

Altman, Rebecca

From: Griffin, Tim (Contractor)
Sent: 19 February 2026 17:58
To: Altman, Rebecca
Cc: Oliveira, Marta (Contractor); Dyer, Tim; Ellison, Mark
Subject: RM/25/100615 Land West of Burnetts Lane (The Holme and Homestall), Horton Heath, Eastleigh, SO30 2HH - landscape comments

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Categories: Consultation responses

Hi Rebecca,

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

By way of background, this is my first review of this site. I have not had the opportunity to visit OHH to assess the setting of the proposal, but I have reviewed on-line images and read through the submitted Design & Access Statement(DAS).

My focus at this stage is on the masterplanning for the sites, and in particular on the provision of connected Green Infrastructure (GI).

Although I am content that all details of soft(planting) and hard landscape will be conditioned, it is important that a robust and deliverable landscape masterplan is agreed at this stage. This will form a firm foundation for detailed design.

I am assuming, that as this site has already been through a lengthy design process, that major changes to the site layout are not feasible at this juncture. Bearing this in mind, my comments aim to be proactive in order to help generate as strong a landscape scheme as possible.

It is unfortunate that concept landscape plans were not presented early for comment, before proceeding with more detailed design, as this would have avoided abortive work.

General comments:

This site is a more complex than other parcels of development at OHH since the application site straddles Fir Tree Lane, plus there are several distinct and separate red line areas. Some of the boundaries with adjacent development are very strange as they cut through the centre of external spaces.

The DAS provides useful background information on this project and the analysis and landscape & visual impact work is generally sound.

The indicative landscape concept plan in the DAS illustrates the intended structure of the site. The proposed north-south route appears to have been envisaged as a main 'Green Spine' through the development with potential to be a significant landscape feature.

The Holme and Homestall were formerly in agricultural use and as a result the majority of existing vegetation is located around the boundaries of the site. Fir Tree Lane is the exception, with a band of existing trees crossing the site, east to west.

In landscape terms, one of the strongest aspect of this proposal is the retention of most boundary vegetation as these provide a strong framework to the development. They will also create effective green corridors for local fauna. There are some tree and hedge removals, but these are relatively insignificant and can be replaced with new planting on at least a 2 for 1 basis.

The boundary open spaces have generally been reasonably well laid out with retained vegetation bolstered with new planting. There is an interesting range of circulation routes and it is good to see SuD's features incorporated.

Internally the landscape structure is much weaker. Street tree planting is more sporadic, and parking courts are typically dominated by hardscape since tree cover is too light and fails to provide sufficient screening and shelter for parked cars.

The envisaged 'Green Spine' has only partially been delivered, which is disappointing. This spine is most effective in the northern section of Homestall but weakens the further south one travels. Within the Holme area the spine has been almost entirely lost to access roads and parking. With the current layout it will not be possible to significantly strengthen the GI in this area.

I note from the DAS that there is a fall across the site of around 8-10m. This may require some retaining walls, and if so, these should be indicated on the landscape masterplans.

The inclusion of rain gardens is welcomed and their introduction should be maximised as they can provide distinctive landscape character and add interest to the development.

Overall, the landscape approach is acceptable despite the 'watering-down' of the strong north-south Green Spine. If developed with care during the detailed design phase, it should result in a reasonably attractive landscape setting for the new housing.

In places, the design of external space is a little over-complicated and there is scope to improve the layout by rationalising some areas to create a more coherent landscape.

Looking at the submitted Landscape General Arrangement Plans for both sites, further refinement is required to generate robust landscape masterplans for both sites. It is crucial that there is sufficient information on these masterplans to guide future detailed landscape design work. In addition, the proposals must be deliverable, in particular the tree planting.

The following information needs to be added to the landscape masterplans for clarity:

Key (with all hard & soft landscape elements included)

Plot Nos.

Retained vegetation along boundaries

Shading to reflect proposed surfacing colours

Varying kinds of trees indicated (Canopy, small, fastgiate etc)

Clearly indicate trees in narrow beds that require specialist tree cell pits (distinctive code/colour)

Detailed comments (broadly following sections in the DAS) :

Design Proposals

Site Layout

1/ The key includes existing GI, however this does not seem to have been shown on plan. SuD's basin have also been wrongly coloured.

