Landscape Consultation

Proposal: Discharge of Condition 9 (Hard and Soft Landscaping) for 24/00024/S73	**Location:** Oakwood Business Park Old Great North Road Sawtry
Case Officer: CDEW **Landscape Officer:** PBAI	**Application No:** 25/80106/COND

Comments in PURPLE relate to the resubmitted discharge of conditions application 25/80106/COND following refused discharge of conditions application 24/80296/COND to which comments shown below in black, blue, green and red relate to.

Comments in GREEN from a re-consultation on 12/10/2024 with reference to an amended landscaping scheme with updates from the Landscape Architect dated 06/12/2024 in BLUE, provided on 10/12/2024. N.B. with reference to notes in BLUE: *'In those places that mention 'David to update' this means that the applicant will need to implement these requirements on site in accordance with this updated scheme, once approved.'*

Comments in RED in response to amended drawings received 17/02/2025.

Condition 9. A scheme for hard and soft landscaping, including a programme of implementation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of the date of this decision. The approved scheme shall be completed in accordance with the implementation programme. Hard landscaping shall include details of all boundary treatments, hard surfaces and demarcation of parking spaces. Soft landscaping shall include planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes, proposed numbers and densities where appropriate, and full details of landscape maintenance regimes after the completion of works. The development shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme. Any trees or plants which are planted in connection with the development hereby approved which within a period of five years from planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of the same size and species as those originally approved.

Reason. In the interest of the visual amenity and the character of the area and in the interests of the biodiversity of the site in accordance with Policies LP11, LP12 and LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

Documents Reviewed:

- Amended Tree Planting Plan TPO1 Rev 09
- Amended Tree Pit Sections TPH 01 Rev 02 Rev 03
- Car Park Planter Plan P 01 Rev 04
- Shrub, Hedge and Meadow Planting Plan SHM 01 Rev 06
- Hard Landscaping Plan TP01
- Landscape Maintenance and Management Schedule
- Soft Landscape Specification
- 20/02138/FUL Proposed Site Layout
- 23/80214/COND Planting Plan PP01
- 24/00024/S73Tree Planting Plan TP01 Rev 6
- 23/80270/COND Ecology Plan EP01
- 23/80270/COND Tree Planting Plan TPO1 Rev 04
- 23/80270/COND Shrub, Hedge and Meadow Planting Plan SP01 Rev 3
- Amended Tree Planting Plan TPO1 Rev 10 Rev 11 Rev 12
- Shrub, Hedge and Meadow Planting Plan SHM 01 Rev 07 Rev 08 Rev 09

Tree Pit Sections:

The use of Stockholm Tree Pit designs to incorporate heavy standard tree planting within a hard landscape setting is welcomed. It represents an example hugely beneficial in mitigating the dominance of cars and parking that are often a consequence of high-density commercial developments where parking is a major factor.

A site visit with photographs was taken on 12/11/24. Units 14 to 18 have been built. No trees have been planted in the frontage of Units 14 to 18. The below images suggest that the Stockholm Tree Pit Design has not been incorporated into the fabric of the hard landscaping. The pre-cast concrete frame which is used for the planting hole to house the tree rootball cannot be identified, neither can the aeration well which should be positioned within the planting strip or block paving, nor the rootball irrigation system. It is considered highly unlikely that structural soils have been provided, which has a specific combination of compost, enriched biochar and 32-63mm crushed rock and at a recommended minimum volume of 26m^3 for each of the trees proposed. It unlikely that any form of planting, other than hard wearing amenity grass will tolerate the hostile conditions presented. It is unclear whether tree planting remains to be proposed with the use of the Stockholm Tree Pit Design as the amended Tree Planting Plan TP01 Rev 10 remains unchanged. The question remains unanswered; clarification on the suggestion that the Stockholm Tree Pit design has not been incorporated into the fabric of the hard landscaping is requested. Despite this being the third round of comments there remains a lack of clarification on this matter.

Submitted Tree Pit Sections TPH 01 Rev 03 show details of structural soil tree pit design with tree pit soil volumes shown to provide 26m3 for each semi mature tree to be planted within the hardscape setting. It can only be assumed that the proposed Stockholm Tree Pit design has been incorporated into the fabric of the hard landscaping.





Images showing narrow planting strips void of the means for tree planting between Units 14 and 18.

