

Urban Design Comments:

F/24/97945 – Land adjacent to Oak Cottage, Winchester Road

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

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Planning Officer: Liz Harrison

Date: 30 August 2024

Proposal: Erection of 52 retirement living apartments with associated communal facilities and car parking; the erection of a pair of detached dwellings; improved vehicular access and new pedestrian access to Winchester Road.

Summary:

- No objection in principle to the principle of development.
 - Successfully balance between built form, parking and landscape suggests that the scheme sits comfortably within the site.
 - Alternative arrangements should be explored to reduce the number of the north facing apartments.
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These comments are made in relation to the plans dated 1 and 9 August 2024 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Landscape, Tree and Ecology Officers.

1. Site Context

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.

2. Site Access, External Spaces and External Layout

Site Access

The existing site access is to be retained. The proposed street scene towards Winchester Road shows a symmetric building with a suitable framed view for those approaching the site from the main entrance.

It is welcomed that the building is significantly set back from the road respecting the existing building line and providing enough space to reinforce the planting buffer.

External Layout

The design approach has sought to create separate forms to mimic the residential scale with recessed and subservient links (parts of the building) in order to break up the visual bulk and mass of the building. This is a reasonable approach to accommodate the type and scale of the development proposed for the site. In terms of architectural language, the proposal presents traditional forms outwards, and a significant element of flat roof concealed by pitches with a variety of modern detailing facing inwards.

It is acknowledged that the building footprint is considerably large; however, the way it is designed, as a series of houses, it is considered to be appropriate and in line with the character of the surrounding area.

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The position of, at least, ten apartments exclusive facing north is undesirable as these spaces would not receive much if any sunlight, particularly for those on the lower floors. Also, there are concerns that the North-Western corner of the building is too close to existing boundary trees. Therefore, a redesign to pull the building further away from the boundary whilst reducing the number of north facing apartments should be explored.

It is welcomed that the elevational treatment and orientation of the detached dwellings are now following the central building as this helps to tie the whole development together and give some consistency.

External Spaces

The outdoor private amenity space is fundamental part of all developments both in supporting residents' wellbeing and the ecology and biodiversity of the local area as such new developments must have adequate amount of external space. This can be provided at ground floor level as a community garden and as balconies at the upper floors.

It is welcomed that the landscape strategy identifies different uses for each area and is designed to encourage interaction amongst residents to create a strong sense of community. I will defer to the Landscape Officer to comment on this matter.

The pedestrian link to the adjacent Boorley Gardens development is supported.

The movement around the site and the internal circulation is dictated by the location of the entrance, leading to a strong sense of arrival.

Parking and Servicing

It seems to be of a good approach to propose a variety of parking areas located close to the part of the building that they serve, without dominating the site or intruding too far into the more peaceful parts of the site away from the road.

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

It is welcomed that charging points for electric vehicles are being considered at this stage.

3. Height, Form, Scale & Mass

No objections in principle.

4. External Appearance & Materials

It is encouraged to develop a palette of materials that reflects local distinctiveness without having to slavishly copy the materials of the surrounding area and avoiding using too many materials on a single building. All materials proposed should be durable and of high quality.

It is unclear from the drawings what type of roof material is being proposed. It will be encouraged to propose plain clay tiles as they are natural, more noble and they weather naturally, in keeping with other commonly used walling materials such as clay bricks, adding a beautiful finishing touch to the roof of any building.

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Also, using render on north elevations, might be too risky in terms of how well it will weather, particularly at ground floor level and/or close to trees. It would be encouraged to replace it with e.g. a painted brick which would tie in better with what has been used on the adjacent Boorley Gardens development.

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 given the significant growth occurring in this area
- Provide minimum parking provision
- Consider installation of photovoltaics
- Introduce *Passivhaus* and *Lifetime Homes* approaches to building design and construction
- Consider creating provision for shared car club vehicles to reduce overall parking requirements
- 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
- 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