

Inspector Concerns

At the hearing session the Inspector requested further information with regards the residual views from the south/south east. He requested further consideration of whether more substantial planting was required to assist him in considering the site.

WHBC, Hill and the RVC agreed to review the situation further.

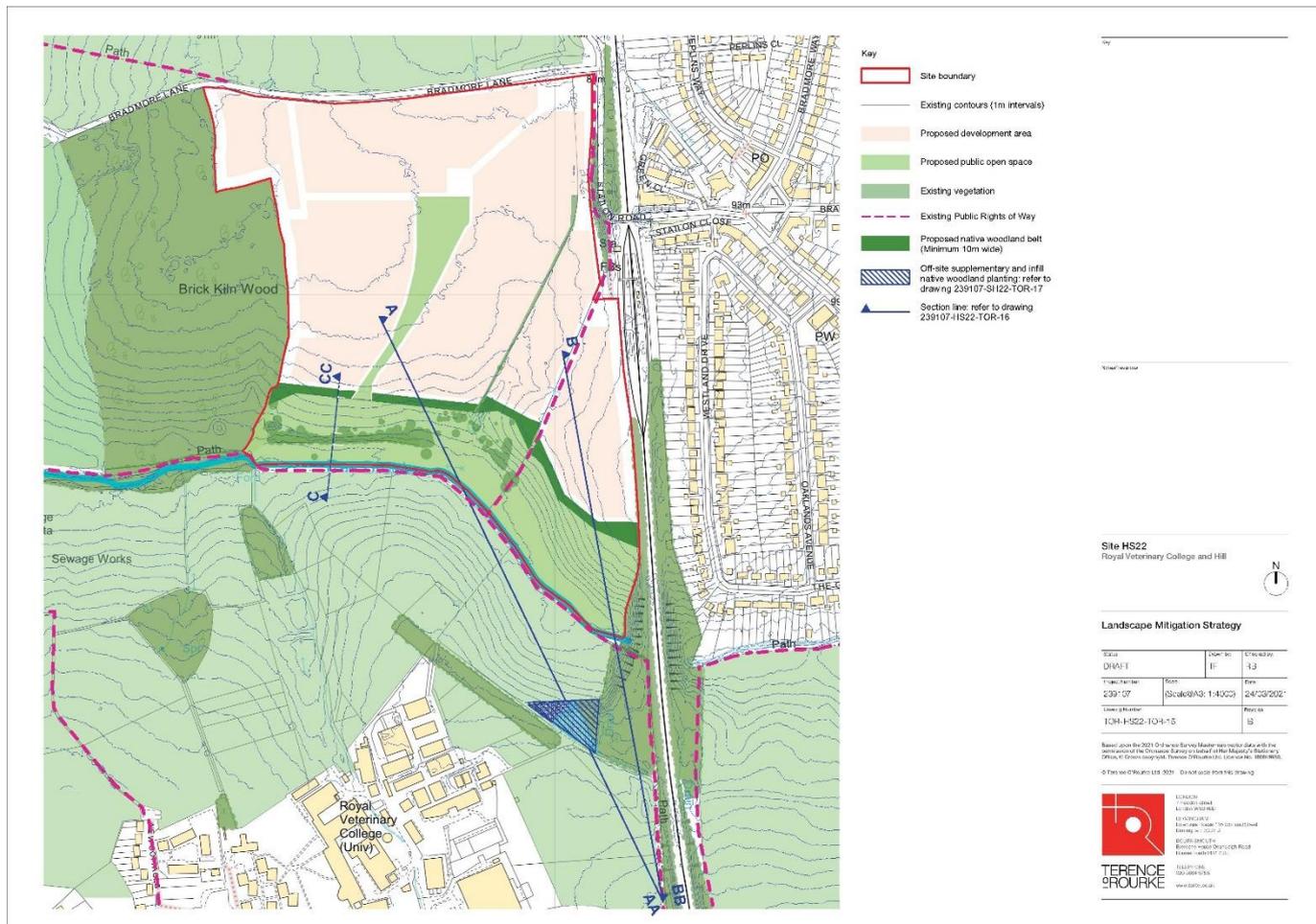
As noted by the Inspector there is a gap in the existing tree belt (approx. 10m wide) where the site could be viewed from public footpath North Mymms 011 through the gap between the RVC owned and managed tree belts. It is proposed to strengthen the existing planting within the RVC land through a combination of infill tree planting and a new wooded copse immediately to the west of the existing tree belt. The new planting on the RVC land will comprise native woodland species and include climax trees such as oak. This will ensure that the current 'gap' is closed off, resulting in a continuous tree belt that screens views towards the site from public footpath North Mymms 011.

