

Urban Design Comments

O/25/99506 – Navigator Quarter, Eastleigh, SO18 2NL

From: Urban & Landscape Design Team to Development Management

Urban Design Officer: Marta Oliveira

Planning Officer: Liz Harrison

Date: 8 August 2025

Proposal: Hybrid Planning Application - Outline application for development of the land adjacent to Southampton Airport to provide employment floorspace of up to 92,000 sqm (GIA) within Use Classes E(g) (ii & iii), B2 and B8 with ancillary offices and areas for service yards, car parking, landscaping, ancillary buildings and associated activities, and access from Wide Lane (all matters reserved except for access). Full planning application for initial infrastructure works and construction of new access road including site levelling and other engineering works. (EIA development)

Summary:

- The site is located on the southern edge of Eastleigh settlement boundary.
- The principle of developing the site for employment development is acceptable.
- The parameter plan should show height variation where appropriate.
- The parameter plan should show pedestrian and cycle accesses/ routes on both plots (North/ South) of the site in order to secure permeability and interconnection.
- A Design Code for the whole area should be produce to secure an overall consistency along the street scenes and to ensure that they relate to each other either in terms of height, form, materials or/ and building line.

These comments are made in relation to the DAS and plans dated 28 May 2025 and should be read in conjunction with comments from the Landscape and Ecology Officers and Highways specialist.

1. Site Context & Constraints

The site lies on the southern edge of Eastleigh settlement boundary, being the Southern Plot within Southampton Airport boundary. To the eastern boundary of the site, is the River Itchen Valley. The valley is especially important as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Directly to the north of the site is the train depot and a residential area.

The proposal should minimise any significantly changes to the boundaries unless there are opportunities to enhance the area with views and pedestrian links from the open space across to the surrounding area. This will require identifying appropriate locations along the eastern boundary and providing landscape details.

Given the sensitivity of the site context, adjacent to the countryside, the building layout needs to respond to the landscape. The layout therefore needs to be evolved as part of an iterative and multidisciplinary design process, which is fundamental to high quality placemaking.

The following comments are made on the assumption that any impact on the SSSI, on the SAC and wider countryside setting can be suitably mitigated to the satisfaction of the Ecology and Landscape Officers.

Urban Design Comments

O/25/99506 – Navigator Quarter, Eastleigh, SO18 2NL

The landscape sections should show the maximum ridge height of the proposed development to better understand the scale of the proposal. Also, section E - should extend up to the terraced houses of Campbell Road so that the proposed levels can be assessed in the wider context.

2. Streets & Layout

Site Access & New Road

The proposal includes a new road from Mitchell Way and two new accesses into the site. It is for Highways colleagues to comment on the technicalities of whether the proposed site access is suitable in highway terms.

Layout, Form, scale & Mass

An illustrative site layout was submitted in which is established principles for the disposition of the employment units for the whole site.

In terms of layout, the site plan indicates an approach based on a series of employment units with variety of sizes for potential different type of classes - B2, B8 or E. In theory, the design principle works well and creates a sense of place where the buildings frontage creates a clear, direct and positive relationship with the public realm, such as the open space or the ecologic area.

However, further investigation of its overall form and sitting could be helpful in justifying its current form and reinforcing that large blocks are bulky and could be divided into smaller buildings and plot sizes.

More alternative massing studies should be explored to ensure that the prevalent character of the surrounding area is maintained and enhanced.

It is considered that along the southern boundary, facing the countryside, a finer grain would be more sympathetic and appropriate with the local context whilst allowing views into the countryside from those buildings on the second line of streetscene. Shorter units mean more permeability and higher level of visibility.

If the Council are minded to approve this Outline Application, it is recommended that a condition is imposed which requires a Design Code for the whole area to secure an overall consistency along the street scenes and buildings and to ensure that they relate to each other either in terms of height, form, materials or/ and building line.

