



# Memo.

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> January 2013  
**To:** Sarah Smith  
**Cc:** -  
**From:** Oliver Waring  
**Subject:** N6/2010/3120/DC3 – Redevelopment of site to provide a wet play area, adventure play areas, an educational play area, high ropes attraction, changing huts, education room, cafe and toilet facilities.

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An assessment of the above applications has been made in regard to its potential impact upon existing trees and vegetation and any proposed landscaping. The comments have been made without having seen the tree report (yet to be supplied) and it may be that some of the detail required is submitted within the report.

The scheme as submitted is in two phases:

- **Phase 1** - Development and construction of high ropes course. Site clearance and reclamation of former lido site and restore.
- **Phase 2** – Development and construction of the water play park. Upgrading provisions of the car park and access roads. Upgrading of existing highways junction. Creation of compensatory storage volumes.

## **Phase 1**

The proposed area for the high rope access is a wide fairly flat area. There is little vegetation within the proposed development area itself. There are trees and shrubs to the west and northwest of the proposed site. The plans provided show that the trees are to be retained. It does appear that the fencing for the rope access area does encroach slightly within the Root Protection Areas but this looks minimal and it should be possible to retain all the trees successfully (details of the RPA and encroachment into it is likely to be

clarified within the tree report).

The former lido site to be cleared is devoid of trees and vegetation apart from a few trees along the southeast and southwest boundaries. I would guess that some of the trees along the southwest boundary would need to be removed to facilitate the reclamation of this area, however the landscape contribution of these tree is minimal and there is no objection to their removal if necessary (details of tree retention and removal should be supplied within the tree report).

The main issues with the Phase 1 of the development are the protection of the retained trees throughout the development. Details will be required of any protective fencing and special construction methods to be used. Also details of storage of materials on site as well as the location of any site huts. This information will need to be supplied and be in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012. It is likely that information will be supplied within the tree report, if that is the case it will not need to be conditioned as part of any planning approval.

## **Phase 2**

In relation to the upgrading of the car park, access road and exiting highways. There will need to be clarification of which trees are to be retained and those that are being removed. Also details of tree protection in accordance with BS 5837:2012.

The restoration of the land for the water play area has been discussed above and the tree protection and retention issue for this area remain the same as Phase 1. The other issue is the landscape detailed provided for the water play which are discussed below.

## **Landscaping**

The design and access statement which has been submitted with the application states that the design principles fall into the following six categories:

1. Enhance the natural topography and views of the site
2. Create new habitats through new planting schemes and protect existing through careful and considerate development
3. Improve and enhance access to the river frontage
4. Use sustainable natural materials
5. Use natural drainage systems

## 6. Retain flood plain storage

It goes on to say:

*'Soft landscaping within the Phase 2 Water Park complex is proposed to include a mix of trees, hedging, shrubs and natural ground cover, bamboos and grasses. The planting scheme aims to establish native plant species wherever possible and improve the existing species poor habitats, such as hedgerows by creating diverse habitats,'*

The scheme provided however does not adhere to the above statement. The scheme consists of non native exotics such as *Yucca elephantipes*, the various bamboos and laurel hedging. The scheme as it currently stands would jar with the surrounding landscape and would not enhance the species poor habitats as suggested above.

The scheme needs to be reconsidered in accordance with the design and access statement. Below are comments and recommendations that I would like to be incorporated into a revised landscape plan:

- **Tree Species** - The multi-stem Scots pine are considered appropriate for the site and will offer well all year round interest. The Poplar and Birch are not considered appropriate, birch is fairly short lived and can become brittle with age (they also tend not to do well in the Borough), poplar are also prone to decay and can become brittle with age. *Liquidamba styraciflua* would be a good substitute for the Poplar, similar form to poplar, it has interesting leaf shape and good autumn colour. Instead of the 3 birch within the centre of the site, it would be appropriate to have one large canopy tree, such as English oak, to provide valuable shade in the summer. The *Alnus glutinosa* is a river side tree and is considered an appropriate species for the site.
- **Hedging** – *Prunus lusitanica* (laurel) is a non native evergreen and is not considered appropriate as it requires a lot of management to maintain as a hedge and offers little wildlife value. A better option would be a mixed native hedge to comprise of species to include hawthorn, field maple, black thorn, hornbeam etc. This will sit better within the landscape and provide food and habitat for wildlife..
- **Shrubs** – Generally the shrub species chosen are appropriate. However there is

considerable use of *Photinia fraseria* Red Robin which is a form laurel that will tend to dominate an area and form dense blocks of planting. It would be better to mix up some of this Photinia planting with some of the smaller viburnums or similar species.

- **Ground cover** – The *Liriope muscari* stated is an appropriate species for ground cover which often visited by bees.
- **Bamboos and Grasses** – The main issue with the bamboos and particularly the Yucca is that they are not indicative of the surrounding landscape and offer little in terms of habitat or food for wild life. Bamboos also tend to be thuggish plants that can crowd out and shade other plants. I would prefer to see plants such as dog woods (*Cornus spp*) in place of the bamboos. Dog woods have colourful stems and a similar form to the bamboos. It is also recommend perennial plants such as *Verbena bonariensis* and *Gaura lindheimeri* are used as these have attractive flowers and encourage pollinating insects. The grasses chosen are considered appropriate and would sit well with perennial plants recommended above.

**Planting specification** – Some detail regarding planting specification has been provide however more detail is required with regard to management and aftercare (including watering of plants).

**Carpark area** - Further details of any tree removals and planting within the carpark are required to ensure that there is a consistent approach in this area.

I trust the above clear. Please let me know if you need any classification.

