

21.09.2016

Our Ref: 5480 Elms Park

Your Ref: P16/S1954/RM

Anna-Sophia Stamm is dealing with this matter

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For the Attention of: Mella McMahon

Dear Mrs McMahon

REF: PLANNING APPLICATION P16/S1954/RM

Site : Elms Park, Thame

Proposal: Proposed improvement works to Elms Park including the provision of new paths and the relocation and replacement of the multi-use games area

Thank you for your letter providing us with comments in regards to the Elms Park planning application referenced above. We have found your comments useful and reviewed them in detail. Please find below our response addressing your recommendations and concerns. We have grouped them by topic as referenced in your letter. Please also find enclosed a revised set of drawings. These are listed at the end of this letter.

Multi Use Games Area

We have revised our drawings to provide a 30 metres buffer between the MUGA and the existing dwellings to the south. This complies with the Fields in Trust guidelines (Section 6.3.8) which recommend a distance of 30 metres from dwellings.

In regards to further information of the MUGA, we have provided more detail about colour and height of the fencing. This can be found on a new drawing no. D5480.431 of the revised planning pack.

Play Area

We have reviewed your comments and responses from the council's website in detail which raised concern about the size and amount of play equipment of the proposed play area. Further concerns were that the proposed play equipment doesn't provide sufficient play for older children and how relocating the play area in front of the Van Diemens Rd houses may increase the amount of noise for these properties. The following will provide explanation on the approach of the design of the play area and how we have revised our plans to address these comments:



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Part of the design approach of Elms Park is to provide an activity zone that is designated for play opportunities for a wide age range. The activity zone includes the MUGA, the equipped play and informal play area. The total area of the proposed equipped play and informal play comprises approximately 1737 sqm. The existing play area is approximately 1404 sqm. Therefore we believe that the proposed provision of play is a more than adequate replacement to the existing play area in fact offers enhancement.

We believe that the proposed play equipment provides an adequate range of play experiences such as climbing, sliding, swinging, rocking, balancing and spinning which together, will be challenging and stimulating. In addition, the informal play area with its undulating mounds provides an area for imaginative play and plenty of space for children to run around.

We do acknowledge that the number of play pieces was perhaps a little limited and we have therefore increased the amount of play equipment to include a twin set of swings for toddlers and a twin set of swings for older children. The proposed cradle swing is relocated to the informal play area to accommodate the additional swing units.

Further to this we have included additional play opportunities within the informal play area. This includes the tyre swing for more swinging and spinning experience and the acrobat rig for climbing and balancing. These additions will provide more play opportunities for older children and identify the mounded area as playable space more clearly. Further information on the play equipment can be found on a new drawing no. D5480.431.

The distance between the existing play area and the nearest dwelling currently measures 20m. This is the minimum distance Fields in Trust guidelines recommend as a buffer between equipped play areas and the nearest dwelling. The proposed location places the play area 37m away from the nearest dwelling and locates it opposite to what appears to be a shared communal green area in between the Van Diemens Road properties. This sets the play area further away from the existing houses and rear gardens. We therefore think that this will not have a negative impact on the existing situation.

We have updated our drawings to include a note that responsible dog owner signage shall be positioned on light columns in prominent locations such as the park entrances and close to the play areas.

Undulating Play areas

The undulating play area will consist of a series of low mounds (max 40cm high) that will be turfed. There will be tree planting within this area and trees will be located in the furrow (not on the ridge). Please see planting schedule D5480.200 and planting plans D5480.201-202 for specifications for this area. Detail 1 on drawing sheet no. D5480.420 provides a typical detail of trees planted in soft landscape.

Provision for Paths

As you mentioned in your letter one of the key design consideration which informed the layout of the perimeter path is to maximise the size of the central open space. We have discussed this with our client and considered your comment to round off the corners to reflect the desire lines. We believe that people walking through the park to the proposed development to the

west may choose a more direct route by walking through the open space. A desired route may become more obvious once the design is implemented and the park has been in use for some time. Should this be the case Thame Town Council will review the layout of the paths and make changes as needed at a future time.

The selection of paving materials was discussed with Thame Town Council and the ulticolour tarmac paving was considered an appropriate material to use in a public park as it is robust and requires little maintenance.

We have given consideration to the colour and are content that light grey is a suitable choice for the paths within the park because it is part of a suite of carefully chosen materials throughout the park that are complementary to one another and which enhance the character of the park and the wider conservation area. We do not think that a change in colour at the interface to the future housing site will compromise free and continuous public access.

We would be grateful if you could confirm that the proposed details of the clay paving, and all paving materials are acceptable. If you would like to receive samples of the paving units we would be happy to arrange this; please let us know.

Planting Plans

Planting Plan Sheet 2, drawing no. D5480.202 provides details on planting for the northern section of the application site.

We have revised our design to show fewer trees with wider spacing along the western boundary to address the comments raised by the Forestry Officer. The plans now show 8 proposed trees and one existing tree along this boundary that are spaced 14 metres apart. In addition, we have moved the trees further away from the western boundary to allow for enough separation between the trees and the proposed houses.

We have taken on the recommendation that smaller tree sizes could be specified and reduced some of the sizes. This is reflected in the revised planting schedule D5480.200.

Performance Area

We have revised our drawings to included further information for performance area. Please see drawing no. D5480.102 for a more detailed description.

Gated access for Park Street Properties

We have revised our drawings to indicate the gated access for 82 Park Street.

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Request for Conditions

The current arrangement in regards to disposal of surface water is that surface water drains into the adjacent lawn areas and soaks away. The intention is to keep the current arrangements which, based on our client's knowledge, works satisfactorily. As such, the proposed paths and other hard surfaced areas will be laid to falls to drain into the adjacent soft landscaped areas.

We have provided a construction method statement indicating location and access for equipment/deliveries, storage and likely hours of construction. This is a 'work in progress' document which will be updated as the project moves forward.

Extension of Time

Thame Town Council is happy to agree to an extension of time for determination of the planning application.

We hope this response and the revised plans attached provide enough clarification and have addressed all comments to your satisfaction. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

Yours faithfully

Anna-Sophia Stamm
Senior Landscape Architect
TEP

Enc: 5480 Document Issue Form
5480.001 Illustrative Landscape Plan
5480.002 Key Plan
D5480.101 Hardworks Plan Sheet 1
D5480.102 Hardworks Plan Sheet 2
D5480.200 Planting Schedule
D5480.201 Planting Plan Sheet 1
D5480.202 Planting Plan Sheet 2
D5480.420 Tree Pit Details
D5480.430 Play Equipment
D5480.431 Play Equipment
R5480.201 Construction Method Statement