

Date
30/09/2025

Sarah Kasparian
Senior Planning Officer
Major Projects
North Herts Council

By email only

Application: 24/02780/RM

Location: Land North of Highover Farm to Stotfold Road, Highover Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire

Construction of the main spine road (The Avenue) from Stotfold Road connecting to High Dane, creation of drainage ponds, swales and other associated drainage infrastructure, signage and other necessary highway and service infrastructure (to serve future development parcels) (outline was EIA development with an ES submitted)

We have reviewed the submitted plans and supporting documents for the reserved matters application for the primary spine road at Highover Farm, Hitchin (ref. 24/02780/REM). The proposed alignment and of the road itself raise no objection from a landscape perspective, and the principle of the highway connection is supported.

Several aspects of the associated landscape proposals require further consideration. The submitted planting schedules for The Avenue indicate a palette of tree species, including *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer' and *Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine'. However, the precise location of secondary road junctions and private drive accesses has not yet been confirmed; depending on their final arrangement, there may be opportunities to introduce further verge tree planting than currently shown. The verges should be delivered in a consistent manner with adjacent phases to ensure continuity of design and to maximise the potential for tree planting along The Avenue.

The drainage drawings confirm the layout of swales, attenuation basins, and associated infrastructure. However, there is a lack of corresponding landscape detail demonstrating how these SuDS features will be integrated through seeding and planting. Without this detail, it is unclear how the SuDS will comply with the Highover Design Code, which specifies requirements for grassland mixes and, native shrub planting.

In addition, the covering letter confirms that landscaping of the central public square has been removed at this stage and is intended to be brought forward under a later reserved matters submission. While this approach is noted, the public square represents a key structuring space within the development, and its landscape treatment will be fundamental to establishing local character. It is therefore essential that its detailed design and planting are secured through condition.

On this basis, I recommend that planning permission be subject to conditions requiring submission and approval of detailed landscape proposals:

Prior to commencement: Hard and Soft Landscaping for the Public Square



No development above ground level shall take place until a scheme of soft and hard landscaping for the public square drawn to a scale of not less than 1:200 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soft landscaping details shall include planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/ densities and tree pit details.

Hard landscape details should include proposed finished levels and contours showing earthworks and mounding; surfacing materials; hard surfacing material specifications; minor artefacts and structures (for example furniture, refuse and/or other storage units, signs, lighting and similar features); boundary treatments and proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (for example drainage, power, communications cables and pipelines, indicating lines, manholes, supports and other technical features).

Prior to commencement: Soft Landscaping for Drainage features

No development above ground level shall take place until a scheme of soft landscaping for drainage infrastructure (as per approved engineering drawings) drawn to a scale of not less than 1:200 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soft landscaping details shall include planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/ densities and tree pit details.

Subject to these conditions, there would be no landscape objection to the approval of the spine road reserved matters.

Please let me know if you have any queries regarding the matters above.

Kind regards,



Ryan Mills BSc (Hons) MSc CMLI
Director and Landscape Architect, Planscape Consultants

Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer who will seek further advice from us where appropriate and necessary.