

Memo

To: Huimin Chen, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 23rd January 2026

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/25/1662

Application Type: Approval of details reserved by a condition

Address: 48 Knights Way, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8RH

Proposal: Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 5- (Hard & soft landscaping) of application PL/24/0487

I had previously commented on application PL/25/0822 which sought to discharge Condition 5 (landscaping) of PL/24/0487. However, Condition 5 was not discharged as part of PL/25/0822.

Following my comments of 22nd December 2025, and providing additional advice to the applicant of 15th January 2025, please see my previous comments in black and my newest comments in red.

Condition 5 states:

Prior to first occupation/use of the building 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 details of the replacement trees – species, stock size, location and tree pit specifications, 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 (Nov-March) following the occupation of the building(s) or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. If any of the trees, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased they 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.

Approved Drawing No. BA0275 02 A – Proposed Plans and Elevations, shows the expected level of landscaping; that being two new trees to mitigate the loss of two trees; one in the front garden and one at the rear. My previous comments for application PL/25/0822 raised concerns that only one tree was included within the landscaping.

Comments for landscaping on frontage

I note that the previous landscape document for PL/25/0822 (Landscaping and Kerb Details drawing, January 2025, BA 0275 04), has been resubmitted yet has not taken into consideration the suggested amendments I included in my previous comments. They therefore still stand and are as follows:

Following the submission of the revised Landscaping and Kerb Details drawing, January 2025, BA 0275 04, please see my comments below.

Watering: *The watering specification should be extended to include the amount of water; that being 20-25 litres weekly given the stock size proposed*
Additional watering during dry conditions should also be considered.

This has now been amended with additional watering included which meets with the requirement of the Condition..

Planting Notes: *planting will take place in the 1st planting season following the construction, stating the planting will take place between October-March. Condition 5 states 'Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting (Nov-March) following the occupation of the building(s) or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.'* – The start of the planting season needs to be amended to begin in November, rather than October

This has now been amended and meets with the requirements of the Condition.

This plan also needs to specify the following as part of the requirements of the condition (also mentioned in my comments for previous application):

If any of the trees, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased they 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

This has now been included and meets with the requirements of the Condition.

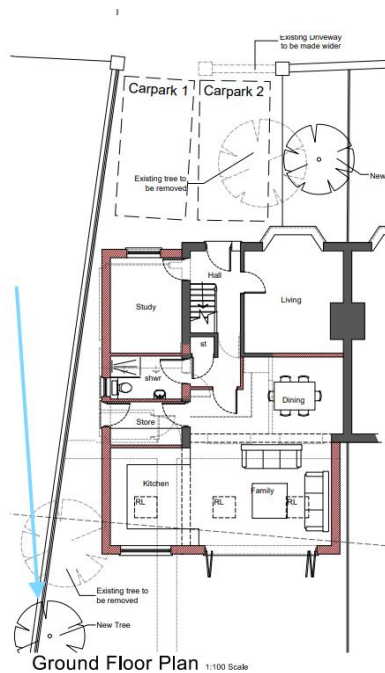
Comments for landscaping in rear garden

Following the submission of the revised Proposed Rear Tree Plan, please see my comments below.

