

Memo

To: Sian Hickey, Planning

From: Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 16 February 2024

Re: Consultation on a discharge of condition Application (revisions)

Application Number: 231815
Application Type: Approval of Conditions
Address: Hamilton Academy 40 Christchurch Road Reading RG2 7AY
Proposal: Discharge of conditions 5 (arboricultural method statement), 6 (landscaping scheme), 7 (biodiversity enhancements), 8 (muga fence) and 11 (construction method statement) of planning application 231025.

With reference to my memo of 8/2/24 and to the agents email of 15/2/24, I have the following comments with reference to the following plans /documents provided within the email:

Landscape Specification and Management Plan ref L6615 Rev 03 dated 14.2.24

Arboricultural Method Statement ref J64.56, dated 14 February 2024 from Broad Oak Tree Consultants Ltd

Proposed Site Plan Rev P04

Construction Management Plan 20th November 2023 Rev 1.1 (no revision date or ref which would be prudent to distinguish it from the original)

I note that **Proposed Site Plan Rev P04** now omits the play area at the rear (all other plans are consistent with this).

Condition 5 – Arb Method Statement

With reference to the **Arboricultural Method Statement ref J64.56, dated 14 February 2024 from Broad Oak Tree Consultants Ltd** I can confirm that this responds satisfactorily to the point in my previous memo.

However, see my comment below regarding hard surfacing.

Condition 6 (landscaping etc)

With reference to **Landscape Specification and Management Plan ref L6615 Rev 03 dated 14.2.24** (which includes Landscape Plan Site Overview 2023-L6615-002 D, Soft Landscape Plan Sheet 1 of 3 2023-L6615-003 D, Soft Landscape Plan Sheet 2 of 3 2023-L6615-004 D, Soft Landscape Plan Sheet 3 of 3 2023-L6615-005 D and Planting Schedule dated 15/02/24):

In relation to hard surfacing on the east side, the Site plan and Landscape plans are consistent in showing gravel, however the TPP shows block paving albeit I note section 7 of the AMS specified gravel - on balance the TPP doesn't need to be amended.

In relation to the proposed soft landscaping, the amendments largely satisfactorily respond to my previous memo. However, soil volume provision is important to consider now as it affected the tree pit design and possibly species and is a normal request as part of discharging landscaping. There is no provision to secure this information otherwise. The response in the agent's email to this is: *'I have put a note in the maintenance schedule re root barriers and root management systems. Requirements for these will vary depending on circumstances on site and will need to coordinate with services, foundations, hard landscaping etc. I don't feel we need to go into more detailed specification apropos the soil volume at this stage'*. This raises the issue of services, the details of which are required by part b of this condition and which do not appear to have been provided. Landscaping and services need to be considered together to ensure they are mutually inclusive.

The stock size of trees proposed (6-8cm girth) is smaller than normally required, however will be accepted in this case as 'instant' impact is not so important given existing trees.

I commented that Cherries were over-represented in the borough so the two Wild Cherries (*Prunus avium*) at the front have been replaced with two *Malus* and 2 Bird Cherries have been replaced with Kilmarnock Willow. However, the two Birch at the rear were then replaced with two Cherries, hence this is confusing. In case, as it's only now two Cherries proposed, it's acceptable.

I note the confirmation that all boundary treatment is to be retained as is.

With reference to the main document of **Landscape Specification and Management Plan ref L6615 Rev 03 dated 14.2.24**, this is now acceptable [there is a typo in 4.2.3 ii as it should be BS5837, but this is a minor point].

Condition 11 (construction method statement)

With reference to the Construction Management Plan 20th November 2023 Rev 1.1 (revised but with no revision date or reference, as should be provided), this now makes reference to the AMS (in section 3). It is a fairly unconvincing addition though and states:

The following statements needs to be adhered to throughout the project upon instruction from Reading District Council:

'Tree protection to be implemented in accordance with the approved Arboriculture Method Statement'.

'The applicant should ensure, of course, that there is nothing on the CMS plan that conflicts with the tree protection and work with the arb consultant if necessary.'

Obviously, it Reading Borough Council. The second sentence is fine. The third sentence sounds like an officer comment rather than confirmation that the CMS presents no conflict with the AMS requirements. However, the CMS plan on the last page raises no obvious conflict and the above states that they will work with the arb consultant as necessary, hence the CMS is acceptable, albeit a one with a revision number and date should be sought.

For completeness, the following is the response from the agent (in their email) with my comments in red:

I have received the updated landscape design and the amended AMS. Below is a summary of responses to each query, which I hope covers everything.

Condition 5 – AMS

- Comment added to section 9 as requested.
- Section 13 note added.
- No dig annotation added to plan.

All accepted, as above.

Condition 6 – Landscaping etc

- All references to the version B drawings can be ignored as they were superseded by version C and now version D in the attached. **Noted**
- The legend on Drawing 23-062 0100 has been updated in revision C04 (attached) to note the porous surface. **Noted**
- The existing boundary treatments are being retained. **Noted**

Notes on updates from the Landscape Architect:

1. Sheet 1 of 3. I have suggested that the 2 Cherry Trees (*Prunus Avium*) in front car park area are changed to 2 no Crab apple (*malus sylvestris*) which are smaller trees, still native and hopefully are not over represented in the Borough. I have put a note in the maintenance schedule re root barriers and root management systems. Requirements for these will vary depending on circumstances on site and will need to coordinate with services, foundations, hard landscaping etc. I don't feel we need to go into more detailed specification apropos the soil volume at this stage. **Comments as above**
2. Sheet 2 of 3. I have replaced the 2 Silver Birch with *Albertii* Cherry. The 2 Bird Cherries have been replaced with Kilmarnock Willow. **Comments as above**
3. I have shown mulched zone around the Beech and Oak as per your drawing although the area seems generous. **Noted – for clarity, mulched zones are recommended to the drip line (furthest extent of the canopy) where feasible, hence that shown on the TPP is appropriate and in line with good practice.**
4. Girth sizes now included on schedules. This is something I would normally have specified however the original Ecologist's notes asked for saplings and these do

not normally specify girth sizes. Comments as above – ‘saplings’ would not have been appropriate.

5. *I confirm I’ve updated / adjusted the reference to the BS standards. Noted.*

In conclusion, the following are required:

- Soil volume provision for new trees, particularly those mentioned in my original memo
- Plans showing existing and proposed services
- Amended CMS - purely for new revision number and date