

WINCHESTER & EASTLEIGH DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting: 23/04/2024

Site: Badnam Cottage, High Street, Bursledon, Southampton, SO31 8DJ

Proposal: Demolition of existing bungalow and replacement with 1No. 4-bedroom dwelling

Planning reference: F/24/97033

Design Review Panel Members sitting on the Panel: Scot Masker (Chair), Gail Kenton, Neil Armitage & Julian Livingstone

Council Officers in attendance: Rachael Morris & Gary Osmond

Item presented by: James Waluga (J W Architecture)

Declarations of Interest declared: None

Comments:

Whilst the supporting D&A Statement gave an indication of the size and architectural designs of neighbouring dwellings found in the locality, there was very little in terms of contextual analysis of both the site and its immediate surroundings. Information with regards to site topography, natural features and the quality of views available from the site were lacking and should be the starting point for any scheme. Much was made of the view to the meadow to the north of the site, indeed a number of prominent design features such as the first floor terrace and projecting box/picture window are located on the northern elevation to take advantage of this view. However, these features appear to be served and accessed via a bathroom and utility room. Why if this view is important is it not available to main habitable rooms.

This confusion between internal and external space is also evident elsewhere. Whilst the desire to look at attractive distance views is understood, what thought has there been to the garden space immediately surrounding the dwelling. Although a south facing terrace is shown and accessed from the main living space, there is equally useable garden to the east and north, both of which seem to have no meaningful connection with the internal functions of the dwelling. More thought as to how the dwelling is approached from the street and accessed from the rear should also be given. How will this journey look and feel.

Confusion continues with the elevations and form of the dwelling, which is somewhat schizophrenic in its design language. There is a clash between

contemporary and more traditional design features, such as the large glazed south facing wall, first floor terrace and north facing picture window against very traditional dormer projections. It is as if these elements are leftovers from previous versions of the scheme and as a result appear incongruous in the overall composition. Other features, such as the very low pitched roof make the dwelling appear uncomfortably squat and out of context with the character of the locality where dwellings have a much steeper roof pitch. The low roof pitch may be a result of the volume constraints of local policy, but this should not dictate the design and form of the dwelling to a detrimental extent. The site does form part of a conservation area where a higher standard of overall design should be achieved.

The use of render as the main facing material was questioned, as this can look very tired within a short space of time and can look somewhat institutional, whereas a brick or tile finish would be more akin to the rural character of the locality. A number of other design decisions were questioned, such as using the top of the large southern glazed window projection as a rain gutter. It was also highlighted that this window will result in considerable solar gain, which will require some form of physical shading such as brise-soleil. Equally, the northern elevation has a considerable quantity of glazing and could result in excessive heat loss. Passive control of heating and cooling the building will be important if the dwelling is to be sustainably efficient. Installation of PV panels and an air source heat pump was mentioned but not shown on any of the drawings, and it was questioned whether there would be sufficient space on the southern roof slope for PVs. These features will have a considerable impact upon the external appearance of the dwelling and need to be considered from an early stage. As does the construction of the dwelling, which as shown will have some structural difficulties to overcome.

Conclusion:

Whilst the policy limitations of a maximum increased volume are acknowledged, it should not be at the expense of good quality design, particularly in sensitive locations such as conservation areas. That currently proposed is considered to lack cohesion or sufficient architectural quality for the nature and importance of its context. Many of the design concerns seem to be a result of continuous changes to the design and a lack of an overall vision for the scheme. Presently, the design language is a confused mix of contemporary and traditional. Whilst both can work together, that proposed lacks a design harmony. It also appears to have been designed from the inside out, without sufficient consideration for how the internal arrangement will impact the external appearance of the building. Many elements and issues also appear to remain unresolved, which will impact the external appearance and form of the dwelling.

Even with the policy constraints, the site has scope for a good quality dwelling which takes advantage of the site's assets. Unfortunately that proposed fails to achieve this, possibly as a result of a number of self-imposed constraints such as working off the same building footprint and trying to accommodate all

sleeping accommodation at first floor level, whereas a larger single storey building may work better for the site and within the policy limitations.