

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting:	18/02/2020
Site:	Land adjacent to Coppice Cottages, Coombe Road, East Meon, Petersfield, Hampshire
Proposal:	Development of 11 new dwellings comprising 1 no. detached 2 storey dwelling and 10 no. semi-detached 2 storey dwellings, detached garage block, 2 no. new access from Coombe Road and 5 metre landscape buffer on southern boundary.
Planning reference:	SDNP/19/06024/FUL
Panel members sitting:	Kay Brown (Chair) David Edwards John Hearn Andy Clemas
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Ben Terry (Design Officer) Rafael Grosso-Macpherson (Case Officer) Nikki Allen (Support Services Officer)
SDNPA Planning Committee in attendance:	None
Item presented by:	Sarah Hains (WYG, Planning Consultant) Dennis Priestley (Pope Priestley Architects)
Declarations of interest:	None

The South Downs National Park Design Review Panel is an independent assessment of development proposals by a panel of multidisciplinary professionals and experts, who aim to inform and improve design quality in new development. It is not intended to replace advice from the planning authority or statutory consultees and advisory bodies, or be a substitute for local authority design advice, or community engagement.

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.

Main issues

1. Is the layout landscape led?
2. Is the indicative layout shown on the Neighbourhood Development Plan landscape led?
3. Does the proposed footpath deliver safe, permeable and functional pedestrian connectivity?
4. Does the layout positively respond to surface water concerns, especially how this deals with water run-off from higher grounds to the south?
5. What way can they move forward with this scheme?

Summary

On behalf of the South Downs National Park, I would like to thank you for bringing your proposal to the Design Review Panel. The Panel thanked the applicants design and planning team for their presentation. We're grateful to receive further clarification on your proposal, and in answering some difficult questions as well.

We visited the site this morning, which gave us a really good feel for the issues, particularly with it being very wet underfoot in the field above your site.

The Panel feel it is unfortunate that the work on the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has come ahead of the adoption of the SDNPA Local Plan. As a result, the two aren't quite in kilter with each other. The Panel feel that the indicative plan within the NDP is not demonstrably landscape-led. We feel that if this had been the other way around then there would have been a better understanding of the landscape, emphasising the importance of following a landscape-led approach to design. The Panel are, therefore, unable to support the proposed design, we feel that the current approach is not robust enough for us to support.

The Panel recommends a full review and context appraisal of the site. It would be useful to have a figure ground diagram completed to support your site in a context appraisal. From our site visit, it would seem that the built environment follows the contours of the valley - Coombe Road is a good example of this. In the older parts of the village there are more ad-hoc, random arrangements of developments, we feel a better understanding of these areas would help inform the proposed layout on this site.

We also feel the opportunity to access this site from the adjoining car park (rented from Radian) should be considered. Please can you negotiate the use of that car park to either gain access and/or provide additional parking, maybe parking in clusters for your site? *Associated with that could be a parking cluster at the other end of the site?*

The Panel are not convinced that the proposed footpath is best located along the 'street frontage', we think that would urbanise a rural lane. We feel that the footpath could be incorporated within the site, or alongside the five metre wildlife corridor at the rear of the site. The Panel feel the use of swales, to help mitigate against surface water runoff and the land drainage issues, should be a key feature of your landscape strategy. The Panel also feel that house sizes are excessive. One-hundred and fifty square metres is on the luxury end of three beds homes, particularly if there is a demand for affordable housing. *The Design Officer has also pointed out that at least one or two of these houses should be passivhaus certified as well. (Policy SD 48).*

Moving forward, we would like to offer a workshop, or a series of workshops to help you develop the scheme. If it's acceptable to you, we would like you to include the neighbourhood plan working group and the parish council, because, obviously, they've been key to developing this site and its policies

Questions from Panel

- 1. Have you undertaken a full Site analysis or a Design analysis?
Have you undertaken a study of site constraints and context?**

Yes, we've looked at typology in the local area, looked the topography of the local area and the landscape visual impact issues which arose from discussions with WYG. The nature of the existing settlement and its history.

The panel suggested using a simple diagram to clarify your site appraisal and rationale for the final design.

- 2. In developing the site layout, have you looked at alternatives that could be significantly different from that of the neighbourhood plan? And, looking into whether there could be a different, maybe a more appropriate layout?**

When development principles are enshrined in neighbourhood plans, there would ordinarily be a reluctance to move from those ideas, unless you have a good reason. during the early design stages, we did strip back the design and look at the site as if it were a greenfield site, however, there was a very strong view by the local community that the idea of two groups of house was the best approach.

We don't believe that a linear development will provide greater benefits. I don't think it's a strong enough case for a site that borders the countryside on two sides.

- 3. Had you looked at what a linear solution might have looked like, from a rooftop view at the key viewpoint, and the difference this would make to the character?**

No, we didn't take the linear 'idea' view that far. When we had discounted a linear approach, the conclusion was that two clusters were an appropriate approach.

- 4. Is there a drainage strategy?**

Yes, there is a drainage strategy. Hampshire County Council have undertaken infiltration testing. There is an infiltration strategy, it's something we're very aware of.

- 5. Is there enough space to incorporate Swales or SUDS?**

Yes. The overland flow is making the site particularly wet at this time of year, because all the water from the southeast is coming down the hill. There is an opportunity to incorporate swales as part of the five-metre landscape screen. There is also a land drain to the front of the site which has been damaged, causing some of the current problems.

We've got the potential to improve the situation. At the moment you've got all that water draining on to Coombe Road and it's not intercepted in any way. We will provide suitable measures on site, and we can make some repairs anything that's damaged.

- 6. What about the provision of affordable housing?**

In consultation with the Parish Council their request was no affordable housing; they requested two/three bedrooms with large rooms for downsizers. However, the local Housing Officer has requested affordable housing to be in-line with the Local Plan requirement. Southcott Homes have spoken to affordable housing providers, there initial reaction was the site is too small to deliver five houses affordably, even the intermediate properties are too small. Southcott Homes will speak other providers.

- 7. What are the house sizes?**

6 x 2 bed

5 x 3 bed (100sqm- 150sqm with a variety of sizes between)

8. Is the footpath necessary?

The Parish Council have been so involved from the start and a footpath is a specific request that Southcott Homes are happy to provide.

9. When did you last consult the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan group?

We spoke to them last summer (2019) when this layout was being worked up. We presented the scheme at a Parish Council meeting. There were a series of informal discussions, over a number of years, before Pope Priestley were formally involved. We feel this scheme would not progress without buy-in from the Parish Council and Local Community. The Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2016, prior to the adoption of the SNDP Local Plan.

10. Is there provision for emergency vehicle access?

The two cluster approach means emergency access and all services, refuse collection etc. will be served off of Coombe Road. There are bin collection points at each dwelling. However, if the incline is considered too steep for bin collection operatives, provision will be made along the boundary of the site. The gradient is not seen as an issue.

11. What is the reason for the skewed nature of some of the dwellings?

We felt the design required a variance, in terms of the angular arrangement between buildings in a cluster. I didn't feel it was appropriate to position buildings in a courtyard arrangement.

12. Have you looked into access from the adjacent car park?

Not yet, it's under private ownership – Radian.