Public Ream

The public realm provides a setting for all buildings and includes all parts of the urban environment that the public can experience or access, such as public spaces and in some cases, semi-public spaces. A high-quality public realm space can provide many benefits to a development, including enhancing the building's setting, encouraging active use of space to support personal safety within the built environment, and creating a space for socialising and enjoyment.

In terms of public spaces, these could be communal areas for site workers and visitors to socialise and relax within a safe, relaxed environment. Sitting areas should be considered, potentially near the pond.

Urban Design Comments

O/25/99506 – Navigator Quarter, Eastleigh, SO18 2NL

Consideration needs to be given to how the space is activated across the day, how it is maintained and whether it delineates sufficiently areas for pedestrian and vehicles.

Also, 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.

The parameter plan should indicate pedestrian and cycle links to make sure certain connectivity does occur.

The following recommendation should be considered at reserved matters stage:

- Explore how the space can be treated to create opportunities for different users by enriching personal experience and promote social and economic interaction. As well as, highlighting prominent features on the walkable streets and/ or defining sitting areas with fixed (or removable) furniture.

3. Height

The site overlaps with the Airport Public Safety Zone where height restrictions are imposed. The Parameter Plan indicates a maximum building heights (to ridge) of 21.8m which is fairly high.

A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was submitted and should inform the Parameter Plans in terms of where the sensitive places are located.

It's acknowledged in the LVIA report that there are places that will be impacted by the development. One way to mitigate that is to lower the height of the buildings at those places or step down towards the sensitive bits.

Views 7 and 8, presented on the LVIA, show a building breaching the tree line meaning that the proposal will be visible from the water meadows access point from Itchen Valley Country Park and from Itchen Navigation public footpath. Also, views 11a and 11b, which are close views taken at the end of Cambell Road, on the adjacent neighbourhood next to the northern plot, show the proposed development extending above the existing vegetation. Furthermore, on the western boundary of the southern plot there will be building height restriction towards the runway of Southampton Airport.

It is acknowledged that the proposed site layout establishes a setback of units 14, 15 and 16 from the western boundary, which is welcome, subject to Airport consultation.

The maximum ridge height indicated on the parameter plan does not necessary imply the desired height variation recommended by us and informed by the LVIA.

4. External Appearance & Materials

In terms of design, it is essential that all new buildings appear as high-quality buildings in their own right and do not stand out as unattractive monolithic blocks. Due to the bulk and expansive elevations of larger buildings, it is often necessary break-up elevations wherever possible, to create more architectural interest and style and prevent prolonged street scenes (and wider views) dominated by a continuous blank and uninteresting elevation.

Urban Design Comments

O/25/99506 – Navigator Quarter, Eastleigh, SO18 2NL

At this stage, it has only been submitted a Parameter Plan and a series of precedent images of how it could look like.

If the Council are minded to approve this Outline Application, it is recommended that at reserved matters stage, the design should be very carefully considered to minimize the bulkiness and mass of the building throughout elevational treatment and choice of materials.

To provide further detailed design comments, more information would need to be submitted such as:

- Provide further information and studies to examine the context to appropriately guide the proposal's articulation and elevational treatment. These studies should specifically assist in refining the architecture style proposed; the solid to void ratio and pattern; the roof form and ridges' heights to respond appropriately to the local character. Consider as well providing a wider site plan showing the surrounding buildings and open spaces.
- Elevation drawings to show the relationship between the proposal and the surrounding area and how the external treatment relates and enhances the character of the place by using appropriate features and materials.
- Plans to include the external spaces and clarifying how they will be treated and used.
- Also, submitting visualisations will help to clarify how the scheme relates to its setting, namely through close views. A careful consideration from specific viewpoints towards the building could ensure that the development integrates well within its setting.

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
- Provide minimum parking provision and a range of parking solutions
- Provide charging points for electric vehicles, Ebikes and other forms of micro-mobility within 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
- Incorporate permeable surfaces and multi-functional SuDS in accordance with advice from Landscape and Ecology Officers
- Consider installation of photovoltaics
- 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