Revised Scheme

A revised landscaping scheme has been prepared by Terence O'Rourke on behalf of RVC and is indicated in the plan below. Welwyn Hatfield, Hill and the RVC agree that enhanced screening will serve to further screen the site and be beneficial to the site in relation to the wider Green Belt.

Plan B Revised proposals

New planting, comprising native woodland species mix, will form a continuous tree belt along the south edge of the development. In combination with the existing planting to the south this new planting will afford a high level of visual containment, alongside additional biodiversity and landscape benefits.



The key changes are as follows.

- The development edge has been pulled back from the southern edge of the site to ensure sufficient room is available for a significant belt of new planting on the upper slopes of the local valley.
- A new tree belt along the southern edge is proposed between the development zone and wider countryside. This will include a new earth bunding in the order of 1.75m-2m high, planting with a mix of woodland species no less than 10m wide.
- Planting within RVC land to the south will supplement the existing vegetation with infill woodland tree species and include a new wooded copse to the west, which will further strengthen the visual containment of the valley landscape.
- Cross sections have been prepared to indicate the screening potential of these proposals. These show that views from footpath North Mymms 011 alongside the railway to the west of the site will be of the tree screen and the dwellings will not be visible once the new planting is 10m or higher. The cross sections are in Annex A to this addendum.

Possible Main Modification

The original statement of common ground contained a potential Main Modification. A slight change to that modification would be required to reflect this revised landscaping scheme.

The following wording change to Table 15 indicates changes from the submitted version with underlining and strikethrough and changes from the original statement of common ground in red font (deletions) and blue font (additions)

- Provide a 15m or wider green infrastructure corridors ~~along the Ray Brook and adjacent to Brick Kiln Wood WS144 with at least a 15m buffer to Brick Kiln Wood and preferably wider~~ to avoid and mitigate any harm to the ecology of the ancient woodland.
- Prepare a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment at the planning application stage to guide the landscaping requirements for the site.
- Additional tree planting along the northern boundary of the site to maintain the open nature of the green belt to the north by strengthening the visual screen provided by the existing hedgerows.
- Create a wide multifunctional green corridor (incorporating a woodland tree belt) along the southern boundary of the site to screen the development from wider views, provide recreational space including active transport routes and protect/enhance the biodiversity of the Ray Brook. Will include natural/semi-natural greenspace, footpaths, substantial woodland tree planting and ecological enhancements.
- Infill landscaping to screen views from public footpath North Mymms 011 and tree planting and a new adjoining native woodland copse within the RVC land.

Stage 1 habitat survey required at planning application stage.

Heritage Statement/Impact Assessment required to assess the impact of traffic generated from this site via Bradmore Lane on heritage assets at Water End.

For clarity the revised wording without any changes indicated would be as follows.

To replicate the above text with additions and without red and blue coding.

- Provide a 15m or wider green infrastructure corridors adjacent to Brick Kiln Wood WS144 to avoid and mitigate any harm to the ecology of the ancient woodland.
- Prepare a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment at the planning application stage to guide the landscaping requirements for the site.
- Additional tree planting along the northern boundary of the site to maintain the open nature of the green belt to the north by strengthening the visual screen provided by the existing hedgerows.

- Create a wide multifunctional green corridor (incorporating a woodland tree belt) along the southern boundary of the site to screen the development from wider views, provide recreational space including active transport routes and protect/enhance the biodiversity of the Ray Brook. Will include natural/semi-natural greenspace, footpaths, substantial woodland tree planting and ecological enhancements.
- Infill landscaping to screen views from public footpath North Mymms 011 and tree planting and a new adjoining native woodland copse within the RVC land.

Stage 1 habitat survey required at planning application stage.

Housing Numbers

We have assessed housing numbers in the light of the updated landscape proposals within the site, including the 'additional land' identified in the Statement of Common Ground, capable of accommodating around 500 dwellings depending on the accommodation of the Primary School.

Conclusion and Agreement

The signatories agree that the revised landscaping scheme within the site in addition to the new planting on the RVC land to the south will mitigate the visual impact in views from the green belt.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council continue to recommend removal of the site from the local plan by a Main Modification whereas RVC and Hill support its continued allocation.

