

NOTES OF MID SUSSEX DESIGN REVIEW PANEL 25th January 2016

Present: Giles Ings (Chair), Lap Chan, Nick Lomax, Neil Way, Mark Folkes, Jenny Lewin, Gavin Sargent

Apologies: Jake White, Richard Morrice

In attendance: Will Dorman and case officers as stated below

New Members

Jenny Lewin and Gavin Sargent were welcomed on to the Panel. The two other new members, Michael Alete and Phil Winch will attend the 21st March meeting.

Keymer Tile Works phase 2

Description of the Scheme:

Phase 2 of the residential redevelopment of the Keymer Tile Works involving the erection of 170 dwellings (approx.) and a local centre including retail, doctors surgery, community facility organised around a new square with sports pitches and ecological parkland within a new open space (Pre-application proposal ahead of a Reserve matters application in relation to the outline consent for 475 dwellings, access and associated infrastructure ref: 09/03697 which reserved appearance, landscape, layout and scale)

Presenters

Architect/Designer: Ian Bott, Steve Lamble (PRP)

Landscape Architect: Adrian Judd (PRP)

Developer: Ray Carlier (Croudace)

In attendance

Case Officer: Hamish Walke
(Apologies received from Councillor Colin Holden)

The Panel's Comments

Despite the length and high quality of the presentation, the information was felt to be lacking in some respects. Fuller site sections and a 3D model were needed to fully understand the implications of the undulating character of the site. The plans were confusing because they were inconsistently orientated and had no north point. There was also a lack of continuity between some of the drawings.

As with phase 1, the Panel questioned the lack of architectural ambition, and the further repetition for phase 2 of the previous approach was considered problematic and in the panels opinion would weaken the sense of place. The front-hipped version of the same 3 storey semi-detached house design suggested a lack of imagination to produce an alternative design; they also sit uncomfortably with the full gable version. There is the opportunity to evolve a more contemporary approach which would allow phase 2 to be distinct from phase 1.

While the aspirations for a market square flanked by retail / community uses was supported, the Panel were not wholly convinced by the design. The square may lack adequate enclosure in reality and risked being a wind-swept suburban-looking place

that may not attract people; it was felt that either the building frontages need to be brought further in (reducing the overall dimensions of the square) or increased in height. Further studies to justify the proposal are suggested. Early consideration needs to be given to employing a pedestrian-friendly surface treatment (tarmac must be avoided). The parking looked as if it may dominate with the pressure for spaces generated by the surgery as well as the surrounding dwellings. Some of the Panel members questioned the location of the square because of its awkward slope and despite the landscape architect's best endeavours it appeared to be a struggle to make it work. However it was appreciated the undulating nature of the site limited the options.

The community building is especially problematic. It's squat / horizontal proportions makes it appear out of place in relation to the other taller / vertically proportioned and more traditionally designed frontages that characterised the rest of the square and the wider scheme. Some of the Panel felt the community building needed to be closer to the football pitch and perhaps positioned adjacent to it within the open space (in place of the orchard).

With the above exceptions, the landscape strategy of the main open space seemed sound; however considerations could be given to incorporating allotments next to the blocks of flats and ensuring large tree varieties are specified along the principal spine road.

Recommendation

The scheme was too preliminary for the Panel to reach a formal view at this stage. A further presentation was recommended when the scheme had reached a more detailed stage.

Penland Farm, Haywards Heath

Description of the Scheme:

Residential development of 210 dwellings including new internal access roads and footpaths, landscaping, open space, drainage measures and associated infrastructure (pursuant to outline consent ref 13/03472/OUT with all matters reserved except for access)

Presenters

Architect: Geoff Perry (Geoff Perry Associates)
Planning Consultant: Joanna Hanslip (Urbanista)
Developer: Michael Maskew (Redrow)

In attendance

Case Officer: Steve Ashdown
Ward Councillors: Jonathan Ash-Edwards, Sandra Ellis, Geoff Rawlinson

The Panel's Comments

The Panel felt the architecture was disappointing and that effort was not being made to deviate from Redrow's standard house type, which would undermine a sense of place. This is a unique site that should be carefully considered. The presentation material was limited with the perspectives images not related to the current site. In the analysis of the existing architecture, it was surprising that the closest building, Penland Farm, did not feature.

