

Memo

To: Anthony Scholes, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 3rd July 2026

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/26/0310

Application Type: Full planning permission

Address: 40-48 MOUNT PLEASANT, READING

Proposal: Retrospective demolition of car repair garages and erection of 6 dwellings (5 x 2-bed, 1 x 3-bed); with landscaping, waste storage areas, bicycle storage and associated works (an amended scheme to that approved under application reference PL/20/1880)

I have commented on applications for this site on several occasions and highlighted the need for the landscaping documentation to be clear and concise. For this development to be supported without associated conditions attached, the level of detail below is expected, which is the standard wording for Condition L2 and is as follows:

No development shall commence on site until a comprehensive scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- a. Proposed finished ground and floor levels or contours, means of enclosure (including mammal gaps where appropriate), car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;*
- b. Hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and other ancillary structures (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc);*
- c. Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), tree pit specifications, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable;*

d. *A maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting;*

e. *routes and details of proposed and existing functional services above and below ground including foul and surface water drainage, soakaways and SUDs details, power, communications cables and water and gas supply pipelines, including access points;*

The approved hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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: These details are required prior to commencement of development because of insufficient information contained within this submission and 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.

Four different landscaping documents have been provided and are referred to as follows:

Landscape Plan, February 2026, Drawing No. D.002, Rev L

Block Plan, Urban Grain, 3D views, Drawing No.02, Rev: P23

Landscape Base (undated), Ref: 01P2MS.V4 (Planting Plan V4 – with clearer planting areas)

Landscape Implementation and Maintenance Plan V4.

Within the Maintenance Plan there is reference to a 'Planting Plan V4' – none of the above documents are titled this but it is assumed that the Landscape Base is that being referred to. However, the Landscape Base is of poor quality and the trees on the frontage are not consistent with that on the Landscape Plan. The Landscape Plan is also of poor quality; neither I would consider appropriate to be approved documents within the decision notice should this proposal be approved.

Hand Landscaping Comments:

I cannot note the means of enclosure provided on any plans.

There are structures on the Landscape Base & Landscape Plan which are not clearly labelled. These are labelled on the Block Plan; however, all landscaping should be shown on a clear landscape plan and having information scattered across several documents makes the proposal difficult to follow. Given the complexity of this site, it is of high importance that documentation is clear and can be followed with ease.



Landscape Base vs Block Plan

The rear gardens are demonstrated as having patio areas, although the material they are being constructed from is not clear. The Landscape Base states 'paving', albeit the specific material is not stated.

With reference to the Below ground services block plan overlay, Drawing No. 21, Rev P3, I note some of the services have been plotted, but not all. There is no clear sewage run and the extent of existing vs proposed services, is not clear. the southern tree on the frontage appears to conflict with the electricity route – clarity is required on how these are mutually inclusive. I don't note any access points such as that for inspections and repairs for the services demonstrated either.



Below ground services block plan overlay: new tree conflicting with services

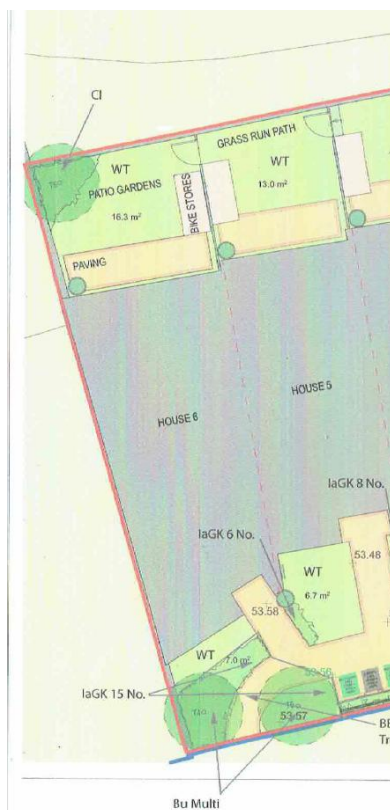
Mammal gaps are shown on the Block Plan, but not the Landscape Plan. So, again, information is scattered across several documents, making it difficult to truly appreciate what is proposed. The specific locations of these mammal gaps are not shown.

I will reiterate that it is expected that the Landscape Plan contains all the relevant information as this will be an approved document of which the landscaping must be implemented; hence it needs to be clear and concise.

Soft Landscaping Comments:

I firstly note that the Landscape Maintenance Plan refers to an 'approved' document, being the Landscape Plan Rev L – this is not an approved plan so I'm unclear why this is being referred to as an approved document, and as mentioned above, wouldn't be appropriate due to inconsistency and quality.

Having a Landscape Base document and a Landscape Plan, is confusing and all landscaping should be shown on one clear plan. Whilst I appreciate the Landscape Base is clearer and is described as having '*clearer planting areas*', there are still elements that are unclear. An example is that not all the 'T' numbers for the proposed trees aren't labelled. T6 in the northwestern corner is not clearly labelled. T4 & T5 in the southwestern corner is also not clearly labelled. T6 Hawthorne is proposed as the 'Paul's Scarlet' cultivar on the Landscape Plan, yet this cultivar is not specified within the Maintenance Plan. The Hornbeams also state that will be fastigate in the Landscape Plan, yet a specific cultivar has not been provided – the Landscape Base or Maintenance Plan doesn't mention a fastigate cultivar, so this is unclear what is truly proposed.



