

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting:	20/12/2018
Site:	25A Heath Road Petersfield GU31 4EH
Proposal:	New dwelling with adjoining garage and carport following partial demolition of existing dwelling.
Planning reference:	SDNP/18/04887/HOUS
Panel members sitting:	Mark Penfold CHAIR Merrick Denton-Thompson Steven Johnson David Hares
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Benjamin Terry (Design Officer) Ruth Childs (Landscape Officer) Natacha Bricks-Yonow (Support Services Officer) David Boyson (Conservation officer) Nat Belderson (Planning Link Officer)
SDNPA Planning Committee in attendance:	Ian Phillips
Item presented by:	Luke Smith Adam Knibb
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.

	Design Review advice report
Summary	<p>The Chair advised the applicant to review the current design, the Design Review Panel feels there should have been a stronger analysis of the site and surrounding area, once the decision of demolishing the building had been made. The scheme has to feel right on this site, the fact that it does not at the moment might be the reason it has <u>so</u> many objections.</p> <p>The current design is based on the footprint of the existing building and re-siting a new building would raise concerns with local residents. The design is so constrained by these issues, that you have sited the larger elements of the building against the boundaries, which would have a greater impact on neighbouring properties.</p> <p>Rethinking the height of the building would allow you to reduce its impact on the neighbouring properties. More height in the middle of the site would evidently give more space around the edges: it would allow you to 'open-up' space around the building. You would have less impact against the edges of the plot, a principle you <i>could</i> use to move the design forward.</p> <p>The Chair reiterated the differences between planning and design. He stated that there was a lack of confidence in the proposed building (due to planning constraints) and there was no <i>desire</i> for the building to contribute to the character of the area.</p> <p>The surrounding buildings are prominent and they generate public interest; they're social, distinctive, and they add value to the character of the area. Your proposal seems to hide away, it closes itself off to the street-scene. The design should take its cue from the surrounding buildings, from its verticality. There are architectural elements on those buildings that break down the overall scale and massing of the elevation, these elements contribute positively towards the quality of the public realm. There is a very social aspect on Heath Road, which should give the applicant the confidence to produce something beautiful. There is no need to replicate what has already been done: the 'gap' can be opened.</p> <p>Design in the National Park should be of outstanding architectural merit and it must be landscape-led. This scheme is not, it is tailored to planning constraints and the need, albeit superseded, to keep parts of the original building. A well-informed design rationale will create a better building and one that will have less impact on neighbouring properties. A strong analysis of the site and surrounding area will help you draw and justify an adequate design solution.</p>
	Notes taken during the meeting
Discussion/ Questions with applicants	<p>The Chair opened the meeting and introductions were made around the table. The Chair reminded those in attendance that the Panel is as equally concerned with style and appearance, as it is with a contextual understanding of the site: and what qualities that building needs to fit into its surroundings.</p>

During our site visit, we (the Panel) noted that many of the plots surrounding the site had large late Victorian Arts and Crafts villas within them [...] within your submission, the proposed building steps back from the (historic) building line and it fills the breadth of the plot. It hasn't taken the advantage of siting the building (as other buildings have) in a position to enhance the street-scene along Heath Road.

The Panel asked if the applicant had thought about addressing the plot differently.

The Applicant stated that they had worked around a range of ideas. Initially, the proposal was a refurbishment project, rather than a full rebuild. We intended on using the existing footprint and some of the external walls. However, the project has evolved. The Applicant stated that they could have looked at changing the siting + orientation (of the building), but they felt it was important to consider (primarily) the architectural styling of the arts and crafts buildings and the character of the Conservation Area.

The applicant stated that it is the best solution to use the existing footprint, to avoid overlooking issues (in this case) and to avoid any adverse impact the building could have on the character of Heath Road. The dynamic on the plot works well, we have also tried to reduce the width of the building on the eastern side of the plot. They also looked at the surrounding densities and the distances to boundaries to inform this design.

