

Rainger, Angela

From: Griffin, Tim
Sent: 18 October 2022 16:46
To: Sharpe, Summer
Cc: Oliveira, Marta; Ellison, Mark
Subject: F/22/93835 MOORLANDS FARM, BOTLEY ROAD, WEST END - Landscape Comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Categories: Consultees

Hi Summer,

I have been asked to provide landscape comments on this application.

Rebecca Altman and I had productive exchanges with the applicant and the design team on this site during the Pre-App discussions. It is good to see that a number of the positive aspects arising from our discussions have been incorporated on the submitted site layout.

This is a sensitive site in the Countryside and adjacent to an SSSI. A Public footpath runs along the western and northern boundaries and the busy M27 passes along the western edge of the site.

Robust and deliverable Green Infrastructure (GI) will be fundamental to creating a pleasant setting for the development and planting will be crucial to ensuring the proposed units are not overly intrusive in Public views.

I have downloaded and reviewed the following documents that have been submitted:

03 - 7912 - L01- Location Plan
17 - 7912 - D09-Proposed Site Sections A-A and B-B
19 - 7912 - D100 - Proposed Access Road Works_Part 1 of 2 - RevE
20 - 7912 - D101 - Proposed Access Road Works_Part 2 of 2 - RevE
025 - Design and Access Statement_REV B
027B - AIA - Tree Protection Plan MOORLANDS FARM AUGUST 20
027C - AIA - Tree Protection Plan MOORLANDS FARM AUGUST 20
031B - LVIA - 2 - BMC LVIA-photos and method 07-09-22
Arboricultural Impact Statement
Ecology Assessment
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
LVIA - 2 - BMC LVIA-photos and method
M27 streetview
Proposed Block Plan Sht 1 of 2

The most useful plans for me to base my landscape comments around are the ACLA's Proposed Site Layout (Landscape Mitigation & Enhancement) and the Radley House Proposed Site Plan (Proposed Block Plans) sheets 1 & 2.

These plans include some positive proposals including:

- layout and scale of the proposed light industrial units
- good range of external finishes
- enhancement of the ecology buffer zone
- inclusion of reinforced grass surfacing
- significant proposed tree and hedge planting
- Green roofs
- SUDS elements

However, I do have a number of landscape related concerns regarding the current proposals which I hope can be addressed by negotiations with the design team:

Access road works:

There are a number of issues with the current proposals.

a/ 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).

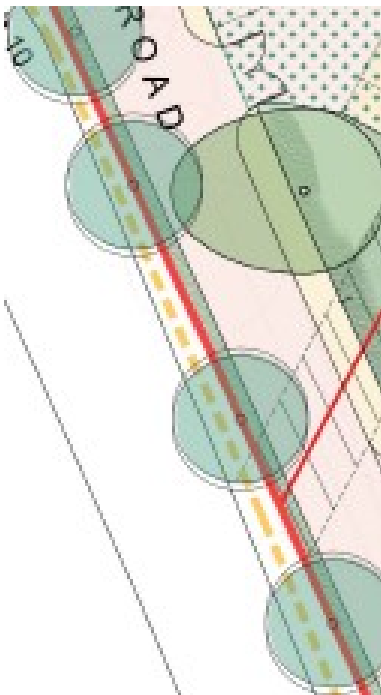
Here is a stitched view I took during my site visit which shows the effectiveness of these trees in blocking year-round views into the site:



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.

Here is a typical extract to illustrate the issue:

