

Urban Design Comments

F/24/97312 – Land Adjoining 4 Brookfield, Providence Hill

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

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Date: 20 May 2024

Proposal: Construction of Residential Care Community, comprising a 73-bed care home (Use Class C2) and 5 x 2-bedroom close care cottages (Use Class C3 age restricted), with associated access, internal access road, parking, landscaping and infrastructure.

Summary:

- Concerns raised about the scale and massing of the Care Home building.
 - The proposed roof form for the Care Home presents a confused design.
 - Lack of outdoor amenity space around the main building.
 - Unconvinced that proposing a projected wing to define and contain the south facing courtyard is the best approach.
 - A sunlight study is required to ensure that natural light penetrates all habitable rooms.
 - More consideration should be given to the Cottages' built form and design.
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These comments are made in relation to the plans and supporting information dated 29 April 2024 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Heritage, Landscape, Tree and Ecology Officers.

1. Site Context

Landscape

The site lies in open countryside within a Local Gap. The northern boundary is well treed and covered by a blanket Tree Preservation Order that forms an important backdrop to the site and which is prominent in the important view from Providence Hill. To the north east of the site is a SINC. The southern boundary abuts Providence Hill and is marked by well established tree and shrub planting that provide good screening to the site.

A footpath runs from the north west corner of the site along the site's northern boundary to Goslings Turning creating a useful link. In addition, Providence Hill is a bus route and there are bus stops within easy walking distance of the site.

Built Heritage

The site lies outside, but on the southern boundary of, the Bursledon Windmill Conservation Area (CA). [Bursledon Windmill](#) itself is Listed Grade II* and the adjacent [Granary](#) is Listed Grade II. An important view of the Windmill exists from Providence Hill adjacent to 4 Brookfield, as shown in the *Bursledon Windmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals SPD* (BWCAAMP). This view needs to be preserved and enhanced.

Planning Policy

The Site is covered by Policy BU1 in the emerging Local Plan. This Policy states that the site is allocated for “... *approximately 19 dwellings...*” provided that, amongst other things, “*the development provides a high-quality landscaped setting which preserves or enhances the special interest, character and appearance of the adjoining Bursledon Windmill Conservation Area and safeguards the setting of the listed windmill.*”

Existing Built Form

Directly to the north of the site is a recent residential development at Goslings Turning that has significantly affected the setting of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. This development has however had regard to the important view identified in the BWCAAMP and a well overlooked area of Public Open Space has been created to accommodate this.

To the southeast are detached dwellings forming ribbon development along Providence Hill, and beyond these another contemporary residential development called Oakeley Vale.

On the southern side of Providence Hill is the well-established built up area of Lowford, which has now merged with Bursledon following the significant expansion of the village over the past 50+ years. Development is generally of modest two-storey domestic scale.

2. External Layout, Mass and Scale

The proposal has positively evolved to address some of the concerns raised on the previous comments; however, since pre-app stage that concerns were raised regarding the size and mass of the building. It is important to ensure that the proposed Care Home integrates well within the urban grain of the surrounding area.

It is disappointing to find out that the number of rooms of the proposed building slightly increased when compared with the previous iterations at pre-app stage (65 to 73 rooms). Furthermore, we are still unconvinced that proposing a projected wing to define and contain the south facing courtyard is the best approach as it adds bulk to the built form, increases visual impact on adjacent neighbours whilst reducing the amount of outdoor amenity space proposed where it is much needed – the southern corner.

Also, the south facing courtyard is now presented as a sunken courtyard to enable more rooms to be proposed at the lower ground floor level. This is considered to be the best place to provide a usable outdoor amenity space in terms of solar orientation. As it stands it is felt that there is a missed opportunity to propose a well-designed landscape led external space where the land could be model on a more natural and organic way. The proportions of the courtyard as well as the ratio between the height and the width of this space seems claustrophobic and could use some design improvement.

A shadow analysis should be carried out in order to demonstrate that adequate level of daylight and sunlight are received in the proposed outdoor spaces as well as to ensure that natural light penetrates all habitable rooms. There are concerns that the northern area to the proposed 4-storey building and all rooms facing exclusively north, particularly those on the lower floors, would be overshadowed most of the time as they will not receive much if any sunlight. Furthermore, it is anticipated that all rooms facing the sunken courtyard at lower ground floor level will suffer from the same problem.

The roof form of the Care Home presents too much variation resulting in a confuse scheme (i.e. elevations and roof plan). It would be encouraged to rationalise the form given the fact that the roof will be highly visible from the street. It's important to ensure that an excessive number of variations in roof height and form are not employed in a single building as this often results in a discordant composition, which will usually have a detrimental visual impact on the surrounding area.

Furthermore, it is felt that the Cottages' built form also requires some rationalisation particularly in what respects to the dormer's design and variation of the eaves' height.

It is acknowledged that some elevations have full sized windows to potentially overcome natural light issues; however, concerns are raised about how natural ventilation will be sorted on those rooms facing exclusively one side. Air flow through windows in single aspect rooms tends to be lower as there is no cross-ventilation, and it will be even worst if they are not meant to be open.

I agree with the landscape officer regarding the insufficient turning space of some of the parking areas. Also, it is considered a missed opportunity not proposing green roofs on the scheme.

Lastly, proposing a lift to allow for the collection of the bins seems to be an expensive solution and thought afterwards.

3. Sustainability

Further, 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
- Consider installation of photovoltaics
- Introduce *Passivhaus* and *Lifetime Homes* approaches to building design and construction
- 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 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
- Incorporate permeable surfaces and SUDS in accordance with advice from Landscape and Ecology Officers
- Orient buildings to maximise solar gain and provide natural surveillance of surrounding streets and spaces to encourage active travel
- Ensure habitable rooms enjoy dual aspect to maximise solar gain, improve ventilation and maximise overlooking of surrounding streets and spaces