The architect's reference to "cut and fill" was a concern as it may undermine the character of the site and could result in abnormal level differences such as in relation to the buffer zones adjacent to the ancient woodland; this would be disastrous as it is a special site that needs to be sensitively developed. It is therefore important to demonstrate how the layout will work with the site's undulations, several detailed site sections are required to convince the Panel that this has been considered fully. The street elevations supplied were limited and more information is needed such as contextual sections and a site layout overlaid across the site contours.

The site layout showed a number of areas of retained trees, not just the large individual trees within the site, but also at the edges of the site, most notably adjacent to the site entrance. It was felt important that these trees are safeguarded/preserved, and another reason why the existing site levels need to be retained.

The access road annotated as a "bus gate" looked as if it might be an unattractive back-alley type of environment.

Sustainability and the incorporation of renewable energy should be considered at this early stage to ensure it is properly integrated with the design.

Concern was raised generally about future landscape management and ownership; in particular the dog-legged wooded area to the east was landlocked and an integrated pedestrian access should be considered.

The main open space should include a play area.

Recommendation

The scheme was too preliminary for the Panel to reach a formal view. A further presentation was recommended when the scheme had reached a more detailed stage.

Burgess Hill Town Centre / Martlets mixed use redevelopment Revised Drawings / Supporting Information

In attendance

Case Officer: Steve Ashdown

The Panel considered Corstophine and Wright Architects response to their previous comments. The result of the desk-top Wind Impact Assessment was unconvincing. The key area for investigation, the proposed square, was not included in the study as previously requested. The most relevant area under consideration was the pedestrian link, which registers as "unacceptable conditions or intended use", where remedial measures are necessary (in figure 8.1 summary). Given that the pedestrian link and square are the key new public spaces, it was felt that the Panel has not been reassured by the findings of the report. It was therefore agreed that further investigation was required in the form of a full study.

The visual impact assessment supplied was not the final measured version, so the comments must be caveated on this basis. The longer view silhouettes did not seem to be problematic (although it should also be noted that some of the images showed trees in leaf that would not give the full impact at winter time). The closer views from the front (looking from Station Road environs) confirmed to the Panel, that the design was flawed. There were particular concerns about the monolithic appearance of the cinema building and its junction/juxtaposition with Market Place. This would be a particular issue at day time when there is no back lit lighting of the mesh screen. More

effort needs to be invested in articulating this long façade (possibly by varying the screen) and treating the return flank and set back roof section.

The Panel nevertheless agreed that the re-organised car park and the widening of the footway by 1.5m between Market Place and the new square were improvements; however the skeletal framed walkway across the car park appeared inconsistently illustrated.

The changes to the elevations of the phase 2 buildings (residential block) represented a marginal improvement, although there was concern that the heavier treatment of the top floor of the residential block on the western side, would increase the considerable scale of the Civic Way elevation.

Recommendation

Accept subject to the above changes and the outcome of the full Wind Assessment study.

Little Park Farm

Description of the Scheme:

Reserved Matters application (DM/15/4736) for details of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale following the outline permission 12/04141/OUT for 140 residential dwellings.

In attendance

Case officer: Andy Watt

(Applicants were not in attendance, as the similar pre-app scheme had previously been presented to the Panel)

The Panel's Comments

The Panel acknowledged that the houses in the north-west corner of the site were now better laid out. However, in other respects their assessment of the scheme was the same as before (refer to October meeting notes). In addition to this, the scaled elevations, which the Panel had not previously seen, were generally poorly designed featuring shallow roofs, poorly-integrated and peeled-back facades; there were also inconsistencies between the plans and the elevations. It was also noted that some of the driveways (between houses) leading to garages appeared to be overly long and unacceptably thin, so much so that the panel questioned if it was actually possible to open car doors.

Recommendation

Object

Member Design Training – Monday 21st March

It was agreed that the workshop scheme should feature a typical mass-housing scheme – WD will circulate some options on this (already built schemes would have the benefit of photographs of the completed development).

Panel members involved will be GI, NW, LC, NL, MF, RM. New Panel members are also invited (their involvement is still to be confirmed).

NW and WD have been working on the introductory presentation setting out good and

bad design practice, and the Planning policy framework.

Next Meeting(s)

2pm on Monday 21st March 2016 in the Committee room, MSDC Offices, Oaklands, Haywards Heath to follow the Member Design Training. (NB: As there were schemes that cannot be included on the March agenda, it was agreed to hold an additional meeting on the 18th April).