

Osmond, Gary

From: Griffin, Tim
Sent: 17 November 2022 15:14
To: Osmond, Gary
Cc: Ellison, Mark; Stringer, Chris
Subject: F/22/94108 Broadway Farm, Broad Oak, Botley - landscape comments

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Hi Gary,

I have been asked to provide landscape comments on this latest full application for this development.

I have reviewed my previous comments made on the 28.07.2022 on the last full application F/22/93195 on this site. This was withdrawn by the applicant.

This latest application includes some changes to partially address earlier Officer comments.

I have downloaded and reviewed the following documents uploaded on Salesforce:

Hard-Soft Landscape General Arrangement
Hard-Soft Landscape General Arrangement
Illustrative Landscape Plan
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment -
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment P
Landscape Design and Access Statement
Section Plan

Although there are some welcome changes to the proposed layout, including the removal of the hard standing in the NE corner of the site and an increase in buffer planting to the SINC woodland, our previous principal landscape objection remains unchanged.

The site is within designated Countryside and settlement Gap 7 as identified in the adopted Local Plan. Any development within these areas should be resisted as it is erosive and counter to Policy.

Whilst I agree with Fabrics statement in the Landscape Design and Access Statement that '*.... this part of the gap along the road corridor of Broad Oak is not pristine rural countryside either side, which contains low density ribbon development comprising dwellings and commercial premises*' this does not provide sufficient justification for a proposal which will further diminish the Gap. Historic erosion of the Gap by piecemeal development makes it even more important to resist further diminution of the Gap.

My previous comments on the LVIAS unpacked our objections in more detail, responding to various points made in these documents by the applicants. These comments largely remain relevant but see below for the most significant points (my responses in blue):

LVIAS Part 1

Executive summary

'The Site is significantly enclosed by woodland and existing built form, therefore, it does not contribute to preserving the open nature of the Gap'. I disagree. The open nature of the Gap is not dependant on whether it can be seen from the public realm or not. The fact is, the proposal will see part of an open field replaced with a large warehouse, thus diminishing the Gap.

'The sense of separation between the two settlements are defined by its built edge, woodland blocks and landform'. I disagree with this statement as it implies only woodland blocks and landform contribute to the 'sense of separation'. Open fields, such as this site, are another significant contributor to the sense of separation within a Gap.

'The proposed built form will intensify the commercial character in the part of the Gap. However, the proposed treebelt and vegetation within the Site and the wider land ownership areas of CCW Services will positively enhance the landscape character in the localised area'. The intensification of the commercial character in this part of the Gap must inevitably lead to diminution of the Gap, however well screened the site may be.

'.....the Site lies in the centre of the Gap and is bound by the physical attributes surrounding the Site. Therefore, the land on its own plays little role in separation of the settlements'. The fact the site is bound by physical attributes surrounding the site does not alter the contribution the land makes to the Gap.

'With the development in place, the distinct character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will remain; retaining the sequence of fields, dwellings, commercial, fields, woodland and therefore all of the current elements of the gap and retaining the overall dimension of the Gap between Hedge End and Botley'. I disagree, since the sequence of fields is disrupted by the proposal with the loss of part of an open field.

'Although there will be additional built form within the Gap, the implementation of tree planting will improve the overall landscape character in the localised area and in time provide a physical and visual enhancement to the landscape.' It should be noted that the applicants accept there will be 'additional built form within the Gap'. The implementation of new planting cannot mask the loss of part of an open field that does make a contribution (even if a small contribution) to the Gap.

'With the development in place, the distinct character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will remain and retain the sequence of fields, dwellings, commercial, fields, woodland and therefore all of the current elements of the gap, retaining the overall dimension of the gap between Hedge End and Botley. These two settlements will not coalesce through the implementation of the proposals. Although additional built form will be added within the Gap, the implementation of tree planting will improve the overall landscape character in the localised area and in time provide physical and visual enhancement to the landscape'. The extent of fields that contribute to the sequence of elements within the Gap will be reduced, and although the loss of part of an open field is relatively limited, the proposal will still have an urbanising effect.

