**From:** Tim Screen   
**Sent:** 24 July 2018 14:30  
**To:** Caroline Ford  
**Subject:** 17/00600/DISC - Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site Banbury Road Bicester

Caroline

Further to consideration of the above planning application I provide the following comments.

There is a surplus of Malus Tschonoskii and Prunus avium.  In terms of biosecurity and sustainability of these trees do not fare well; they are susceptible to disease according to The RHS website. There must be range trees that are of a low risk of pest and diseases (including leaf scorch). I recommend the following trees:

Acer campestre

Amelanchier lamarkii

Ginko biloba

Liquadambar styraciflua ‘Worplesdon’

Rubus tricolor is extremely vigorous and will out compete other species for light nutrients and water. It can only be planted in large areas on its own where it will not disrupt  a designed scheme.

An interesting choice of Fargesia robusta (bamboo) in small space between kerb and the road. A very tall dense bamboo when established. It may well be a problem in restricting visibility for pedestrians and drivers. They should deleted from the proposals.

Any failures of planting - especially the ‘soft’, herbaceous perennials -  may require

Temporary post and wire fencing may have to be erected to protect the Hornbeam hedge on the play areas/public open space from desire line damage until establishment.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 1 OF 12 14790/5001

Hedera helix will climb garden and house walls and if the mortar joints are not  I recommended replacing this ivy with the evergreen Vinca major

Trees

Malus tschonoskii is too close to the garden wall of plot with a distance of only 0.98 m wall. It is prudent to delete this tree to reduce future soil shrinkage and associated structural damage

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 2 OF 12 14790/5002 P4

Trees

Malus tschonoskii are used continuously. In light of the these trees’ susceptibility to fireblight (if one gets infected it will spread to the others) I recommend that they are replaced  with the aforementioned trees in paragraph 2.

The Betula pendula is going to be planted too close to the paved edge of parking bay 146. Centralise the tree in the centre of the bed to a alleviate this problem of root encroachment and soil shrinkage. The specified root defector is  appropriate.

The double leaf maintenance gate on the play area should be kept locked to ensure pedestrian do not use it given that it opens onto the grass area in the play area.

The Mediterranean plants such and Thymus and Rosemarinus require a free-draining soils (wet soils in winter tend to kill off these Taxa).  It is prudent therefore to ensure that the sub soil is de-compacted and topsoil free-draining to ensure successful establishment.

The spiny Pyracantha ‘Sappho Orange’ is a little bit too close to the parking bay of 169 and my make access to and from vehicles a bit difficult with its spines – replace with Loncera pileata.

Where is the purpose of the double-leaf gate near the crescent shaped fence at the south side of the play area. This and the pedestrian gate -  which is also surplus to requirements - must be deleted from the scheme.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 3 OF 12 14790/5003 P5

I note that Ligustrum vulgar (privet) hedging is still proposed further to my advice. Because it is native plant I assume it is being used to improve the BREEAM rating, and planted on plots 209, 210 and 228 near and therefore associated with the native boundary hedge/buffer, however it is quite an ugly hedge, especially when severe pruning exposes the bare wood which never regenerates sprouts leaf cover.

Consider replacing M. tschonoskii for the aforementioned reasons

The planting areas to the north of plots 195 and 196 would benefit from the removal of Rubus tricolor. R.tricolor is an extremely vigorous plant once it gets established. It will smother the Luzula. Therefore replace in favour of Euonymis fortunei Darts Blanket

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 4 OF 12 14790/5004 P3

Consider the comments re Ligustrum above.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 5 OF 12 14790/5006 P3

The spiny Pyracantha Sappho Orange is a little bit too close to the foot path in respect of plots 167 and 184. This plants spiny outgrowths will impede access on the path. I recommend replacing this species is replaced with hedge that does not have any spines, such as Osmanthus x burkwoodii .

Delete most of the Malus tschonoskii trees in favour of a range of tree species that include Acer campestre, Amelanchier lamarkii, Ginko biloba  and Liquadambar styraciflua ‘Worplesdon’

In respect of the area south of plot 189 the M. tschonoskii on the right of the bin store is located too near to the edhe of the paving. Delete this tree from the scheme (there is no space a tree here, therefore replace with a multi-stemmed Amelanchier specimen shrub in the middle of the bed).

The 3 Carpinus betulus ‘Fastigiata’ west of plots 191 and 192 are not appropriate for the rural edge hedgerow corridor. Replace with 3 native Betula pendula arranged naturalistically as opposed to the rather straight, equi-distanced trees.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 6 OF 12 14790/5006 P3

The Betula pendula tree on the eastern boundary of plot 226 boundary is far too close to the path edge, even with a root defector the root flare/bole of the tree will grow and expand and push the root deflector into the kerb and cause structural damage to the path. Delete the tree .

