

# Memo

**To:** Anthony Scholes, Planning

**From:** Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

**CC:** GS Ecology

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026

**Re:** Consultation on an Application

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**Planning Application Ref:** PL/26/0372

**Application Type:** Approval of details reserved by a condition

**Address:** 23 Church End Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4XA

**Proposal:** Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 of application PL/25/0273

We were not consulted on the PL/25/0273 so comments from us regarding tree and landscaping requirements were not provided. However, Sarah Hanson (NE Officer) provided you with an email regarding the tree and landscaping requirements for the development proposed under PL/24/1201 on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024. She mentioned that tree protection would be required, alongside an AMS for the patios being built within RPAs. The patios shown for PL/24/1201 (later withdrawn) are in the same proximity to the trees as that in PL/25/0273. I am unclear why tree information was not provided or why we were not given the opportunity to comment on PL/25/0273, given Sarah's advice for PL/24/1201. Unfortunately, no AIA/AMS/TPP was provided at the application stage and aren't conditioned in the approval for PL/25/0273.

I had previously commented on this application on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Please see my previous comments in black and my response to the new documents in red.

Condition 7:

*Prior to first occupation of the dwelling 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, specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted (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 accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the first occupation of the dwelling or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation. 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.*

Comments for Condition 7:

With reference to the PROPOSED SITE PLAN HARD & SOFT LANDSCAPE LAYOUT. March 2026, Drawing No. PL/A724/07, and the associated Landscape Specifications, Reference: PL/A724/D03, I note the following:

I note that the 'Existing trees to be retained' label only points to one of the trees on site. There is another tree in the southeastern corner, and it is not clear whether this is to be retained or removed. Clarity needs to be provided on this as development must not lead to a net loss in tree numbers. This information should have been demonstrated at the application stage. Section 3.2 Retained Trees of the Landscape Specification, states 'Protect all trees marked Existing trees to be retained', but it is unclear how the trees will be protected as no RPAs are shown on the Landscape Plan and there is no tree protection shown. With reference to the Construction Method Statement, Ref: PL/A724/D04, I note that tree protection isn't shown here either. I also note that the site office appears to conflict with the tree in the southeastern corner (that is not clearly labelled as retained), so clarity must be sought on this as this may require tree removal or facilitative pruning.

With reference to the LANDSCAPE SPECIFICATION (PL/A724/D03A – Landscape Specifications REV A), it has now been confirmed that the two trees in the rear garden will be retained and protective measures will be implemented in accordance with the BS5837 2012, which is positive.

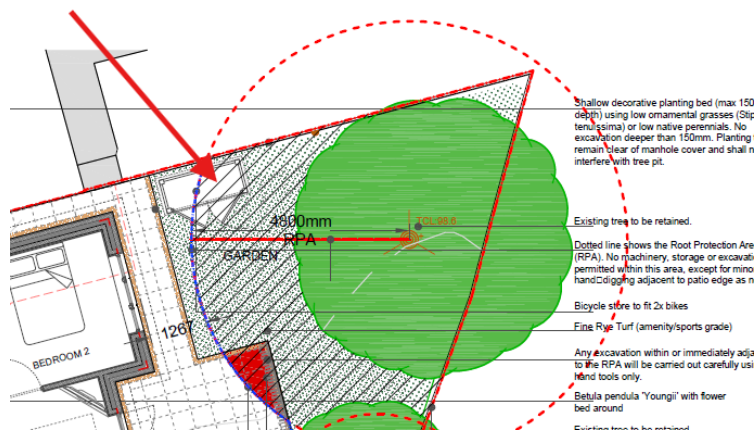


CMS Diagram



Landscape Plan Diagram (first revision)

With reference to the PROPOSED SITE PLAN HARD & SOFT LANDSCAPE LAYOUT, March 2026, Drawing No. PL/A724/07, Rev: B, I note that the bike sheds are being constructed partially within an RPA. I encourage that these are built above ground level and excavation is minimised through the use of a foundation type such as screw piles. I also encourage that a gap between the base of the bike sheds and the ground is left to allow for water permeability/movement and gaseous exchange within the soil of an RPA. If any concrete is poured into the ground, I encourage impermeable liners are used within RPAs to prevent the concrete leaching into the soil. If any excavation is required to facilitate the construction of the bike sheds within an RPA, the methodology in Section 2. Existing Trees & Retention Strategy, should be followed.



Landscape Plan Diagram (Rev B)

I note the 'Proposed mixed hedge planting to screen north and east boundaries for private amenity space' doesn't state the species or provide any further detail within the Landscape Specification. This is not detailed enough to meet the requirements of the condition. It needs to specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of plants to be planted.