The Panel contemplated whether it would have been be more advantages to position it differently, especially regarding the orientation (overlooking). Following the typology of the surrounding buildings (scale), it could be a taller building. When looking at it, the existing house blocks out the site and the proposal still does that. The Panel asked if there would be an opportunity to re-orientate the proposed building (North-South).

The Applicant highlighted the impact of the sun path for neighbouring properties (illustrating this with diagrams). If the proposal was orientated north-south (at 90 degrees) it would shade neighbouring buildings.

The Panel suggested that they should make more of the site and the proposed building (referring to the scale/height/massing of the proposal).

The Panel asked what site analysis was available at this stage, and whether they could talk through their appraisal of the site.

The Applicant answered that there was a very simple page on their site analysis. There is a diagram of the site that illustrates the sun path (and how it goes between the near-by flats). The plot receives evening sun in the back garden and if the building was turned around, it would shadow the opposite plot. The view from the site is important to pick up as well: it is a South East view going down the road. There are townscape benefits of siting the building in the middle of the plot, and we have tried to take advantage of this.

The Panel asked about their client, and whether they would enjoy the garden in the evening.

The applicant answered that they would, and it is one the most important point to consider: the enjoyment of the plot.

The Panel suggested that they could have moved the building closer to the road, to provide more space to enjoy the garden.

The Applicant answered that they could have but it would have an adverse impact on a key view, which would be more overbearing. They are also working with significant level changes (to the front of the plot) + the existing access.

The Panel noted that when arriving from the station and walking to the site, the existing building, by way its size and massing disrupts the feeling of community in the street; especially where it steps back from the historic building line. It's worth noting that the proposed building has done nothing to address this. It's uninspiring, it feels secluded and it doesn't add any value to the character of Heath Road. As somebody arriving on foot, it feels like the proposed building would be against the trend of buildings in the Heath Road... It shouldn't be

The Applicant felt that this isn't helped by the access and boundary wall/planting to the front of the plot, it feels as if this has constrained the site and their proposals. It could be taken out to create a more dynamic street scene [?] There is a variation of step backs + scale + projections in the building line.

The panel discussed the siting of the garage, and if it were mirrored - the garage on the longer side - it would open up the site and fit better within the plot. The garage does not create issues of shading or overlooking.

However, (now) the applicant has decided to knock down the existing house, the assessment of the site should respond better to the typology of the area.

The applicant explained that the visual impact is minimised because the middle section of the roof plan (flat roof) is not visible from the Heath Road or the surrounding properties.

The Panel explained that the impact is due to the bulk of the building within the plot and its overall footprint across the plot. A taller building would have had a much smaller footprint and it would better respond to the site and the character of the area. An analysis of the site and how the site operates is necessary to see how a replacement dwelling works on site.

The position of the flat roof is where you want the height. The proposed elevations (east/west) are bold and brutal, but if the height of building is in the centre, the relationship to the neighbouring properties would be much softer and its adverse impact lessened.

The Applicant answered that this is hard to demonstrate on a flat elevation, but questioned whether this would be detrimental (overall). The proposed double gable frontage would be viewed as a semi-detached house, which is less bulky.

The Panel agreed but stated said that the proposed typology is not in keeping with the surrounding character of the area - which is vertical.

	<p>We appreciate that this is an infill site, sited in-between two very distinctive buildings, and that it is not uncommon to find a situation where the rationale is to simply cause the least harm... The neighbourhood is (architecturally) very powerful, beautiful buildings sit within landscape plots. It's such a shame to not pick up on this strength. The applicant should view the proposed building as an opportunity to respond to the surrounding context, but equally enhance the street-scene along Heath Road.</p> <p>The applicant is concerned that if a building was 2.5-3 stories, there would be a lot of objections from the neighbours and the local community, and explained that they are simply trying to balance 'everything'. In the appraisal, there was a huge concern in regards to the impact of the proposed building on the neighbouring buildings, which has constrained the design process. It influenced the length of the building, the framing, the step back.</p>
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