

Planning Consultation Memo

Date: 25 April 2022	Planning Officer: Louise Sahlke	Landscape/Tree Officer: Oliver Waring
Planning Application Number	<u>6/2021/2125/MAJ</u>	

Context	
Site Address	Hertfordshire Constabulary, Stanborough Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6XF
Relevant Constraints/Policies	<p>WHDP 2005</p> <p>R11 – Biodiversity and Development – all new development will be required to demonstrate how it would contribute positively to biodiversity of the site by retention and enhancement of the natural features on site.</p> <p>R17 – Trees, woodland and hedgerows – the council will seek the protection and retention of these features and require when appropriate new, native planting.</p> <p>D8 – Landscaping – the council will require the retention and enhancement of existing key landscape features (requiring detailed surveys)</p> <p>Policies from the Draft local plan -</p> <p>SP11 – Protection and enhancement of critical environmental assets – protection, enhancement and management of the environmental, ecological and historical assets within the borough, will be sought commensurate with their status, significance and international, national and/ or local importance.</p> <p>SP12 – Strategic Green Infrastructure - The council will aim to ensure there is no overall net loss of green infrastructure across the borough within the plan period.</p> <p>SADM16 – Ecological Assets – Proposals that will result in loss or harm to ancient woodland, veteran trees will be refused unless the mitigation hierarchy is followed (avoid, reduce, remediate, and last resort compensate).</p> <p>NPPF 2019 - This framework policy promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, delivering good quality design and change for the</p>

better in our built and natural environment over the lifetime of the development.

The Nation Design Guide – Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places.

- Integrate existing, and incorporate new natural features into a multifunctional network that supports quality and place, biodiversity and water management, and addresses climate change mitigation and resilience;
- Prioritise nature so that diverse ecosystems can flourish to ensure a healthy natural environment that supports and enhances biodiversity;
- Provide attractive open spaces in locations that are easy to access, with activities for all to enjoy, such as play, food production, recreation and sport, so as to encourage physical activity and promote health, well-being and social inclusion.

BS:5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction: Recommendations

Main Issues

Is the development within a conservation area?

Yes Part of the proposed site, the new access, partially falls within the Conservation Area

Do any of the trees in or adjacent to the site have a TPO ?

Yes No

Comment (if applicable):

Would the proposal require the removal of any trees, woodland or significant vegetation?

Yes No

Comment: Trees to be removed:

The Planning Statement and the Arboricultural Impact Assessment provided states: In total **23** individual trees, **three** groups, **part of three** groups, **one** hedge and **part of one** hedge are to be removed to facilitate the development. None of these trees are high quality but they include seven individual trees, one group and part of one group classed as moderate quality (Category B) and the remaining 16 individual trees, two groups, part of two groups, one hedge and part of one hedge classified as low quality (Category C). In addition, two individual trees and one tree group of very low quality (Category U) are also recommended for removal. These trees are arguably not suitable for long term retention and their removal is justified regardless of the development.

The landscape visual assessment states;

Two of the Norway maples within group G41, which would be close to the proposed Decant Building - the northern and southern trees within the row would be retained. These are Category B trees around 8m in height.

Tree group G45, the **three** birch trees on the existing entrance roundabout - these are also Category B trees around 8m in height, and need to be removed due to the proposed road realignment.

A number of mainly small trees to the west of the main headquarters building (T54, T56, T58, T61, G65 and T68) - these are cherry, rowan, poplar and ash trees, of which only one (T68, an ash tree around 9m in height) is a Category B tree, with the others being Category C or U.

Further mainly small trees (**6**) within the courtyard area to the east of the main headquarters building (T64, T66, T72, T73, T74, T75 and T78) - these are cypress, birch and cherry trees, with the birch being Category B, most of the cypress Categories C or U and the cherry a Category C tree.

A mature tree to the south east of that building (T83) - this is a Category C silver maple around 14m in height.

A line of young ash trees to the south of the memorial garden (G92) - these are small Category C trees around 4m in height, with some die-back, and are proposed for replacement as they are unlikely to provide robust specimens in the future.

Tree T95 and group G96 just to the south west of the large oak tree, T93. These smaller trees have been planted relatively recently and are proposed for removal as they can be readily replaced and do not suit the proposed paving and access layout at this point.

The above information appears to relate to the development of the site and not the proposed temporary access. An email received on 17 March 2022 from the applicant states that two trees are to be removed to facilitate the new access. Photographs of these trees show them to be of low quality. The plan provided Drawing ref: HCHQ-VGA-XX-XX-DR-AR-00118 shows an area of vegetation to be cleared which I assume includes the two trees mentioned in the letter. There is no objection to the removal of this vegetation as it should not affect the screening from Stanborough Road

Has any BS: 5837:2012 information been supplied?

Yes No N/A

Comment (if applicable): A Tree Survey and constraints plan, in accordance with BS:5837:2012, by AECOM has been provided.

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan has also been provided. The Tree Protection Plan does not include the proposed new access road. It is noted that Temporary contractor's compound is to be located adjacent to the access road. If approved details of any tree protection required during the construction and use of the road and compound should be requested via condition..

Would the development maintain the amenity of adjoining occupiers? (e.g. privacy, outlook, light etc.)

Yes No

Comment (if applicable): The majority of the screening vegetation adjacent to Stanborough Road is to be retained.

Is there a detailed proposed landscape plan?

Yes No N/A

Comment (if applicable):

A Proposed Landscaping Plan has been provided. This provides some detail of proposed hard landscape and indicative soft landscaping. If approved a detailed landscape plan would be required via condition. This would need to include proposed species, plant sizes, planting densities, planting methods and aftercare.

Recommendations and conclusion

In principle, from a landscape perspective, there is no objections to the proposal. Some trees removals are required to facilitate the development; however, most of the tree removals are internal to the site and can be mitigated through a robust landscape scheme. A Proposed Landscape Plan has been provided and outlines the planting principles; further details will be required via condition.

Tree protection details have been provided for the main site but there are no details for the new access and compound within the Gosling site.

If approved, it is recommended that the following is requested via condition:

- Tree Protection details for the construction and use of the temporary access route and compound within the Gosling Site
- A detailed landscape plan to include. species, plant sizes, planting densities, planting methods and aftercare.