

WINCHESTER & EASTLEIGH DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting: 20/02/2024

Site: Boundary Lakes Golf Clubhouse, Moorhill Road, Southampton, S030 3XH

Proposal: Erection of golf course clubhouse and ancillary facilities, car parking area, together with internal access roads, landscaping, and SuDs

Planning reference: F/23/96573

Design Review Panel Members sitting on the Panel: Scot Masker (Chair), Jo DeSyllas, Jeremy Tyrrell & David Gregory

Council Officers in attendance: Gary Osmond

Item presented by: Bo Thamwiset (Architect), Zoe Curran (Planning Agent), Mar Russell & Barry Holmes (Applicants)

Declarations of Interest declared: None

Comments:

The site sits on an elevated position with extensive north-east views of the golf course and much further afield towards the South Downs. The need and desire to take advantage of this view is understood but must be balanced with the orientation of the building and the ability to take advantage of the position of the sun. Where possible scope to pull south-western light into the building should be explored. This is especially so for spaces such as the restaurant/bar area. As presented the scheme does not achieve this, with the only element able to utilise afternoon/evening sun being the pro-shop, with its large glazed gables. However, this could result in overheating of the space. Equally, the large glazed elevation to the north-east, whilst taking advantage of the view, will lose substantial amounts of internal heat. As such, this space will very likely need to be airconditioned to provide a comfortable temperature, which may cause difficulties in being able to meet the sustainability levels required.

A number of concerns were raised in relation to the internal arrangement of the building, both from a user's point of view but also for servicing of the building. The 'journey' of someone coming to play a round of golf was discussed during the presentation, i.e. arrival, signing-in, getting changed, pulling their trolley through to the course. Then once they had finished their round, perhaps collecting a drink, getting changed and then sitting down at the bar for a bite to eat. When playing this journey through based on the

layout currently proposed, it involves various trips into and out of the building, through the car park and up and down stairs. Whilst it is not necessary to make this journey as efficient as possible, it should at least be an obvious and logical experience.

Equally, important spaces such as the entrance foyer and bar/restaurant should be pleasant spaces. The foyer is little more than a large landing space to access the changing rooms, with no obvious visual connection with the bar and no physical connection to the pro shop. Although this space at least takes advantage of natural light, whereas the restaurant is predominately buried underground. Whilst it is glazed along the north-east elevation, very little natural light will be able to penetrate into the space, making it dark and requiring artificial lighting for the vast majority of the day. The external terrace to which the restaurant opens onto is very mean in terms of its width and will receive little sunlight, being overshadowed by the building for most of the day. Conversely, the terrace at the upper level, which has the best views and is more generous in size cannot be accessed by general users, only through the pro-shop.

In terms of more practical issues of servicing, etc, it was questioned whether the size of the kitchen and bar was sufficiently large enough to cater for a restaurant of the scale proposed. The bar area was also rather constrained and there is likely to be some conflict between those trying to use the bar and others the main stairs. Servicing of the building via the golf course terrace was also considered to be poor and unnecessary and would do little to heighten the experience of club users.

Once examined in detail, the proposals do not appear to address how the building is experienced by its users and staff, with many of the issues being a result of stacking the building in the manner proposed which is neither logical or practical. This should be a special place for club members and have some degree of theatre, something the present scheme lacks.

A thorough and wider analysis of the site is also lacking. Such a scheme should form part of the landscape and be led by an analysis of orientation, topography, tree lines, and view towards as well as from the site. Given the potential space available, an assessment of a more engaged position for the building that may better be able to address arrival, orientation and solar concerns could be explored. Based on the presentation, this does not appear to have been undertaken. Neither does it appear sufficient thought as to the building's sustainability credentials has been given. Such issues need to be considered from the beginning of the design process, as layout, structure and materials play a substantial part in the efficiency of the building and the extent of plant and servicing required.

Whilst there was no objection in principle to the proposed materials and finishes, albeit these were not overly clear, there did not appear to be a clear rationale for the design approach taken. Nor did it appear that sufficient thought as to the immediate setting of the building had been undertaken, with

very minimal soft landscaping and an overly large, unrelieved and regimented car park dominating the building's frontage.

In conclusion, the design and layout of that proposed fails to adequately take into account the needs of the building and those using it. Its internal and external layout lacks hierarchy and given its function and location; the proposals miss an opportunity to create a sense of theatre. It also lacks any sense of immediate or wider landscape setting, to which the building needs to provide a positive contribution. Sites such as this are not readily available and therefore deserve a building of a fitting design quality, not only for those using it but also for the wider character of the landscape.