

The Orchard 5 West Gate Mews – Urban Design Comments (dated: 10/02/2026)

Having reviewed the revised proposals against the comments made on the earlier scheme (Pre-app comments dated:02/18/2025), it is considered that the fundamental concerns remain largely unresolved.

In particular, it is noted that the overall quantum of development remains unchanged, with eight dwellings still proposed on the site. As previously highlighted, this level of development continues to feel excessive in relation to the site's constraints, resulting in a scheme that appears tightly arranged and overly intensive. The revised layout does not sufficiently introduce the sense of spatial relief that would be expected to support a high-quality residential environment.

As a consequence, the amount and usability of private outdoor amenity space across the scheme remains a key concern. Whilst some plots benefit from modest improvements, the overall provision still appears constrained and does not reflect the character of development in the surrounding area, where more generous gardens and spacing between buildings are a defining feature. This continued lack of adequate private amenity space raises concerns in relation to future residents' wellbeing, long-term liveability, and alignment with good design principles.

The revised proposals also continue to rely on the removal of a number of existing trees, including mature specimens, to accommodate the proposed layout. It is considered that the level of tree loss remains disproportionate and undermines opportunities to retain and integrate meaningful green infrastructure within the scheme. A reduction in unit numbers would offer greater scope to retain existing trees, introduce more substantial areas of soft landscaping, and strengthen the ecological and visual contribution of the site.

Specific concerns previously raised in relation to Units 1 and 2 also remain relevant. Unit 1 continues to appear constrained between neighbouring dwellings, with limited separation distances and the loss of existing vegetation exacerbating issues of overlooking, overbearing impact, and loss of privacy for adjoining properties. While the amended siting of Unit 2 represents a marginal improvement, there remain concerns regarding its relationship with neighbouring land and the potential for adverse impacts in terms of outlook and daylight.

Similarly, the relationship between the existing main dwelling on site and the proposed new development remains problematic. The proximity of new units on both sides significantly reduces its sense of breathing space and privacy, particularly following the removal of established boundary vegetation.

In terms of layout efficiency, concerns remain regarding the parking arrangement for Units 6, 7 and 8, with rear garden depths still appearing limited. Opportunities to reposition parking and visitor spaces to improve garden sizes and boundary setbacks do not appear to have been fully explored. The siting of Unit 6 close to the boundary also continues to raise concerns.

It is acknowledged that there are no objections in principle to the proposed building heights, which remain broadly consistent with the previous scheme. However, height alone does not mitigate the cumulative impact of density, spacing, and landscape loss.

The amendments to Unit 1 and Unit 2, in terms of built form and roof design, appear to increase bulk and overlooking, which does not respect the scale, privacy, or amenity of adjacent neighbours. The proposed changes are inconsistent with the surrounding context and could result in adverse impacts, particularly through overshadowing, visual intrusion, and loss of neighbourhood character.

Finally, as with the earlier submission, the revised pack does not clearly set out any sustainability or environmental measures. Given current policy expectations, further information is required to demonstrate how the development will address energy efficiency, water use, sustainable drainage, biodiversity enhancement, electric vehicle and cycle charging, and broader climate resilience measures.

Conclusion

In summary, while the revised drawings show a degree of evolution from the previous proposal, they do not adequately address the core concerns previously identified. It remains strongly encouraged that an alternative layout with a reduced number of dwellings is explored. Such an approach would allow for improved spacing between buildings, more generous and usable private amenity space, greater retention of existing trees, and a stronger landscape-led design. This would result in a more balanced scheme that better reconciles built form, parking, and landscape, and avoids the perception of overdevelopment of the site.