

File note for 2022/0351

Discharge of conditions 18 (phasing of landscaping) and 19 (landscape management plan) of application 3/2019/1104.

Third party representations have been received with regard to the choice of species within the buffer zone and the views of the applicant were sought on this.

Their response is as follows

*The proposed landscape buffer comprises a Cherry Laurel 'Rotundifolia' hedge with maintenance access channels either side to be seeded with a wildflower mix called Germinal WFG20 Eco Species Rich Lawn. We proposed a cherry laurel hedge to act as an effective visual barrier that will partially screen and soften views for residents to the south due to cherry laurel being evergreen, dense, and can grow up to 5m high. Cherry Laurel would also be more in keeping with the local character of ornamental hedges and shrubs located in the existing gardens of local residents along Hawthorne Place. Cherry laurel hedges are lower maintenance than deciduous or semi-evergreen species used in native mix hedgerows.*

*No mixed native hedgerow species are currently proposed within the landscape buffer. Native hedgerows would be harder to maintain within a narrow area due to being woody with spikes/thorns, whilst also creating more leaf litter and being prone to inevitably start thinning and gapping over time and losing their attractive appearance. Native hedgerows within the local area are mainly located along open field boundaries in the wider countryside as opposed to being in between residential gardens within the urban area.*

*In summary, it is our opinion that a Cherry Laurel hedge would appear neater and tidier than a native mix hedge, would be easier to maintain in a narrow area, and would be more in keeping with the character of the existing vegetation along Hawthorne Place and the proposed vegetation within the residential areas of Hawthorne Farm.*

This is accepted and taking into consideration that the buffer between the new development and existing dwellings has been reinstated at the request of existing residents the scheme is considered acceptable. It is also the view of the council's countryside officer that native species would not be traditionally found in housing developments rather used to divide fields and would be difficult to maintain.