

Landscape Perspective response to HDC Landscape Comments Furners Lane, Henfield (3.2.25)

Soft Landscaping

'4.a. Trees and hedgerow were removed from the existing access to the listed Backsettown House. Whilst there is an arboricultural justification for this, the sense of arrival and a softer approach to the house must be preserved, particularly as the context of the site has fundamentally changed from a field to a housing estate. To this effect, tree planting to create a tree avenue is required. The trees along this access route must be of a larger size and a minimum 20-25cm girth.'

LP: We do not feel that a formal avenue of trees is an appropriate design approach for this rural location, as it would impose a structured, urban feel that is inconsistent with the site's existing character. Instead, we have added informally spaced trees along the main access route to Backsettown Farm to preserve a softer, more rural approach. 6no. new trees are proposed on the access track approaching the listed dwelling, replacing the 3no. currently there. We propose that the tree species and sizes will be determined via a suitably worded planning conditions for soft landscaping, which will ensure they complement the local landscape character and reinforce the rural setting of the listed building.

'4.b "We recommend that an area of open amenity space is managed with a regular mowing regime, as opposed to meadow. This is to provide opportunity for informal play/picnics and to safeguard the retention of the wider meadow, especially where closer to the more sensitive boundaries of the site. In addition, we recommend delivering signage to educate future residents on meadow appearance, management, and general need for meadows in landscapes.'

LP: In response to the recommendation, we have incorporated an area of closer-mown grass within the south-eastern part of the open space area to provide functional space for informal recreation such as picnicking and play. The mown grass area accords with the 'Amenity Greenspace' as set out within the Horsham District Open Space Sport and Recreation Review.

This has been carefully balanced to ensure that 10% can still be achieved on site, and allows for more ecologically sensitive areas to be safeguarded. We ask that educational signage is addressed via a suitably worded planning condition for Hard Landscaping.

'4.c We would also welcome the provision of some informal natural play elements (LAP - refer to the Horsham District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Review June 2021) within this open space, as well as an all-weather footpath and some seating so that the space can be enjoyed by all including those less able.'

LP: We have integrated natural play elements at key locations along the walking routes to encourage informal play while maintaining the rural character of the site. Bench seating has been strategically positioned to provide resting points and enhance accessibility. However, we have retained mown grass paths instead of all-weather surfacing to minimise habitat disturbance, particularly for reptiles that utilise the existing grassland. This approach balances accessibility with ecological sensitivity and onsite BNG.

'4.d Opportunities for more tree planting, particularly within the open space that homes the balancing pond, must be explored.'

LP: While we recognise the benefits of additional tree planting, we believe that the character of the open space should be maintained as an open landscape to preserve its rural open character. As such, we have focused increased tree planting within the housing area.

'4.e Concern is raised with the arrangement and amenity of users of PROW 2548, which will travel along the garden fences of plots 29, 26 and 25. Please note space must be allowed to include a standard width footpath, grass verge, hedgerow planting and close board fence.'

LP: The PROW officer's comment relates to upgrading the surfacing of PROW2548 to a Limestone Path, with construction specification agreed with the PROW team and Highway Authority under a s278 agreement. This has been agreed to by the applicant. FP2548 will be improved only along the site boundary south of FP2548_1 where the footpath is particularly muddy during winter months, but not further south of the site as the made path there is currently fit for purpose.

The existing hedgerow will be retained along this route, and post and rail fence will be proposed along the east of the hedgerow to form the boundaries for Plots 29, 26 and 25. This will be established at planning condition stage, within the hard and soft landscaping condition and boundary treatment condition.

4.f We request enhancement planting of the existing boundary along Furners Lane and proposed hedgerow planting along PROW 2548 to advance planting delivered prior to any development above ground floor slab level takes place. These areas are to be fenced off and protected as part of the site's enabling works therefore enhancement planting can take place as soon as possible. This will make sure mitigation measures are in place at an early stage, including during construction, and reduce the adverse effects on users of footpaths which are highly sensitive receptors.

LP: To align with the request for early mitigation planting, we have added a drawing note confirming that enhancement planting along Furners Lane and the proposed hedgerow along PROW 2548 will be implemented prior to any development above the ground floor slab level. This ensures that landscape mitigation measures are in place early to minimise the visual and environmental impact of construction and to provide immediate benefits for footpath users.

5.a We note 6 proposed tree species, however we expect to see a greater diversity and variety in species in order to minimise the risk of widespread biotic threats. We would advise selecting trees that are suitable to the landscape character and geology of the site, as well as fruiting species in the more open areas in order to reflect the character of orchards as seen in the wider landscape. The location of these must be shown in a detailed planting plan.

LP: We will increase the proposed species diversity and can provide a tree planting plan as part of a suitably worded condition.

5.b The accompanying planting schedule, in addition to the information provided within the landscape masterplan, must also include planting numbers.

LP: The detailed planting plans including the plant schedules will be prepared to discharge the pre-occupation condition on Hard and Soft Landscaping.

5.c 'We recommend that native trees are sourced from seed or stock from the Region of Provenance 40 in order to ensure resilience and therefore successful establishment.'

LP: This can be dealt with within the tree planting plan which can be submitted via a suitably worded condition, as outlined above.

5.d *'We recommend the introduction of planting within the swales and balancing pond in order to further compound effects of the SuDS and for the purposes of securing a high-quality landscape. We advise using a range of vegetation types including nectar rich plants and grasses of various heights.'*

LP: We have added additional planting to the edge of the SuDS and balancing pond, which will contribute to the on-site BNG.

5.e *Please note that we expect to see information on watering regimes for successful establishment and the submission of a Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan (LMMP).*

5.f *With regards the LMMP, also note that we strongly recommend that chemicals including herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers are not to be applied on site at any time due to impacts on the existing and proposed waterbodies, woodland, hedgerow and ditches, and the protection of their ecological features. Alternative methods for*

LP: These points will be comprehensively addressed within the Landscape Management Plan, which will be submitted as part of the Pre-Occupation Condition discharge. We acknowledge the importance of establishing appropriate watering regimes to ensure successful plant establishment. Additionally, we confirm that no herbicides, pesticides, or fertilisers will be used on-site, in line with best practices for protecting waterbodies, woodlands, hedgerows, and ditches.