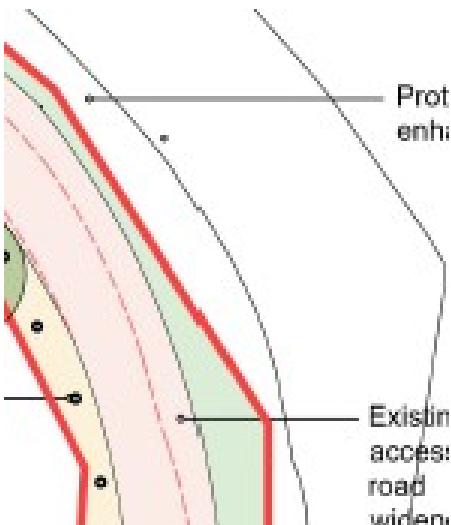
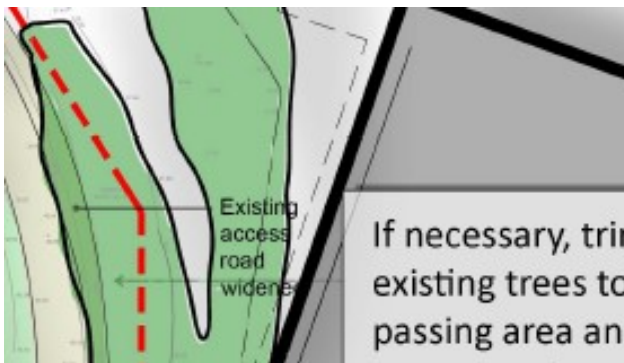


I estimate that the planting strip for the proposed trees shown along the LHS of the drive is under 0.5m wide. This is far too narrow for successful tree or hedgerow planting.

Please can you ask the applicants design team to re-visit this issue and come back with further detailed proposals to demonstrate how the screen planting could be delivered. A planting strip at least 1m wide is

needed to allow successful tree and hedge planting (assuming a pinned/pegged kerb detail to avoid concrete haunching. If standard pcc kerbs are proposed, then the strip needs to be 1.5m wide).

b/ The notes on these plans are misleading:



The road is being widened here and this will definitely lead to loss of part of G1 Hawthorn that presently provides some important screening to Wellington Park. Please amend these notes and add further detail to ensure that any vegetation loss is kept to a minimum. We wish to avoid any possibility of unnecessary/excessive removal of existing vegetation.

c/ We need clarification of what fencing is proposed to the site boundaries down the length of the access road. In particular, much of the existing boundary fencing along the side of the Public footpath is in disrepair, intrusive and needs to be replaced. Here is a typical example of the view from the PROW:



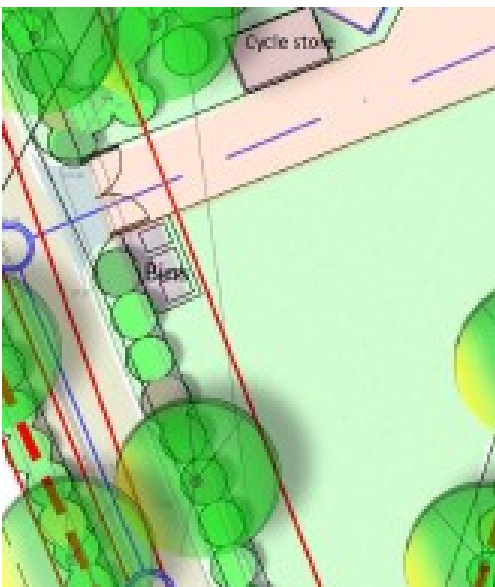
Please ask for further detail (note - any metal mesh security fencing should be dark grey or black).

d/ What surfacing is proposed for the access road and also the central yard?

e/ The notional low-level lighting - are these light bollards? They are indicated at very close centres - please review. The lights stop part way along the drive? Please ask for further clarification on external lighting across the site.

Main site comments:

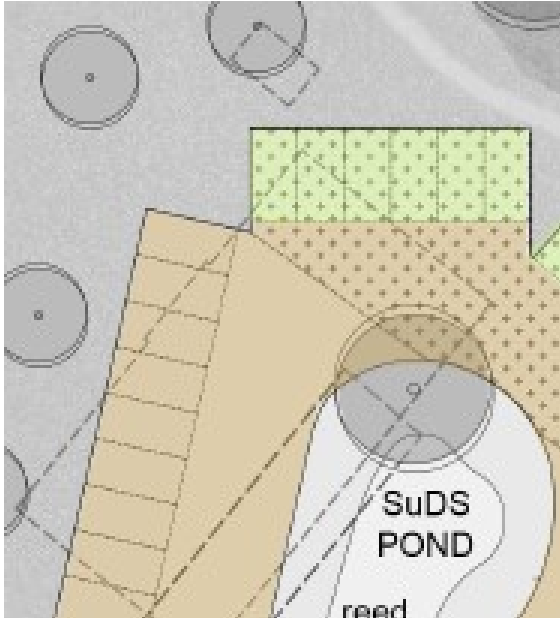
a/ What is the intended long-term use of this triangular area? Could it be planted up as a new woodland copse as an extension to the existing woodland on Wellington Park?



b/ Some trees are shown on the site layout (Landscape Mitigation & Enhancement) over the pipeline easement. Please relocate.

c/ The use of reinforced grass for selected parking bays and yards is generally welcomed, but I wonder how realistic it is to use grass on parking bays in daily use as the grass will quick deteriorate with lack of light. Perhaps some heavily used bays should be reinforced buff gravel instead.

The edge of reinforced grass adjacent the SUDs pond appears arbitrary. I suggest a re-design here with green areas being reinforced grass (bays kept as grass here as assumed these will less well used) and buff being reinforced gravel:

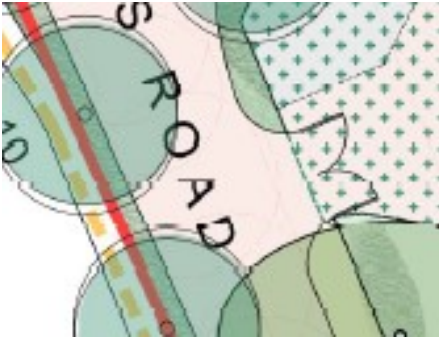


d/ What does the light-yellow strip on the RHS of the access road represent on the extract below:



I presume this is not a footpath as on the landscape plan the strip is shown planted.

e/ Is the retention of this existing tree realistic?



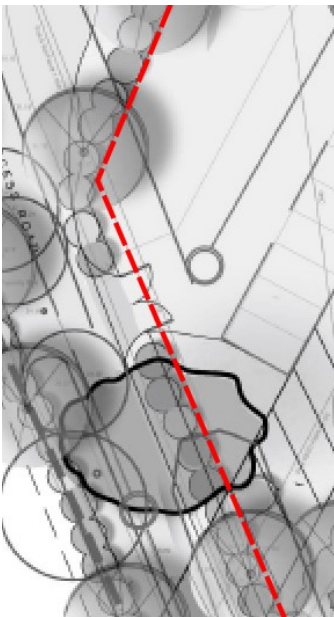
I defer to the Tree Officer on this matter.

f/ Why are these bins and cycle stores not orientated parallel to the building (as per Unit A).



Is a link path required into the open storage area?

g/ Please pull back the gates and fence line from the road edge by a further 1m (approx. as per dashed red line below) to create a wider strip for planting:



h/ The SUD's pond has potential to be an attractive focal point. Please add further proposed trees here to soften this open area.

j/ The green roofs are welcomed. I suggest it may be more appropriate to the setting of the site to replace the Sedum roofs with intensive grass roofs.

k/ Subject to separate comments from the Ecology Officer, the layout and design objectives within the Ecology buffer zone shown on the landscape plan are generally acceptable. I suggest that a shallow scrape could be included in this area to further boost habitat enrichment. Further design work will be required in due course and all details should be conditioned.

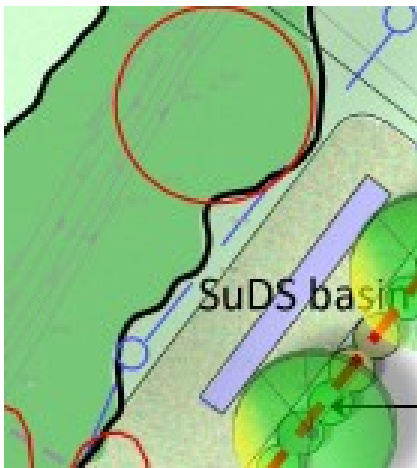
I am not sure if the 'low key path' will be welcomed by the Ecologists who may prefer to see the area undisturbed. Perhaps the area will need to be fenced off to prevent accidental access by pets etc?

