

WINCHESTER & EASTLEIGH DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting: 13/12/2022

Site: Moorhill, Moorhill Road, West End, Southampton, SO30 3AY

Proposal: Proposed 70-bed care home (Use Class C2); associated access, parking, landscaping, sustainable drainage, electricity sub-station, other structures and works; following demolition and clearance of the existing site

Planning reference: F/22/94034

Design Review Panel Members sitting on the Panel: Jon Moore (Chair), Neil Armitage, Paul Bulkeley & Tim Smith

Council Officers in attendance: Summer Sharpe & Gary Osmond

Item presented by: Den Garlick (Harris Irwin Architects) & Phil Deacon (Deacon Design)

Declarations of Interest declared: None

Comments:

The Panel noted the progress made to the scheme since it was last reviewed at the pre-application stage and the responses to the comments made. The most significant change being to the orientation of the central courtyard, which now faces south. This was considered to be a successful move which greatly enhanced the scheme, as was angling the western wing to further open up the courtyard space. It was also noted that comments in relation to the location of the main ancillary servicing areas had also been addressed, placing these along the northern side at ground floor level.

However, one consequence of reorienting the building is an increased number of north facing bedrooms, albeit was accepted that these would have a pleasant outlook across the neighbouring reservoir and towards the woods. Notwithstanding, it was suggested that there was scope to provide easterly and westerly aspects to the end bedrooms through the use of corner windows, which would suit the contemporary nature of the design proposed. Or make more of an internal feature of these north facing windows if it compromises the internal layouts. There may also be scope to light the top floor rooms and spaces from above via rooflights.

Overall, it was considered that there was a significant amount of shared space around the building, including seating areas at the end of corridors to provide

interest and social interaction. These features were welcomed, as were small private patio/terraces to ground floor bedrooms and the well landscaped garden spaces. Some concern as to the quality of outlook for some of the western facing bedrooms was raised, particularly those at ground floor level with parking spaces immediately in front of windows. Whilst the layout of the car park and use of tree planting and landscaping to break up the space, so as not to result in a sea of parked cars, was welcomed, ideally parking should be kept away from bedroom windows. The nature of surfacing material for the car park also needs to be considered, so as to prevent large areas of tarmac.

In terms of general mass, form and elevational appearance, no particular issues were raised in relation to the overall scale of the building, although it was suggested that some site sections be provided to better assess the relationship with the reservoirs and trees surrounding the site. How will views from the building be impacted and how might it be viewed from the wider surrounding area.

The revisions to the elevational compositions and use of visually softer materials to provide a 'less urban' design were noted. Those now proposed will likely work better with the character of the site and neighbouring woodland, although the design is still very urban in its form and appearance but was still welcomed and supported by the Panel. However, it was noted that some of the design hierarchy and variety of the previous pre-application scheme has been lost in terms of the use of the materials and differing window sizes and positions. Whilst there was no objection to how materials and detailing are proposed to be used in this latest scheme, it has resulted in some awkward elements, such as a large blank section of brick wall to the northern end of the western elevation. The position and size of windows is also now very homogeneous, all remaining the same despite being on different elevations and having differing outlooks. This should be reviewed to bring back a sense of hierarchy to the elevations informed by an assessment of the impact of solar gain upon internal spaces. This may also identify the need for external shading which again may further change the external elevations.

Other aspects of the design which need to be considered at this stage, due to their potential impact upon the building's elevations, are the mounting of PV panels to the roof, as well as heating and cooling plant ducting, safety barriers, etc, which if visible above the parapet would adversely impact the otherwise simple clean form of the building. How the roofs will be drained and the need for internal or external hoppers and downpipes (the Panel strongly recommend researching internal drainage options due to the maintenance and visual benefits provided) will also impact the external appearance and elevational compositions and need to be shown on the planning drawings and CGI images.

The submission suggests a considerable quantity of high-quality brick detailing, which will provide interest and variety. However, the subtlety of this detailing needs to be retained throughout the detailed design stage, to ensure that building regulation requirements, etc. do not result in such features being

watered down. Equally, it needs to be ensured that such features are not value engineered out of the scheme. As such, it is recommended that these detailed features, including aspects such as window reveals, parapet coping, material transition details, etc. are all secured via planning conditions. This could be in the form of 1:5 or 1:20 detailed sections through various parts of the elevation. Preferably these details should be agreed prior to any planning consent being granted.

To conclude, the Panel were generally supportive of the scheme as presented and felt that it has the potential to be a high-quality development which will provide an attractive environment for residents. However, more work needs to be carried out through a greater level of detailed design, as discussed above, which does not yet appear to have been undertaken. These more practical aspects of the scheme's design need to be considered at this stage as they will have an impact upon the end quality and appearance of the development. If these aspects are not more resolved prior to planning consent being granted, they could adversely impact the appearance and quality of the final product, to its detriment.