What is the reason for the triangular-shaped space at the rear of plot 226? Does it have a function? Is it possible that this land could be claimed by the future resident of the plot? There could be anti-social behaviour issues for the resident. I recommend planting it up the entire area with Viburnum opulus and Hedera helix groundcover.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 7 OF 12 14790/5007 P4

It is prudent to ensure that the micro plots, opposite plots 12 and 14 are not over-shaded by 3 proposed Prunus avium trees with dense canopies near the site. An open sunny site is more conducive for growing produce. 3 Amelanchier lamarkii multi-stemmed shrub specimens should be planted to replace these trees

On the periphery of the site the numbers of Prunus avium are to be reduced to combat bacterial canker. Replace these tree  with native Acer campestre, Crataegus monogyna and Quecus robur (where space allows)

Trees that will eventualy grow to  over hang to play features equipment are still a concern.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 8 OF 12 14790/5008 P4

Again the M. tschonoskii are to be replaced with the replacement trees identified above.

The spiny Pyracantha 'Sappho Orange' hedge to the car parking plot nos. 69 – 70 should be replaced to with a non-spiny formal hedge i.e. Osmanthus x burkwoodii.

A surplus of Prunus avium trees: if they get bacterial canker they will have to be felled.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 10 OF12 14790/5010 P4

Refer to paragraph 5 above. Fargesia robusta (bamboo) a locations along the side of the road is unusual. I am concerned that these specimen will suffer from rock slat deposits during winter; will become damaged by  vehicles and drought ridden (very small volumes of growing medium). These bamboo specimens do not provide the same amenity and environmental impact that street trees would provide .

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 11 OF 12 14790/5011 P3

The car park layout is unworkable. The parking for plots 91 to 119 should be situated located along the edge of the rear garden plots. The current layout does not allow vehicles the reverse or drive into the parking bays.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHEET 12 OF 12 14790/5011 P3

A B.pendula south of plot 49  is situated too near to the edge of the path and damage will ensue with the roots and stem grow and spread. Therefore delete this tree.

The tree P.avium south of the bin stores and the parking bays for plot 131 is positioned too close the edge of the paving.

The planting around the aforementioned bin store should ideally be increased in depth to provide the necessary screening.

The parking areas where plots 131 exist the narrow strip along the northern side is too narrow to sustain the proposed planting of ornamental dogwoods. Concrete haunching will reduce the optimum soil volume and cause a drainage problem (the soil will dry out too quickly in drought). Delete the border planting adjoining the house to plot 132,but retain a widened border with the dogwoods (1 m) along parking bays 131-133

EASTERN OPEN SPACES14790/5013 P5

The narrow planting borders with sharp mitred corners will be trashed by people walking across, and cutting corners,  over the ends of these borders.

What is the reason for the double leaf gates and pedestrian gates and pedestrian gates and fence at the southern end of the play area when there is already a double maintenance gate proposed in the eastern boundary.

The protruding gatepost is a hazard for children in the circulation area near play feature 5.  I recommend a redesign of the fencing position to resolve this problem.

The planting mix has been repeated throughout. The herbaceous perennials are not robust enough to cope with the rigors of active children running around. Strong, robust landscape plants are required: a mix of non-toxic shrubs and ornamental grasses already specified.

Narrow plant borders near hedges are going to be trampled and compacted due to landscape contractor’s access to cut the hedges.

CENTRAL OPEN SPACES 14790/5014 P4

The triangular planting areas near the picnic tables are in located where plants and soil will be damaged by trampling and cycling. The border to the grass should have a metre verge between the path and the edge of the border. Both areas should be protected with knee rail fencing (the extent to be indicated on the drawing). A similar problem will occur of the small beds at the pedestrian junction west of the bus stop. These bed are so small that will be unsustainable.

The crab apples of the Malus trees will attract birds over the picnic tables. The ensuing bird mess will is a hazard and substantial amount of cleansing will be required.

The Amsonia tabernaemontana salicifolia is unsuitable because they will be trampled which is a concern because the milky sap may irritate skin

Please note that if this planting is given consent and fails the developer will have to formally write to this authority to change the species to a more suitable species or  cultivar.

WESTERN OPEN SPACES 14790/5015 P4

Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata' to the front of plot 113 is actually shown to be planted in the foot path. This tree must be shown to be 2 m minimum from the edge of the paving.

The canopy of this tree are very dense and the afternoon sun will cast shade over the front gardens and dwelling of plot 113 .

OPEN SPACE SURFACE FINISHES & DETAILS SHEET 3 OF 3 - PLAY AREA SURFACING ENVIRONS: ILLUSTRATIVE CROSS SECTIONS

I am concerned about the proposed gravel surface to the play areas and the edge of mown turf. Children tend to fall and graze themselves more badly on gravel. Also the gravel tends to be kicked onto safer surfaces which can indent the surface and deform and split it. Falling on a safer surface with aggregate embedded within it also creates injury to children.

NORTHERN GATEWAY 14790/5016 P4

The rather soft herbaceous perennial planting at the base of the mounding is prone to damage from inconsiderate mowing operatives. Being such a high profile site is impotent to ensure this planting thrives. In order to make these small areas of planting more sustainable they should be increased and joining together.

Regards

Tim

**Tim Screen** CMLI

**Landscape Architect**

Cherwell District & South Northants Councils

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