

Job Number: QD88

Application Number: S/2020/0385/MAR

Proposal: Application for consent of 127 units (parcels H16 and H18) and the surrounding strategic landscaping (part phases 1,2 and 3. (Approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission S/2007/0374/OUTWNS) The outline application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement

Location: Towcester Vale Phase 1, London Road, Towcester

Date: 9th April 2020

This is a response to the submitted documentation of the above approval of reserved matters as part of the Towcester Vale Phase 1.

Open Space

1. Tree species specified are of mainly small canopy trees and are insignificant in size. It is recommended to the increased use of larger canopy trees such as Oak, Lime etc are used to create more significant visual presence/feature within the open space
2. The use of large size Cherry's specified throughout the open space when not used as vista's/features within the scheme should be replaced with an alternative species. Cherry's are commently known to be shorter lived and as well are known for related bacterial disease issues. The sizes proposed are too large and it would be recommended a species is specified provided.
3. There are no reinforcement of the existing hedgerow to the west proposed. It is recomended that any gaps or areas which require infilling/reinforcement. Alternatively the existing hedgerows are used as a planting spine to new areas of planting
4. There is no mention of the managment of the existing hedgerow. How will the existing hedge be managed to ensure its longevity as well as being an attractive part of the landscape? Are there ditches adjacent to the hedgerow and how will these be managed or dealt with to avoid attracting tipping?
5. There needs to be an increase in the number of trees associated with the existing hedgerow to reinforce the existing hedgerow as well as creating a woodland buffer feel.
6. The native shrub mix density is relatively low dense mix and it would look insignificant throughout the open space. It is recommended that the density is increased to 2 per m². It may be beneficial to use whips and feathers where the native shrub mix is located adjacent to the existng hedgerow.
7. The relationship between the public space and the private space needs to be considered in greater detail. It may be beneficial to show the boundary treatments to the adjacent plots to show how boundaries are formed between the spaces and to show how the space is organised and defended.

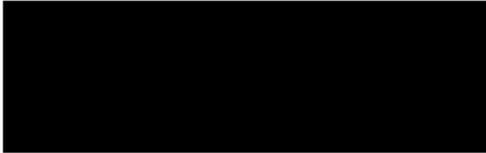
8. The areas of bulb planting are relatively small and the visual impact of these will not be sufficient enough. It is recommended that the bulb planting areas are increased in sizes or the smaller areas are put together to create a much larger area which will allow for a greater significance and visual impact.
9. There needs to be a focus on feature trees upon termination points within the open space. These will provide visual connections/focal points to users of the open spaces as well as a connection with the adjacent residential units.
10. The location of Litter bins/Dog waste bins needs to be rationalised. These locations would be more appropriate at the termination/connections of footpaths for ease of use as well as ease of maintenance.

Play Area

11. The maintenance height of the beech hedge needs to be advised to ensure sufficient supervision of the play area whilst also providing sufficient boundary enclosure. Protection of the initial planting should be specified to ensure the successful establishment of the plants as this will be vulnerable in such close proximity to the play area.
12. Ensure trees are located at termination points of footpaths or connections to give a visual focal point and connection. This may mean a reassessment of tree alignment by either relocating or increasing/decreasing distances between trees.
13. Trees will need to be positioned at equal distances from each other to provide the linear feel as well as the line which is being proposed on the Carpinus betulus trees located to the south west of the Play Area.
14. The location of Litter bins/Dog waste bins needs to be rationalised. These locations would be more appropriate at the termination/connections of footpaths for ease of use as well as ease of maintenance. Dog waste bins need to be located away from the play area for safety reasons. Litter and dog bins should be set in an area of hard-standing to allow for the ease of long term grass maintenance.
15. The positioning of the benches as part of the development look uncomfortable on plan. Their locations however seem feasible and I can understand why they are positioned there however it needs to be looked at so these benches are positioned more comfortably. Ensure that there is adequate hard surface area to the seating to assist with management.
16. On the landscape plan provided and the accompanying boundary treatment plan it is unclear how the boundaries of the play area or open space are protected. There appears no fences on any of the accompanying drawings and the beech hedge to the south west may not be sufficient enough to protect users of the Play Area. It is important to ensure that these spaces are protected so children do not run into the adjacent roads.
17. The use of Holly near the play area is of concern. The sharp edges of the plant as well as the poisonous berries may become an issue to young children who use the park. I recommend that the planting species used within the play area need to be re-assessed to ensure plant material is safe for the space which the planting is to be used in.
18. The connecting paths within the play area need to be softened. The paths shown on the plan are too straight and the connection needs softening/sweeping to avoid people cutting corners.
19. It may be useful to include a greater area of wildflower planting to the proposed mounds.

20. The use of the rocks is an interesting element within natural play, however it is unclear on how these elements will fit in within the proposed mounding. It is suggested more detail is provided to show how the rocks fit within the mounding and how these would be accessed. Erosion to the grass will occur in these locations and design consideration to reduce the erosion by should be provided.

Kind regards,



David Newman
Partner
09th April 2020