

SDNPA Landscape & Design Officer Response to Planning Consultation

Date	28/06/2022
Application Reference	SDNP/21/04848/FUL
Description	Development of 37 dwellings (including affordable homes), alterations to existing access onto Petersfield Road, hard and soft landscaping, drainage and all other associated development works.
Address	Liss Forest Nursery, Petersfield Road, Greatham, Liss GU33 6HA
LPA	SDNPA
Summary Response	Objection (on Sustainable Construction grounds) Neutral (on Landscape and Design grounds)

The site and townscape context

The site is bordered by existing residential properties to the north, the local primary school to the south and countryside to the east and to the west across Petersfield Road.

The site is fairly well enclosed by deciduous hedge and tree vegetation and is raised relative to the road. The site drops gently to the NE corner.

Summary

The proposals fail to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Construction SPD in full which is not acceptable. There are a number of concerns with the landscape and particularly the design of the proposals which over rely on standard house types and do not sufficiently speak of Greatham, but on balance a neutral response is offered.

Layout

1. The layout does provide reasonably generous space for a landscape strategy that accommodates a POS and buffer to the countryside to the south, a buffer to the mature trees on the site periphery and a set back from Petersfield Road for development. This has left a developable area which also incorporates a N/S green link at the far end of the site.
2. The location of 37 dwellings, consisting of 35 houses and 2 maisonettes in a village which is characterised by small scale incremental development over centuries is always going to risk creating an uncharacteristically suburban development. This is exacerbated by the quantity of houses proposed for the developable area. This tight development (37 units in approximately 1.42ha, with a density of 26 dph) does not respect the contextual urban grain which includes Petersfield Road (characterised by mostly detached houses of varying sizes in large plots with generous set-backs from the street) and the adjacent twentieth century Bakers Field estate (26 units in 1.49ha, with a density of 17.5dph).
3. The proposals consist of houses of a very similar size, minimal set back from the road and with repeated garage units. On the SE edge there is an increase in building and plot size, but the overall impact is of a highly suburban character.

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4. Some variety in the detailing, materiality and orientation of buildings, particularly on the Petersfield Road frontage, have been made following previous officer comments and in an attempt lessen the 'anywhere' suburban character, but this has been limited by the constraints of using standard house types, rather than through bespoke/landscape-led/contextual site design.
5. The pumping station continues to be emphasised by the design (see hedgerow), and needs amendments to better integrate it into the site. More information is needed explaining or demonstrating what it will look like, often these uses fundamentally undermine public realm as little design consideration is provided. What will people see here? This whole area requires a design which maximises the multiple benefits in a characteristic way. How is this space envisaged to be used and how is the design delivering this?

Road character and landscape

6. Rural roads have; no kerbs, no white lines, no material changes, no rumble strips. Traffic speeds are managed by the form of the road. Please consider positive precedents in the local area, and amend highway design.
7. The road design has been improved. The build out in the SE part of the site should be removed – it fails to deliver passive traffic calming characteristically. The rumble strips should be removed. If the applicant is seeking to identify the footpath we suggest pedestrians are given priority through design by marking the path on the road using setts of a characteristic material – ensure the road is as narrow as possible where it can be.
8. Use tree planting to help generate the perception of narrowing in the road where conventionally a rumble strip may be used. Trees will need to be large when planted.
9. It remains unclear how water will leave the road surface and be managed.
10. The applicant notes their intention to use drought tolerant species. Adapting to climate change requires a more integrated approach than this, and species should be first characteristic of Greatham in order to help the scheme integrate into its context. Consider the emerging design guide for advice on trees now and ensure spaces are sufficient and trees form an integral part of delivering SuDS. Resilience to shocks and delivery of ecosystem services should be the design aim.