Units and Car Park Tree Planting:

It is clear from a site visit on 12/11/2024, that Units 19 to 29 are yet to be constructed. It is strongly recommended that the Stockholm Tree Pit designs to incorporate heavy standard tree planting within a hard landscape setting is undertaken as proposed. It is unclear whether tree planting remains to be proposed with the use of the Stockholm Tree Pit Design as the amended Tree Planting Plan TP01 Rev 10 remains unchanged. Please clarify the position with the ongoing construction. As discussed above, there remains a lack of clarification on this matter. As above, it can only be assumed that the proposed Stockholm Tree Pit design has been incorporated into the fabric of the hard landscaping. The current prominence of hard landscaping and car parking is unacceptable and is considered contrary to the objectives of the HDC Design Guide SPD requirements for employment and commercial car parks (page 91 *'In commercial developments, the best way to alleviate the effect of large parking areas is to ensure that they are designed as an integral part of the landscape.'... 'generous areas of soft landscaping and tree planting both within the car park and around its external edges will help to enhance the appearance of the car park'*),

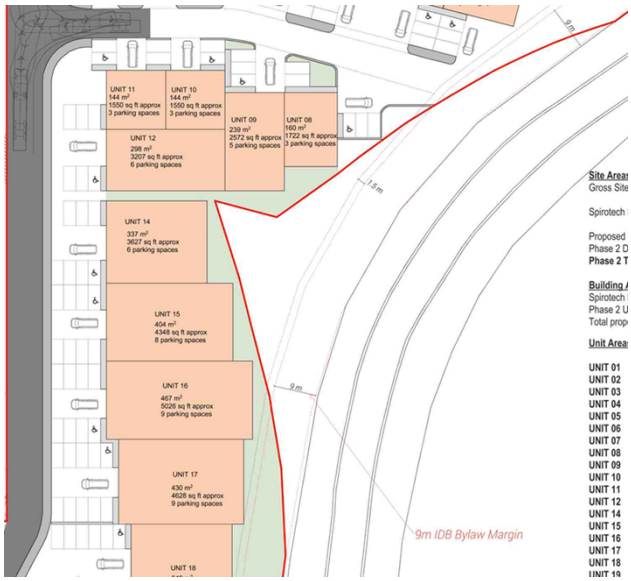
and the NPPF para 140 (‘….*Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used)’).*

Tree planting in front of Units 02 and 03 is strongly recommended, as proposed in 23/80270/COND Tree Planting Plan TPO1 Rev 04. Tree planting in front of Units 02 and 03 has not been provided. Comments provided against Recommendations ‘*Can’t update due to underground cables*.’ The omission of C7 to specify ‘[…]*planting plans (which show the relationship to all underground services)[…]*’ does not allow for examination of this statement using the submitted plans. Accepted.

Evidence of the Stockholm Tree Pit construction should be provided with specific reference to structural soils and volumes.

Red Line Boundary:

It is unclear whether planting is proposed outside of the Red Line Boundary. The images below suggest that tree planting is proposed outside of the Red Line Boundary between Units 8 and 16. Clarification is required; please provide amended tree planting plans showing the extent of the Red Line Boundary. Clarification on the extent of the Red Line Boundary remains unanswered. Please provide amended tree planting plans showing the extent of the Red Line Boundary. The following comments were provided against Recommendations: ‘*Red line moved to align with Water peps*.’ It is unclear whether this statement is suggesting that the Red Line Boundary has been moved to accommodate tree planting. I defer to Planning Officer guidance on this issue. Amended drawings show a different treatment of this area which is not presented in the key on both TP01 rev 11 and SHM 01 rev 8. One can only assume that this is now represented as sealed surface concrete hardstanding which occurs outside of the RLB. This needs to be made clear. Furthermore, amended proposals for tree and hedgerow planting suggest that the tree planting remains outside of the RLB. The red line boundary needs to be shown in relation to the proposed tree and hedgerow planting. Submitted drawings align and show the red line boundary with proposed tree planting inside the RLB. Accepted.



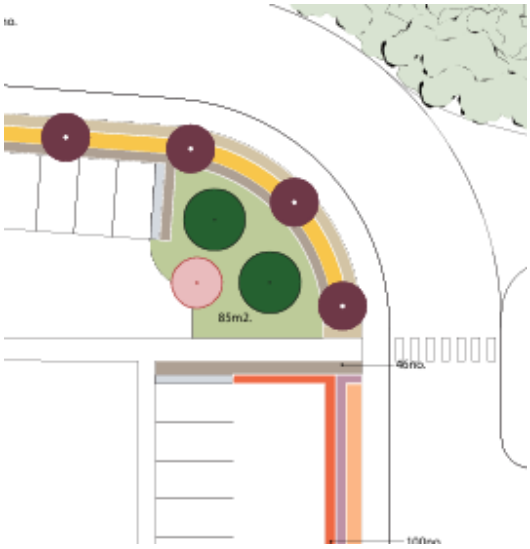


20/02138/FUL Proposed Site Layout showing the Red Line Boundary. 24/80296/COND Tree Planting Plan.

