

From: Lyster, Dominic

Sent: 26 October 2018 15:24

To: Wright, Richard <RWright@Fareham.Gov.UK>; Development Management <devcontrol@fareham.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Fareham Borough Council - Consultation: Land to the South of Romsey Avenue

P/18/1073/FP

Land to the South of Romsey Avenue Fareham

Hybrid planning application for residential development of 225 dwellings and bird conservation area, seeking full planning permission for 58 dwellings and outline planning permission for 167 dwellings with all matters reserved except for access

Urban Design Consultation

The following assessment relates to urban design only and are not prejudice to the consideration of the principle of development in this countryside location and issues relating to the 5 year housing land supply.

Setting aside the principle of development in the countryside and 5 year housing land supply, there are two key policy areas relating to design that need to be satisfied:

- Core Strategy Policy (CS14) that seeks to protect the landscape character and the setting of settlements outside of the built-up areas.
- Core Strategy Policy (CS17) seeks high quality design and specifically that development responds positively to and be respectful of the key characteristics of an area including landscape, scale, form, spaciousness.

Policy requirements set out in the recently published National Planning Policy Framework, concerning 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' (Ch 12) should also be taken into account.

This application is a mix of full details and outline with access only for consideration.

Landscape character and the setting of settlements

The site comprises a large open arable field to the south of Romsey Avenue and the existing built up area of Portchester. It is characterised by its openness and flat coastal plain topography. It is largely enclosed by hedge/woodland belt vegetation to the eastern, western and southern boundaries. The northern boundary comprises the rear gardens and variable boundary treatments of early-mid 20th Century semi-detached two storey dwellings and chalet bungalows. There are two long views to Cams Lake (Portsmouth harbour) from the access road, particularly to the south west.

The 2017 Fareham Landscape Assessment identifies the site as falling within area 12.1b of the Cams-Wicor Coastal Plain. Overall, it is assessed as being an area of undistinguished landscape of lower intrinsic value and sensitivity with no specific features of note other than the mature tree cover and vegetation around some of its margins. The assessment recognises that some development in the area could potentially be accommodated without unacceptable adverse effects on the Borough's most valued landscape resources and without adversely affecting the character and quality of the rest of the landscape in the wider Cams-Wicor character area. The Assessment recommends strengthening the existing landscape character and enhancing the GI and habitat networks, as well as minimising any effects on the visual amenity of neighbouring residents. It should also respond to the distinctive 'amenity' character of the local area, for example, by

creating a new 'parkland' setting for development that reflects the woodland blocks, avenues and groups of trees, lawns and designed landscape of the adjacent Cams Hall estate. This should incorporate substantial networks of open space and wildlife habitat to divert pressures away from the more sensitive parts of the coastal margins.

Overall development structure (outline)

The illustrative development structure is one of interconnected perimeter blocks indicating principal and secondary streets. The principal streets are tree lined with grass verges and the secondary streets appear to be shared surface, slow speed environments. This basic structure responds to the surrounding context. It is an acceptable and legitimate urban design response. It is not, perhaps, an exciting and interesting arrangement of spaces. With the exception of the detailed area, there is scope within the remainder of the site to be more creative with the secondary street spaces to deliver varied and interesting places rather than standard street corridors. This should be encouraged together with additional 'secondary streets' to avoid the longer uninterrupted perimeter blocks.

The density of the proposal is approximately 30dph (detailed scheme). This is a suitable density to work with across the site. I find the illustrative layout shows some unacceptably prominent and dominant frontage parking and a lack of frontage space along the edge road to accommodate tree planting such that the total of 225 dwellings may need to be reduced. More convincing illustrative material should be produced.

In broader terms, when considered in the context of the Cranleigh Road development to the east, then the combined open space has the potential to deliver a strong parkland development linked to the waterside and recreational facilities associated with Wicor. However, more extensive tree planting may be required to fully reflect the development strategy identified within the Landscape Assessment 2017

The position of the NEAP is too close to the future LEAP at Cranleigh Road and an alternative location further west should be identified, with suitable and safe ped/cycle links. It would also be appropriate to provide complimentary or indeed different equipment than that provided at Cranleigh Road or for part of the proposal to deliver healthy exercise trails or similar.

The illustrative landscape strategy plan shows a parkland approach to the southern POS and appears to 'borrow' from the open space associated with the Cranleigh Road development to the east. This eastern boundary appears too narrow to create the enclosing parkland envisaged.

The plan shows a footpath network running through the open space. It shows a link running along the eastern boundary, but this is also the space shown for reptile protection and, given the presence and depth of the relatively unmanaged hedgerow and visitor parking spaces, there would appear to be insufficient space for both access and protection. The northern link into the neighbouring open space exits into the Badger Protection area and needs therefore to be moved further south.

The plan also shows a footpath along the southern area linking the football club grounds. The link needs to be moved further west to link with the open area but it is recognised that this will bring people and potential disturbance closer to the Brent Goose mitigation area.

The landscape strategy shows the removal of part of the mature woodland belt along the south-western boundary 'to enhance the sight-lines for waders and Brent geese' I am not certain if this is strictly necessary and there is a tension with the resultant landscape impact such that this area of the site is much more exposed to visual receptors and brings the development visually closer to the coast. It also undermines the Landscape Assessment of strengthening vegetation cover and

enclosure. The removal of the trees will also expose the area to football matches and heightened recreational disturbance. This issue needs carefully balanced.