Character Areas

2/ The concept of character areas is welcomed. The proposed palette of hard and soft landscape materials/species will be key to creating areas with distinctive character.

Green Spine

3/ As mentioned above, the present scheme fails to deliver the intended Green Spine. The main N to S spine extends through Homestall into Holme and the further south one travels the less 'green' this space becomes. This is primarily due to the lack of space in the southern sector for significant soft landscape. The short section in Holme is especially poor with very limited GI.

Sections of the landscape layout at present appear over-complicated. It is hard for me to analyse in detail the design approach along the Green Spine without keyed information on the landscape plans, however, my initial impression is that a number of spaces appear in plan form to lack legibility.

I appreciate the intention may have been to deliver more informal, naturalistic spaces, but there are places where simplifying the design would help create a more coherent sense of place.

For example:



There is a range of different landscape elements included here which at present do not produce a harmonious layout. I suggest that the design of the open spaces along the green spine be reviewed and a slightly stronger structure be developed.

Here is an example from the Folds site of the kind of more refined layout that I think could work well on this site:



Another example area requiring clarification:



I am struggling to understand the rationale for the layout of the linear space above. Do the 6 trees enclosing a 'pocket square' frame a key view? What is the purpose of the 'square'?

As there are other areas that I feel require refinement, can I suggest we have a round-the-table review to look at each space and explore what options could work well. This review would include the layout of the soft and hard landscape elements with the aim of creating a strong landscape structure along the spine.

There are a significant number of trees along the spine located in relatively narrow planting beds. These will require specialist tree cell pits.

There are significant stretches of 900mm walling to front gardens along the spine. The notional planting shown in the narrow strips behind the walls will be hidden in views from the street, and will be difficult to maintain. Perhaps these could be replaced with a hard landscape solution (slabs?).

Green fringes

4/ Generally supportive of the design approach in these areas, though scope to bolster tree planting further to strengthen existing tree screen and ensure succession. Will there be provision of seating and bins?

Additional planting required to soften exposed rear boundary walls/fences to create continuous soft edge to the open space and to create pleasant route for the footpaths.

Quobleigh Villas

5/ See comments below on north basin.

Holme Road

6/ The success of this linear space largely depends on the continuity of the existing hedges shown retained. Are the hedges shown accurately plotted or are there gaps in this vegetation that need to be closed/strengthened?

It looks like the rear garden fences are softened with extensive hedge planting which is welcomed (although looking at the birds-eye image in the DAS this might be a footpath?).

The relatively narrow space between the rear gardens and the retained hedge will create a secondary route for dog walkers and pedestrians. Provision of a narrow all-weather route might be sensible.

Will there be a problem of fly tipping over the rear fences?

Foxwood Road

7/ This is not the easiest area to assess as some areas are offsite to Holme and the junction is very odd, cutting 1/2 way through spaces that should really be considered together.

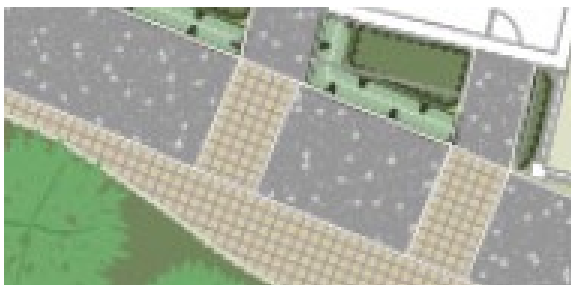
Generally the streetscene lacks coherence with a range of different landscape effects proposed. Tree planting is limited and sporadic, and in places the trees lie too close to the proposed dwellings which will restrict these to only small trees.

The layout of the tree planting shown just offsite along the edge of the main open space is questionable. Can it be delivered? In places the trees are shown planted in very narrow planting strips. A continuous avenue of trees along this edge would have been more effective.