Please check as there is an existing shallow ditch in this area, and this should be retained if possible and linked with the SUD's scheme.

l/ The areas of species rich grassland need a neat mown margin where it abuts driveways or parking bays.

m/ Planting in the central yard is noted as 'amenity planting' on the landscape plan. These ground level planters should include tall multi-stemmed shrubs or small trees to soften the elevations (see sketch perspective). These beds are in danger of being overrun, so some form of protection will be required (bollards, ad hoc knee rail, large boulders etc).

n/ Will the construction of the SUD's basin here place unacceptable stress on the existing trees?:



I defer to the Tree Officer on this.

p/ The note on the landscape plan that suggests 'selective retention' of boundary vegetation should be removed. We need to know the exact extent of removals to avoid opening up views unnecessarily.

q/ Please indicate on plan all proposed fences and other means of enclosure. Boundary treatment is of particular importance.

LVIA comments:

The quality of the assessment is generally thorough and fair. It is good to note the document is based on GLVIA 3 guidelines and I am satisfied with the overall methodology and scope of the report.

I am in general agreement with the summary of effects on the Landscape Character and accept that the magnitude of change is low.

As regards Visual Impact, it is helpful that the visual impact photographs have been taken during winter months when potential visual impact will be greatest. The report therefore considers the worst-case scenario.

I am in agreement that the site is relatively well enclosed and that a combination of topography, vegetation and built-form limits potential views of the site, especially views from the more sensitive rural landscape to the north and east.

I am content that the range of viewpoints selected includes the most prominent views. The glimpses of the site from the PROW are the most significant, although views by passing vehicles on the motorway and views from the bridge over the M27 also need to be carefully considered.

My primary concern is the increased visual impact resulting from the removal of the established conifers along the western boundary to the motorway. These trees currently offer year-round screening of the site, and their loss will be a significant change in the scene.

The following detailed comments focus on clauses in the report that relate to this conifer screen and the proposed replacement tree and hedge planting:

Clause 4.8 - I am concerned that there is a reliance here on replacement field hedges and individual trees to replace the existing conifer screen. Currently there is too little space to successfully establish this planting (as per my earlier comments above).

Clause 4.10 - the current access track alignment DOES NOT allow sufficient space for the new native field hedge and trees.

Clause 7.12 Viewpoint 8 - The existing conifers provide effective year-round screening of the site.

Clause 7.25 - I disagree with the negligible ranking in terms of the degree of effect for view 8. I consider the proposals would result in a medium effect with the proposals forming a visible and recognisable new element within the overall scene readily noticed by the observer.

Clause 7.26 - the recent planting mentioned along the eastern edge of the motorway will not screen views wither from the M27 or the bridge over the motorway.

Clause 7.28 - mitigation includes landscape screening along the western boundary of the site. I do not believe at present there is sufficient space for this planting to succeed.

Clause 7.30 - visual effect summary - viewpoint 8 - I do not accept that the degree of effect is negligible.

Clause 8.8 - The removal of the trees along the western boundary cannot be balanced with new hedge and tree planting as there is insufficient space on the current plans for this planting.

Clause 9.22 - Insufficient space for the suggested replacement native tree and hedge planting.

In summary, whilst I am happy that overall visual impact will be relatively low, viewpoint 8 is of concern and further design work is required to create sufficient space for the replacement native tree and hedge planting along the western boundary.

The proposed planting across the rest of the site is generally welcomed, although full hard and soft landscape details should be conditioned, together with a condition covering replacement planting during the first 5 years after implementation.

I have raised quite a few points, so if the applicant or designers need clarification, they are welcome to call me direct.

KR Tim

Tim Griffin

Development Management Consultant

Service Delivery - Specialist Services - Housing and Development