

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting:	18/11/2016
Site:	Nore Down Way, West Marden, West Sussex, PO18 9EP
Proposal:	Construction of 10 no. dwellings consisting of 6 no 2 bedroom houses and 4 no. 3 bedroom houses at Nore Down Way, West Marden.
Planning reference:	SDNP/16/00162/PRE
Panel members sitting:	Graham Morrison (Chair) Kay Brown Mark Penfold John Starling Kim Wilkie (Andrew Smith – site visit only)
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Genevieve Hayes Paul Slade Nat Belderson Kelly Porter Lillian Wakely
Item presented by:	Janna Laan Julia Philip Philip Thirlwall
Declarations of interest:	None

The Panel's response to your scheme will be placed on the Planning Authority's website where it can be viewed by the public.

The SDNPA operate a transparent service, whereby pre-application and application details, although not actively publicised will be placed on the online planning register. This is unless the applicant gives reasons why the enquiry is commercially sensitive.

COMMENTS

	Notes
1.0 Discussion/Questions with applicants	<p>1. The Panel questioned the parking planned for the scheme – They felt that in the effort to avoid impacting the views of the opposite houses, the plan had created a few large blocks of solid parking, which would dominate the development. They asked if there was some way to reduce or conceal the parking. The Applicant said that residents are keen to get more off-road parking, with one of the main concerns highlighted by existing residents being the lack of room for cars on Nore Down Way, so the Applicant was not keen on removing the parking spaces. The Panel asked whether it would be possible to conceal the parking with car ports. The Applicant said they had initially considered adding garages to the buildings but had discarded it, but they could look in to alternative types of car ports, attached to the sides of the buildings.</p> <p>2. The Panel complimented the applicant on the quality of the report, being particularly impressed with the way they set out how the scheme had evolved. However, they felt that the first iteration of the layout where the houses fronted Nore Down Way was better than the proposed layout, as it was more in line with how most villages develop. They acknowledged that fronting the houses onto the road would be contentious, as it could damage the view from the existing properties on the opposite side of the road, but noted that the land east of the road is substantially lower, making it possible for the existing buildings to have a view out over the top of of new housing. They also said that there was a good opportunity to enhance the eastern boundary of the site, creating a better view in from the right of way further to the east, and asked if the applicant had considered that. The Applicant said that they had considered enhancing the boundary, but wanted to use some of that space for a communal area while also allowing room for people to walk through it.</p> <p>3. The Panel asked about the plan to raise the buildings by 500mm, above the flood risk area. They asked whether the Applicant had been advised to do that to avoid the potential for flooding. The Applicant said no, they had actually planned this because the materials they intend to use need to be raised like this in order to protect them from wear. The Panel asked whether the raise would make the</p>

	<p>houses inaccessible for disabled people. The Panel said that they intend to introduce ramps with landscape up to the doors specifically to allow for disabled access.</p> <p>4. The Panel asked about viability and were not convinced that the construction and materials suggested would make them affordable. The panel asked if the Applicant had done any market testing. The Applicant said that they worked out pricing for the scheme based on average prices of floor space by M² in similar projects, but haven not tested their own scheme specifically. The Panel said that their choice to use local materials was commendable, but raised the concern that this choice might raise the cost of the housing. The Applicant agreed, saying that they would need to formally assess this but they expected that the materials would raise the price, flint in particular.</p> <p>5. The Panel noted that the rest of the village features a lot of prominent boundary walls, which could help resolve the problem of the ostentatious blocks of parking by positioning them in walled courtyards. The Applicant said that they were exploring boundary treatments and that they were considering boundary walls at the current stage of development.</p>
2.0 Panel Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Panel opened by saying that this scheme raised a number of issues, but it was very well presented, giving particular praise to the inclusion of previous design concepts that help show the route the site design took. 2. However, the Panel feel that the route that the designers took, while logical, was different to the one that Panel would have taken themselves. 3. The Panel said that they acknowledge the sensitive location and that the authority and some of the community may not support the principle of development here, but expressed their point of view that in design terms, an exceptionally well designed development may improve the existing view of this site, rather than detract from it, so they consider that the site could take some development. 4. The Panel said that they preferred the design layout where the dwellings fronted Nore Down Way, believing that this would be more appropriate to a village setting and complement the street scene. 5. The Panel explained that the existing houses on Nore Down Way are positioned cleverly, so that from the entrance of Nore Down Way, all you can see is the gable end of the first house. The proposed scheme would mean that the first thing you would see from that same position would be a car park. Coupled with the cul-de-sac style ending in a small roundabout, this development would, unintentionally, look very suburban. 6. The Panel suggested that the Applicant looks at the work

	<p>of Architect Eric Lyons with Span Developments, which often used car-free designs in which parking was concealed in car ports or walled courtyards.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The Panel suggested that an alternative option would be to put more, wide frontage houses as a terrace along the road. This would provide more space for integration of car ports or garages, possibly carrying through to the rear of the house for parking. 8. The Panel made the point that any development should be designed to suit the whole settlement and not only the adjacent buildings. It was noted that the character of the hamlet was described in 1965 by Pevsner as “A pretty collection of flint cottages straggling up a hillside on the road from Chichester to Harting”, which is an assessment that the current form of the development is at odds with. 9. The Panel complimented the applicant on the landscape strategy in the watercolour image and said that if that could be achieved in reality then the scheme could work. However, it would need to be incredibly well managed to be successful. They believed that, if the buildings were moved a bit closer to the road and so used less land, it would both make more room for a magnificent green space to the rear of the properties as well as reducing the floor space of the buildings slightly, making it easier for them to meet affordability targets. 10. The Panel cautioned, however, that the site is very apparent both from the road and from footpaths to the east and, less so, the west. They advised that the Applicant should undertake a landscape and visual appraisal to demonstrate that this is understood. 11. The Panel also raised the concern that the 500mm raising of the buildings is a problem, and suggested that alternatives should be considered. One suggestion was that the houses could be dug in to the falling ground, keeping their frontage level with the access road by building in a split level or a lower ground floor to account for the lower ground to the rear of the properties. Gravel could then be laid around the perimeter of the house to avoid splash back and damage to the proposed façade materials. However, the flood plain issues need to be addressed for this to be possible. 12. The Panel noted that they had not looked at the detail in the designs, but that they’re mostly confident with the quality of work so far and feel that these will be well handled. Their primary concern here is that the amount of conservatories and roof lights planned need careful consideration in light of the Dark Night Skies policy of the National Park. 13. The Panel ended by saying that they feel confident that the site is in safe hands, but feel like there are too many ideas going around at the moment and the plans needed to be edited down a bit. The scheme should fit in as part of the village, rather than merely looking in at it.
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