

SITE: Long Priors

Design Review Panel Workshop NOTES

DATE: 12th March 2020

TIME: 1.40 – 2.40pm

VENUE: Ditchling Room, SDC,
Midhurst

Attending DRP:

Mark Penfold (Chair)
Kay Brown
Steven Bee
Merrick Denton-Thompson
Clare Sutton
Kim Wilkie

Attending SDNPA:

Mark Waller-Gutierrez
Ben Terry
Richard Ferguson
Ruth Childs
Tania Hunt

Attending Applicants:

Alistair Harris - Metis Homes
Neil Armitage - Re-Format
Architects

Points discussed during the workshop

Points from the presentation:

- 10 – 12 home allocation in West Meon
- Only Allocated site with West Meon
- Stage 1 Access
- Ecology plays a key part
- Improved settlement boundary
- Landscape Trees and encouraging Bats
- Link from East to West, without the use of Church Lane
- 13 metre height change on the site impacts strongly on the development

Points Discussed:

Topography of Site

- A discussion about the site's complex topography was had. The applicant's described how they changed red lines to try to make dealing with it easier. All agreed it is a difficult site to develop from a landform point of view.
- The panel discussed the relationship between the settlement and the topography. These downland settlements characteristically do not climb up the slopes of the Downs. Parts of this site a steeply sloping and so integrating it within the existing settlements and being sensitive to the open countryside is the challenge. Narrow woodlands/belts of trees may be helpful, equally developing down in the bowl of the site to help it better 'fit' with the existing buildings.
- The Panel considered whether there is an opportunity to leave the higher parts of the site undeveloped and develop the lower parts of the site to overcome some of the issues in terms of the contours?
[Applicant: *Probably not – one of the directions is to have generous gardens. The idea of splitting the development in half is that the central section takes the sting out of the hillside, meaning that there can be flat parking near the houses. This scheme works as it does not chop into the hillside – it works with it.*]
- The two properties at the top of the site at the eastern end are uncharacteristic as they will be dominant in views.

[Applicant: *Rearrangement of roof profiles may help reduce the dominance of these properties.*]

- The Panel suggested showing the contours of the site on the plan would be essential. This would better convey how the landform is proposed to be modified and how these changes relate to the field beyond.
- The Panel considered whether having more communal parking might help. It could present problems with ownership but having housing concentrated at the lower part of the site might help.

Access

- The Panel noted that the drainage plant is located half way up the slope rather than at the bottom of the slope. Panel members asked about whether the access to the drainage plant needed to be via the site?

[Applicant: *We can back up with a lorry and pump, or a man can go through the gate. This means that there will be no vehicles in the field. If this is changed the plant would have upgrade the field track for access.*]

Boundary and Planting

- The Panel asked whether there is scope to have planting areas beyond the site to serve as off-site mitigation.
- Are two fences along the boundary?
[Applicant: *Property ownership stops at the garden fence and there is a protected area of hedgerow*]
- Members of the Panel considered that planting trees could integrate the edge of the site near the tennis court. The Panel believes there is scope for a 10m tree boundary along the boundary on the north of the site.
- The awkward transition with levels around the boundary was noted by the Panel. They recommended it should be 10m wide, not 3m as the latter is far too narrow over this change in level. There is a natural line across to the tennis court where planting could be put in place.
- How permanent is the edge of settlement? There is a danger that the access into the proposed field will facilitate future extension of development.
- What is the nature of the path from the last unit to the tennis court? How are you thinking of dealing with this to make it safe?

[Applicant: *Perhaps this could be a shared surface more like a country lane?*]

Environment Sustainability

The Panel challenged the Applicants on their sustainability credentials, asking how the design meets net-zero carbon in twenty years' time.

- Embodied energy – 80 tonnes in a small house and pavement is an addition – this can be reduced by 25% by using a porous pavement.
- There is much heavier rainfall. The dew pond is nice, but not big enough to collect the amount of rainfall off the roofs. Drainage needs to be integrated at every level. How can you arrest, retain and infiltrate as close to where the raindrop fell as possible? There is a lot of hard surface that was not there before and this means completely different approach to dealing with water.
- How are you orientating the buildings to make best use of passive solar gain?
- There is no reason a more contemporary edge could not be looked at in the design of this build with a hillside there; is there the possibility for earth shelter and use of local materials that come out of the national park?
- Green infrastructure between north and south does not work as it is broken up too much. If this was moved to the top of the site there would be more room for the development at the bottom to the west. There should be a buffer East to west. North to south is not achieving anything?

[Applicant: *It was to link the new buffer zone to the old one for bats and ecology and a good way to divide up the site with the change in contours and height different.*]

- Has this site been sown-up, or is there any connection between the developers and the farmer and therefore more scope for woodland planting/foot paths ?
[Applicant: *The area within the red line and not beyond is under contract and a small area to the north to allow for drainage.*]
- SDNPA need to look at how net gain could happen and this landscape is going to change in terms of how it is being managed. The thought was to investigate some link with the land to develop footpaths or structure planting. Perhaps this conversation could be explored.

Design

- Study the existing developments within the village and the relationship with walls and perhaps look at examples of similar issues in this village, or villages nearby where the development has had to climb out of the bowl of the valley.
- The design needs to not look suburban but also is clearly not a village centre character either. Farmyard typologies or something else may be appropriate here.
- Denser development, e.g. terraces could create more of a positive place and allow more generous green space.
- Look at what the Local Plan says about density and parking and how this has been responded to. Could car parking be made more communal?
- The character of the older part of the village, which is mainly terraces, is much more efficient. The central part of the village is very dense and there is a transition between the wider landscape and the suburban village.

Panel Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape stresses from farming – look into how this could be overcome and opportunities to ‘mend’ it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Changes in landscape – farming practices have to change to comply ii) Boundaries of the proposal – may extend beyond the site to put in woodland and pieces of landscape that help to mend this - that includes down towards where the drainage goes and if there is an opportunity with different service access for drainage. If the design could incorporate an alternative access to this across the bottom of the field and the lane there so it mends all of that end of the field. • Visual block – particularly at the top of the site. • Contours and relationship with land beyond, scope for planting and depth of planting to also overcome the changing level. • Working toward net-zero carbon and biodiversity net gain and adapting to climate change .– this has got to start happening now. Design and the orientation of the buildings should respond to microclimate (e.g. providing shelter to prevailing wind) • Study development of the village – move away from the suburban layout and work with the existing village landscape. • Need to look more into green infrastructure – this needs more working through to give understanding of the plan. • Have a look at enhancing the settlement boundary treatment
Recommended Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put contours on plans to help show the height difference.
Details for next session	