4.3.5 THE ROLE OF THE SITE WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT GAP

Although the report says the site does not form a *significant* part of the Gap, there can be no doubt the site does form 'a part' of the Gap. Bearing in mind the already diminished character of the Gap, any remaining open land contributes to the Gap as a whole, and further loss should be resisted.

'Within the Gap, residential and commercial built form is already perceived along Broad Oak road / A334 and in the immediate context of the Site. This part of the gap therefore is not pristine rural countryside, but is already influenced by a range of built form present within the immediate setting to the Site'. The fact this is not pristine Countryside and that there is built form within the immediate setting of the site, makes the preservation of the remaining undeveloped parts of the Gap even more important.

'The Site on its own does not perform a significant part of the Settlement Gap. It forms part of the peripheral area to existing commercial operations'. I disagree. The location of the additional warehouse, an open field, does form part of the settlement Gap and is not part of the peripheral area to existing commercial operations.

'Despite the scale and mass of the warehouses of the CCW Services operating area, this area and the Site forms a discrete parcel within the Settlement Gap'. The argument appears to be that if the site is a well screened 'parcel' of land it does not contribute to the Gap. I disagree. Just because the site cannot be seen, does not mean it does not physically contribute to the Gap.

Figure 4.5 - looking at this plan, with selected widths of the Settlement Gap indicated, the Gap is narrow (under 1km wide) and as such, resisting any further diminishing of the Gap is important.

LVIAS Part 2

5.2 VISUAL SUMMARY

'Therefore, whilst located within the Settlement Gap between Hedge End and Botley, the character of this part of the gap along the road corridors such as Broad Oak road / A334 and Woodhouse Lane are not a pristine rural countryside either side. It contains low density ribbon development comprising residential dwellings and commercial premises which together reduce the sense of settlement separation'. I agree that low density ribbon development reduces the sense of settlement separation. This will only be increased if the proposed warehouse is constructed.

Overall, the LVAIS report does not significantly alter my landscape comments on the proposal.

In particular, there is nothing presented to alter my view that in landscape terms the proposed addition of a further sizeable warehouse on an open grass field, will diminish the Gap physically and have an urbanising effect.

Hard/soft landscape general arrangement plans

No legend/key on these plans, so I could not comment on proposed materials.

Illustrative Landscape Plan

Again, no legend, so although the layout generally appears acceptable, I could not provide detailed comment on this plan (see points under Landscape DAS below).

LVIAS

Comments above.

Landscape DAS

Figure 3.1

Attenuation pond within SINC buffer - the natural shape is welcomed but detailed design should introduce a variety of slopes to the sides for natural effect. The design should be developed to be more than a sterile 'hole in the ground' by maximising a range of planting types.

Area 17 - replace 'Grasscrete' with reinforced grass surface such as Netlon Netpave 50 or similar approved. Grasscrete is yesterday's product being more concrete and less grass! We require this area of parking to be as 'soft' as possible.

Please supply for approval detailed planting plans for all proposed planting. The planting proposals must maximise tree planting opportunities. New planting to be fenced off with protective p&w fencing and please supply full details of mulch, mulch mats, shelters, rabbit guards, strimmer guards etc. to be provided.

Please submit for approval a separate landscape maintenance plan.

Section Plan (Landscape sections)

These show a 1.2m high metal security fence? Should this be 1.8m high? This should be a weldmesh fence, dark grey or black in colour, NOT green.

Surface water drainage strategy

Please provide details of outfalls/chambers for approval. Please avoid concrete or brick headwall details. I defer to the Tree Officer regarding potential impact on retained boundary vegetation by the construction of the attenuation pond.

I hope these comments are helpful but should you require clarification, or any changes, do get in touch.

KR Tim

Tim Griffin

Development Management Consultant

Service Delivery - Specialist Services - Housing and Development