This hedging in the rear garden has been omitted with the two existing trees retained. Section 5.1 Hedge Species Mix (Native), 5.2 Planting Specification & 5.3 Planting Arrangement, now provides species, spacing and sizes which is positive. A final total number of plants should also be stated. The only hedging now shown is that on the frontage along the southern boundary and a small section on the western boundary (previously further hedging shown on the frontage adjacent to the proposed tree), which Ecology will need to provide further comments on.

I note the hedge planting on the frontage of the site is '*Photinia Red Robin Hedging Plants 20-30cm Bushy Evergreen Hedge Shrubs*'. Section 5.2 *Photinia Red Robin Hedge* of the Landscape Specification then provides further detail on this. However, the maintenance and planting requirements are not detailed enough i.e. all planting should be undertaken during the planting season (stating the months) and there should be a detailed ongoing maintenance programme in order to determine successful establishment over the course of five years, as with all the planting on the site.

This has now been omitted from the plans which is negative as this reduces the amount of soft landscaping. However, I do acknowledge that the two trees in the rear garden are both being retained and that a mixed native hedge is replacing some of the previously proposed hedging. It is unclear why the hedging adjacent to the newly proposed tree on the frontage has been omitted (being previously '*Photinia Red Robin Hedging Plants*') but not replaced with mixed native hedging, so clarity would be welcome. An additional mixed native hedge on the frontage could mitigate for that lost in the rear garden, but I will leave Ecology to comment further on this.

I note there is a new *Betula pendula* 'Youngii' proposed to be planted on the frontage. Section 5.4 *Betula pendula* 'Youngii' Tree of the Landscape Specification details the planting of this further. Whilst this is positive, it does not include a tree pit specification or the stock size of the tree, which needs to be provided in order to meet with the requirements of the condition. I also note that it states it will be planted within a flower bed. The species of flowers and other information regarding these plants and their maintenance have not been provided.

I note the stock size has been provided but only states girth. Planting should state both the girth and height of the time of planting.

I note a tree pit diagram/cross section has not been provided. I advise that the latest guidance for tree planting/pits is referred to, being the BS8545:2014+A1:2026 'Trees from nursery to independence in the landscape – Code of practice'. Trees of different stock sizes have different tree pit specifications; hence the tree pit should be designed specifically for a 10-12cm in girth tree.

Section 8.1 Watering, requires amending to be more specific. Watering should be 20L a week for the first three growing seasons (April-October), with additional water added during drought periods.

I note the previously proposed flower beds have been clarified and described as '*Shallow decorative planting bed (max 150mm depth) using low ornamental grasses (Stipa tenuissima) or low native perennials*'. The species of the '*low native perennials*' should be provided, alongside the number of plants to be planted – the term 'or' is uncertain hence this needs to be specified for clarity and certainty purposes. Ecology will need to comment further as to whether this is acceptable based on their requirements.

I note the patio is to be made of '*Edale Eco Concrete permeable Paving slabs 450x450mm*', which is further detailed in Section 4.2 Patio of the Landscape Specification. This patio was discussed in the email exchange with Sarah Hanson for PL/24/1201, as it likely falls within the RPA of the tree in the southeastern corner. How this will be constructed whilst minimising the impact to tree health should have been demonstrated at the application stage. It is assumed this will require excavation, so I encourage that no further excavation than what is necessary is undertaken to try to limit the impact this will have on tree health. Although, note comments below regarding extents of excavation.

Section 6.1 Patio Areas, details how the patio will be installed within an RPA which I can confirm is fine.

I note in the general notes of the Landscape Plan that it is stated '*Extent of excavation works is to be determined by the contractor prior to pricing or commencing works*' and that Section 3.4 Grading of the Landscape Specification states, '*Grade soil to smooth, even falls.*' The extent of this excavation and ground level changes are a concern given this is currently unknown/not determined. There are trees on the site, and it is difficult to envision the extent of the potential negative impact this could have on the trees and their RPAs.

Section 3.2 Existing Trees, 3.3 Topsoil Handling & 3.4 Grading, all further detail how excavation and ground level changes will be undertaken with consideration for retained trees and their RPAs which I can confirm is fine.

Section 3.3 Topsoil Handling of the Landscape Specification states, '*Strip and store good quality topsoil for reuse*'. This implies the topsoil will be removed across the entire site but doesn't state the depth, along with the other unknown amounts of excavation within the site, so it hard to envision the potential negative impact this could have on tree health. It is also stated that '*Planting areas are to be cleared of all plant growth rubble and any other waste material.*', which is a concern as to how tree roots are going to be retained and protected whilst this is being undertaken as planting is indicated in close proximity to the retained trees.

