



15th April 2021

Penny Mills
West Suffolk Council

By email only

Thank you for requesting advice on this application from Place Services' landscape and ecological advice services. This provides advice to planning officers to inform West Suffolk Council planning decisions with regard to potential landscape and ecological impacts from development. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer who will seek further advice from us where appropriate and necessary.

Application: DC/21/0315/FUL
Location: Little Court Haverhill Road Little Wratting CB9 7UD
Proposal: Planning Application - Specialist dementia care village for up to 120 residents, including: 20 x 6 bedroom apartments provided within five buildings; central amenity building containing shop, restaurant, pub, communal hall, offices and staff accommodation; club/hobby rooms; treatment/counselling rooms; vehicle and cycle parking; landscaping proposals and associated works

Dear Penny,

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

With reference to the above named application and submitted documents received by Place Services on the 25/03/21, asking for Landscape comments. As per the agreed timescale, our comments on the Planning Application as submitted are provided below:

Landscape

Recommendations prior to determination

The site is located north west of Haverhill along the A143. It is currently occupied by a horse stables, handling yard and grazing land with a mixture of mature hedgerows and tree groupings on the boundaries, as well as some trees and groupings within the site.

On review, the site lies within the undulating estate farmlands landscape character type (Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment, 2011). This landscape is described as having a well-kept appearance with strong linkages of hedgerows and woodland. Other key characteristics include; oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees, dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages and landscape parks and ornamental tree species.



The application has been accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). This has been prepared following the principles set out in the third edition of the "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment"(GLVIA3). In order to understand the likely changes for landscape character and visual receptors, the LVIA provides a baseline description of the existing landscape and built features within the Site and the surrounding local context, as well as the potential effects on landscape and visual receptors. The LVIA concludes that *"the greatest effects on landscape character and features would be limited to those within the site and which would be of Moderate significance during the construction phase"* Whereas, the effects on visual amenity will be limited to *"areas in the immediate vicinity of the site and specifically to areas beyond the south eastern boundary where the significance of effects immediately post-construction would be Moderate."* We have no concerns regarding this judgement and do not believe the scheme will result in significant landscape and/or visual harm.

Although we have no objection to the principle of development, if minded for approval, we would advise the following recommendations are taken into consideration:

- Although the Design and Access Statement states that the masterplan capitalises on the existing landscape as feature and asset, with minimal loss of existing vegetation. We are of the judgement that the scheme has pushed the limits of the amount of built development that can be proposed within the confines of this landscape and hasn't taken into consideration the proximity to existing hedgerows and trees. This has meant that many features that will be retained, will then be located within poor environmental conditions that may lead to deterioration of quality and health. For example, the mixed hedgerow on the eastern boundary is shown abutting one of the building blocks (Tree Survey and Constraints Plan LSDP 1599.01., 2020). For this reason, to ensure compliance with Policy DM13 we would recommend site capacity and layout is reconsidered to ensure not only the physical retention of existing landscape features, but also their protection long term.
- Much of the drainage scheme includes the use of underground storage tanks. Although efficient, we would welcome the use of soft engineered approaches such as bioretention beds and rain gardens too. These features could add further biodiversity and aesthetic appeal to the proposed courtyards but also reduce reliance on the storage tanks.
- A predominance of one species or variety should be avoided in order to minimise the risk of widespread biotic threats to the urban forest and to increase species diversity. Preference should be given to native trees and shrubs, but the use of naturalised trees and shrubs, which are not necessarily native but are the correct tree for site conditions could be used to add landscape and arboricultural value.

Recommended conditions

1. PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: LANDSCAPING SCHEME.

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard, soft and boundary treatment landscaping works for the site, which shall include any proposed changes in ground levels and also accurately identify spread, girth and species of all existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows in the surrounding area. A specification of soft landscaping, including proposed trees, plants



and seed mixes must be included. The specification should be in line with British Standards and include details of planting works such as preparation, implementation, materials (i.e. soils and mulch), any protection measures that will be put in place (i.e. rabbit guards) and any management regimes (including watering schedules) to support establishment. This should be accompanied by a schedule, with details of quantity, species and size/type (bare root, container etc). Hard landscape details such as surface materials and boundary treatments must also be included.

Reason: To assimilate the development into its surroundings and protect the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policies DM2 and DM13 of the West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015, Chapters 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework and all relevant Core Strategy Policies.

2. PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: ARBORICULTURAL METHOD STATEMENT

Prior to commencement of development an Arboricultural Method Statement (including any demolition, groundworks and site clearance) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement should include details of the following:

- a. Measures for the protection of those trees and hedges on the application site that are to be retained,
- b. Details of all construction measures within the 'Root Protection Area' (defined by a radius of $dbh \times 12$ where dbh is the diameter of the trunk measured at a height of 1.5m above ground level) of those trees on the application site which are to be retained specifying the position, depth, and method of construction/installation/excavation of service trenches, building foundations, hardstandings, roads and footpaths,
- c. A schedule of proposed surgery works to be undertaken to those trees and hedges on the application site which are to be retained.

Reason - To ensure that the trees and hedges on site are adequately protected, to safeguard the character and visual amenity of the area, in accordance with policies DM12 and DM13 of the West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015, Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework and all relevant Core Strategy Policies. This condition requires matters to be agreed prior to commencement of development to ensure that existing trees are adequately protected prior to any ground disturbance.

3. PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN

No development above ground level shall take place until a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules and periods for all soft landscape areas (other than small privately owned domestic gardens) together with a timetable for the implementation of the landscape management plan, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetable.

Reason - To ensure the longevity of the landscaping scheme and protect the visual amenity and character of the area, in accordance with policy DM12 and DM13 of the West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015, Chapters 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework and all relevant Core Strategy Policies.



Please contact us with any queries.

Yours sincerely

Ryan Mills BSc (Hons) MSc CMLI

Senior Landscape Consultant

Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of West Suffolk Council

Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.