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Our reference: Chickenhall Lane / 3765 / 23.04.25 / AP

Dear Martin

Technical Note

Planning Application Reference F/24/99878, Land East of Chickenhall Lane – Overshadowing of North – Facing Accommodation.

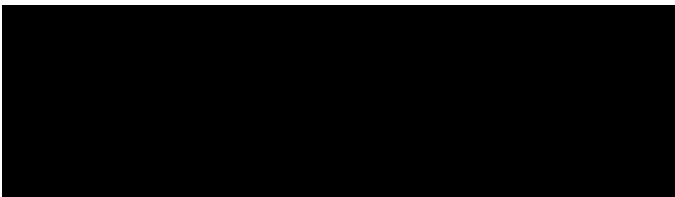
Further to the concerns raised by the planning officer and design review panel regarding potential overshadowing of the north-facing accommodation, we have prepared the following rebuttal, setting out our reasoning for the preferred scheme design.

- In our experience operators prefer to have a range of bedroom options available. The variation between levels of the building, orientation, specification, placement within the floor plan (proximity to a communal lounge, or not, for example) and aspects are all elements which can combine to offer this range. When it comes to orientation, operators expect that some rooms will face towards north and also know that some residents prefer this.
- North-facing windows can allow for a better and more stable quality of light, which has been commonly acknowledged by artists and architects throughout time.
- New regulations and the way that care homes are modelled for energy consumption and heat conservation mean that northern windows can be more easily accommodated within a care home. This orientation can allow for larger openings, without the risk of overheating and mechanical cooling that comes with this should all windows be on the southern orientation. This also assists with the recent changes to the ventilation requirements under the Building Regulations.
- Whilst we of course acknowledge the importance of natural light and in places direct sunlight entering the building, for a positive environment and the wellbeing of residents and staff, it is critical we believe to take into account the total accommodation offered to residents. Choice of day space between active and quiet, sun and shade is important and that is what is provided here. Operators prefer to have this variation and acknowledge that, especially in summer, shaded communal rooms and outdoor terraces are just as important an amenity as those fully in the sun.

- Residents are actively encouraged to leave their bedrooms to engage in activities within the home limiting time spent within their bedrooms.
- Where we have amenity areas, including terraces, to the north these spaces will allow residents access to the outside at the peak heat of the day within a shaded north facing garden complimenting the southern gardens and terraces that could present a danger to residents burning during summer months.
- Outlook and access to light is therefore appropriately delivered through the provision of not only the bedroom accommodation but the range of other facilities present. The total living conditions need to be assessed as a whole.
- In this instance we must also acknowledge that the north-facing bedrooms have the best prospect in terms of overlooking the river area and trees. Connecting residents with nature and the calming qualities of trees and water. Again, this is a balance between various elements which results in rooms of varying character which appeals greatly to care operators.
- The general market view maintains that the sweet spot in terms of a design for a new care home is a home with between 70 and 80 bedrooms. In homes of this size, and without being able to dictate the shape and orientation of any chosen site, it is inevitable that a proportion - in the range of 25%, of bedrooms will be in the NW to NE-facing zone.
- As a practice operating since 2013 and specialising in the care sector, we have completed and handed over in excess of 60 new build care homes (not including extensions and refurbs) providing over 4,000 care beds to the sector. A large percentage of these homes have been constructed with north-facing bedrooms. At this year's Healthcare Design awards, we have had 16 of our homes reaching the finals of which 4 were shortlisted and with 2 worthy winners. This shows the quality of the homes we design, with them being accepted by peers as being of exceptional design quality in their class.
- In addition, we have also received comments from members supporting the design of the care home presented in our application, with compliments on the design quality of the elevations and layout.

I trust this is of assistance. Please contact me should you require anything further.

Yours sincerely



Pp Rob McCartney on behalf for Andy Plaice
On behalf of Harris Irwin Architects