Phase 1 areas:

The current proposal is for the discharge of Condition 9 with regards to Phase 2 – Land North of St Andrews Nurseries. The extent of the Red Line Boundary is clearly defined in the Proposed Site Layout of 20/02138/FUL. Current planting proposals (Tree Planting Plan TPO1 Rev 09 & Shrub, Hedge and Meadow Planting Plan SHM 01 Rev 06) appear to propose planting outside of the Red Line Boundary in areas of Phase 1. Phase 1 Hard and Soft Landscaping conditions remain,

discharge was refused RE 23/80214/COND. Please provide amended drawings to only include proposal within the Red Line Boundary. Clarification on the extent of the Red Line Boundary remains unanswered. Please provide amended tree planting plans showing the extent of the Red Line Boundary. The red line boundary needs to be shown in relation to the proposed tree and hedgerow planting. As above, the submitted drawings align and show the red line boundary with proposed tree planting inside the RLB. Accepted.



Phase 1 refused proposals RE 23/80214/COND



24/80296/COND Tree Planting Plan

Mound:

The proposed landscape planting of the mound along the northern site boundary includes meadow seeding covered in a jute fibre mesh. The natural fibre mesh is recognised for its' use in stabilizing soils which are susceptible to surface water soil erosion. Planting wildflower meadow seed allows for further stabilization of the soils while providing aesthetically pleasing and pollinator friendly ground cover and is welcomed.

An avenue of 14 Acer campestre 'Huibers Elegent' is proposed along the spine road, 2m off the kerb line at the base of the mound. An understorey of contrasting evergreen *Prunus laurocerasus* and red stemmed hardwood *Cornus sanguinea,* with further tree planting proposed on the top of the mound will provide an attractive formal and highly ornamental entrance along the spine road, and is welcomed.

However, the reality is that the mound has already been planted and differs somewhat from the proposals: A woven polypropylene geotextile membrane adorns the mound which is punctuated by shrub planting, far from providing a formal and attractive entrance along the spine road. The hideous covering of black woven plastic is not considered permeable for filtration and is likely to lead to increased drought stress for the planting on the mound, enhancing the drying-out of the shrub and tree roots as the black plastic heats up in the summer sun. Any attempt to mitigate the unsightly appearance of the membrane with bark mulch will be unsuccessful as it is rapidly washed out in the rain. Furthermore, in years to come the non-biodegradable woven polypropylene geotextile membrane will break down and contribute to soil pollution and accumulation of micro plastics.

Of the 14 *Acer campestre* trees proposed, 7 have been planted. Tree planting has not been provided to soften the side elevation of Unit 1 and associated car parking. David to update: *'In those places that mention 'David to update' this means that the applicant will need to implement these requirements on site in accordance with this updated scheme, once approved.'*

It is strongly recommended that plans are amended to reflect the planting which has taken place. Recommendations include for the woven polypropylene geotextile membrane to be lifted, recycled and replaced with a biodegradable alternative, such as coir or jute fibre. A wildflower seed mix should be provided which could be successfully established. No comments provided. One can only assume that the recommendations above will be implemented on site in accordance with this updated scheme, once approved. Please provide clarification on this matter. Clarification on this

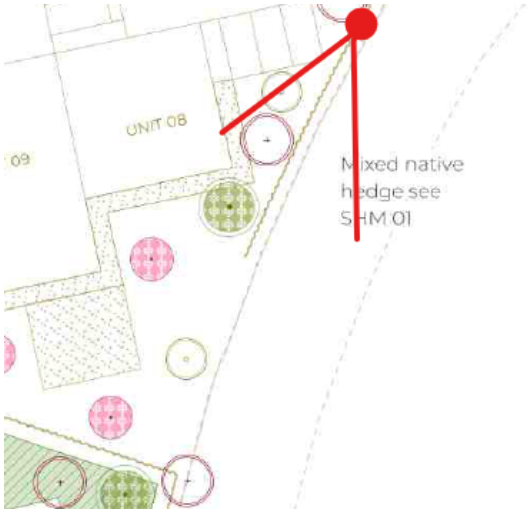
matter remains unanswered. Further tree planting should be provided to soften the side elevation of Unit 1 and associated car parking, as proposed. Additional 1x *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer' proposed is welcomed.