Boundary treatments

11. Internally more opportunities for hedgerow planting to divide gardens have been taken but there is no reason why the potential for a continuous green hedgerow links are not completed by including the boundaries between units 15 & 16 and 13 & 14.
12. Lengths of close boarded fences currently face onto the public realm. Between units 1 & 2; 3 & 4; 11 & 12; 12 & 13; 13 & 14; 16 & 17; 20 & 21; 22 & 23; 23 and 24; 29 & 30; and 34 & 35. These should be change for walls.
13. Where close-boarded is used the sustainability statement now indicates they will include hedgehog holes, enabling wildlife to move around freely.
14. Material for walls should also include locally characteristic stone – (see opposite the site, and around the Rectory). Stone walls are a characteristic of Greatham, but currently none are proposed. Some prominent walls such as around unit 1; the walls framing the exits in the central part of the development (units 7, 9, 11 & 15) and along units 24 and 28 could all be in stone matching the local ironstone. This would help, in a small way, make the design more Greatham specific.
15. The front boundary treatments need to be landscape-led. Locally matched stone walls should be part of the design response here as they are clearly locally characteristic (e.g. see opposite site) Picket fencing to some limited extent should only be proposed if clearly locally characteristic- need the evidence for this, including in conservation area.

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16. Pedestrian gates are locally characteristic and therefore are expected where appropriate, which is in the majority of cases in this layout. It appears that these have now been indicated which is positive.

SuDS Design –

17. The rain gardens, swales and pond need to be designed to maximise the benefits they can deliver. Once their function is designed in they also need to be positive spaces for wildlife and people. The SuDS pond for example should not be of the same gradient all the way round, should be more naturalistic in profile and less engineered.
18. Precipitation capture at source – should be achieved through 10% green roofs (including car ports and sheds), water butts.
19. Although some swales and raingardens and a detention basin are shown, none of the comments previously made regarding water have been addressed, and basic simple measures, such as providing water butts, have not been provided for. These need to be integrated into building design, rather than stuck on as an afterthought, to ensure they are easy to use so people do use them.
20. Overall information about how water will be managed is still lacking. It still isn't clear how water will move sustainably around the site, e.g. from roads and houses into rain gardens, swales and then the pond. How often will the pond be wet (permanently?), headwall locations (design should be conditioned to ensure small diameter pipes are used allowing for very understated headwall design and thus more integrated (not engineered) features remains scant in the recent submissions. Is there sufficient space for ponds and swales to be sensitively designed, integrated and deliver multiple functions?

Elevations

21. How are the house elevations demonstrating locally characteristic design as required in policy SD5f? These look like 'anywhere' house types. There is not a sense of 'Greatham' when looking at the street scenes.
22. There is a need for less reliance on repeated standard house types and more bespoke design both to reflect the local character and to create a more distinctive residential settlement.
23. Elevations show a large preponderance of white barge boards and soffits. Why is this and how does this relate to the local character of traditional building in the Greatham area and the National Park? The precedent images (showing boundaries) provided, only show twentieth and nineteenth century buildings which do not represent the true character of the rural architecture in the area. Exposed rafter eaves solutions would be more characteristic for what is traditionally inspired design.
24. Brick window arches are locally characteristic, often in stone-faced elevations, but there is also variety in the detailing found locally which should be referenced in the scheme design. Some better detailing now indicated.

Materials

25. Red brick as a main elevation material is appropriate (although the specific brick will need to be locally characteristic and agreed with the Authority), as is clay tile hanging, but the local stone building material would tie the development more to Greatham.
26. The small increase in ironstone use on the buildings is positive, however where the development would be most prominent (from Petersfield Road and as approached along the PROW to the south in the countryside the greater use of ironstone is needed to make the development speak of Greatham, which is an ironstone village.
27. It would be helpful to see where the stone will be sourced from, pre-determination, to prevent changes at conditions discharge stage.

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28. Roof materials should be mainly red clay tiles with some natural slate. This is now indicated and will be covered by condition.
29. Plastic windows and doors are strongly discouraged in favour of timber, aluminium or a combination of the two, such as Velfac.
30. Materials for access roads need to conform to 'Roads in the South Downs', i.e. simple, natural (e.g. stone finish to roads, hoggin to paths etc.) and no kerbs with road bleeding into grassed areas.

Lighting

31. Is there any lighting proposed for any external spaces? Needs to conform to Policy SD8 and Dark Night Skies. Lighting concerns remain unaddressed.

