

Urban Design Comments

F/23/95122 – Hans Way Car Park

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

Urban Design Officer: Marta Oliveira

Planning Officer: Gary Osmond

Date: 12 May 2023

Proposal: Construction of 4No. two bedroom and 2No. one bedroom apartments in a two and three storey block, with ancillary amenity space, landscaping, bin and cycle storage.

Summary:

- General layout, form and scale is appropriate, and the design development work lifts the quality of the scheme.
 - The staggering and better articulation of the western elevation as well as its external treatment are considered to be an improvement in terms of its visual impact upon the outlook from the rear of neighbouring Desborough Road properties.
 - Careful consideration of materials and detailing.
 - I would be encouraged to provide visitor cycle parking.
 - Ensure that all habitable rooms enjoy dual aspect to maximise solar gain.
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These comments are made in relation to the plans and supporting information dated 26 April 2023 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Landscape Officer.

1. Site Context

The site is an existing car park within Eastleigh Town Centre within the Secondary Zone shopping area. The car park is owned by Eastleigh Borough Council.

Existing Built Form

The site lies in a transitional location between the shopping core to the east and residential streets to the west.

To the north of the site is a sub-station, beyond which is a two-storey development of terraced houses. To the west are established terraced streets laid out on a strict grid system, comprising two-storey terraced houses of modest scale with small front gardens providing a pleasant buffer to the street and some soft landscape. Parking occurs on carriageway.

To the south is Eastleigh Baptist Church, an attractive building making a statement on an important corner plot. This is attached to the Wells Place Centre, a modern building of limited architectural value and beyond this is the Swan Shopping Centre, a two-storey building of substantial commercial scale and mass that dominates this part of the town centre.

To the west of the site are the rear parking areas of the two-storey High Street shops, creating an untidy streetscene. The High Street contains a variety of traditional and contemporary buildings that provide a good sense of enclosure to the street.

2. Streets, Spaces and External Layout

Site Access

Pedestrians

The main pedestrian entrance to the building is located at the corner of the site allowing access from Wells Place and Hanns Way. Also, it is flanked by a curved brick wall providing some privacy and protection at the ground floor level. This approach is acceptable in principle although it is considered that if the potential public art project is not taken forward, then more consideration should be given to this corner element, e.g., proposing a seating area facing inwards, to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Parking and Servicing

Given the highly sustainable location of the site, it is acceptable that no parking spaces are proposed within the scheme enabling a stronger landscape setting to the building and wider streetscape to be created. However, it would be encouraged to include visitor cycle parking within the site or at least confirm existence of alternative solution nearby. The maintenance parking space provided next to the bin and cycle storage appears to be difficult to use given the very constrained manoeuvring space adjacent to the bollards.

The tree shown on the visualisation submitted would be much more likely to establish if it was planted within a more generous soft landscape strip, ideally that extends across the entire northern boundary to provide additional screening to the sub-station.

It is welcomed that the cycle store is big enough to accommodate non-standard cycles as well as a charging point for E-bikes.

No objections in principle to the siting of the bin store provided this arrangement is acceptable to the Waste Authority.

Building and Site Layout

The footprint of the building has been curved to work with the position of the easements and to reinforce and enhance the corner position. Also, the notable features of the building such as the proposed recessed corner balconies and the oversailing roof in conjunction with the curved brick wall positively contribute to address the street frontage as well as the corner of Wells Place and Hanns Way while enhancing the character of the area and providing a gateway feature into the town centre.

There were also concerns that the scale and mass of the building would appear oppressive from the rear of the properties on Desborough Road. The elevational treatment of the western elevation is important in this regard. The proposed elevation is now considered to be an improvement as it is more broken up vertically with altering height and depth to the elevation. Furthermore, by exploring a different detailing treatment and other proportions and design of windows, it creates more visual interest and prevents being dominated by a continuous blank and uninteresting elevation which would have an unacceptable impact upon the outlook from the rear of neighbouring Desborough Road properties.

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It is welcomed that bedrooms are now further away to existing commercial uses to avoid noise and odour disturbance. However, it is noted that one of the bedrooms (bed 1) of the northern apartments is exclusively facing north. In order to ensure that all habitable rooms enjoy dual aspect to maximise solar gain, it would be encouraged to propose a second opening in these rooms. Any opportunity to open towards west should be taken in consideration, even if it is high-level window to avoid overlooking issues.

It is welcomed that the bin and cycle stores is now located in a separate building which provides an end vista in relation to the northern service road whilst benefiting from a greater separation from that street.

3. Use, Height, Form, Scale & Mass

Given the location of the site, a mixed-use scheme comprising commercial use on the ground floor with residential above would be preferable. This would immediately negate privacy and outlook issues for occupiers of the ground floor flats.

A three-storey building is considered appropriate on this prominent corner site, to create enclosure to this important gateway into the town centre. It is unfortunate however that the constraints of the sewer easements have diluted the potential of the development to properly address the corner using conventional design solutions.

4. External Appearance & Materials

The contemporary design approach is acceptable in principle. It is noted that architectural interest and style is proposed such as projecting brickwork, window reveal depths, window sills or lintels, coping or capping to the roof or where the facing materials transition from brick to cladding. These details are important to enliven the environment and to provide interest to the elevations.

It is welcomed to install PV panels for each apartment and to ensure they are laid flat to relate well with the Baptist Church and Desborough Road existing neighbours.

All flats require a balcony or private outdoor amenity space, in accordance with the Quality Places SPD. A Juliette balcony is not considered sufficient, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of access to private amenity space for health and wellbeing.

6. Sustainability

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

- Consider introducing green and blue roofs and walls to reduce hard surfaces and control water at source
- Include additional trees and rain gardens to reduce hard surfaces, slow surface water run-off, provide shade and create habitats / corridors for biodiversity
- Consider installation of photovoltaics
- Introduce Passivhaus and/or Lifetime Homes approaches to building design and construction
- Reduce levels of CO2 emissions via energy efficiency and choice of materials
- Incorporate efficient mains water consumption measures

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- Ensure habitable rooms enjoy dual aspect to maximise solar gain, improve ventilation and maximise overlooking of surrounding streets and spaces