Section 3.2 Existing Trees, 3.3 Topsoil Handling & 3.4 Grading, all further detail how excavation and ground level changes will be undertaken with consideration for retained trees and their RPAs which I can confirm is fine.

Section 7 Timing of Works and Section 8 Maintenance of the Landscape Specification are not specific or detailed enough. The planting season's months need to be stated, and the ongoing maintenance needs to be detailed further.

Section 7.1 General Planting Season, states planting season is October-March. The planting season is November-March hence this requires amendment.

#### Condition 8:

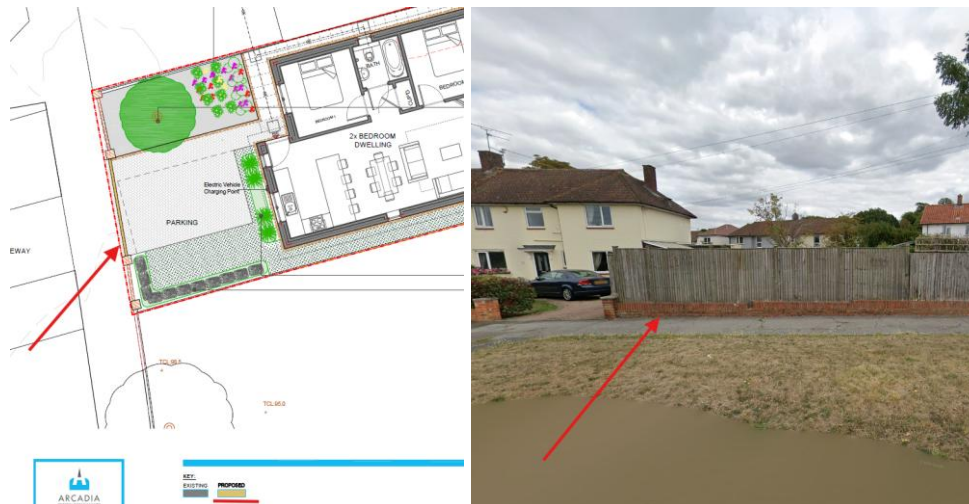
*Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of all boundary treatment to be erected, shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where appropriate the boundary treatment shall include the provision of mammal gaps. The boundary treatment shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan before the development is occupied or otherwise in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation.*

*REASON: In order to protect the privacy of adjoining and future occupiers and in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality and local wildlife in accordance with Policy CC7 and EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.*

#### Comments for Condition 8:

The Landscape Plan states that the southern boundary fence will retain the existing fence which is fine. The northern boundary treatment has been stated using both a '*Minimum 1.8m high close boarded fence*' and a '*Proposed 2m high close boarded fence*', but it isn't clearly indicated where these different boundary treatments change/the extent of each different boundary treatment.

Section 5.4 Boundary Treatment states '*Existing close-boarded fence retained*' on the western boundary. However, the fencing will need to be altered to allow for the parking/driveway entrance hence this should be demonstrated. There also appears to be an existing brick wall which is not acknowledged in the existing boundary treatment, and it is not clear how this wall will need to be adjusted to facilitate the driveway. Will there be a new gate for the driveway or is it being left as an open entrance? The Landscape Plan seems to be proposing something new as the key indicates.



Landscape Plan (Rev B) Vs Google StreetView

There is no existing boundary treatment on the northern boundary in the rear garden, so it is assumed new boundary treatment is proposed here hence the details of this are required. Please see the boundary I am referring to, taken from an aerial image from Google, below:



Google Maps

I note the frontage/western boundary treatment hasn't been specified so clarity needs to be provided on this. I note the Landscape Plan has included '*Proposed mixed hedge planting to screen north and east boundaries for private amenity space*'. Please see my comments above regarding the landscaping requirements of this hedging.

The remaining boundary treatment is fine albeit further clarity needs to be provided on the frontage/western boundary and the northern boundary in the rear garden.

## Conclusion

To conclude, currently neither Condition 7 nor Condition 8 are supported for discharge. Further clarity on all boundary treatment and the extent of each different type of boundary treatment needs to be demonstrated. The Landscape Plan and the Landscape Specification need to provide further detail in order to meet the requirements of the condition. Retained trees needs to be clearly labelled, and protection for the trees is mentioned so demonstrating this in the CMS would be appropriate.

To conclude, Condition 7 requires some minor amendments and details which I have noted above prior to discharge, and a diagram/cross-section of a tree pit design is required. Condition 8 requires further clarity of the northern boundary in the rear garden. Further clarity also needs to be provided for the western/frontage boundary treatment, as I am unclear on the works to the brick wall and fencing to facilitate the driveway.