

From: Oliveira, Marta (Contractor)
Sent: 08 April 2026 17:52
To: Harrison, Liz
Subject: F/26/101013 - OAK COTTAGE, WINCHESTER ROAD, BOTLEY, SOUTHAMPTON, SO32 2DH

Hi Liz,

Please see below the revised comments on the application referenced above.

1. Site Context

The scheme comprises 50 apartments and two detached dwellings, together with associated communal facilities, access, parking, and landscape works.

The site lies within the new Boorley Green development and has a single point of access from Winchester Road. Bus routes on Winchester Road provide services to Southampton city centre and Eastleigh.

The site occupies a transitional position between Winchester Road, which forms a key movement corridor, and newer residential areas to the north and west. To the south, the character shifts toward lower-density, more traditional dwellings. This juxtaposition of differing urban conditions creates a sensitive interface, requiring a design response that mediates between contrasting scales and typologies.

The rectangular form of the site and its relatively level topography provide a clear framework for development. Existing mature vegetation along the northern and eastern boundaries contributes to enclosure and offers an opportunity for integration into the proposed layout.

2. Site Plan Assessment

The proposed layout adopts a perimeter-based arrangement organised around a central courtyard. This structure establishes a clear hierarchy of spaces, moving from the public realm at the site edges to a more private, inward-facing communal environment at its centre. The buildings address both Winchester Road and the northern footpath, creating strong and continuous frontages that contribute positively to the surrounding streetscape.

This perimeter definition plays a critical role in reinforcing enclosure and legibility. By aligning built form along the site boundaries, the development avoids the fragmented or inward-looking character often associated with standalone apartment blocks. Instead, it presents a coherent edge condition, consistent with established principles of urban structure.

Internally, the courtyard provides a focal point for communal activity and amenity. Its south-westerly orientation ensures favourable sunlight exposure, enhancing its usability and environmental quality. The arrangement also allows ground floor apartments to benefit from direct access to private patio areas, which contribute to defensible space and increase passive surveillance.

A key aspect of the layout is the distribution of built form. Development along the site perimeter is limited to two storeys, maintaining a scale consistent with surrounding residential properties. In contrast, a three-storey element is introduced within the centre of the site, facing the courtyard. This internalisation of height allows the scheme to achieve the required density while minimising its visual impact on the public realm.

To the south, the inclusion of two detached houses provides an important transition in scale and typology. These dwellings form a softer edge to the site, mediating between the larger apartment building and the neighbouring properties. Their positioning also enables effective natural surveillance of the site's southern boundary.

Access arrangements are straightforward and legible, with a single vehicular entrance from Winchester Road reflecting the existing access point. Internal circulation is designed to accommodate service and emergency vehicles without creating a car-dominated environment. The absence of through routes reinforces the residential character of the development and limits unnecessary traffic movement.

Parking provision is carefully integrated into the layout, with spaces arranged in smaller clusters around the site rather than concentrated in large areas. This approach reduces the visual prominence of vehicles and allows landscape elements to play a more significant role in structuring the environment. The result is a more balanced and visually coherent setting, in which built form, movement, and planting are effectively integrated.

Landscape design is fundamental to the success of the scheme. The retention of existing trees, combined with new planting, strengthens site boundaries and enhances biodiversity. Within the courtyard, the introduction of a communal garden and terrace creates a high-quality amenity space that supports social interaction and well-being, particularly important in a retirement living context.

3. External Appearance

The external appearance of the development reflects a deliberate strategy to reconcile increased density with a domestic and contextually appropriate architectural language. This is achieved through careful manipulation of massing, form, and materials.

The overall mass of the building is broken down into a series of smaller elements, articulated through projecting gables, varied ridge heights, and stepped façades. This compositional approach reduces the perception of scale and allows the building to read as a collection of individual or semi-detached dwellings, rather than a single monolithic block. However, with regard to the main elevation, the refused application more successfully established a clearer separation of built form through the use of recessed and subservient elements, which helped to reduce perceived bulk and improve legibility. The application of a similar approach to the principal frontage in this scheme is strongly encouraged, as it would further break down the massing and enhance the overall composition.

The use of a two-storey frontage to the street is important, as it helps the scheme maintain a human scale and avoids overpowering adjacent development. The three-storey element is effectively concealed within the roofscape and set back from the outer edges, ensuring that it does not dominate key views or disrupt the established character of the area.

Material selection plays a significant role in reinforcing this strategy. The primary use of red brick reflects the prevailing material palette of the surrounding developments, while the introduction of

contrasting brick panels and areas of white render adds visual interest and variation. Roof forms are predominantly pitched, further reinforcing the domestic character of the architecture.

In terms of material quality, it is important that the development secures a robust and durable palette appropriate to its long-term residential use. In line with previous discussions under application F/24/97945, the use of clay tiles and natural slate is encouraged, as these materials provide greater longevity and a more authentic architectural expression than concrete alternatives.

Consideration was also previously given to the use of painted brick in place of render to achieve a more solid and maintenance-resilient finish. While it is acknowledged that the applicant has opted to retain areas of render, the provision of additional information regarding the protective coating system is noted. Notwithstanding this, a reduction in rendered surfaces, where feasible, would further enhance the durability and visual quality of the scheme.

Within the courtyard, a subtle shift in materiality is introduced through the use of buff brick and simpler detailing. This creates a distinction between the outward-facing public elevations and the more private internal environment, without compromising overall coherence. The courtyard elevations adopt a slightly more contemporary expression, reflecting their more urban and enclosed character.

Façade detailing is handled with a consistent level of refinement. Recessed window openings, darker brick accents, and the use of balconies contribute to depth and articulation, enhancing the visual quality of the building. The main entrance is clearly defined and emphasised within the composition, providing a strong sense of arrival and improving legibility.

The design demonstrates a clear understanding of its context, drawing on both the modern suburban character of recent developments and more traditional architectural references. This results in an approach that is neither overly historicist nor excessively contemporary but instead achieves a balanced and contextually responsive outcome.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the proposal achieves an effective balance between density, context, and design quality, and can be regarded as a positive contribution to the ongoing development of the Boorley Green area.

Notwithstanding this, there remain opportunities to further refine the scheme, particularly in relation to the articulation of the main frontage and the specification of materials. Addressing these aspects would strengthen the architectural expression and ensure a more robust and enduring design outcome.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Kind regards
Marta

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