Greenway

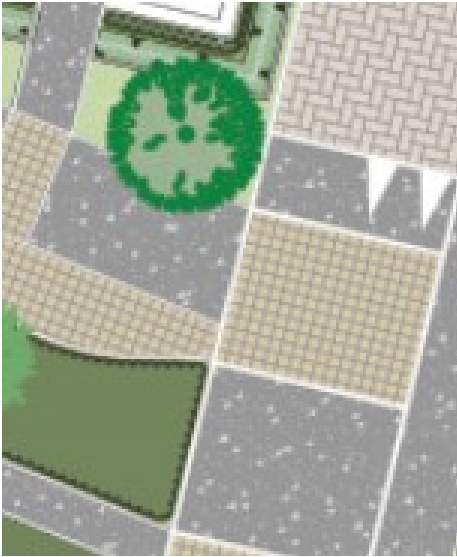
8/ Although the planting along the cycle route is welcomed, there are places where planting needs to be bolstered/re-arranged for improved effect. Some of the trees are arranged in a more random fashion and in other places a more formal layout. I suggest that a more informal layout along both sides of the route would be more consistent.

Please clarify purpose of sweeping bays of paving alongside the cycle path:



Is this intended for seating or cycle racks or perhaps purely decorative?

Some cross-over junctions along the Greenway are awkward and should be re-designed. For example:



I am not clear as to the purpose to this large area of crushed stone:



It appears to be a 'left- over' space. Could the tree planting on the Folds site be continued into this space for continuity?

If the cycleway is a shared route, are all the subsidiary footpaths shown required?

Parking courts

9/ From a landscape perspective, the parking courts are among the least satisfactory aspects of the layout. Too many are dominated by hard surfacing with few tree planting opportunities. As a result, these spaces will be exposed and unattractive.

Of the limited tree planting indicated, many trees will require specialist tree cell pits as they are planted in narrow beds surrounded by hard paving. These trees need to be colour coded on the masterplans so they are not missed by the contractors pricing the scheme.

Some parking courts are surfaced only with tarmac. As soft landscape opportunities are so limited, some of the courts need to have at least some areas of block paving to lift the quality of these spaces. I would prefer blocks on the drives and tarmac parking bays.

Some very narrow strips of planting are indicated which cannot be delivered. They should be omitted unless the beds they are in can be increased in width.

Here is just one example of poor place making for parking areas:



Design Proposals

10/ I support the use of a distinctive palette of plants for each character area. All soft landscape details will be conditioned to allow time to properly assess the planting design.

Landscape Masterplan

11/ This will be the key document that I wish to approve at this stage, with all hard and soft landscape details conditioned.

The landscape proposals for the Holme are limited, with too many areas dominated with hard surfacing. There are too few locations for deliverable street tree planting. As a result, a number of streetscenes will be exposed and bland.

North basin

12/ The more naturalistic design of this area is supported, although the formal swale seems a little out of keeping with the intended character of this space. Could the swale have a more naturalistic design linked into the attenuation basin?

The basin form is generally acceptable, however, it would be good to see some more variation in slope angles for a natural effect. Can a continuous fence around the basin be designed out by introducing shallow slopes to the pond? If the fence cannot be avoided, then at least some more visually prominent stretches should be softened with native mix hedge planting.

Some swathes of native woodland could be rationalised to ease implementation and maintenance. Layout of tree planting to be re-visited to create clearer structure/groupings.

The layout/alignment of the 2/3m wide crushed stone path to be reviewed. In places there are awkward junctions with surrounding landscape and perhaps the alignment can be 'smoothed-out' a little.

Since the British weather appears to be increasingly wet in the spring(!), perhaps some mown grass paths should be replaced with crushed stone to enable year-round use.

Any headwalls to be stone filled gabions, not concrete or brick.

The Green spine

13/ See previous comments - area requires further work to rationalise the design.

Locations of rain gardens to be clearly indicated on landscape masterplans.

Cycle Greenway

14/ See previous comments.

Indicate on masterplans: small unit paving along edge of Greenway, cycle stands, bins and seats.

Level 2 Play space

15/ Some additional shrub planting to enclose space.

Mown paths to be compacted stone.

Idea of themed play space supported, although not entirely convinced of play value of runway-inspired surfacing.

All play area details to be conditioned.

South Basin and Level 3 play area

16/ An unusual layout as it straddles the boundary between 2 parcels of development.