Rear of Units 8, 9 & 14:

The images below show a photograph taken 12/11/2024 looking SSW along the eastern boundary fence and planted mixed native hedgerow plus the corresponding viewpoint as shown on the Tree Planting Plan. The tree planting proposed has not been undertaken and is now not possible due to the concrete sealed surface presented. Please amend plans to reflect the planting which has taken place and to that which is realistically proposed as additional planting. Updated Plans have been updated to show concrete hard standing in the areas of visible concrete hard standing shown in the photograph below. It is recommended that the updated plans are brought to the attention of LLFA colleagues at Cambridgeshire County Council due to the potential for surface water flood risk or drainage implications. I defer to the Planning Officer regarding the potential for the need for a S73 application and for the viability of this amendment under a Condition application. Plans have been amended presumably to omit these areas as they lie outside of the RLB. The red line boundary needs to be shown in relation to the proposed tree and hedgerow planting for clarity. As above, the submitted drawings align and show the red line boundary with proposed tree planting inside the RLB. Accepted.



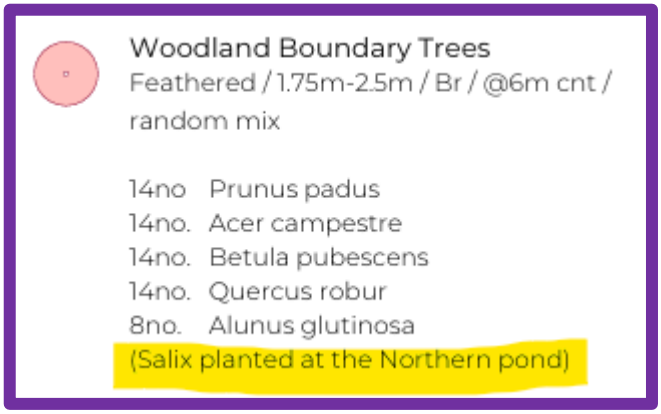


Woodland Boundary South:

It is recommended that larger trees are provided to improve structure of the woodland boundaries and to hasten the establishment of the habitat and associated screening it needs to deliver. Feathered/1.75-2.5m bare rooted trees, @ 6m centres should be provided, as proposed in previous refused application 24/00024/S73 Tree Planting Plan TP01 Rev 6, replacing *Carpinus betulus* with *Quercus robur.* Updated Amendments welcomed.

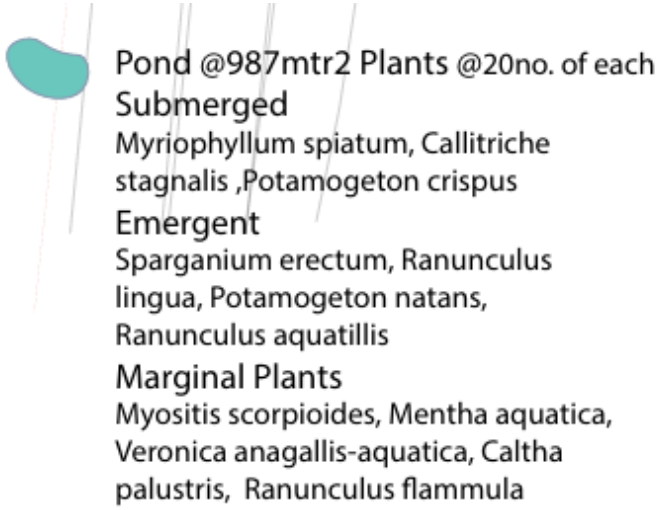
Pond/Ecology Area:

It is recommended that larger feathered/1.75-2.5m bare rooted trees, @ 6m centres are provided as proposed in previous refused application 24/00024/S73 Tree Planting Plan TP01 Rev 6, replacing *Carpinus betulus* with *Quercus robur* -Amendments welcomed- and *Salix fragilis* with *Alnus glutinosa*. Updated *Salix fragilis* to be replaced with *Alnus glutinosa. Salix sp.* is not specified in text '*Salix planted at Northern Pond'* in the legend. *Salix fragilis* is inappropriate due to the maintenance issues related to this species. Please specify species or replace with *Alnus glutinosa. Salix sp.* remains in specification. Please specify species or replace with *A. glutinosa. Salix sp*. remains in specification which requires amending as per previous comments:



Grassland areas in the proposed Ecology Area/Pond Area is specified as Naturescape N13 Dry Soil mix which is not appropriate due to the classic chalky boulder clay soils is this region. Please amend to Naturescape N6 Clay Soils Meadow Mixture or Emorsgate EM4 Wildflowers for Clay Soils (or similar). Updated Naturescape N6 Clay Soil mix provided, welcomed.

