

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

Date of meeting:	18/12/17
Site:	Land South of the Seven Stars, Stroud.
Proposal:	Erection of 30 dwellings and a Village Hall
Planning reference:	SDNP/17/06010/PRE
Panel members sitting:	Graham Morrison (Chair) Paul Fender John Starling Kay Brown Andrew Smith
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Genevieve Hayes (Design Officer) Mark Waller Gutierrez (Design Officer) Ruth Childs (Landscape Officer) Paul Slade (Support Services Officer)
SDNPA Planning Committee in attendance:	Ian Phillips
Item presented by:	Natalie Fellows (OSP Planner) Viv Hill (CALA Homes) Craig Burdon (Architect, Planner, Urban Designer) Phil Deacon (Landscape Architect)
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
<b>1.0</b> <b>Discussion/Questions</b> <b>with applicants</b>	<p><b>1. The Panel asked about the easement and fence line along the northern boundary and what the relationship was to the stream.</b>  The Applicant said the fence has no relationship to the Easement or stream and can be relocated.  <b>The Panel asked if the Applicant had ownership of the fence.</b>  The Applicant said that they did.</p> <p><b>2. The Panel asked if the Applicant could elaborate on how they see the watercourse and green space beyond the northern boundary contributing to the character.</b>  The Applicant noted the pub and associated car parking to the north, which they hoped to connect to the development; they said that the pub would be happy to see more people but have raised concerns about conflicts in the car park between manoeuvring vehicles and pedestrians.  <b>The Panel clarified that they were referring to the open space and green features rather than the pub.</b>  The Applicants stated that those spaces were the richest part of the site in ecological terms. Further to this, they said that they'd consider establishing a boardwalk, enhancing the easement and possibly incorporating the SuDS system to increase ecological value and accessibility to the public.  <b>The Panel asked if the Applicant considered these features an asset to the development.</b>  The Applicant said that they did, subject to negotiation with the pub owners, but noted that the highest quality was at the western end and the eastern end had very little value, as it was dominated by the service entrance to the pub.</p> <p><b>3. The Panel noted that there were existing restraints from TPOs and the easement, then asked if the habitat survey had turned up any further constraints relating to the watercourse.</b>  The Applicant said that there were no further constraints; the watercourse is fairly low flow and features no threatened ecology.</p> <p><b>4. The Panel asked if the Applicant had looked at the impact on the setting of the nearby Roman Villa archaeological site and what the relationship between that site and this development would be.</b>  The Applicant said that, even during winter, there's no real visual relationship between the two because of the intervening tree cover.</p> <p><b>5. The Panel asked about the visual connection to Butser Hill and whether the field shape could be made out from the Hill.</b></p>

