

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P14/S2310/O</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	OUTLINE
<b>REGISTERED</b>	21.7.2014
<b>PARISH</b>	THAME
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	David Dodds Ann Midwinter
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Rectory Homes Ltd
<b>SITE</b>	Elms Park, Park Street, Thame, OX9 2DN
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Landscaping and improvement works to Elms Park including the provision of new paths and the relocation and / or replacement of the multi-use games area. As amended by letter from Barton Willmore dated 7 January 2015, Revised Design and Access Statement December 2014, Ecology Addendum 22 December 2014 received on 7 January 2015.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	470962/205469
<b>OFFICER</b>	Emily Hamerton

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This planning application has been referred to Planning Committee at the discretion of the Planning Manager given the level of public interest.

1.2 Attached at **Appendix 1** is an OS extract plan which shows the location of the site.

1.3 Elms Park is an area of 2.68 hectares of public open space immediately east of The Elms housing allocation site in the TNP. Pedestrian access is provided to the park at the north boundary onto Park Street and at the south boundary onto a pathway adjacent to Van Diemens Road. The site currently has a multi-use games area, a children's playground but is otherwise left as informal green open space.

**2.0 PROPOSAL**

2.1 This is an outline planning application for landscaping and improvements to Elms Park consisting of:

- (i) new footpath and cycleway connections
- (ii) relocation of the multi-use games area or replacement play space
- (iii) landscaping and planting

2.2 Attached at **Appendix 2** are the proposed layout plans. A copy of the supporting documents can be viewed on the council's website at [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk).

2.3 The TNP requires a planning application for improvements to the park to be submitted at the same time as an application for housing at The Elms under planning application reference P14/S2176/FUL.

2.4 The application has been amended by;

- (i) the alteration of the development description withdrawing reference to a performing arts stage
- (ii) revised design and access statement
- (iii) ecological addendum statement to supplement ecology appraisal

- (iv) withdrawal of the illustrative masterplan drawing

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Below is a summary of the consultation responses received. A full copy can be viewed online at [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

3.2 **Original Plans**

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Summary of response</b>
Thame Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Object. The illustrative masterplan should demonstrate how the improvements to the park will mitigate the impacts of the proposed development at Land at The Elms</li> </ul>
Neighbours	<p>307 objections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposals are contrary to TNP guidelines for a public area which state that the public must have been consulted beforehand</li> <li>• An outline application on Elms Field should not have been a requirement of the TNP because this land was given to the people of Thame in a legal document and should not be designed by a developer. There should be a referendum to exclude this requirement and allocation from the TNP</li> <li>• Too ‘designed’ and urban in character</li> <li>• Views across the park to house grounds important to setting of park</li> <li>• New paths cut up useable grass area for informal games and encourage use of park as a cycling racetrack</li> <li>• Design encourages anti-social behaviour – additional gate into housing estate acts as escape route and corners are more hidden and dark. Security of park has recently been addressed and improved by residents, TTC and police and is much improved- this scheme would go against what has been achieved.</li> <li>• MUGA reduced to one court only and would be too close to play areas used by younger children</li> <li>• Play areas segregated by age and too far apart making parental supervision difficult and impractical</li> <li>• Park would be overlooked by housing making children playing vulnerable and privacy of existing users compromised. Uninviting for users</li> <li>• Harm to wildlife habitats as a result of works to trees and landscaping</li> <li>• Loss of mature trees and landscape quality</li> <li>• Soil hills impractical for use of space and reduce privacy for residents of Elms</li> </ul>

	<p>development and damage furrow and ridge ground features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MUGA too close to properties on Broadwaters Avenue – noise and light pollution</li> <li>• ‘grassland’ is impractical and will not be properly maintained and will look untidy</li> <li>• Park is used for music events and concern they would be allowed to do this in such close proximity to new housing</li> <li>• Permanent performance area is unneighbourly and ruins tranquil character – ‘should not be an event driven space’</li> <li>• Concrete stage would be unsightly and ruin a green space</li> <li>• The park appears as a garden extension to the housing scheme and the design has been purely made to soften this, not to improve the park in consultation with public</li> <li>• Music in the Park organisers should be consulted on design</li> <li>• Space should be designed to encourage more events</li> <li>• archaeological studies should be carried out first</li> <li>• Permanent stage area is a good idea</li> <li>• Park is uninspiring at present and open space lacks attraction</li> </ul> <p>4 letters expressing no strong views 1 letter of support</p>
<p>Forestry Officer (SODC) -</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle of application acceptable and removal of marked trees is acceptable. Concern that the paths and MUGA relocation may cause damage to RPA’s of adjacent trees but this can be dealt with via condition.</li> </ul>
<p>Thame Conservation Area Advisory Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra openings into the park will compromise security of the park and the safety of users</li> <li>• Loss of mature trees is objectionable in a conservation area</li> <li>• Proposals would breach the conditions of conveyance by Leonard Purser in 1948 when he gave Elms Park to the people of Thame</li> </ul>
<p>Environmental Health Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of light and noise from MUGA upon residences needs to be considered and assessed</li> </ul>
<p>Landscape Architect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme provides some improvements and provides a good structure for further facilities to be provided if required after public consultation</li> <li>• Design connections with The Elms can be</li> </ul>

	made using similar tree species and construction materials so that they read as one
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Below is a summary of the consultation comments received in relation to the amended plans.

