

Rachel Legood

From: Miriam Hill
Sent: 26 April 2017 16:45
To: Mark Peacock
Cc: Planning
Subject: 6/2017/0550/MAJ: Land adjacent to Porsche Garage Hatfield Avenue

Proposal: Erection of a 75 bed elderly care home development (C2) with 20 parking bays and associated landscaping.

Arboriculturally: There are no significant trees on site. The boundary with Manor Road has some topped Lombardy poplars along it. These will be discussed in the soft landscaping comments but if they are to be retained and the application approved, then they need a tree protection plan and method statement.

Soft Landscaping: Overall I was disappointed by the amount and quality of the landscape information provided. I was not clear if this was a simply a care home or care home to meet specific care needs, specifically dementia. I have therefore given consideration to both. As the applicants are inserting an elderly care home into an area which is essentially a commercial estate, on the periphery with a residential area, I would have thought more consideration would have been given to the outside space both to make it an attractive place to live in and to settle it into the neighbourhood.

My comments are quite broad due to the broad nature of the information provided.

The external areas of the proposed site have to provide many functions, car parking, storage, pedestrian and vehicular access, amenity to surrounding residents and internal residents. I don't feel like the Landscape Strategy really fulfils everything it needs to. As there is so little area given over to external space I am not sure they will be able to.

If the care home is to take in residents suffering from dementia, no information has been given to any gating locations, both in access off site and internally to divide up the outside zones.

Connectivity with the surrounding area seems limited for the residents. The Transportation Statement suggests all the pedestrians are going exit the site onto Hatfield Avenue. This is a bleak and busy road with a subway connection to the shops on Birchwood Avenue or a long walk around block to Manor Parade. This is not encouraging to the residents to get out and about which is imperative to their health and wellbeing. No access appears to be indicated through the boundary and onto Manor Road and the small set of shops. I appreciate an open gate may cause problems with others using it as a cut through between home/available parking and work areas but it imperative the residents can get out and about. This is an issue which needs to be considered within the landscape plan now rather than try to retrofit it at a later time.

Mobility scooter storage: I was unable to see where the scooter storage is. Is some going to be provided?

Roof terrace: Will this have planters etc to give a setting for the residents.

Car parking: I always have concerns for areas of soft landscaping next to car parks as they appear to be an easy target to lose as soon as a few more parking spaces are needed. As there is such limited space around this building all the external space needs to be maximised for soft landscaping. The loss of any of it for additional parking or shelters (bike, smoking or scooter) would be very detrimental to the amenity of the site. The applicant needs to be confident they are not going to subsequently apply to lose areas of soft landscaping to these types of things.

Car park trees: All trees set in or surrounded by hard surfaces need to have structural soils or 3D cellular confinement systems underground. Natives are not necessary here. Something like Magnolia Kobus will give the height required, are robust with a narrow crown.

There is also a dayspace wedged between the delivery entrance and carpark. The landscaping around the dayspace windows needs to be very interesting and screen the carpark. This will require some more interesting planting style than perhaps commonly found in car parks.

Reception area planting beds: I agree that the area in front of the reception needs to be very attractive and impressive and direct people to the reception. The position of the seating is very good for those being picked up or dropped off. Especially for the bed on the southern side I would have expected something more on the building side as this is also a dayspace. It would be nice if the residents can get out of the building and sit in a pleasant area to aid their health and wellbeing.

I am looking forward to having more detail about the water feature.

Pergola: A secluded or intimate area outside is very useful and welcome. I have some concerns that the majority of this feature runs parallel with bedrooms and is not very far from the windows. With my experience of communal areas, I wonder if this will create conflict between those wanting quiet time in their rooms with those wanting to be a little bit noisy outside. It is also not going to get much sun. Perhaps style and/or location could be given further consideration?

Lawn area at eastern end: Accessible outside seating is very important to resident health and wellbeing. This area is close to but not directly outside a dayspace. It would be helpful if this seating area had some additional connectivity to the dayspace.

This area could certainly benefit from some inventive and different planting from other areas of the site to make it more of a destination or separate space for residents.

This area is the most prominent or commonly seen from the Manor Parade area. No landmark trees have been used in this area to give it increased interest.

Southern boundary (with Porsche): The amount or type of screening from the adjacent sea of car park needs to be substantial. Any hedge here will need to be maintained at a higher than normal height. To the rear of the building a more informal screen could be used.

Entrance: I agree that the entrance needs substantial landmark trees. No oak (OPM) or beech (rootplate disturbance – too dry) and hornbeam and cherry are too small. It is not necessary to use natives. Structural soils or 3D cellular crates will be required. Will the services be trunked to reduce the amount of future disturbance to the trees roots?

Western boundary (with plot 6000): There appeared to be some discrepancy between the 'Landscape Strategy' plan and the 'Proposed Site Plan'. One is more informal, the other formal. It would be better if the tree planting along this boundary was not one species planted uniformly as per the 'Proposed Site Plan'. A mixed tree planting is more appropriate but not so mixed that there is only one of several species. Larger or broader crowned trees should be inserted where there is more space. These do not need to be native species.

Northern boundary (Manor Road): There seems to be a reliance on the existing Lombardy poplars. These are in fairly poor structural condition and have been topped in the past. Although they can be used as an interim screening they need to have supplementary succession planting for when these can or need to be removed.

Tree species: The applicants do not need to use native trees. When choosing tree species consideration should be given to their ability to thrive in the Borough and current plant movement restrictions. Birch, ash and rowans should be avoided as these do not thrive. Horse chestnut suffers extensively with bleeding canker in this area and should be avoided. Ash and plane currently have movement restrictions. Lime should be avoided in areas of hardstanding due to the issues associated with root damage. Oak should not be planted in close proximity or within easy eye sight of residential properties to reduce the management of OPM in future years. Trees commonly known to suffer from honeydew drop should not be used in seating areas, above sculptures or other locations where conflict can be foreseen. Varieties with double or semi-double flowering species should not be used as these provide no forage for pollinators. Consideration should be given to using evergreen or semi-evergreen trees.

Shrub, herbaceous, climbing plant and hedges: Native mixes but must not include blackthorn.

If the care home is to have residents suffering from dementia some of the species shown on the suggested planting pallet are poisonous and should not be used.

Lamp posts and CCTV points: These should not be located close to trees. These locations should be indicated on the landscape plan.

Overall: As I am not clear on the future use of the site I can't give detailed comments. It feels like the outside space has not been thought out full and this concerns me as soft landscaping is always the first thing to be nibbled away. As this site needs to be self-sufficient for amenity, it is going to struggle to provide this with limited exterior space.

I would like some more details and clarification before I can make a considered response. Really for this type of site, where landscape is so important, this should not be left to a condition but should be resolved up front.

Regards,

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