

## Natural Environment

### Landscape Consultation Response

Reference Number:	21/00953/FUL
Proposal:	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a care home (Use Class C2) with external amenity space, access, parking, landscaping and other associated works
Site Address:	Former Hotel Felix Whitehouse Lane
Case Officer:	Mary Collins
Responding Officer:	Bana Elzein
Date:	21 June 2021

#### Comments:

##### Greenbelt and LVIA

The findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal are generally acceptable. It is considered that the impact of the development on the openness of the Greenbelt is negligible due to the existing presence of a similarly functioning and sized building as discussed within the report. The new building will be further away from development along White House Lane, but it will become closer to the back of properties along The Brambles. The gap between the building and both these developments, however, remains deep and open. A significant reduction in surface car parking area which can be converted into landscaping is also an improvement to the overall character and openness of the area. The placement of the new building has allowed for the retention of significant trees within and at the boundaries of the development site.

##### Landscape and Trees

Landscape has some significant concerns over the intention to move existing semi-mature trees. In all, ten trees are highlighted for relocation. Nine of these trees are identified as European Lime ranging from 7.5 to 10 metres tall. The remaining tree is an Atlas Cedar, 8.5 metres tall. Following discussions with the Tree Officer, that while it is possible to achieve, it is neither cheap nor easy, and requires a considerable time investment in advance of relocation. Of more concern is the moving of trees which are not particularly required for the construction and needs of the new building and we question whether there are options which, whilst perhaps, less aesthetic, allow for the retention of the trees in situ. It is considered that the

Atlas Cedar, which would be the most vulnerable of the proposed trees for relocation, should be retained and developed into the landscape scheme. The limes should be considered as per the comments of the Tree Officer and adequate confirmation of method and phasing/timing submitted for review.

It is considered that some pressure arising from a symmetrical building and garden design on the western end of the building is creating this desire to relocate trees and we feel this is not a strong enough reason for moving trees. The garden design should react to the context and constraints of its environment. We require a review of the proposed landscape with this key consideration in mind and which aims to retain as many trees and possible which are not truly in the path of development of the building or a danger. Initially, we would require a design which seeks first to retain as many trees as possible in coordination with a supplementary methodology and phasing plan for any trees remaining which must be moved.

Through the pre-app process the design of the individual patio/private amenity for the ground floor rooms was considered and agreed based on the health and medical needs of the residents and is acceptable. Other features of the retained and proposed landscape are acceptable. The car park is split up well and interspersed with tree and shrub planting which reduces the visual impact of car parking.

Beyond the intention to relocate mature trees to the boundaries, Landscape generally supports the application. Issues associated with the redesign of the gardens and retention of more of the existing tree stock must be reviewed and submitted through an amendment prior to decision.