

Urban Design Comments

F/22/93315 – Cockpit Farm Barn, Knowle Lane

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

Urban Design Officer: Marta Oliveira

Planning Officer: Alex Webb

Date: 25 July 2022

Proposal: Construction of nine (9) dwellings, landscaping, parking and associated works following demolition and site preparation.

Summary:

- The site is located outside the urban edge within the countryside and a settlement gap
 - The existing building has no architectural merit therefore there is an opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the area.
 - Well-achieved balance between built form, parking and landscape
 - Electric Vehicle Charging Points need to be included on the Site Plan
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These comments are made in relation to the plans and supporting information dated 29th June 2022 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Landscape, Tree and Ecology Officers and Highways Specialist.

1. Site Context

The site lies within open countryside in a settlement Gap, directly to the north of Horton Heath and to the west of Knowle Lane. It is already developed, and a prior approval has been granted under Class Q for the change of use from agricultural building to residential. A PRow runs alongside the northern boundary.

The following comments are therefore made on the assumption that issues relating to development within the countryside and settlement Gap can be overcome. It is noted that a LVS has been submitted in support of the application and the Council's Landscape Officers will be able to comment more fully on this.

2. Siting & External Layout

The existing character on this side of the road consists of a linear development set in long plots with generous rear and front gardens, with dwellings set well back from the road.

In general, the proposal appears to sit comfortably within the site, displaying a relaxed form of development where most of the space is utilised in a considerate way and the proposed dwellings are set with sufficient distance between each other. It is also felt that the proposal provides sufficient, private and useable amenity spaces for future occupants. Therefore, the proposed layout is considered to be acceptable and balanced within the pattern that characterises the surrounding area.

Furthermore, it is acknowledged that there is a desire to maximise the potential of the site in terms of unit numbers; however, the resulting plot sizes, together with the necessary ancillary external amenity space and off-street parking, seems to be acceptable when comparing with the general size of neighbouring plots.

The existing building has no architectural merit, and the proposal is considered to be an improvement in terms of design and living environment and, therefore, an enhancement to the character and appearance of the area.

3. Height, Form, Scale & Mass

There are no objections *in principle* to this aspect of the scheme.

4. External Appearance & Materials

There are no objections *in principle* to this aspect of the scheme; however, further details of all materials should be submitted to ensure that the external appearance of the dwellings is of high order.

5. Sustainability

There appears to be no reference within any of the supporting information with regards to what sustainability measures are to be incorporated into the development.

To support the Council's commitment to mitigate climate change:

- Significantly reduce vehicular dominance and prioritise pedestrian and cycle provision and links to public transport
- Provide minimum parking provision
- Consider creating provision for shared car club vehicles to reduce the number of parking spaces required
- Provide charging points for electric vehicles, Ebikes and other forms of micro-mobility in locations that support the streetscene and do not hinder pedestrian movement
- Installation of photovoltaics and solar tiles
- Introduce *Passivhaus* and *Lifetime Homes* approaches to building design and construction
- Consider introducing additional green and blue roofs and walls to reduce hard surfaces and control water at source
- Include additional trees and soft landscape within streetscenes to reduce hard surfaces, slow surface water run-off, provide shade and create habitats / corridors for biodiversity
- Incorporate permeable surfaces and SUDS in accordance with advice from Landscape and Ecology Officers
- Orient buildings to maximise solar gain and provide natural surveillance of surrounding streets and spaces to encourage active travel and sociability
- Ensure habitable rooms enjoy dual aspect to maximise solar gain, improve ventilation and maximise overlooking of surrounding streets and space