

Urban Design Comments

F/23/95549 – Brighstone, Botley Road, Horton Heath

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

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Proposal: Construction of 5 no dwellings, landscaping, parking and associated works following demolition of existing dwelling, site clearance and preparation

Summary:

- The site is located within the urban edge.
 - The layout and setting of the dwellings are sympathetic to the surrounding area.
 - The proposed height of Plot 3, 4 and 5 is considered to be out of keeping with the existing neighbours.
 - Potential overlooking into adjacent neighbours caused by the restrict distances between existing and proposed buildings.
 - The design and appearance of the development is considered to be acceptable.
 - Charging points for vehicles and E-bikes are needed.
 - No information on bins and cycle storage.
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These comments represent a desk-top study of the plans dated 3 July 2023 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Landscape Officers.

1. Site Context

The proposal is for a residential development of 5 dwellings in Botley Road. The proposed layout is for a backland/ cul-de-sac development. This is a constrained site with a number of challenges that need to be taken into consideration, in particular protecting the amenity of neighbouring residential properties, in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing.

Site access

The applicant is proposing to access the site through an existing access from Botley Road. It will need to be demonstrated that the junction onto Botley Road is adequate to deal with the level of traffic movements for the development in order for Highways colleagues to comment on the technicalities of whether the existing site access is suitable in highway terms.

2. Layout and Amenity Considerations

In general, the plots' size proposed seem to be appropriate when compared with the pattern of the surrounding area.

It is acknowledged that some openings are being proposed on Plot 3 towards north to secure natural surveillance across the internal access; however, there is a concern of potential impact

on the neighbours through overlooking. It would be encouraged to submit more information this matter. It seems that, in a few cases, the distances are quite restricted, and it is likely that direct overlooking will occur between the new development and the existing neighbours to the north. To produce a drawing showing the location of windows on the buildings on Cherry Drove relative to the proposal will be welcome to assess the impact on neighbouring amenity, as well as sections through the proposal and the adjacent neighbours.

Also, the proposal should be successfully arranged to address the internal access from Botley Road whilst providing natural surveillance to this cul-de-sac. It is important to ensure that vistas are suitable framed and terminated.

A series of sectional drawings through the site, including adjacent surroundings, would allow the relationship between the development and levels to be understood better.

Parking & Servicing

It is a shame that the layout shows a parking space at the frontage. Ideally, car parking should be provided at the rear of the semidetached dwellings to improve the general appearance of the site from the streetscene.

Where parking areas are located adjacent to soft landscape, a buffer strip will be needed to prevent trampling of vegetation.

Charging points for electric vehicles need to be provided, this has clearly not been considered as part of this scheme. Such provision needs to be agreed now. To attempt to retrofit vehicle charging infrastructure via planning condition is likely to result in loss of landscape and a cluttered streetscene.

This also raises issues as to where residents can safely store bicycles in a convenient location. No sheds in back gardens are shown on the drawings. They should be big enough to accommodate non-standard cycles and include a charging point for E-bikes and other forms of micromobility. In addition, cycling should be more convenient than driving and hence cycle stores should be located at the front of the properties, designed as an integral part of the building.

Similarly, bin stores should be located in frontage locations and designed as an integral part of the buildings to lessen the possibility that bins will be left in the streetscene.

Connections

An opportunity to create a pedestrian and cycle link to the western and northern development at Cherry Drove, through Plot 5's garden, should be explored. If possible, it could be also a vehicular link to better connect the road network by avoiding proposing cul-de-sacs.

3. Scale and Height

In terms of height and due to the existing site levels, Plot 3, 4 and 5 should be reduced to a typical bungalow of one storey in height with occasional occupation within the roof to be more in keeping with the existing neighbours. Ideally, it should be submitted north/south sections through the site to understand the levels on site better.

4. External Appearance and Materials

The use of red brick is supported, and it reflects the surrounding development. Furthermore, the Landscape Proposed Plan shows a wide range of alternative materials for the hard landscaping material on the driving area. A block paving material to the parking area and parking bays is welcomed.

5. Sustainability

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

- Provide minimum parking provision.
- Provide charging points for electric vehicles, Ebikes and other forms of micro-mobility.
- Consider introducing green and blue roofs and walls to reduce hard surfaces and control water at source.
- Include additional trees and soft landscape to reduce hard surfaces, slow surface water run-off, provide shade and create habitats / corridors for biodiversity.
- Incorporate permeable surfaces and multi-functional SuDS in accordance with advice from Landscape and Ecology Officers.
- Consider installation of photovoltaics.
- Reduce levels of CO₂ emissions via energy efficiency and choice of materials.
- Incorporate efficient mains water consumption measures.
- Orient buildings to maximise solar gain and provide natural surveillance of surrounding streets and spaces to encourage active travel.
- Include measures to provide outdoor shade and minimise indoor heating.
- Ensure habitable rooms enjoy dual aspect to maximise solar gain, improve ventilation and maximise overlooking of surrounding streets and spaces.