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Thame Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Object</li> <li>• Elms Park still appears a private garden for the development. Paths and accesses severely affect the amenity of the park for the general public</li> </ul>
Neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 Objections</li> <li>• Previous objections still stand and remain unaddressed</li> <li>• Outline planning applications are not appropriate for development in Conservation Areas according to SODC</li> <li>• Environmental survey underestimates wildlife species present here</li> <li>• Stage in the park not required for a once a year event</li> <li>• Division between Elms Field and The Elms parkland should be made distinct</li> <li>• Relocation of MUGA will have a direct impact upon the amenities enjoyed by residents of Broadwaters Avenue by means of the noise and anti-social behaviour (35 Broadwater Avenue, Thame)</li> <li>• There is not an existing site layout submitted with this application</li> </ul>
Conservation Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Conservation objection; Application is a requirement of the TNP</li> </ul>
Countryside Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Crested Newts highly unlikely to be supported by nearby pond habitats and therefore a further species survey is not required. No further action required.</li> </ul>
Thame Conservation Area Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous concerns have not been unaddressed</li> </ul>
Environmental Health Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of light and noise from MUGA upon residences needs to be considered and assessed fully</li> </ul>
Landscape Architect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns that illustrative drawings do not correspond with proposals for the Elms eg. footpath connections are not same width across the sites</li> <li>• Tree planting on north east corner should be rearranged to break up views between</li> </ul>

	<p>proposed housing and The Elms development to mitigate removal of trees along boundary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better correspondence between materials on both sites would be required</li> </ul>
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4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1
- [P08/E0773/CA](#) - Approved (28/08/2008)

Removal of an existing dwarf wall and metal fencing to create space for a public access gate.

- [P08/E0772](#) - Approved (28/08/2008)

To install a public access gate to the side of vehicle access gate at entrance to Elms Park.

- [P91/N0498/O](#) - Approved (13/11/1991)

Erection of skateboard ramp.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 The following policy and guidance is relevant to this proposal.

The Thame Neighbourhood Plan

Policy No.	Policy Title
ESDQ6	Improve Elms Park Recreation Area
ESDQ2	Allocated sites to provide open space
ESDQ16	Development must relate well to its site and surroundings
ESDQ17	Development must make a positive contribution towards the distinctive character of the town as a whole
ESDQ18	New development must contribute to local character by creating a sense of place appropriate to its location
ESDQ24	Pedestrian and cycle routes must link together potential destinations, such as new housing in the town centre
ESDQ28	Provide good quality outdoor space
HA4	The Elms – allocation for no more than 45 residential dwellings

5.2 The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy

Policy No.	Policy Title
CS1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CSS1	The overall strategy
CSTHA1	The strategy for Thame
CSTHA2	New allocations at Thame
CSEN1	Landscape
CSG1	Green Infrastructure
CSB1	Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan

Policy No.	Policy Title
G2	Protection an enhancement of the environment
C6	Biodiversity conservation
C8	Species protection
C9	Landscape features
CON5	The setting of listed buildings

CON7	Proposals affecting a conservation area
CON12	Archaeology
EP2	Noise and Vibrations
EP3	Light pollution
D1	Good design and local distinctiveness
D4	Privacy and daylight
D6	Design against crime
D7	Access for all
R2	Recreation
R6	Informal recreation
CF1	Safeguarding community facilities and services including recreation facilities
T7	Cycling and walking

### 5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

## 6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### 6.1 The relevant planning considerations in the determination of this outline application are:

#### 1. The principle of development

- 6.2 Policy HA4 of the TNP requires a planning application for housing at The Elms to provide proposals for improving the adjacent Elms Park. The applicants have submitted an outline planning application for Elms Park which includes an outline proposal for landscaping and improvement works to Elms Park including the provision of new paths and the relocation and / or replacement of the multi-use games area. The multi-use games area currently sits adjacent to where the new housing is proposed and will be in very close proximity and not desirable for the new occupants of the proposed houses, therefore the planning application for Elms Park provides a mechanism to relocate or re-provide it.
- 6.3 The application must be informed by consultation with local people. To date there has not been a public engagement event in Thame where members of the public can put forward suggestions to inform this planning application. However Thame Town Council are proposing to carry this out soon and money is to be secured through a S106 agreement in relation to this application which would cover the cost of a public engagement event and the cost of improving Elms Park. This would then enable local people be involved and put forward their suggestions for the park improvements.
- The landscape architect considers that the illustrative masterplan is acceptable and will provide flexibility for Thame residents input at public consultation stage which will then inform a more concrete design at the reserved matters application stage.
- 6.4 Proposals must also provide public pedestrian / cycle links from the north south route to the adjacent Elms Park. The illustrative masterplan shows that the basic outline of a pedestrian/cycle link to the housing at The Elms is provided in accordance with the requirements of this policy.
- 6.5 Policy ESDQ6 of the TNP states: 'A planning application for improvements to the Elms Park Recreation Area must be submitted at the same time as any application for the development of the adjacent land at The Elms. The improvements must be

implemented at the same time as any residential development of land at The Elms.’ The application for the park was made at the same time as the proposal for housing and therefore accords with this part of the policy.

- 6.6 Section 106 monies need to be secured in order to undertake the public engagement work and the improvement works to the park which will involve the relocation or provision of the existing MUGA. TTC have advised that this will cost £300,000 which will cover landscape architects fees, planning application fees and the improvement works. This money is being secured through the S106 agreement for the residential development. In addition a condition is recommended on the residential development application which ties this development to the improvements to the park.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 It is recommended that outline planning permission is granted because the application forms a flexible basis from which public consultation can inform reserved matters to fulfil the total requirements of TNP policies ESDQ6 and HA4.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **It is recommended that outline planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Outline consent.**
2. **Reserved matters to be submitted.**
3. **Approved plans.**
4. **Construction of paths at the same time as the residential development.**
5. **Public engagement for park improvements.**

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