

Urban Design Comments:

F/23/95431– Home Farm, St Johns Road, Hedge End

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

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Date: 26 July 2023

Proposal: Construction of 8.no dwellings (2No. two bedroom, 4No. three bedroom and 2No. four bedroom) with associated access, parking and landscaping

Summary:

- The site is located within the urban edge.
 - Policy HE3 requires that the detailed proposals should comply with the development plan and with an approved master plan for the whole site. Therefore, more information would need to be submitted in order to comply with the Local Plan Policy.
 - The proposed layout shows the buildings predominantly located within the area next to the existing adjacent buildings, minimising the encroachment into the undeveloped part of the site.
 - Also, the proposed layout appropriately addresses most of the site constraints.
 - General form and scale acceptable subject to improvements below.
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These comments are made in relation to the plans dated 14 June 2023 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Landscape, Ecology and Tree Officers.

1. Site Context

The site lies within the urban edge and adjacent to a woodland. The site sits within a natural bowl, surrounded by mature trees, and neighboured by the adjoining housing site which sits at a higher level.

Planning Policy

The site is covered by Policy HE3 in the Local Plan. This Policy states that the site is allocated for "... development to include approximately 16 dwellings" and that "Planning permission will be granted provided that the detailed proposals comply with the development plan, and comply with an approved masterplan for the whole site which addresses the following requirements: a range of housing types, sizes and tenure; the provision of vehicular access from St John's Road, the provision of pedestrian and cycle links both within the site and to connect the site with the built-up area of Hedge End, the provision of a good quality landscape setting for the development ...,etc."

Site Access

The applicant is proposing to access the site through an existing access to the adjacent development from St John's Road. It will need to be demonstrated that the junction onto St John's Road is adequate to deal with the level of traffic movements for the combined developments, existing and proposed, in order for Highways colleagues to comment on the technicalities of whether the existing site access is suitable in highway terms.

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2. External Layout

The proposed site boundary is limited to a restricted area within the site allocation, and it is not clear what the intentions are for the remaining site. Policy HE3 requires that the detailed proposals should comply with the development plan and with an approved master plan for the whole site. Therefore, more information would need to be submitted in order to comply with the Local Plan Policy.

In terms of layout, the proposed arrangement is in the form of a courtyard. There is no obvious solution for this site; however, the proposed approach could work with some improvements to make it more acceptable.

First suggestion is to widen the courtyard a bit by moving Plots 1, 2 and 3 towards northwest making it a more open and attractive space. Also, it would be encouraged to increase the block paving area by aligning it with the bottom part of Plot 2. As it stands, the side elevations of Plots 3 and 6 are overbearing and blocking the views of Plots 4&5 presenting it with a constrained feeling. It would be welcomed to propose more breathing space between dwellings.

On the other hand, proposing more space to the courtyard would offer scope for proper planting, instead of proposing trees within private space which would be difficult to control at a later stage. It would be encouraged to submit a landscape strategy for the courtyard to ensure that a strong sense of place is achieved as well as a higher design quality scheme.

Furthermore, the side elevations of Plots 1 and 8 need careful consideration to make sure that these dwellings work as a gateway for those approaching the site, by providing natural surveillance and legibility to the entrance of the development.

Lastly, the pedestrian link to the woodland, proposed between parking spaces of Plots 4 and 5, should be legible and easy to find.

On another subject, the proposed layout arrangement uses semidetached and linked dwellings to achieve enclosure to the courtyard. Whilst it would be expected a more loosen grain on a countryside site, the elevations indicate that the building mass proposed is broken up several times with single storey elements, such as entrances or car ports, making it more acceptable.

The site section submitted are very helpful to properly assess how the proposal sits within the existing site levels and it is acknowledged that Plot 1 would generally be hidden from view.

3. Height, Form, Scale & Mass

No objections in principle.

4. External Appearance & Materials

Whilst it is not essential that design mimics or tries to replicate existing traditional buildings, such as barns, as this often results in poor quality replicas, it is important that new buildings reinforce the character of the area.

Plots 4 & 5: These try to mimic the appearance of a barn by using the timber cladding and small windows. However, none of all the other details are representative of this typology i.e., lower eaves or continues ridge lines, etc. Good architecture is less to do with a particular

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style, and more to do with the successful co-ordination of proportions, materials, colour and details.

In general, all openings seem to be a bit on the small side when compared with the size of the dwellings. Is this to protect from noise, limit loss of heat? More consideration would be needed regarding this matter.

Materials

The external finishing materials and detailing are very important from an urban design perspective. These should be durable and of high quality, reinforce the overall design concept, and take account of the context of the site.

Further details of materials are needed.

5. Sustainability

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 given the significant growth occurring in this area
- Provide minimum parking provision
- Provide integrated cycle storage
- Consider installation of photovoltaics
- Introduce Passivhaus and Lifetime Homes approaches to new building design and construction
- Consider introducing green roofs and walls to reduce hard surfaces
- Consider creating provision for shared car club vehicles
- Provide electric vehicle charging points
- Include additional tree and soft landscape planting 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