, means of enclosure including mammal gaps where appropriate, biodiversity enhancements including integral bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities on around

the buildings, specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted (including replacement trees and tree pit specifications where appropriate, and must include a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s) or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with 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.”

With the reason being:

“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.”

Condition 4

In respect of this Condition, a detailed Landscaping Plan has been prepared by Marcus Foster (BA (Hons), MSGD, MArborA). This outlines the location of the proposed planting and new hard and soft landscaping, alongside wider landscaping of the site.

A satellite image of the existing hardstanding to the rear of the site is provided at Figure 1.



Figure 1. Satellite View of Site

In response to comments received during the course of the main application, the applicant provided details of the landscaping scheme including a commitment for additional tree planting and inclusion of native species, in addition to the protection and retention of the tree to the rear of the link building. The proposed planting scheme was considered to be acceptable by the Natural Environment Officer and approved under the main application.

These details have been incorporated into the proposed Landscaping Plan, which uses naturalistic materials and elements to create a high quality and user-friendly outdoor area for the children, whilst also providing visual interest and enhancing the character, appearance and setting of the locally listed building.

An extract of the Landscape Layout is provided at Figure 2, with Extracts of the Hard and Soft Landscaping Schedules provided at Figure 3.

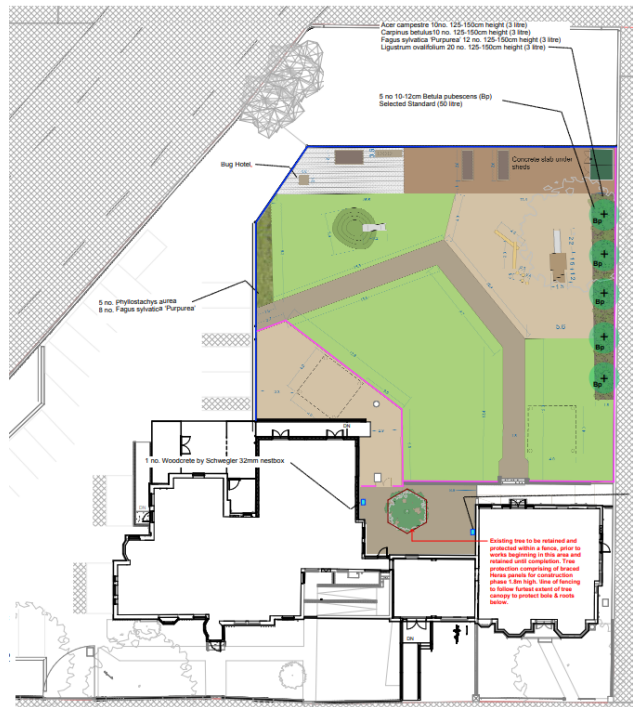


Figure 2. Extract of Landscaping Scheme

HARD LANDSCAPE SCHEDULE

MATERIAL		
Marshall Charcoal concrete blocks (200mm x 100mm)	43m2	43m2
Pathways		
EPDM Rubber Surface: Crumb	242m2	242m2
Play Areas		
EPDM Rubber Surface: Mulch	110m2	110m2
Artificial Grass	440m2	440m2
Decking	77m2	77m2

SOFT LANDSCAPE SCHEDULE

PLANTS	QUANTITY	TOTAL / SIZE
TREES		
Betula pubescens	5	5 no 10-12cm Selected Standard (50 litre)
NATIVE HEDGE		
Planted at 3 / linear metre in piebald formation:		
Acer campestre	10	10 no. 125-150cm height (3 litre)
Carpinus betulus	10	10 no. 125-150cm height (3 litre)
Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea'	12 + 8	20 no. 125-150cm height (3 litre)
Ligustrum ovalifolium	20	20 no. 125-150cm height (3 litre)
SHRUBS		
Phyllostachys aurea	5	5 no. 175-200cm height (50 litre)

Figure 3. Extracts of Hard and Soft Landscaping Schedules

Soft Landscaping

In terms of the soft landscaping, the landscaping scheme outlines the species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of the proposed new planting. To the rear play garden, 5no. new 'Betula pubescens' Birch Trees are to be planted. In addition, a mixture of native hedging is to be planted in piebald formation, with spacing of 3 per linear metre. These are specified to be 3 litre plants of 125-150cm height, comprising 10no. Acer campestre, 10no. Carpinus betulus, 20no. Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea' and 20no. Ligustrum Ovalifolium. Furthermore, 5no. 'Phyllostachys aurea' shrubs will be planted of 175-200cm height.