Sustainable Performance

32. **Sustainable Construction SPD:** The May 2022 Sustainability Statement sets out the policy context for the sustainable construction approach, but completely fails to reference the Authority's Sustainable Construction SPD adopted in August 2020.
33. **Energy/CO2 emissions:** SD48 requires all development to meet sustainable construction standards beyond what is required through national building regulations. The development needs to reduce predicted CO2 emissions by at least 19% **via energy efficiency** of the building and a further 20% via on site **low or zero carbon energy**. Both these reduction figures relate to the baseline for maximum CO2 emissions allowed under building regulations. The sustainability statement commits to achieving a 14% reduction via energy efficiency and at least a further 25% through the use of PV and ASHPs. Although, not meeting the policy SD48 and SPD requirements to the letter, this will be acceptable, although it should be noted that the updated carbon conversion factors for mains gas and electricity, as used in SAP 10.2, will be expected, which will have a bearing on, e.g. the quantity of PV required. **PASS** (subject to use of correct carbon conversion factors)
34. **Passive house:** At least 10% of the units (4 in this case) need to be passive house certified but none are proposed. **FAIL**
35. **EV charge points:** There is at least one electric vehicle (EV) charge point for every dwelling, which is acceptable. **PASS**
36. **Water consumption:** The predicted internal mains water use must be no more than 105 litres/person/day. This has been targeted by the applicant. **PASS**
37. **Waste:** A site waste management plan must demonstrate that at least 50% of construction waste is diverted from landfill. Waste inside the dwellings must be segregated to match the local waste collection service (e.g. mixed recycling, refuse, food etc.). No commitment to do either of these is provided in the sustainability statement. **FAIL**
38. **Materials:** Timber in the construction should be 'Grown in Britain' certified, or where this is not possible, FSC certified. FSC/PEFC proposed but no commitment to exploring 'Grown in Britain' timber. **NEUTRAL** (some good commitments but need to explore option of 'Grown in Britain' timber).
39. **Green roofs:** At least 10% of the total roof area of the new development should be green roof. Only 6 car barns (approx. 110 sqm in total) out of the whole development of 37 units (approx.. 2500-3000 sqm in total) indicates that the green roof percentage is perhaps only about 4% at most. Garden sheds not proposed for green roofs but this is an obvious option. **FAIL**

Conclusions

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40. The layout is landscape-led in terms of its initial landscape strategy but fails where it becomes too suburban in character, given the number of units proposed in the developable area.
41. The building design is too reliant on repeated house types that do not speak of Greatham. And the final effect is that the design of the built form is quite mediocre in quality.
42. The material choices for buildings and boundaries do not sufficiently demonstrate a landscape led approach to design. The identity of Greatham as an ironstone village is still not sufficiently used in the design proposal for buildings and boundary walls.
43. The proposals do not fully conform to the requirements of the adopted Sustainable Construction SPD (no passive house homes, 10% green roofs not achieved, construction and operational waste targets not met, 'Grown in Britain' timber sourcing not explored, SuDS strategy not fully explained or justified).

Recommendations

44. A better design solution with a more relaxed, less suburban character would be achieved with a modest reduction in units.
45. The design needs to speak more of its location in the South Downs National Park, Greatham and its edge of countryside rural location, in terms of the architectural language; use of locally characteristic materials and boundary treatments; and layout; and a more rural road design.
46. The proposals should fully address the Authority's requirements in the adopted sustainable construction SPD.
47. Ironstone around the key building at plot 1 still needs to be resolved to ensure the whole building can be clad and not just parts of it. This may require bespoke design changes.
48. More ironstone is needed, particularly as viewed from Petersfield Road and on the countryside edge.
49. Scope to reduce the suburban character could still be made through a reduction in repetitive garages, a greater variation in building heights, removal of close board fencing facing the public realm and its replacement with local stone walls – the heights of which could be varied. But care will be needed to ensure these are meaningful.
50. The sheds/outbuildings provide another opportunity to deliver some additional green roof – especially on sheds. These could become outbuildings, integrated into the garden wall (where they exist) – supporting a monopitch green roof – reducing the maintenance burden on residents/the HA, providing more opportunity for residents to experience nature, and preventing lots of different shed roofs to be visible from the public realm. Similarly the sub-station and pumping station are likely to undermine much of the public realm and would benefit from an integrated design. Using a green roof is one way to start to achieve this.
51. Suggest the 'gateway' walls are removed to plots 26 and 27. Doubling up on boundary treatments is unnecessary (hedges already shown here, which are fine). Instead local stone walls should be used to better delineate spaces between properties where they face onto the public realm as previously advised.
52. Where walls are a significant feature of a private garden (e.g. corner plots) they too should include hedgehog holes similar to the CBF. This will need to be covered explicitly via a condition.

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