

Urban Design Comments

F/24/98678 – Land East of Chickenhall Lane, Eastleigh, SO50 6AF

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

Urban Design Officer: Marta Oliveira

Planning Officer: Rebecca Altman

Date: 21 January 2025

Proposal: Proposed 70-bed Care Home, associated parking, landscaping, access, suds drainage, and other associated works.

Summary:

- The site is located outside the urban edge within the countryside and a settlement gap.
 - Countryside location where there is a presumption against new development.
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These comments are made in relation to the plans dated 24 December 2024 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Landscape Officer.

1. Site Context & Constraints

The site lies between Barton Park/Deacon's Industrial Estate and Barton River and is located outside the urban edge within the countryside and a settlement gap.

Given the location of the site, there is an in-principle objection to this form of development.

The following comments are made on the assumption that suitable justification can be made for a departure from planning policy.

The vehicular access is from Chickenhall Lane and the proposed building was positioned away from the main road junction on Bishopstoke Road to potentially reduce the effect of noise from the road traffic and maintaining the gap in the landscape.

Currently, the main vehicular entrance to the industrial estate is through this junction and Chickenhall Lane, being the proposed site along the eastern side of road. Therefore, noise will always be a concern to this site.

It is questioned whether this is the best location, next to an Industrial Estate, for such a use, and whether a care home is the most appropriate type of development to be positioned next to a busy roundabout, and two noisy roads - Bishopstoke Road/ Chickenhall Lane.

If we add to this, the fact that the site is in the countryside and within a settlement gap, it will be hard to support any development on this site in the near future.

2. Layout, Height, External Spaces and Parking

It is mentioned on the applicant's Design and Access Statement that the building footprint slightly increased, when compared with the proposal submitted at pre-app stage, due to an internal reorganisation to suit the required programme over 3 storeys instead of the previous 4. An overlay of both proposals should be presented to better understand the differences between them.

Concerns were raised at pre-application stage about the proposed large footprint and how much is taken from the site leaving too little for landscape and outdoor private amenity.

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The outdoor private amenity is a 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 or as a balcony at the upper floors.

There are two external spaces proposed on site; one of them, is facing north and surrounded by existing mature trees and the other, is adjacent to Chickenhall Lane. These locations raise concerns in terms of potential shadowing and challenges of noise and pollution from the busy road.

A shadow analysis of the amenity space should be carried out in order to demonstrate that adequate levels of daylight and sunlight are received in the proposed outdoor space as well as to ensure that natural light is penetrating in all habitable rooms.

The external spaces are important in residential facilities and should be an important driver in the design development. The applicant is encouraged to explore designs that create peaceful, protected courtyards.

It is felt that there isn't enough quality amenity space around the building for future occupants to enjoy. It is recommended to retain a reasonable amount of external space, even if that means that considerations should be taken to reduce the number of rooms. The external spaces should be designed to encourage interaction amongst the residents and create a sense of community.

Furthermore, the position of, at least, fourteen rooms exclusive facing north is undesirable as these spaces would not receive much if any sunlight, particularly for those on the lower floors. The same principle applies to north facing balconies as they won't provide quality outdoor amenity space. Therefore, a redesign to reduce the number of north facing apartments should be explored.

The revised scale of the building, which sought to reduce the height of the building from 4 to 3 storeys, is welcomed; however, the design approach of having a flat roof with a continuous parapet wall and a few extruded volumes on a lower level make it visually bulky and with an institutional feeling. It is felt that the roof form does not make a positive contribution to the appearance of the overall design as it does not sensitively relate to the context nor helps to soften the building.

More opportunities to break up the visual bulk and mass of the building should be explored such as, for example, creating separate built forms to mimic a residential scale with recessed and subservient links to interconnect spaces.

The proposal should demonstrate that the proposed layout does not diminish and, preferably, enhances the character of the area.

Therefore, whatever scheme is proposed for this site, it would need to contribute towards a positive relationship with the surrounding area and its landscape character.

Parking

The car parking is proposed on the northern and western part of the site which is welcomed; however, the courtyard parking design should be landscape-led, responding to the character of the place; it should be well-integrated, with good landscape treatment, be overlooked and avoid a public realm dominated by cars and hard standing.

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3. Materials and Detailing

No objections in principle to the proposed material palette shown on page 60 of the DAS.

I agree with the Heritage Consultant about the importance of using the projecting brick coursing detail to alleviate any feeling of blandness and that the dark metal cladding helps to define and make the entrance more legible.

However, before discussing about materials, it is important to agree on the built form to break up the visual bulk and mass of the building as mentioned above. The choice of materials should reinforce the overall design concept and take account of the context of the site.

The external finishing materials and detailing are very important from an urban design perspective. These should be durable and of high quality.

Further details/ samples of materials are needed.

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
- Provide minimum parking provision and a range of parking solutions
- 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
- Consider installation of photovoltaics
- Introduce *Passivhaus* and/or *Lifetime Homes* approaches to building design and construction
- Reduce levels of CO₂ emissions via energy efficiency and choice of materials
- Incorporate efficient mains water consumption measures
- Orient buildings to maximise solar gain and provide natural surveillance of surrounding streets and spaces to encourage active travel
- Include measures to provide outdoor shade and minimise indoor heating
- Ensure habitable rooms enjoy dual aspect to maximise solar gain, improve ventilation and maximise overlooking of surrounding streets and spaces