This planting has been selected to suit the site, so as to ensure its long-term survival. These plants will provide low-level visual and sensory interest, be safe for garden users and also help to provide additional shading. In addition, moveable planters will provide visual and sensory interest, and 'learn through play' opportunities for the children.

Across the wider site, the existing trees to the car parking area boundaries and Craven Road frontage of the site are to be retained, with the tree within the rear play area to be retained and protected in line with the requirements of Condition 5.

The Landscape Methodology sets out in detail the preparation and process required to successfully implement the soft landscaping and tree planting scheme. It is noted that all tree planting will be undertaken in accordance with BS8545 (Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape, 2014). It also sets out the post planting aftercare and maintenance programme required, to allow successful establishment of planting and ensure a satisfactory appearance on completion of the development and beyond.

As specified within the Condition, the Landscaping Plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the occupation of the buildings, in the first planting and seeding seasons or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. All tree planting and landscaping will be maintained for five years from the date of planting. Any trees or shrubs which die during the 5 year period will be replaced during the following planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Hard Landscaping

In terms of the hard landscaping, the landscaping scheme outlines the proposed location and materials of surfacing to the rear of the site. To the play areas, it is proposed to use a combination of artificial grass and porous rubber crumb and mulch surfacing, along with smaller areas of concrete paving and decking. The approved fencing will be a mixture of low-level picket fencing within the play areas, alongside close-boarded timber fencing. While it is noted the condition wording seeks inclusion of mammal gaps where appropriate, the brick boundary walls reduce the possibility of installing these, and they are not considered to be suitable for a nursery environment, with the safety and security of the young children using the garden areas in mind.

Biodiversity Enhancements

The Landscaping Plan also outlines measures which will be implemented to enhance the biodiversity interest of the site. It is noted that there is no additional hardstanding proposed onsite, and no vegetation or planting is being removed as part of the works. Retaining the existing mature trees is a sustainable solution which will maintain existing habitats. As outlined above, all new proposed planting has been selected to suit the site, to ensure its long-term survival. This will maximise the long term biodiversity and nature conservation interest of the site.

The new planting proposed will create additional habitat opportunities across the site, with the proposed species selected in part for their biodiversity value. The proposed species for the new native hedgerows will provide a roosting and nesting habitat for birds, with the mixture of 3 species offering a greater biodiversity value. Similarly, the proposed species of birch tree is known to provide food and habitat for more than 300 insect species and birds¹.

In addition to the planting, 2no. bird boxes are proposed, and are specified as 'Woodcrete by Schwegler 32mm nestboxes'. These are multi-host boxes which can offer nesting and roosting opportunities for coal tits, blue tits, great tits and house sparrows. These are considered to be most appropriate for the location and nature of the site. Care will be taken to protect and maintain the boxes, to avoid damage to active nest sites. While it is noted the condition seeks bat boxes, these have not been included as the site has limited opportunity for bat roosts at height on suitable elevations. As such, bird nesting opportunities have been prioritised in this case.

¹ www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Finally, it is proposed to introduce a timber 'bug hotel' within the main play area. The bug hotel, in addition to its biodiversity contributions, will create valuable opportunities for the children to explore and learn about the importance of insects and nature through play.

NATURE ENHANCEMENT FEATURES		
MATERIAL	QUANTITY	TOTAL / SIZE
BIRDBOXES		
Woodcrete by Schwegler 32mm nestbox		
<i>To host:</i>		
Coal tit / Blue tit / Great tit / House sparrow	1+1	2 no. 32mm diameter nestbox
TIMBER BUG HOTEL (CHILD FRIENDLY)		
1000mm height x 500mm width	1	1

Figure 4: Extract of Nature Enhancement Features

As demonstrated above, the proposed landscaping forms a significant increase in the planting to the rear of the site and delivery of clear biodiversity and aesthetic (greenery) enhancement over the existing tarmac environment. Similarly, the proposals provide these (historically) residential properties a formal garden, which will enhance their character and the appearance as a whole.

It is considered that the Landscaping Plan and Management Plan demonstrate that the landscaping of the development will be visually attractive and enhance the visual environment and setting of the locally listed building.

Conclusion

We trust that the enclosed information is sufficient to enable officers to successfully discharge all elements of Condition 4 attached to Planning Permission ref. 230654.

In the meantime, we look forward to receiving confirmation that the enclosed application has been validated, however, if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



CHRIS PIRIS-JONES

Director

Enc.