

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting:	23.03.22
Site:	Castelmer Fruit Farm, Kingston near Lewes SDNP/21/03968/PRE
Panel members (DRP):	Paul Fender Maria Hawton-Mead Kim Wilkie Graham Morrison (Chair) Lap Chan
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Rafa Grosso-Macpherson (Design Officer) Ruth Childs (Landscape Officer)
Applicant and Project Team:	Peter Rainier (DMH Stallard Planning) Robert Burnham (Greenplan Designer Homes) Simon Greig (Fabrik Landscape) Patrick Graham (OSP Architecture)
Observers:	Tania Hunt (Support Services Officer)
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 and landscape skills or community engagement

The Panel's response to your scheme will be placed on the Planning Authority's website where the public can view it.

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.

Summary

On behalf of the South Downs National Park, I would like to thank you for bringing your proposal to the Design Review Panel. We are incredibly grateful to review a proposal so early in the process and look forward to participating in further DRP sessions in the future. We would like to thank

you and the applicant team for their presentation and the supporting information you provided to us. It created numerous points for discussion and generated some interesting ideas during the session.

The DRP would like to advise that going forward the technical team find out more about the village and the way that it is structured. It was thought that there would be a historic layout to the village that is a simple spine with roads going off perpendicular to the spine. The option 1 layout plan was thought to be very suburban rather than the 'villagist' option 2. As part of the Design and Access Statement, evidence will need to be provided to show an understanding of the structure of the village, providing historical maps, particularly showing how that structure/layout has responded to the landscape will be needed. In turn this will present the anchoring of the thoughts of landscape, road pattern and buildings, to the way that the village has developed over this long period of time.

In terms of landscape, the thoughts for consideration were the contours and slope of the site, with a road at the top that continues the structure of the village and parallels the path, allowing the gardens to enjoy the slope and the houses to enjoy the views. The orchard is important from a biodiversity point of view and would be a valuable shared space for residents. Views to be presented as part of option 2. The DRP wish the scheme to be bold and 'villagist'. The road pattern following the contours and the continuity of the village. The buildings are divided into 3 groups; the group to the N/E, the apartments and the group in the southern edge and how they respond to each other. 3 distinct contexts in which the buildings are starting to respond. If presented along these lines it allows for a good basis to start to look at design, architecture and numbers. It was thought that option 2 could claim that it makes a positive contribution to the village.

Landscape/ Topography

- **Contours** – it is essential to see the contours of the site and surroundings, currently and proposed to assess the scheme.
- **Orchard** – retention of 2 parts of the orchard to allow a gateway to the orchard from all the gardens, much like 'Notting Hill'. Much less disturbance and cheaper to build and shared safe and private community space.
- **Slope** – Use the slope for the gardens.
- **Units** – should sit on the landscape following contours.
- **Views** – to the south (option 2 preference for this). Maximise views out from houses.
- **Unit 11 on Option 2** – very wet ground and question if this area should be developed, especially considering the future climate. Consider relocating this unit or omitting it completely.
- **Keeping existing access road** – Top road in layout 2 follows the natural contours of the site. The road to the west follows the existing road and sits with the village.
- **Consider use of S/E corner** – collection of water to flow off to the ditch. Is there space for SuDS?

Road Layout

- **Option 1 Vs Option 2** – Option 1 creates a classic cul-de sac that separates from the village and it is not supported. There is preference for Option 2, which becomes part of the fabric of the village.
- **Humble** – keep the character of the road simple, narrow and rural, do not ornate it.

Sustainability

- **Terrace housing** – should be along the north. Exploring terrace housing is much more affordable and reducing surface area is much more energy efficient. This could make up for not having unit 11 to the south.
- **Removal of existing building** – this will need to be justified.
- **Windows** – Larger to the south.

- **Solar shading** – to help to stop overheating.
- **Solar Panels** – on the roof and for solar shading. Use of non-reflecting panels?
- **Water/ drainage.** There is no reference to surface water management. Area to the SE as potential space for SuDS feature.
- **Passive solar gain** – south facing to contribute towards heating with glazing to the south.

Design

- **Option 1** – Variety is forced.
- **Option 2** – Supported by the Panel subject to amendments as per the considerations raised – Option 2 is easier from a development perspective and sits in the contours and allows for uninterrupted views.
- **Topography** – Use within the design to create split levels within the design. Consider upside-down houses with balconies to enjoy the views and make use of the slope.
- **Garden length** – to take out garden length from units 10 and 11 to allow access to the orchard from all the units as a shared space.
- **Garage/ Home Office** – units 10 and 11 to have garage/ home office combined. This transforms the scale of the buildings and creates a little group of buildings that could be quite special and unique.
- **First Impression** – consider arrival point. Shame that the first thing that you are aware of is parking. This should be re-considered.