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Land at Bird in Eye Farm, South of Bird in Eye Hill, UCKFIELD
LPA Ref: WD/2021/2198/MAO

Addendum Design Statement

March 2022

Introduction

This Addendum Design Statement has been prepared in response to email comments received from the LPA dated 31st January 2022.

The officer comments raised five key issues in relation to the submitted Illustrative Masterplan (PRB/BIE/PA2N).

We have reviewed the issues raised and amendments have been made to the Illustrative Masterplan.

The changes have been informed by a further policy reviewing, including in relation to the Council's Design Guide SPD; as well as input from the consultant team (including, but not limited to heritage and landscape).

The review has informed the following formal plan revisions:

- Illustrative Site Layout (Masterplan) No. PRB/BIE/PA2R; and
- Parameter Plan No. PRB/BIE/PA4D
- Indicative Street scenes Plan No. PRB/BIE/PA7B

Below are each of the issues raised and the subsequent changes to the masterplan described to overcome them.

The amendments to the Masterplan are to be assessed in the context of the planning application being made in outline with only the principle of the proposed uses and means of access to be determined.

All other matters of detail, including appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved for subsequent determination.

The Revised Illustrative Masterplan

Revised Illustrative Site Layout drawing number PRB/BIE/PA2R should be read in conjunction with the descriptions below.

The illustrative layout as shown would not be acceptable with regard to a number of issues.

- 1. There is a heavy reliance on flat blocks and whilst it is noted there are public open spaces, no provision has been made for the communal amenity spaces that are required to be provided for flats in accordance with the Wealden Design Guide.*

There were eight flat blocks indicated on the originally submitted plan and of these six had sufficient amenity space to meet the required standard. However, the requirement to change the housing mix so that all affordable two-bedroom units comprise dwellings with gardens meant a reworking of the plan.

The apartment blocks that have been retained contain only one-bedroom units in clusters of no more than four. In all cases the associated private amenity areas exceed Wealden's standards. All the two-bedroom affordable units are now houses with garden areas that also exceed the standards.

In addition, the "L" shaped private two-bedroom block of apartments that overlooked the central green have also been omitted and the layout changed to provide houses only.

- 2. The punctuation of the perimeter blocks with a series of internal parking courtyards is unacceptable not only with regard to issues of security, amenity for adjacent dwellings but also the poor relationship of parking to the associated dwellings.*

The creation of good urban design not over-dominated by vehicles and the need to make efficient use of land have been key aspirations in the preparation of the layout.

The rear parking courts have therefore been reviewed and, in several instances, removed completely and parking placed on the frontage.

Where parking courts have been retained some of these have been reduced in size to serve between 3-7 dwellings maximum. Some are accessed via covered drive-throughs, (which could be gated), for added security.

Travel distances from the parking courts to the dwellings has been kept to a minimum. The exception is the court behind the houses facing the first square in the northern section where it is considered appropriate to allow the architecture to dominate the space. The parking is accessed via a covered and gated drive-through and is conveniently placed in relation to each dwelling with direct access to rear gardens.

- 3. The layout as shown would not be able to accommodate the parking provision that would be required including the Council's requirement for visitor parking of one space per three dwellings.*

A full review of the parking provision has been made for each housing area using the Council's Parking Calculator.

The total parking requirement is for 523 spaces comprising 361 allocated spaces, 106 unallocated resident's spaces and 56 unallocated visitor spaces.

The amended Illustrative Layout includes provision for a total of 583 parking spaces to serve the residential development. A further parking 30 spaces dedicated solely for the users of the SANG open space.

4. *Whilst it superficially appears that there is a lot of open space, much of this would be the ancient woodland buffers to which public access would not be permitted. Furthermore, only the minimum buffer of 15m has been provided.*

There is open space within the development that excludes the ancient woodland buffer. There is also the new SANG which is a major area of public open space adjacent.

5. *Development on sloping sites results in considerable engineering works and retaining walls which exacerbates the impact of built form on the landscape. As a result, there is greater need for structural planting belts within the public realm for example along the roads to mitigate visual impact of development as it steps down the slopes which does have an impact on the developable area.*

Drawing number PRB/BIE/PA7B shows three indicative street scenes that illustrate how the houses will sit within the landscape. There will be an element of "underbuild" to some of the houses to address levels. However, retaining walls will be limited and generally within rear gardens, hidden by the houses themselves.

The main route through the site comprises a tree-lined avenue and there are tree groupings on the lower slopes as well as the upper slopes between the houses and the adjacent the Bird in Eye Farm boundary.

Summary

Overall, the scheme secures a high-quality residential environment together with extensive SANG land, children's play park and other areas of open space. The proposal is consistent with development plan policy and will secure the provision of sustainably located and accessible new homes.

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