Quality Design and Detailed Matters

The layout comprises a mix of two storey detached, semi-detached, and terraced houses. There are occasional two storey flatted blocks. The architectural language reflects existing properties in Romsey Ave. There is no objection to this approach, but it could be regarded as a missed opportunity to develop a new dwelling design for this coastal zone. The principal streets are shown as tree lined with verges and this is welcomed to help deliver the parkland approach and create visual interest to the street. Guarantees needed from HCC that the proposed street trees will not be removed / reduced during S38 adoption process given HCC Asset Management current position. The position of street lighting will potentially affect the street trees and this too needs to be understood at this detailed stage.

This adoption issue is also relevant to the use of block paving and setts, which do help to improve the visual appearance of some areas, slow speeds and define shared surfaces.

The plot designs show a front boundary physical barrier is welcomed to strengthen defensible space, but I find the masonry walls proposed to be too harsh and unrelieved by the proposed ornamental shrubbery behind. Successful alternatives include the use of 'estate' fencing with hedging (Hornbeam or Beech or even Privet). This allows the vegetation to be seen and softens the street environment in this countryside location as well as providing defensible space. such a boundary would also compliment the parkland approach. Examples below:



The front gardens are welcome and most are of an acceptable depth (2m+ allowing for space behind hedging for informal, temporary storage of bins or bicycles if required). Some front gardens

are short, which should be amended. Consideration should also be given to reducing the full shrub planting across gardens of 3m+ such as 15,16 and 51,52 which may be high maintenance. Again, hedging to the front and private space behind for individuals to cultivate or utilise may be more efficient and robust in the long term.

The central flatted block planting to the parking edges should be more robust than grass, given the v narrow space left over (0.6m to 1.0m) reducing maintenance and increasing robustness and longevity.

The street trees (running east-west) are not 7m from the buildings as stipulated. They vary from 5-6m.

I am uncertain as to the purpose and future function of the wildflower meadow running along the northern boundary and behind flatted blocks 7-14. It is a significant space (behind the houses) from an urban design perspective. It is recognised that this is the area where slow worms were recorded, but the ecology strategy identifies the eastern and southern boundaries for retention and enhancement? (It is noted that knee rails are proposed to deter public access to these southern and eastern areas, which is insufficient and post and rail of 1.2m will be necessary). If the purpose of this space is merely to move development further away from existing residents (beyond normal requirements), it should be understood that this will create an unacceptable crime risk unless it is appropriately secured to prevent public access. Alternatively:

- it could be used cumulatively throughout the site to provide more depth to front gardens and landscaping;
- the units could be turned to be flank on to the existing properties, which has the benefit of giving new residents better orientated rear gardens.

The pocket park at the entrance has the potential to be a pleasant space, but it has no real focus and is isolated from other open spaces as part of connected green infrastructure.

I find plot 25 to be very awkwardly arranged with a prominent exposed side elevation, 'left over' landscape and with visitor spaces impinging on plot 26 also.

There is an inconsistent approach to rear garden boundaries flanking roads. Some are masonry and some shown as timber. The principle is usually to have masonry walls where they face the public realm and therefore should be provided at plots 42, 15 and 52. The latter show a strange low wall with grass behind and then a 1.8m close boarded fence to the rear garden.

Some granite setts or similar should be introduced to help define changes in surfacing (block to block to tarmac)

The dropped kerb to serve the flatted blocks to the north east should be block paved to be consistent. The access should also be narrowed to create a gateway entrance with the hedging extended to enclose the frontage, opening to 6m internally. I find block 11-14 to be too close to the back edge of footway.

A number of plots do not have direct links to front doors from parking spaces.

Plot 44 is too tight to the side and will appear discordant to the building line established by units 45-52. The parking arrangement with 43 is too open and prominent, and I would expect to see a stronger landscaped separation between these 4 bed dwellings.

The terrace of 3 typology has frontage parking for the middle unit. These are narrow units (4.6m) and it means that the 2 parking spaces (totalling 4.8m wide) occupy the whole frontage and encroach slightly on the neighbour. The minimal width will make accessing the front door difficult,

without walking on the neighbours 'front' garden. Generally, 6m would give enough by-pass space if two cars were parked side by side. The depth is also minimal (4.8m) which will add to the problem and may lead to vehicles overhanging the footway. The Council's design SPD seeks to avoid frontage parking and in my view this typology needs to be reviewed in order to improve the arrangement. It is noted that front gardens to units 28-42 have no shrub or hedge boundary and as such the frontage parking will be very visible. I am not convinced that the trees in front gardens will be sufficient and could be removed by homeowners. There would be benefit in moving the side boundary wall to plot 27 behind the property with stronger tree and shrub planting roadside.

I would be happy to discuss the above in more detail as necessary.

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From: devcontrol@fareham.gov.uk [<mailto:devcontrol@fareham.gov.uk>]

Sent: 19 September 2018 14:50

To: Lyster, Dominic <DLyster@Fareham.Gov.UK>

Subject: Fareham Borough Council - Consultation: Land to the South of Romsey Avenue

I am writing to consult you on a planning application I have received (P/18/1073/FP). Details of the application and how to respond are in the attached PDF document.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this.

Richard Wright
Principal Planner (Development Management)
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