Submerged, emergent and marginal planting of the pond has been omitted from drawings. Pond planting to follow recommendations from previous application 23/80270/COND Ecology Plan EP01, it is presented as an ecology area after all: Updated Amendments provided. Welcomed.



Recommendations:

- Refuse application its current form and seek the following recommended amendments for future application: Condition 9 should not be discharged in its current form: Unresolved matters remain as discussed. Minor amendment required relating to Salix species specification, following which C9 will be recommended for discharge.

- Stockholm Tree Pit designs to incorporate heavy standard tree planting within a hard landscape setting is undertaken as proposed in car parking areas of Units 10 to 29. TBC at a later date Clarification on the suggestion that the Stockholm Tree Pit design has not been incorporated into the fabric of the hard landscaping is requested. Please clarify the position with the ongoing construction. There remains a lack of clarification on this matter. Resolved.

- Stockholm Tree Pit designs to be to be included in the Soft Landscaping Specification. Updated Amended Soft Landscaping Specification has not been provided. Unresolved. Resolved.

- Tree planting in front of Units 02 and 03 is strongly recommended. Can't update due to underground cables. Accepted.

- Provide amended drawings to only include proposal within the Red Line Boundary, showing the extent of the Red Line Boundary. Red line moved to align with Water peps. It is unclear whether this statement is suggesting that the Red Line Boundary has been moved to accommodate tree planting. I defer to Planning Officer guidance on this issue. Clarification on the extent of the Red Line Boundary remains unanswered. Please provide amended tree planting plans showing the extent of the Red Line Boundary. The red line boundary needs to be shown in relation to the proposed tree and hedgerow planting for clarity. RLB now shown and all planting shown inside the RLB. Resolved.

- Plans to be amended to reflect the planting which has taken place and that which is realistically proposed as additional planting. Updated It is unclear whether the plans reflect the planting which has taken place, or it is intended that the planting will take place in accordance with this updated scheme, once approved. *'TBC at a later date'* comments provided regarding the Stockholm Tree Pit designs and associated tree planting does not provide the clarification sought. Unresolved. Resolved.

- Woven polypropylene geotextile membrane is lifted, recycled and replaced with a biodegradable alternative, such as coir or jute fibre. David to update on site: '*In those places that mention 'David to update' this means that the applicant will need to implement these requirements on site in accordance with this updated scheme, once approved.'* I defer to the Planning Officer on this matter.

- A wildflower seed mix provided which could be successfully established with the biodegradable geotextile membrane. David to update on site: *'In those places that mention 'David to update' this means that the applicant will need to implement these requirements on site in accordance with this updated scheme, once approved.'* I defer to the Planning Officer on this matter.

- Further tree planting provided to soften the side elevation of Unit 1 and associated car parking. Updated Additional 1x *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer' proposed is welcomed.

- Larger feathered trees provided to improve structure of the woodland boundaries along the southern boundary and around the Pond/Ecology Area to hasten the establishment of the habitat and associated screening it needs to deliver, as proposed in previous refused application 24/00024/S73 Tree Planting Plan TP01 Rev 6, replacing *Carpinus betulus* with *Quercus robur* -Amendments welcomed-.and *Salix fragilis* with *Alnus glutinosa*. Updated *Salix sp.* is not specified in text: '*Salix planted at Northern Pond*' in the legend. *Salix fragilis* is inappropriate due to the maintenance issues related to this species. Please specify species or replace with *Alnus glutinosa.* Unresolved. As above, this is the final remaining unresolved issue, following which C9 can be discharged.

- Replace Naturescape N13 Dry Soil mix with Naturescape N6 Clay Soils Meadow Mixture or Emorsgate EM4 Wildflowers for Clay Soils (or similar) proposed for Pond/Ecology Area. Naturescape N6 Clay Soil mix provided, welcomed.

- Provide pond planting of submerged, emergent and marginal plants to follow recommendations from previous application 23/80270/COND Ecology Plan EP01. Updated Amendments provided. Welcomed.

- Plans have been updated to show concrete hard standing in the areas of visible concrete hard standing shown in the photograph taken to the rear of Units 8, 9 and 14. It is recommended that the updated plans are brought to the attention of LLFA colleagues at Cambridgeshire County Council due to the potential for surface water flood risk or drainage implications. I defer to the Planning Officer regarding the potential for the need for a S73 application and for the viability of this amendment under a Condition application. As recommended. Resolved.

Signed: PBAI

Dated: 13/11/2024 23/12/2024 26/02/2025 29/04/2025