

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting:	19/03/2019
Site:	Former Syngenta Site, Fernhurst, West Sussex
Proposal:	210 dwellings
Planning reference:	SDNP/19/00913/FUL
Panel members sitting:	Mark Penfold (Chair) Paul Fender Graham Morrison Lap Chan Kim Wilkie Andrew Smith
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Kelly Porter (Case Officer) Mark Waller Gutierrez (Design Officer) Ruth Childs (Landscape Officer) Natacha Bricks-Yonow (Support Services Officer)
SDNPA Planning Committee in attendance:	Ian Phillips
Item presented by:	Neil Rowley – Savills Lionel Fanshawe – Terra Firma Gavin Wheatley – Plus Architecture David McFarlane – SP Broadway
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
	<p>At the start of the meeting the Case Officer explained the Localism Act 2011 positively encourages and enables SDNPA Members to be involved in these types of discussions. Members will have an open mind and will consider all relevant information presented to them during the determination of any planning application. Members in attendance at today's meeting were there to observe the meeting.</p>
<p>Discussion/ Questions with applicants</p>	<p>The Panel asked if the applicant could identify where they are in terms of underground car parking. The Applicant explained the car parking strategy and explained that there are no visitor spaces in the underground car parks, all the spaces are assigned to residents. Each section is based on the number of blocks. All visitor spaces would be on the surface.</p> <p>The Panel asked what would prevent people parking in non-designated spaces. The Applicant answered that there would not be opportunities to park in unauthorised places as they would be parking in bushes etc... So it would be designed out.</p> <p>The Panel asked if there were car ports or garages, as people would tend to use garages for storage and park their car in the street. The applicant answered that this was a management issue.</p> <p>A member of the panel noted that he had preferred an earlier iteration of the layout which provided much more development on the SW entrance space and he questioned the importance of designing around the existing trees in this area. The retained area in the back of the proposed pavilion blocks here looks more like a municipal park than 'parkland'. By building more in this area it would free up the development in other parts of the site, including in the eastern end. The applicant explained that the eastern end of the site has been left really undeveloped as it is set back to an ancient woodland. This is an undevelopable area and it will be used for various GI functions.</p> <p>On the west side, there is the line of the ancient road, and as a pedestrian way, together with the hazel coppice it is too valuable to put housing there. The total numbers of units on the site has also been reduced. They have finally settled on a figure that seems comfortable for everyone. The scheme feels more like a campus area; there is a sense of place coming in. The entrance zone is a green area, it does not have the same character as other parts of the site.</p> <p>The Panel said that the drawing was very helpful to look at the landscape principles. The Panel asked how the buildings and the architecture are responding or reinforcing the character of the spaces (with the scale, material or typology). The Panel asked the applicant how the orchestration of the architecture and of the spaces is completely under control. The applicant explained that they tried to articulate the blocks in a sequence presenting onto the main street.. In terms of articulation, there is a regular grid of windows and materials. The scale is an appropriate three storeys. The street is reasonably wide, to accommodate the green infrastructure. There is a different character in the north east part of the site.</p> <p>The Panel has trouble understanding how the architecture is helping to make the spaces work well. The street passing the pavilion blocks in the entrance zone is leaky, so the buildings are not enclosing spaces successfully.</p>

The applicant answered that they are not trying to form an edge but to leave the landscape flow between the buildings. There is a 'compression space' as you enter the 'village square' where there are commercial and community uses on the ground floor. There is a different quality as it opens up and a residential use of the ground floor beyond this point.

The Panel suggested that this entrance area could usefully be re-worked and that the value of the ornamental trees and the pond may have been overstated at the cost of a successful layout.

The Panel said that what was termed a 'village green' was misnamed as development around village greens not have this intensity or repetition. It is much more similar to an urban park.

The Panel asked if it the roads would be adoptable as this would have implications for highway design, tree species and locations and lighting etc.

The applicant answered that it was likely that the roads would not be adopted but that they would be designed to an adoptable standard.

The Panel asked about designing spaces for trees, such as oaks which risk falling foul of NHBC standards

The applicant said that it should be fine as this is a new build and foundations would be designed accordingly.

The Panel asked whether the E/W green route would have people functions and what the character of this space would be.

The applicant explained that the woodland was creating an opportunity for natural play, particularly with the coppice. Across the site they want it to feel like a liveable place which is something they failed to understand at the last session. There are a lot of green spaces and opportunities for multiple functions (such as SuDS).

The Panel noted that the applicant talked about the podium and about the basement. They asked if it was a basement or a lower ground.

