

Memo

To: Anthony Scholes, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 10th September 2025

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/25/1173

Application Type: Full planning permission

Address: 40 Mount Pleasant, Reading, RG1 2TD

Proposal: Demolition of existing car repair garages and erection of 6 family dwellings and associated landscaping, waste and bicycle storage. S 73 Variation of Conditions 5, 6, 14, 11 and I11 of application PL/20/1880 - Amendments to the landscape bin store location and boundary treatment. Renegotiation of associated S106 agreement in respect of affordable housing condition

The site is within a low canopy cover ward, tree'd corridor and AQMA. All of which are priority areas for tree planting. I will be addressing the changes to the landscaping.

Planning History

PL/25/0687 sought a variation of the approved plans for PL/20/1880. This was refused on tree and landscaping grounds based on the following:

Landscaping which was originally proposed, and secured by condition (including conditions being discharged) allowed for landscaping to the frontage, and the accessway in front of the dwellings. The current proposal would limit and/or remove the opportunity for landscaping to the frontage. This is considered a failing of the revised scheme, resulting in a visually stark and cramped frontage with no, or limited space for landscaping to soften the frontage.

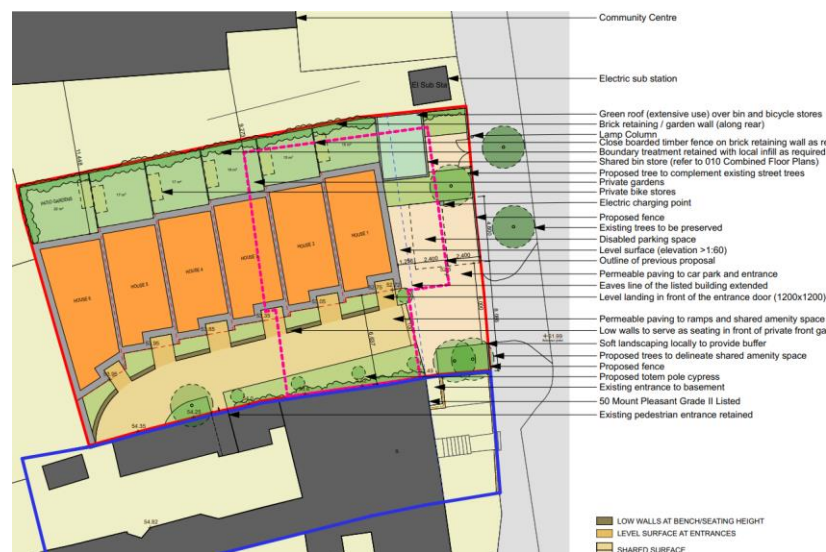
PL/25/0998 sought to discharge condition 6 (boundary treatment) for PL/20/1880 but was withdrawn.

Comments

With reference to the Block Plan, Urban Grain, 3D views, Drawing No. 002, Rev P7 and the Landscaping & Bin Storage Elevations, July 2025, Drawing No. 03, Rev C, I note the following:



Newly Proposed



Originally Proposed

The previous landscaping offered to plant four trees within the site, three of which were adjacent to the road. This was a positive aspect of the previous application given the site is along a tree'd corridor, AQMA and within a low canopy cover ward. However, two trees adjacent to the road have been proposed to be relocated. Whilst their retention is positive, tree'd corridors should prioritise tree planting on the frontage/road side of developments.

In addition, all trees are now proposed in raised planters which is a significant concern in relation to 1) limiting their ultimate size as a result of limited soil volume provision 2) risk of root damage to planters (no specifications are provided) and 3) a greater need for irrigation. No detail has been provided to demonstrate how proposed tree planting can be successful in the long-term.

The plans show only 2 parking spaces; one adjacent to an EV charging point. I note the 'Planning Design & Access Statement including Heritage Statement' refers multiple times to the disabled parking space – it is not clear from the plan which this is. In any case, if only two parking spaces are required, it is unclear why more of the southern boundary can't be afforded to soft landscaping, instead of tree planting being confined to small planters – clarity is required.

The rear gardens of the previous application incorporated the existing northern boundary vegetation. The proposed landscaping plans do not indicate this being included which is negative as it appears there will be a loss of vegetation – it is unclear what is proposed within the rear gardens hence clarity is required.

I also note a reduced amount of soft landscaping through out the entire site. The previous plans included plots of green communal spaces where as the proposed plans offer a lesser amount of communal green spaces whilst including more hard surfacing.

To conclude the Natural Environment Team are not supportive of this change as the tree locations have been altered which are less suited to the site considerations, tree planting is confined to small planters and there is a lesser amount of soft landscaping than that previously proposed with no justification for the limited amount shown.