

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Workshop Notes

Date of meeting:	21.02.24
Site:	Old Malling Farm, Lewes SDNP/23/04659/REM
Panel members (DRP):	William Hardie (Chair) Andy Clemas Louise Hooper Maria Hawton Mead Adam Richards Richard Eastham
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Vicki Colwell (Case Officer) Ruth Childs (Landscape Officer) Rafa Grosso-Macpherson (Design Officer) Mark Waller-Gutierrez (Design Officer) Tania Hunt (Senior Support Services Officer)
Applicant and Project Team:	Lukas Ochendal AHMM (Architects) Martyna Berek BBUK (Landscape Architects) Krishan Pattni, Top Hat (Developer) Tondra Thom Parker Dann (Planning Agent)
Observers	Philippa Smyth Catherine Cardin
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.

Summary

The panel felt that this scheme had improved considerably and is working well. Different character areas have been established, this has enabled the ability to be a bit bolder and playful within these areas and this is working well. There were some concerns regarding sustainability. Where will the air source heat pumps sit? (The noise of these needs to be considered). What is the air tightness and potential operational energy needed to run the buildings? Car ports could be considered and there is an opportunity for further PV panels and car parks could be designed for placemaking. The window reveals don't appear to be very deep, making overheating a possibility, therefore reassurance is needed.

The visualisations give a sense of spirit of the place but are misleading. The Panel do not know if the spaces and details shown on visualisations are designed yet or not. The Panel are interested in seeing the architectural detail of windows, eaves, reveals and gutters to allow understanding of what the projections are. It would also be beneficial to better understand the colours and textures of materials. Further detail is also needed with regards to bin stores, fences, porches, and sheds. Alongside this, further information is also needed on the boundary treatment both internally and externally. A retaining wall plan would also be useful. There was also confusion regarding what are the front and back of buildings. In some situations, it could be both, but this needs to be considered further. The 'specials' were discussed, which in principle are a good idea. However, the visualisations really let down the timber here. The timber looks plastic in the examples. Could this be played with more? There is refinement and balance that needs to be explored.

Discussion

AR - What is the technology of Top Hat, what is the materiality and how is it going to avoid being flimsy?

Pre-assembled timber framed printed onto a calcium silicon board with an overall depth of 15mm. The façade is a printed process with the material used containing 70% crushed brick. It is not a panel, it is a continuous surface, there are no joints with an ability to print around corners.

MHM - What is the material used for the insulation of the panels?

It's a combination of materials that is predominantly glass and mineral wool.

WH – What is the maintenance of the facade if residents want to make alterations, or have problems?

Repairs, depends on extent of repairs (they will have a repair kit that can be sent out), the building is effectively timber framed and can therefore be clad again.

MHM – The airtightness is on the inside? What levels of airtightness are achieved?

Yes, we can achieve very high levels of up to 0.8. This scheme does not rely on high levels of MVHR, so we have relaxed the airtightness with an average 2 air changes.

AC – All aspects of design are marrying up with each other and it has moved on since the last DRP. Some areas are more successful than others. The Greenway - feature buildings are introducing timber. This works more successfully on the left than the right. The left has entrances to homes that are open and landscape that is active with appropriate boundary walls. On the right, the entrances are concealed with a closed frontage to the landscape. There is a quality and character to the left in timber and more in keeping with the precedent. The right is more generic where the layering is divorced from each other. The breaking the eaves comment from the last DRP has not been achieved in all areas. The breaking of the eaves creates visual relief.

MHM- Where is it planned for the air source heat pumps to sit? It would be useful to see this detail on the plans. Along with the bike sheds, bin stores – these all offer opportunities to make the architecture look more interesting.

At the rear of all houses – 200mm from the wall of the house sitting to the side of patio doors.

RE – The Ridgeway - Is there a rationale for the two building pockets not being parallel?

A gesture to create a better visual connection to The Greenway.

RE- You have public spaces framed by backs of houses. There should be clarity on where is the front and the back. The treatment of the large car parks and the parking across the road. The car park should be designed as a public realm space where you can park and not just a car park. Until

landscaping matures, it is a massive hard space. Thought needed on the design of these spaces now, as in the future these areas may need to be repurposed.

RE - The risk of the Green's informal parking becoming parking for residents (road is too wide). This needs to be managed. The intention of the green space could be lost by becoming a row of cars. This also happens in other areas of the development. This could be design-led to mitigate this.

LH – The landscape is really shaping up. Have you thought enough about climate change and the need of planting for shading in open spaces? It's getting hotter and there is a need for trees. *Over 400 trees going in with links to east and west as they grow. There is also a wooded area to the north. There will be areas with seating throughout.*

MHM – where do you see as a meeting spot that could be a community area?
We did not create a main focal point as this has been scrutinised by residents and different character areas. There is a covered area to the north of the site. The Greenway is central, but a permanent structure was not wanted here.

WH – Consistently trying to get people to walk in from Lewes. Community space and flexibility of building use could be linked with this.

MHM – 50% of the houses are facing south, has an overheating analysis been done? Solar shading on the south facing windows would be beneficial. SAP is not very reliable for modelling.
Yes, an overheating analysis has been done and we are using SAP for modelling.

WH – Regarding the relationship to the landscape and the boundaries. I think the boundaries of the outside have moved on a lot. It is now the boundaries of the back and fronts of the buildings, are there gates and flint walls?

All the gardens facing an open space will have gates.

MHM – What is the accessibility of the buildings?
All but 17 of the buildings will be accessible.

Actions

- Useful to see more detail in the plans. where are the Bike Sheds, Air Source Heat Pumps, bin stores?
- A heatmap of walking routes would be useful to see where the hot spots are. An old person strategy is also a thought to see where the communal focus could be.
- Boundary treatment, both internally and externally.