

Urban Design Comments

Q/23/96011 – Land West of Allbrook Way

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

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Proposal: Reserved matters relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the proposed development pursuant to outline permission O/19/86980 for the construction of 49 no residential dwellings.

Summary:

- Opportunities to reduce the amount of hardstanding being generated by the scheme should be further investigated, particularly on the northern part of the site.
 - On the central green corridor, other brick wall options should be explored to increase active frontage and provide more natural surveillance.
 - More clarification is needed on the material plan (roof material and timber cladding).
 - Poor feedback during the public consultation.
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These comments are made in relation to the plans dated 22 and 23 October 2024 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Landscape, Ecology and Tree Officers.

1. Site Context & Constraints

The site lies close to the northern boundary of the Borough, and it is bounded to the north and east by Allbrook Way, a strategic route providing access to the M3. To the south is the residential area of Boyatt Wood, and to the west is the Broom Hill Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Being on the edge of the built-up area, the site has an informal, rural feel, and the proximity to the SINC and mature boundary screening contributes positively to the verdant nature of the area. Landscape is a defining feature, with long views towards Bishopstoke contributing positively to the character of the area. A north-south public right of way (PRoW) cuts through the western part of the site, linking Knowle Hill to Boyatt Lane. Woodside Avenue and Twyford Road provide bus links to Eastleigh, Winchester and Bishop's Waltham.

The site is covered by Policy AL2 - Land West of Allbrook Way in the emerging Local Plan. This Policy states that the site is allocated for "... up to 45 dwellings..." provided that, amongst other things, the development provides "an appropriate landscape scheme; provision of pedestrian and cycle links, both within the site and to connect with the surrounding area and implementation of appropriate measures to mitigate any adverse air quality and/or noise impacts arising from the proximity of the M3 Motorway to the west and/or Allbrook Way to the east."

Given the sensitivity of the site context, the building layout needs to respond to the landscape, and to the setting of the TPO trees, while preserving and enhancing the important views. The layout therefore needs to be evolved as part of an iterative and multidisciplinary design process, which is fundamental to high quality placemaking. In particular, given site topography and the importance of views, it needs to be demonstrated how new built form can sit subserviently within the landscape and avoid detrimental impact on the skyline.

2. General comments on the amended Site Layout

It is a shame that no effort was made to reduce the hard paving proposed around Buildings 47 – 49 in order to provide a scheme that balances built form, landscape and provision for vehicles.

Opportunities to reduce the amount of hardstanding being generated by the scheme should be further investigated. Identify how the external spaces will be used to design them as attractive and functional outdoor areas.

Central Green Corridor

A visualisation of the area was submitted to help understand how the architect envisages the place and how well the proposed dwellings address the open space with active frontages.

It was previously mentioned that all dwellings around this area should address directly the open space independently of the existing level challenges. The submitted design is a compromised solution.

It's welcomed that Plot 15 (PID) has openings at first and ground floor level. However, there is a significant amount of side brick walls facing the open space which won't contribute much towards an active frontage. It would be encouraged to explore more permeable solutions such as brick walls with railings on top or proposing some architectural interest on these walls (e.g. projected brick).

The relocation of the visitor parking space is welcomed.

External Appearance and Materials

Street scenes and a material plan were submitted within this application.

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

Furthermore, using timber cladding on some fragments of the walls seems random and not strong enough as a gesture. Streetscene BB shows on Plots 33, 13 and 14, the timber cladding on a larger surface - the whole first floor level, which is considered far more successful.

More consideration on this matter will be needed as we would like to see dwellings to reflect the woodland edge and local context.

Engagement with Community

The Planning Statement document, on page 16, shows the consultation website responses as not being very positive.

One of the questions, mentioned that dwellings will be constructed using natural timber cladding. Is this compliant with Building Regulations – Part B (risk of fire spread)? If not, why is being mentioned on the public consultation questionnaire?