

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Workshop Notes**

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	22.11.23
<b>Site:</b>	23 London Road, Petersfield. GU31 4BQ SDNP/23/02795/FUL
<b>Panel members (DRP)</b>	Steven Bee Mark Penfold (Chair) Paul Phasey Claire Sutton Andrew Smith
<b>SDNPA officers in attendance:</b>	Rafa Grosso Macpherson (Design Officer) Tania Hunt (Support Services Officer) Yvette Flynn (Support Services Officer) Katherine Pang (Case Officer, Petersfield) Nat Belderson (Link Officer)
<b>Applicant and Project Team:</b>	Dan Roycroft - Atlas Planning Group Olly Bray OB Architecture Anthony May OB Architecture
<b>Observers:</b>	None
<b>Declarations of interest:</b>	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.**

#### **Main Presentation Points**

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- Family owned automotive company specialising in servicing, refurbishment and production of high performance vehicles.
- Awarded McLaren service centre status in 2021 becoming 1 of 11 in the UK for servicing of Ultimate Series vehicles.
- Current commercial services fragmented across different sites, desire to bring them all together for commercial and environmental efficiencies.
- 2 adjacent plots acquired for expansion.

- Extend the existing vehicle workshop westwards over three levels (one subterranean) creating a new main entrance to the building, equipment storage area, additional workshop office space, and a new on-site vehicle storage unit with capacity for 10 vehicles
- Associated change of use of a portion of No.21 London Road's garden (listed building). Demolition of No.21's rear garage and existing extension to the front elevation, front extension to No.21, blocking up of No.21's existing access and creation of a new access and associated staff car park, alongside new Reception area, break out rooms and archive space.
- Associated change of use of a portion of No.19 garden alongside demolition of No.19 and erection of a replacement C3 dwelling to provide high quality accommodation for international clients. Hard and soft landscaping, and associated works.

## Summary

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The Chair thanked the applicants for bringing the proposal to the Design Review Panel (DRP). The South Downs National Park primary focus is Landscape/ Context Led schemes. With this in mind the panel were concerned about the green corridor along the road and the breaking/loss of this, and how this impacts on the landscape/townscape on that edge, leading to a character change of what is now a verdant corridor. It was also felt that the layering of the landscaping mentioned in the presentation needs to be much more dominant. The Panel had concerns regarding the bulk and scale of the workshop building, alongside the work that needs to be done and questioned how this can be completed in a sustainable way. Biodiversity Net Gain is also a consideration and should be incorporated into the design. The current plan for levels and retaining walls, particularly around No. 17 left the panel concerned about the close edge here and they felt that there could be significant issues in terms of retaining and planting within those areas. Another point raised was regarding the Grade II listed building and how it needs to become much more incorporated and inherent within the overall scheme, with concern regarding the justification for these changes and demolishing of part of this building. The new house was not much of a concern other than if the landscape edging on the road is changed (the hedge), as this will allow it to become a much more dominant feature in an area where houses are generally hidden. The panel's final thoughts were that this scheme could work by refining the whole site presence and bringing it together centred around the Grade II listed building.

## Discussion

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**Green Corridor** – the panel see the current building in an opening to site as a jewel on the corner in an otherwise quite enclosed environment. There are sections of openness and permeability as you move east along London Road, but particularly at the moment the western section including the site, is very enclosed with dense vegetation and indigenous hedges.

By removing the hedge and opening up the frontage, the street scene will become far more visually open to the site and the dwellings beyond, making a dramatic difference, and highlight the change of use in a residential area.

Consideration needs to be taken regarding the contextual landscape and dramatically changing the character of the street scene. Removal of hedge opens views across the site through to residential properties (No. 17) behind.

**Layering the landscape** – more thought needs to be taken regarding the layering permeability of the planting within the site. There appears to be pressure between landscaping looking natural and the brand identity of tight clipping. There is an opportunity to use the existing defined boundary between showroom and listed building to split transition.

**Planting** – the bays next to No. 17, boundary space very small, not much room to put trees, consider straightening up the line of bays instead of following the contour to allow for more planting along the boundary.

**Frontage**- how does it fit with the context locally? Is it small rows of trees or clumps of trees?

**Bulk and scale** - the new workshop has too much volume next to the existing workshop and has very close proximity to the boundary of the site and a neighbouring house to the rear.

**Office Location** – could the office be relocated to allow size reduction – take out a level?

**Parking** - Further thinking about the amount of parking spaces needed in the basement and whether usage from the upper floors could be moved down to reduce the mass of the block at the back.

There is an opportunity to use the back garden of the bungalow for staff parking.

**Listed building** –More conversations with the Conservation Officer are needed about the historic significance of the Grade II listed building is. The Grade II listed building feels out of touch/on its own within a wider context, not connected to rest of the site. Moving the glazed extension to the listed building to face the existing 'jewel' building would help to knit the site together and become more inherent within the whole scheme.

A member of the panel suggested, The original setting of the listed building has already been lost. Significance may remain in original fabric and interior features, but removal or adaptation of later additions could improve on the status quo. Further adaptation should allow for the future reversion to residential use.

**New house** – No. 19: There were concerns around the justification for the loss of embodied energy that would be caused by demolition of an existing dwelling, and the size of the new build, although floor area footprint is smaller than original. Consider refurbishing and extending if necessary the existing building.

There is too much on site and each site seems to be working separately and not as a whole.

### **Going forward**

- More thought put into landscape/context led and the green corridor along London Road.
- Need more dominant landscape layering moving through the site.
- More thought around the bulk and scale of the workshop and its proximity to the residential boundary. Consider scaling back the first floor to create staggering or visual distance.
- Potential to move workshop building forward into the site to relieve pressure at the boundary.
- Need to objectively explain what is important about the listed building and better describe its use going forward.