

MADDOX PLANNING

LONDON & MANCHESTER
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Mr S Newall
Cherwell District Council

20/10/2022

**22/02025/REM: BICESTER GATEWAY PHASE 1B
RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATION TO APPROVED OUTLINE REF: 16/02586/OUT
LANDSCAPING RESPONSE; SECURE BY DESIGN RESPONSE; HIGHWAYS**

Dear Simon

We set out our response to comments received from Environmental Services on landscaping and from Thames Valley Police on Secure by Design. We note that these are not expressed as objections, so we hope we have now gone far enough on these two issues. I also deal with highways below, where there is one outstanding objection that seems to have arisen from officers not re-engaging with the project history at the outline stage or the planning policy position. That is, the requested further cycle land works would not stand as a legitimate objection.

Landscaping

Regarding comments on Landscape received on email dated 1 September 2022 from officer Tim Screen, in Environmental Services, we set out our response to address those comments below.

Primary comments relate to requiring additional trees to mitigate the heat Island effect, provide amenity and wildlife value. A marked-up plan accompanies the officer comments. This plan appears to show 16 trees as “new oak trees” on the site. However, these are shown as located within the archaeological priority area, marked on all submission plans as “preservation in situ”.

The reason this Reserved Matters application proposes no structures, no foundations and no standard tree planting in the area indicated “preservation in situ” is by agreement with Oxfordshire County Archaeologist, Richard Oram, that there is high potential archaeology here that is linked to the Scheduled Ancient Monument, comprising a Roman Camp, to the south. Consequently, very limited new trees can be delivered in the area designated. The original submission indicated only two were proposed, planted in mounds (denoted by contour lines on the landscaping plan and on the tree pit detail drawing sheets ref: 7958.TPD.3.OA and 7958.TPD.3.1). This would raise them further above the level of potential archaeology and mitigate any damage.

Notwithstanding, the application proposes a significant amount of new planting and landscaping elsewhere across the site. New tree planting is proposed and shown on landscaping plans across all other parts of the site, including at parking locations between new units and along internal access roads. A mature band of woodland bounds the site around its southern end, providing amenity and wildlife value, and reduces the heat island effect. Hedges and trees are proposed to bound the site on all boundaries.

The team has taken comments on board and sought to respond positively. The landscape plans are amended (enclosed) to make the archaeological area “preservation in situ” clearer. The plans and the landscape management plan (LMP) now include the following:

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- Installation of 1m wide planters in the area of “preservation in situ” in between some of the parking spaces to include planting and additional small trees to help break up the parking area, as well as meet officer comments on mitigating the heat Island effect, provide amenity and wildlife value;
 - Liquidamber and Malus trees will switch for Acer and Cercis as requested;
 - Birch will switch for native species, as requested;
 - Knee rails indicated where shrub is located along the parking and where feasible, as requested;
 - Tree pit details and root deflectors are indicated. Full linear beds would be considered to act as the full tree pit bed;
 - Tree species are clearly set out within the planting plans on mounding and elsewhere;
 - Insurances and Certification are included in the LMP;
 - Environmental Considerations are included in the LMP;
 - Litter and hazardous materials are included in the LMP.

We note that officer comments ask the applicant to address a landscape *and ecological* management plan (LEMP). However, the submitted LMP does not fulfil the ecological function. The ecological function is addressed in the Ecology Statement pursuant to conditions 10, 24 and 25, completed by Ecology Solutions submitted with the application.

In regard to officer comments seeking amendments to a LEMP, some are unnecessary where, for example, the landscape plans are included in Appendix 2 in the ecology report by Ecology Solutions (therefore binding landscaping and ecology). The applicant also reminds officers that there was a substantial offsite contribution paid and this is referenced in the same report and full details are presented again in Appendix 3.

The ecological mitigation strategy and overview is presented in detail in paragraphs 26 to 46 and meets the requirements of condition 24. The combination of Ecology Statement and the LMP requested by officers is not required and simply generates unnecessary work. The requirements for onward management of both landscape and ecology is fully met in these two documents.

Secure by design

Regarding comments on Secure by Design (SBD) received in a letter dated 30 August 2022 from Thames Valley Police, we set out our response to address those comments below.

We are grateful for the comments provided and appreciate these relate to a development seeking SBD accreditation. The development does not seek SBD accreditation. The proposed condition is not required.

Comments relating to excessive site permeability and accessible and open car parking may not take account of the Council’s aspirations for this allocated site in the Local Plan. To assist officers we note that Policy Bicester 10: Bicester Gateway seeks, among other things:

- Layout that enables a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing development particularly the mixed use urban extension at South West Bicester to the west, the garden centre to the north, and, further to the north, Bicester Village retail outlet and Bicester town centre.
- Provision of opportunities for Green Infrastructure links beyond the development site to the wider town and countryside
- Provision for safe pedestrian and cyclist access from the A41 including facilitating the provision and upgrading of footpaths and cycleways that link with existing networks to improve connectivity generally, to maximise walking and cycling links between this site and nearby development sites and the town centre.

However, the development does take account of TVP comments in relation to excessive permeability. We enclose amended site layout plans removing two of the three openings to the hedgerow along the western boundary of the site to the A41. Our consultants have considered whether this could be an opportunity to add two trees. However, they note that would mean removing a section of hedge to do this. Therefore, in their view it would be more beneficial to retain the existing hedge rather than to remove to then replant with tree and hedge planting. This is what is shown on plans.

With regard to the security of the units, the security advice is being taken on board, particularly regarding doors, windows, postal services and vehicle security shutters.

Highways

On the latest comments received today from County Highways, I would simply ask you to refer back to Bicester Policy 10 and all the exchanges with the County during the consideration of the outline application. It is clear, including from the third bullet point quoted above, that the main access to the site for cycles was intended (by policy) to come from the A41. That is what we are proposing. We see no need, and there is no case in policy, to provide an extended cycle lane along Wendlebury Road. We request that this outstanding objection from the County is set aside, citing adopted Local Plan policy.

I trust officers can consider the information herein and look forward to confirmation that the Council is satisfied on these matters.

Yours sincerely



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