

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT

at:

Moorlands Farm

Botley Road

West End

SOUTHAMPTON

SO30 3HD

ADDENDUM TO THE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Prepared by:

ACLA Ltd

For:

Country Homes

Ref: ACLA/BMC/AD

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- 1.1 This report has been written as an addendum to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), last issued in September 2022, to accompany a planning application for the redevelopment of Moorlands Farm, Botley Road, West End, Southampton on behalf of Country Homes. The application site lies immediately east of the M27 motorway and just beyond the northern urban edge of Hedge End.
- 1.2 The application site is a redundant farmstead and takes in Moorlands Farm and its immediate setting, with associated dilapidated stables, barns, outbuildings, overgrown garden areas, a farmhouse and adjacent small fields to the north and east. The application site covers a total area of approximately 1.7 ha (hectares) and is accessed via a low-key track leading from Botley Road at approximately 200m to the south of the main application site. The Site is centred at Ordnance Survey grid reference SU 48155 14523 and the surrounding areas are administered by Eastleigh Borough Council.
- 1.3 This addendum covers the changes to the Site layout that follows the most recent consultation responses with the council. The latest resulted in an additional 15m and 20m ecological buffer lines being agreed upon to the adjoining SSSI to the west and south of the main Site.
- 1.4 Before this, in October 2022, the landscape officer representing Eastleigh Borough Council made the following comments relating to the proposed removal of the double row of conifers in the western parts of the Site:

'My primary concern is the proposed removal of the double line of established conifers. Usually, the removal of non-native species in this semi-rural location would be favoured, however, in this case it will open up significant views into the site from a number of local Public Rights of Way (PROW's).

The removal of these evergreen trees will be a significant change in the scene that will be readily noticed by the casual observer (see my LVIA comments below for further detail).

To balance this loss of screening, we would expect to see a robust and deliverable scheme of native tree and hedge planting along this boundary. Unfortunately, at the moment there is insufficient room within the red line for such planting.'

- 1.5 The revised layout now includes the retained conifers and extended ecological buffers are now shown on plan ACLA/BMC 04 in Appendix 1 of this addendum.
- 1.6 The retention of the conifers has been achieved by retaining the existing access road running between the two rows of evergreen trees with a new return on-way road running back along the eastern edge of the row of trees. Where any new surfaces are within the root protection zones they will be constructed using a no-dig permeable construction method and the new road will join the existing in a gap between the conifers to the south.
- 1.7 To provide security, a new 2m high wire mesh fence will be located along the western Site boundary, between the retained access road and the PRoW (Public Right of Way) and along the outer edge of the west of the retained row of conifers.
- 1.8 The new ecological buffers will be located along the southern and eastern boundaries of the main Site. This has resulted in Unit C being relocated from the south of Unit B to the north side of the main courtyard, next to Unit A. The area that has been 'vacated' by the previously agreed Unit C building, will now be set out with additional new planting. The Unit C building, which previously had a pitch roof, will now follow the same building height and flat (part green) roof arrangement as nearby Units A and B, that also face onto the courtyard.
- 1.9 Unit D, the small management office, has also been reconfigured and very slightly repositioned in order to be fully outside of the 15m SSSI buffer line and also the 20m buffer line as far as possible. This building has also been changed from a flat roof to a pitched roof arrangement, in order to ensure a continued mix of styles across the site. The management building will accordingly follow the arrangement that has previously been agreed for Unit C, with the pitched roof being appropriate here, set back into the site and screened by the nearby planting.
- 1.10 The new ecological buffers will be planted up with a native woodland mix of trees and shrubs on a loose grid. Some areas can be left unplanted to allow woodland/scrub mosaic vegetation to develop.