Whilst I generally support the more informal character of this play area, the design requires further work to create a structurally more coherent layout. The layout of the meandering paths are overly complicated, and too many routes are mown grass, which will deteriorate quickly during prolonged rainy periods.

Some further tree and shrub planting required to frame the space and provide enclosure.

Levels need to be carefully considered in this area. The cross-sections in the DAS are helpful. Any required retaining structures to be indicated on the landscape masterplans.

All play area details to be conditioned.

Fir Tree Lane Linear Park

17/ See overall comments made above.

I welcome the nature-focussed approach and the 'play on the way' and outside exercise elements.

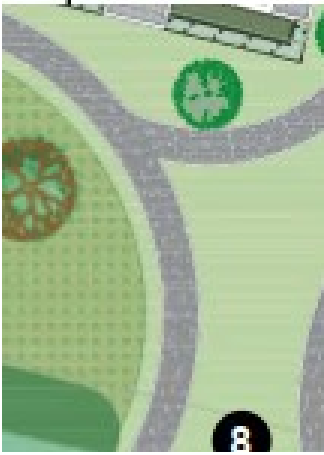
Is the indicated SuD's pond and ditch existing? If so, are these going to be lost under existing vegetation cover.

I am not convinced the layout below will be successful. I am not clear to the design intent here.



This may be a good opportunity for a piece of public art.

This space seems strange and requires further thought:



As this is a nature priority area, should this not, at least in part, be wildflower meadow?

Further detail required of the 'village green' area below:



We should avoid the area being hidden in views which would encourage loitering.

Hardscape & Furniture Palette

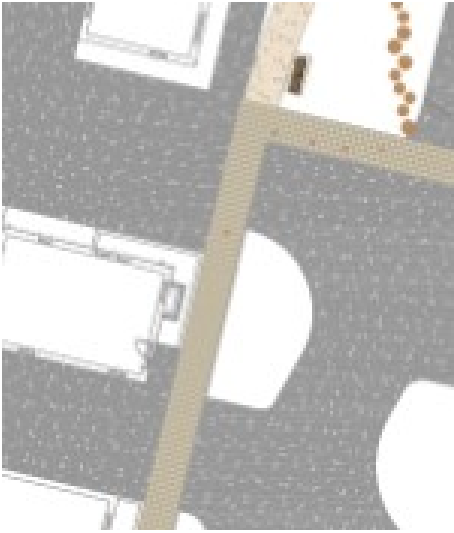
18/ Generally acceptable, although various surfacing types to be indicated on the landscape masterplans.

Increase areas of block paving in parking courts where limited opportunities for tree planting to lift quality of spaces.

Maintenance access route - replace grasscrete with Bodpave85 plastic grids filled with topsoil and grass seeded.

I suggest the cycleway to be coloured bitmac for added quality.

I am not convinced that the hard landscape design of this area is quite right:



A simplified approach as below at the Folds might be better:



Footpath routes to be rationalised.

Softscape Palette

19/ All details to be conditioned.

Information included in the DAS generally acceptable and I support the concept of creating a range of spaces with individual planting character.

Boundaries Treatment

20/ Closeboard fencing to be provided with hedgehog holes.

Half height brick wall & composite fences - no image provided. Colour of composite boards?

Public Art

21/ Locations for public art to be shown on landscape masterplans and the layout should create appropriate spaces for artwork.

Sundry comments

22/ Check tree planting locations to ensure no conflicts with lighting columns, drainage and service runs. **Tree planting shown on masterplans MUST be deliverable.**

After a quick review of the submitted lighting layout plans I did spot a number of possible conflicts.

As a number of areas are being proposed as wildlife friendly, indicate on the masterplans ecology enrichment elements like log piles, hibernacula, insect hotels etc.

In summary, the submitted drawings are a good starting point but considerable design work is still needed to produce robust and deliverable landscape masterplans.

As the agreed plans will form the foundation for all future detailed design work, it is important that the landscape proposals form a strong framework for the development.

I trust all the above points are helpful, but happy to provide clarification as required.

Happy to attend a face-to-face meeting as this should assist the design team as they refine the layouts.

KR Tim

Tim Griffin

Landscape Consultant

Working on behalf of Eastleigh Borough Council

Mobile: 07974 900280