

Memo

To: Gary Miles, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 10th December 2025

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/25/1694

Application Type: Approval of details reserved by a condition

Address: Thameside Primary School, Harley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DB

Proposal: Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 4 (Soft Landscaping) of application PL/25/0342

I had previously commented on the application for PL25/0342. I will be addressing the proposed soft landscaping in this consultation to address Condition 4.

Condition 4 states:

Prior to first use of the equipment hereby approved, a scheme of soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees to be planted within the surrounding school playing fields (including replacement trees and tree pit specifications where appropriate), and shall 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 full in accordance with the approved details in the first available planting season following commencement of the development hereby approved, or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement.

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: 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.

With reference to Proposed Plan - Soft Landscaping, 10th June 2025, Drawing No. 2061-2024-SK-15, Rev D, I note the following:

The plan positively proposes to plant three replacement trees for the felling of the 'B' category Maple to facilitate the development.

I note the Tilia Cordata is proposed to be planted in the Hard Games Court, but within a soft grounded area. I have some concerns that the tree will be vulnerable to damage from the use of the games court and thus some extra protection i.e. a tree guard should be considered. I also encourage considering protection for the two other new trees as they are also vulnerable to damage from the use of the sports field, however their locations are agreeable.

The maintenance programme isn't detailed enough, and it should detail all maintenance to be undertaken to ensure successful establishment of trees. This should include inspections, removal of damage/dead/diseased branches, application of mulch, tree stake inspection/adjustment/removal etc. Also note the watering should be for the first three growing seasons after planting, not two years after planting.

The plan should also state the trees should be a minimum of 3m in height at the time of planting, as well as the 12-14cm in girth. It should also be stated they will be planted in the next available planting season (November-March).

The tree pit specifications need to be provided to meet with the requirements of the condition.

The plan should also specifically state that the trees will be replaced should they die, become diseased, damaged or removed after 5 years from the development.

To conclude, the requirements of the condition have not been met as further detail is required regarding the planting and maintenance of the trees. I would be happy to provide advice of this going forward to get matters resolved.