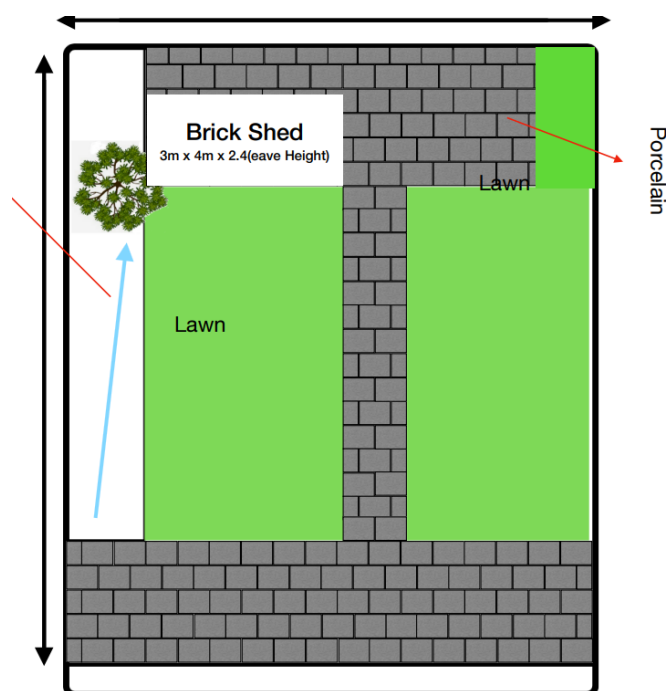
With reference to the Proposed Rear Tree plan, I note the only the lawn area and tree are plotted. I am unclear on the surfacing proposed in the white areas below. Hard surfacing also needs to be demonstrated as per the requirements of the condition. I also note the tree appears to be planted within the hard surfacing or containerised bed (unclear due to lack of labels – see slightly shaded area). So, clarity is required on this as I question why it is not being planted within the lawn area. I also note this tree is also an Apple (Malus) which is the same genus as that on the frontage and thereby offers no diversity other than the difference in cultivar. I encourage a different species is used here to improve diversity.

Clarity has been provided on the hard surfacing which meets the requirements of the Condition. The applicant has also stated via email of 12th January 2026, that the tree will be planted directly into the ground, rather than in a planting bed, which is positive. This

will support the tree reaching its ultimate size rather than confining it to a limited volume of soil. The species in the rear garden has also been reconsidered which is positive as this offers more diversity. I do have concerns that the tree is now in close proximity to the brick shed and this is likely to lead to future conflict between the tree and the shed in the future, which may make tree retention undesirable. The approved plan shows the tree in a different location than that in the revised Proposed Rear Tree Plan. I encourage that the applicant reconsiders its location to represent that of the approved plan and to avoid conflict in the future with the shed which will aid in long-term retention of the tree.



Rear tree location in the approved plans



Rear tree location in revised Proposed Rear Tree Plan (in close proximity to the brick shed)

1. of the Planting Notes states '*implementation of soft landscape proposals to be undertaken following completion of main construction works during the 1st available planting season (October to March).*' – Planting season is November-March so this requires amendment.

This has now been amended and meets with the requirement of the Condition.

The ONGOING MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE NOTES states '*Trees to be watered on weekly basis during growing season (April - October) for first two years*' – Watering should take place after the three growing seasons and the watering specification should be extended to include the amount of water; that being 20-25 litres weekly given the stock size proposed. Additional watering during dry conditions should also be considered.

This has now been amended with additional watering included which meets with the requirement of the Condition.

The management/maintenance notes state '*Regularly inspect all planting and grassed areas, e.g. once a month, for any pest damage or vandalism/damage caused by others. Any damaged to be reported to the Employer and rectified in the next available season by replacement planting or reseeding/ turfing and protective measures if required*'.

This needs to specify what is included in the condition and is as follows:

If any of the trees, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased they 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.

This has now been included and meets with the requirement of the Condition.

To conclude, the discharge of Condition 5 is not currently supported as clarity is required regarding the hard surfacing in rear garden and what the tree is being planted in here. The species of one of the trees should be reconsidered to improve diversity. The remaining above amendments are also required to meet with the requirements of the condition.

To conclude, the requirements of the Condition have been met, aside from the location of the tree in the rear garden not being in the same position as the approved plans. I do have concerns regarding future conflict between the tree in the rear garden and the brick shed, as they are in close proximity to one another and I encourage the planting position is revised to represent that of the approved plans. This will aid in the long-term retention of the tree, as it will have more space to grow to its ultimate size and avoid future conflict with structures.