	<p>The Applicant said that people would struggle to see the field shapes as they are disguised by the numerous mature oaks in the area.</p> <p><b>6. The Panel asked about what analysis the Applicant had done on access to the site; what should the location be and how many accesses should there be?</b></p> <p>The Applicants said that the accesses they currently expect to use are intended to allow people using the Hall and its associated parking to come and go without conflict with the residents. One of the reasons for this is the expectation of the Parish that any car parking at the Hall can be used to alleviate pressure on the roads at school drop off and collection times – The Applicant also suggested that a layby might be installed on Ramsdean Road to this effect.</p> <p><b>7. The Panel asked whether the Applicant had studied the character of Stroud and Ramsdean Road – In particular, had the Applicant performed a figure ground analysis?</b></p> <p>The Applicant said that they had started but not completed a figure ground analysis, but they had looked thoroughly at the local character. They used Finchdean Lane in particular as a case study in relation to possible terraced housing.</p> <p><b>The Panel observed that the local character was quite varied.</b></p> <p>The Applicant agreed and noted that any effort that has not followed the local character has failed. One of the key changes they intend to make over previous schemes is to add more small, terraced properties, to reflect local character.</p> <p><b>8. The Panel asked whether the Applicant had started to sketch out designs for the application.</b></p> <p>The Applicant said that they still had sketches from previous applications, but hadn't assembled sketches for this application yet as they wanted to resolve the location of the village hall first. They noted that the Village Hall is the crux of a lot of issues and they have received conflicting suggestions from the DRP, the Planning Committee and the local Parish. They also conceded that they could be looking at the problem in the wrong way; perhaps they should consider the local character first.</p> <p><b>9. The Panel asked whether the Applicants had thought about unit sizes and numbers of units.</b></p> <p>The Applicant noted that the site was allocated for 26-30 dwellings and that they were going to aim high in order to make affordable housing targets more achievable. At present they expect 29 dwellings. They also established that they'd had a commercial assessment to look at where they currently are, which supported their idea that higher numbers of dwellings make affordable housing more achievable and that larger homes should be limited.</p> <p><b>10. The Panel asked what the reasoning for including car parking in the design of the Hall was.</b></p>
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	<p>The Applicant said that the main reason was because it had been requested; they suggested they could look at sharing parking somewhere else.</p> <p><b>The Panel asked if they could see what other options there were for parking.</b></p> <p>The Applicant noted that the pub has its own private car park and the school has a car park and uses an adjacent field for overflow parking when required.</p> <p><b>The Panel asked how people would be stopped from parking in the Hall car park when they were going to the School.</b></p> <p>The Applicant said that the Parish Council considered that the Hall car park being used by people on the school run would be acceptable, as long as it didn't interfere with anything that was going on in the Hall.</p> <p><b>The Panel noted that if a right of way could be established that runs all the way through the site, from the pub in the north to the school to the south, the pub car park could be used for the same purpose, alleviating the problem without forcing the addition of a car park to the village hall.</b></p>
<b>2.0 Panel Summary</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Panel felt the questions it was being asked were more appropriate to an informal workshop format. It therefore felt it necessary to state that it was not its role to take responsibility for a design on behalf of the Applicant. Its duty is to comment on what has been presented and, if necessary, provide guidance. This summary is therefore set out to assist in understanding what the priorities should be and what elements of the design will be considered as most important. These are areas to be investigated rather than defined solutions or conclusions.</li> <li>2. One of the most important assets but also a key difficulty of the site is the Northern boundary adjacent to the pub. There is a struggle here in managing the green space at the western end, the pub and the difficulty of its servicing area and the watercourse all in relation to the positioning of the village hall. All of these features will be key assets of the site and will need to be resolved.</li> <li>3. This may not be an easy site to get right, but the Panel was convinced that the focus of design development here should be on how it can contribute to the village. Considering it from this perspective will help to give it a more natural sense of place and a clearer hierarchy, which will ultimately produce a more coherent and thus successful development. The drawings should therefore expand to take in the wider context.</li> <li>4. In terms of landscape and history, the northern end is the richest part of the site. It is the natural place for a village green that can capture the local landscape by taking the village green close to the watercourse and the cluster of trees. Bringing this closer to the crossroad will also help make it seem more of a central and genuine feature and less of an obligation to be fulfilled. Connecting the scheme</li> </ol>

	<p>to the green and the green to the village should be the starting point of this scheme, as the land to the west of the pub was unlikely to be built on and was of substantial visual value to this site. Though it may not be in the ownership of the Applicant, its visual and amenity value should be captured to the benefit of the space and the scheme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Turning to the significance of Ramsdean Road, the Panel noted this is really a lane off of the main road. It therefore makes less sense to have the larger houses facing it rather than addressing the new village green. Not only would this seem right in terms of hierarchy, it would assist in the place-making of the green itself.</li> <li>6. The Panel suggested that the Village Hall could be positioned on the Eastern edge of the site. It advised against treating it as an obligation; in order to benefit the development overall, it will need to be confidently included. If Ramsdean Road is subordinate to the green, its gently concave geometry makes it inviting. A person standing at the crossroads could see the fronts of all the houses addressing the road, and so it would be important to have a strong, consistent frontage. The Panel suggested that the design should respond to this and avoid breaking up a potentially continuous line. Here the building line should be respected and garages, if they are provided, should contribute to this continuity.</li> <li>7. Given the strength of this emerging composition, the Panel warned against the use of a standard developer house type. House types ought to respond to the character of place rather than dilute it. The Panel noted the applicant's preference to make the houses 10 metres deep and the gardens 11. The Panel's concern is that this 'potato-print' will always fail to adequately respond to and support a context. In order to make the exemplary scheme that a National Park deserves, the Panel encouraged the developers not to be limited by applying a ridged series of pre-determined house types and develop new types that respond to and better support the circumstances of the site in order to both create and sustain the character of the village.</li> <li>8. On the matter of access to the deeper part of the site, the Panel agreed that the back gardens would need a sense of enclosure and suggested that there was a seeming inevitability that the access road would be a T or L shape. Here, the Panel felt that the choice of house type should respond to this hierarchy and suggested that one of the larger houses be given significance by terminating the view before the road forked, making it apparent that the development would not extend further into the field to the east.</li> <li>9. The Panel suggested that the proposed SuDS pond be considered a landscape feature rather than a problem that needs to be hidden. Moving the SuDS to allow it to participate more prominently in the landscape could help strengthen the application if it was well designed.</li> </ol>
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	<p>10. The Panel concluded by advising the Applicant to consider the development as having four distinct building characters; buildings facing Ramsdean Road, buildings around the Green and buildings addressing each of the two subordinate roads within the development. Each of these might carry different typologies to distinguish these separate character areas. The Panel stressed the plan for the site is unlikely to be successful if the Applicant remains focused on hitting a specific target for the dimensions of each house.</p>
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