The applicant answered it will be a basement car park where the surface is flat but it in places there will be some basement level visible at street level depending on the contours.

The Panel asked if the applicant could elaborate more about the buildings, generally.

The Applicant explained that predominantly there were four main building types. In the corner, the type B with double fronted house have front doors on both sides and have a main vehicular or pedestrian access.

The same approach is used on the house type A, which do not have private gardens. In terms of materials, they are proposing predominantly clay tiles, timber cladding (to be used on the east and west facing buildings).

The streets are characterised by repeated gable fronts creating a lot of rhythm.

The Panel were concerned about a potential confusion between fronts and backs and how these houses address the shared landscape and private space.

The Panel asked if the back gardens were communal.

The applicant answered that some are classic back gardens and in other places there is the same house type but shared communal spaces. The idea was that the spaces would be semi-private.

The Panel asked about the relationship with the pond.

	<p>The applicant answered that house type B (South East) was being used here and that the terrace on the second floor overlooks the water. This is a landscape amenity for the public to use.</p> <p>The Panel asked if the public had a right to walk all around these houses in the SE of the site along the river. The applicant answered yes.</p> <p>The Panel asked about the building in the entrance, immediately north of the pond. The applicant answered that it was not an actual building, but a roofed space allowing views through it. It could be used as a bus stop or a market place.</p> <p>The Panel asked about a shop. The Applicant answered that the shop will be on the ground floor of a three storey building.</p>
<p>Discussion (between panel members)</p>	<p>The Panel noted the scheme was not what was expected at this point.</p> <p>The overall density appears very intense.</p> <p>It is an allocated site in the Fernhurst Neighbourhood Plan, the application is for 210 dwelling but the scheme started with 260 and has been reduced. The gross density is not that great with the green infrastructure.</p> <p>It looks like an urban scheme in the countryside with greens and parks. It would be appropriate in somewhere like Richmond, London. The panel is not sure if this is wrong or right but it is definitely not a village layout.</p> <p>Generally in DRP, the advice is about what to do next but in this case, it is about advising the officers on a refusal or an approval.</p> <p>There are a few things that the DRP would like to see sorted out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They want the entrance area layout around the pond and the ornamental trees to be to be completely revisited as they question the value of the open space. This is where the layout is fundamentally unconvincing. A better enclosure of the entrance street than the current pavilion buildings provide, which would also respond better to a future redevelopment of the pagoda building is needed. - There is an opportunity to create a really special gateway to the site the proposed blocks fail to do this at present – the buildings do not respond sufficiently to the landscape. - Perhaps even a reduction of 10 dwellings across the site would reduce its intensity and allow a better opportunity for good urban design. One example is the terrace of approx. 5 dwellings to west of village square which look rather isolated. If these were removed, the GI could flow uninterrupted. - In the remainder of the site it may be that more a detailed look at how the buildings better respond to the public realm and green space is needed. One example is how homes might celebrate the views out over the new water feature in the east of the site. There is room for further house types or adaptations of house types that could relate to the landscape better? A clearer demonstration of how the architecture responds in scale, materials and typology to the principle landscape spaces, orchestrating the character of these spaces is needed. - Sections through the scheme showing relationship to levels and landscape are needed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design must show how the architecture addresses the corners, ends of terraces etc. - The panel is not sure the social interaction works and how the new community (people, neighbours) will interact. - It would appear that the Urban Design aspect is missing. - The panel wonders about practical aspects of the scheme (drainage, suds...) - The Panel questioned the sustainability of the scheme. The design officer explained that it was very sustainable in terms of performance, zero carbon, waste production, sustainable materials, grey water, water consumption, charging points, solar panels... The panel asked about the separation of grey and black waters and about how the landscape could be forced to deal with grey water using gravity (contours). Officers agreed to look at the detail of the application.
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The landscape led approach and the landscape strategy is sound (there is more layering to it than what was presented on the day) - The panel feel the response of the buildings to that landscape strategy is lacking and the character is a bit too urban. The 'village green' is an urban park surrounded by quite intense development. - The built form is very rigid (pavilion buildings, courtyard buildings, car parking) especially when it is compared to the landscape strategy. There is an opportunity to soften it and respond better to organic forms of nature. - The scheme is disappointing, considering it's been through a long period and had the DRP involvement. - The typology of the entrance area, which is a fundamental part of the scheme, feels uncomfortable, particularly the front / back differentiation. Maybe these pavilion buildings should be rotated? - The Panel wonders about the importance of the pond at the entrance to the office building. Its removal should be considered if that was to unlock a better design solution.