Landscape Base: not all trees clearly labelled

The Landscape Plan shows seven new trees but the Landscape Base shows six, so the plans are not reflective of one another. The new tree next to 'HOUSE 1' is shown on the Landscape Plan, yet not on the Landscape Base. I note the Maintenance Plan should be undertaken in accordance with these plans, but these are not reflective of one another.

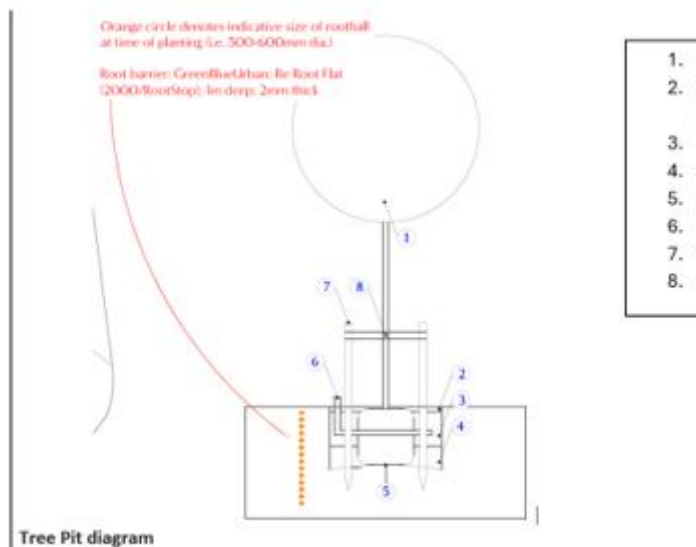
The Maintenance Plan has several inaccuracies and lacking information. The planting season is November-March, but this is not specified. There are several references to planting in September and late October, neither of which are in the planting season.

Plant Type	Planting Period
Betula utilis (multi-stem)	Late October – Late March
Carpinus ~~betulus~~	Late October – Late March
Crataegus laevigata	Late October – Late March
Evergreen Hedging	September
Shrubs	September
Climbers	October
Wildflower Turf	September
Ornamental Perennials	September

Maintenance Plan (9. Planting Programme)

The Maintenance Plan does not go into enough detail to ensure successful establishment and appropriate maintenance. I am unclear who will take responsibility for the maintenance. Inspections are mentioned, albeit who will undertake the inspections?

12.3 Tree Pit details, states '*Trees 12-14cm girth or below to be fixed as above but with 1No. stake*' – it is unclear what girth the proposed trees are, and both the height and girth – stating the proposed stock size is a basic requirement. The newly planted trees should have stakes regardless. They also state one stake, however the tree pit diagram shown is shown as double staked i.e. with two stake posts, so this is unclear and not secure what is truly proposed for the tree pits – there is also reference to the pits being double staked, so for clarity it should state each tree will have a tree pit with double stakes. There are references to the BS 8545:2014 Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape, albeit the size of the pits are not consistent with that of the BS 8545:2014. This practice has also been updated hence referring to the most up-to-date practices is appropriate, 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 we need to be clear on the stock size to ensure the tree pit is compliant with this.



Maintenance Plan (12.3 Tree Pit details)

13. Watering Programme states the trees will receive 25 litres of water a week for the first three years – this should be growing seasons and not years, with additional watering during drought periods.

There are several references to retained trees within the Maintenance Plan – it is unclear why this is included as there are no retained trees on site. If they are referring to the newly planted trees or the street trees outside of the development's boundaries, this should be clear and not refer to retained trees. Examples of where retained trees are mentioned is 6.4 Decompaction, 7. Root Protection Areas (RPAs) and 17. Landscape Implementation Programme.

6.4 Decompaction states when outside of RPAs '*minimum cultivation depth: 300 mm*'. The depth of the tree pit will be significantly deeper than this so I am unclear why the decompaction of only the top 300mm of soil is proposed, particularly as the unauthorised hard standing will have significantly compacted the soil across the areas which are now proposed to be soft landscaped. I acknowledge this states minimum, however the depth of soil decompaction across the site and in different locations is unclear.

7. Root Protection Areas (RPAs) refers to all operations being undertaken in accordance with the BS5837 2012. I am unclear what RPAs they are referring to.

17. Landscape Implementation Programme mentions installing tree protection fencing yet doesn't include when it should be removed. The type of fencing hasn't been mentioned, nor has its locations been shown on any plans, so it is unclear what they are referring to.

10.3 Hedgerow Planting mentions the use of animal guards. I don't agree that these are necessary for a site of this nature. Why these are proposed for the hedgerows but not the trees is unclear. However, I wouldn't consider them necessary for either the trees or hedgerows.

I can't note the species or number of the climbing plants for the trellis' demonstrated on any of the documents listed above. 10.5 Climbers, doesn't provide any further information as to the species and number of plants proposed.

To conclude, the application is not currently supported due to insufficient and unclear information. Across the four documents listed above, there are several elements that are not accurate/representative of one another. Some basic information is missing, such as tree stock sizes, species for climbing plants, specific cultivars for tree species, hard surface materials etc. The planting season is not accurate, and all planting should take place in the next available planting season (November-March). As advised previously, I encourage that a Landscape Architect is employed to aid this proposal, as they will be able to advise on appropriate maintenance of the trees and ensure any inaccurate/insufficient information is corrected and the plans are reflective of one another. It is currently unclear what is truly proposed, and therefore the planting/soft landscaping is not secure. Currently, the proposal is not supported with or without a condition attached, as the proposal is unclear as information is scattered across several documents and not easy to follow.