- 1.11 The far eastern side of the central courtyard service road and the adjoining parking spaces have also been pulled back further into the site, away from the SSSI boundary. The central drainage pond has been very slightly reconfigured to accommodate this change, whilst the bin and cycle stores and the rain gardens / French drains for Units C and D have been (re)positioned around their new locations.
- 1.12 The proposed orchard / ecology area to the north of the courtyard has been reduced slightly in order to accommodate the new Unit C location, but this will be more than compensated for by the new woodland/scrub areas planting that will be laid out in the area previously taken up by buildings.
- 1.13 The easement for the oil pipeline that crosses the site is maintained as indicated on the proposed plans. Where this is crossed by proposed planting these will be restricted to shrub species only.
- 1.14 Other native trees within the site will be retained and incorporated into the proposed landscaping where possible. The young native trees and understorey along the Site access will be retained and brought under enhanced management to ensure their long-term viability and enhance the degree of landscape structure and screening. These may require limited cutting back to accommodate a widened access track to the east. An oak tree with a TPO on the eastern site boundary will be retained and if necessary any new hard surfacing will be constructed in a no-dig method with a permeable surface to protect the root zone.
- 1.15 Other areas within the layout have been set aside for landscaping, including the attenuation basins. This will provide the opportunity to enhance biodiversity with the creation of wetland and emergent habitats. Other grass areas will be sown with species-rich grassland to provide foraging areas for insects and birds.
- 1.16 Elsewhere, the boundary treatments will consist of native mixed hedge planting with individual native trees, and where space allows in the wider ecological buffers, woodland blocks and belts to provide screening and wildlife habitats, as well as integrating the proposals within the locally wooded and semi-enclosed rural landscape to the east and north. The woodland and hedge perimeters can be managed to allow a rich understory and scrub to develop to provide additional habitats.

- 1.17 The previous landscape scheme aimed to reduce impacts on the rural landscape beyond the site and contribute to the local character of the area by providing a high-quality landscape setting to the proposals. The large ecological standoff and landscape and biodiversity enhancement in the northern, eastern and southern parts of the main Site will now provide enhanced woodland settings to the new units and hard landscaped areas.
- 1.18 The proposed buildings are not in a prominent location and screened in all but close-distance views. The mature vegetation will be retained where possible and enhanced with new native planting to provide landscape structure and additional screening in the local landscape and along the edges of the M27 corridor.
- 1.19 As per the LVIA, the revised proposals should not further degrade the wider local rural landscape north of Hedge End or introduce prominent development beyond the fringe of the settlement boundary. The proposals will recognise the sensitivity of Moorgreen Meadows SSSI by providing additional green buffers along the eastern and southern site boundaries.
- 1.20 The highest degree of potential visual effects are all at close distance on or near the site boundary from the more sensitive rural landscape to the east and north. However, these views are localised and only possible where the boundary vegetation is weakest and do not extend into the wider rural landscape. The enhanced ecological standoffs also provide the opportunity to introduce additional woodland planting to screen views as well as retaining the level of screening from the M27.
- 1.21 As per the previous layout, plan ACLA/BMC 04 in the appendices of this report shows the general arrangement of development on the site which will be high-quality buildings clustered within and around the developed part of the site. Now three of the larger buildings will have green roofs and the cladding will be low-key including timber to respect the woodland setting. The mature vegetation including the conifer screen in the western parts of the main Site will be retained to continue to provide screening from the M27. Where space allows the western boundary will be enhanced with new native planting to provide additional landscape structure and lower-level screening.

- 1.22 Most of the northern parts of the site will continue to be set aside as green space and an ecological buffer.
- 1.23 The measures will also aim to introduce additional new planting and habitats to assist in enhancing the internal character of the proposals. Overall the substantial areas of green infrastructure and habitat creation should prevent the site from becoming unduly urban in character, respond to the rural wooded setting of the application site and provide biodiversity enhancements.

Anthony Clarkson BA Hons Dip LA - ACLA Ltd

2nd May 2023

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1 - PLANS

ACLA/BMC-04 Proposed Site Layout- Landscape Mitigation & Enhancement

