

Urban Design Comments

F/23/95527 – 2,4,6,8 TOYNBEE ROAD AND 2,3,4,5 ROMSEY CLOSE EASTLEIGH, SO50 9DP

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

Urban Design Officer: Marta Oliveira

Planning Officer: Gary Osmond

Date: 26 July 2023

Proposal: Redevelopment for retirement living accommodation for older people comprising 83 retirement apartments including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping

Summary:

- Site layout does not adequately take into account the site context or its immediate surroundings.
 - The proposal does not create an appropriate transition to visually connect the existing built form to the north and south, with an appropriate layout and street scene.
 - Any proposed building on this site shouldn't be higher than 3 storeys.
 - The inability to successfully balance built form, parking and landscape suggests overdevelopment of the site.
 - Consider reducing the number of units to diminish the bulkiness of the building and create opportunity for appropriate landscape.
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These comments are made in relation to the plans dated 17 July 2023 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Landscape Officer.

1. Site Context & Constraints

The site sits on the edge of Eastleigh Town Centre and is within the 'Urban Renaissance Quarter' where well-designed and appropriate 'people-intensive' development would be permitted (Policy E4).

The site is occupied by 8 semi-detached residential dwellings, set back from the road in relatively wide and deep plots with generous rear gardens.

Given the location of the site within the urban edge, the basic principle of development is considered to be acceptable, with any formal planning approval being based upon the exact nature, character, design and impact of that proposed being considered appropriate and in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Being within the 'Urban Renaissance Quarter' means that there is scope for larger scale and denser development, with Policy E4 setting out buildings of predominantly three storeys. However, being an edge of centre site means whatever form redevelopment of the site takes, it must provide a successful and appropriate transition between the more built-up development to the south and across Leigh Road, against the less dense and lower scale residential development to the north along Toynbee Road and on Romsey Close. The differing character of these streets also needs to be taken into account, given that Leigh Road is a very busy street and the main east-west route into and through the town, whereas Toynbee Road is a quieter residential street and Romsey Close an even quieter and private cul-de-sac.

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Therefore, whatever scheme is proposed for this site, it would need to contribute towards a positive relationship with the surrounding area and the character of their streets. The site layout proposed doesn't appear to acknowledge the differing scales and characters of its immediate surroundings and more consideration should be given to the transition to avoid creating an unattractive and undesirable clash of scales.

2. Layout and Parking

Layout

The large footprint is taking too much of the site leaving too little for landscape or to even soften this bulky building.

An alternative layout should be explored to create more opportunities to break up the building further, by proposing, for example, two different buildings that potentially could still be linked by glazed corridors, if necessary.

As it stands, the proposal does not create an appropriate transition to visually connect existing built form to the north and south, with an appropriate layout and street scene.

The proposal should demonstrate that the proposed layout does not diminish and, preferably, enhances the character of the area.

External Spaces

The car parking is proposed on the northern part of the site which is welcomed; however, it is felt that there isn't enough amenity space around the building for future occupants to enjoy. Also, the only usable space provided is facing north and it is quite constrained by cars.

It is recommended to retain a reasonable amount of external space, even if that means that considerations should be taken to reduce the number of units. The external spaces should be designed to encourage interaction amongst the residents and create a sense of community.

The proposal should have a landscape strategy on board from a very early stage to ensure that the external space is a pleasant and usable space by identifying different uses for each area.

Also, this strategy should have a massive importance in terms of reducing the impact of the building's mass.

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

3. Height

Policy E4 states that: "development higher than 3 storeys will be appropriate in certain circumstances where development reflects local distinctiveness and would contribute towards a positive relationship with the surrounding area." It also states that: "taller buildings on the approaches to the town centre enhance legibility by indicating that an area of importance is being approached".

Given the fact that the site is on the northern edge of the Urban Renaissance Quarter, located between two quiet residential streets and that transition of scales is of major importance for

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any proposal to be acceptable on this site, it is considered that no more than 3 storeys will be appropriate on this site.

It is felt that the quantum of development should be revisited to allow for a slightly more relaxed scheme with greater emphasis on achieving a well-designed place.

A reduction in unit numbers and consequent reduction of car parking spaces would create opportunities for more significant areas of soft landscape and help to create a more positive contribution to the layout whilst giving more emphasis to the quality of the external spaces proposed.

4. Materials

- No objection to the proposed palette of materials

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
- Provide minimum parking provision and a range of parking solutions
- Provide charging points for electric vehicles, Ebikes and other forms of micro-mobility within garages and/or locations that support the streetscene and do not hinder pedestrian movement
- Consider introducing 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
- Include additional trees within rear gardens and demarcate plot boundaries with hedgerows to 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
- 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