

Report of the Coastal West Sussex Panel

Land North of Sefter Road, Pagham

19th July 2021

The design review meeting

Reference number	1655/210706
Date	6 th July 2021
Meeting location	Online via Zoom
Panel members attending	Lorraine Farrelly (chair), architecture and urban design Maggie Baddeley, planning and housing Steven Bee, historic environment and urban design John Pegg, landscape architecture and urban design David Prichard, architecture and urban design
Panel manager	Kiki Gkavogianni, Design South East
Presenting team	Ben Baillie, Cooper Baillie Architects Jane Piper, Barton Willmore Greg Collins, CSA Environment Lynn Pack, Taylor Wimpey
Other attendees	Rachael Gardner, Taylor Wimpey Claire Potts, Arun District Council Martyn White, Arun District Council Brenda Louisy-Johnson, Arun District Council (observing)
Site visit	This review was carried out during the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020/21. Independent site study and a digital walk-around (in a similar fashion to that which would have been conducted on-site) was carried out prior to the review.
Scope of the review	As an independent design review panel the scope of this review was not restricted.
Panel interests	Panel members did not indicate any conflicts of interest.
Confidentiality	This report will be made public through the Council's website as the reserved matters approval application is live.

The proposal

Name	Land North of Sefter Road
Site location	Land North of Sefter Road & 80 Rose Green Road, Pagham
Site details	The site is 12.29 hectares and lies north of Sefter Road in Pagham. It is currently mostly vacant land; however a scout hut is located by the main entrance off Sefter Road. The south-eastern corner of the site extends to include no. 80 Rose Green Road. The site is relatively flat and there are significant drainage issues in particular in the southern section. A non-designated heritage asset is located within the site which is a World War II Infantry Section Post.
Proposal	The proposal is a reserved matters approval application (live) for 250 dwellings, a 167.8sqm replacement scout hut and allocated space for a potential new school or care home. No. 80 Rose Green Road is proposed for demolition and a new emergency access/cycle and pedestrian entrance/exit to the site will be offered there.
Planning stage	This is a live application following a refusal of the previous reserved matters approval application.
Local planning authority	Arun District Council
Planning context	The site is allocated for residential-led development within the adopted Arun Local Plan (Policy HSP2a: Greater Bognor Regis Urban Area). It forms part of strategic allocation SD2: Pagham North which allows for the development of 800 dwellings within the Pagham North allocation area. A Design Code Masterplan has been submitted alongside this reserved matters approval application, based on the principles of the Outline Design & Access Statement and Development Framework Plans. Access has been approved as part of the outline planning permission.
Planning history	An outline application was approved in October 2019 for the following: P/134/16/OUT for the erection of 250 no. dwellings, (including affordable homes), replacement scout hut, land for an Ambulance Community Response Post Facility, demolition of no. 80 Rose Green Road and provision of Public Open Spaces including associated children's play areas, landscaping, drainage and earthworks.

A subsequent reserved matters approval application was submitted in March 2020 and refused in June 2020. The subject reserved matters approval application was submitted in March 2021 and is still under consideration.

Planning authority
perspective

The Case Officer has not completed a full assessment of the scheme yet. Their initial comments and focussed on layout and are:

- Concern about the legibility of secondary roads to north of site.
- The parking courts in plots 90 -86 do not have sufficient landscaping.
- Sense of arrival on main part of site – the buildings could bookend better.
- The layout needs to include the cycle connection points to the north east (shown as 'potential' links on the plans).

In addition, the scheme does not reflect the local vernacular in terms of built form, only materials.

Community
engagement

Extensive consultation has taken place as this proposal is a live application.

Previous reviews

This scheme was previously reviewed by the Panel in May 2017 at outline stage before an application was submitted. A summary of our comments can be found below.

Key recommendations from previous review (18/4/17)

1. The quality of the connections needs to be maximised so that this site is not an isolated and separate community. We have concerns that the current connections proposed will not be sufficient or of necessary quality to facilitate good integration between this and adjacent areas.
2. The treatment of the site edges and the relationship between new and existing development needs improving.
3. The location of on-site community facilities is too remote for existing residents in the area; relocating them is encouraged.
4. Water management is harming the quality of the spaces proposed on site and should be altered to allow these spaces to better fulfil their potential.
5. Changes to the way open space on site is distributed would help to overcome some of these issues.
6. We encourage early and active community consultation to help shape the development in a way that will integrate better with the existing settlement and community.

Summary

The proposal has not taken into consideration all of our previous recommendations and advice. We appreciate that the uncertainty around the school/care home poses several challenges on the overall layout. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities, for example, the existing anti-tank drain on the northern edge. This, if incorporated into the design, could form an integral part of the SuDS for the site, benefitting the design, enhancing the green/blue infrastructure, revealing and adapting the site's modest historic significance and improving the life of residents.

Since the outline permission in 2019, new national policy and guidance has been published that reinforces the importance of high quality design in placemaking (notably the updated National Planning Policy Framework, and the National Design Guide and Code). This reserved matters approval application should be assessed against this policy and guidance, and previously approved design parameters could be challenged.

Key recommendations

1. Utilise the anti-tank drain to reinforce the interpretation and ecological value of the heritage asset, add value and improve the sustainable drainage system.
2. Model different user scenarios to explore how people will move around and beyond the site and incorporate these movements into the design strategy.
3. Incorporate the cycle route into the low traffic road layout and make better use of the space released by removing the segregated lane.
4. Remove the perimeter amenity space and walking route as it creates unusable space and explore different options where rear gardens back onto the boundary and more space is allocated for public use in the heart of the site.
5. Reflect the local vernacular of longer street frontages instead of cul-de-sacs and provide front gardens.
6. Redesign the central space as one for all to use, rather than dedicate this primary space to a play area.
7. Reinforce the power of a landscape-led master plan by foregrounding impactful landscape elements as both structural and character-forming elements of the design.

Detailed comments and recommendations

1. Design strategy

- 1.1. The applicant team should work with the local planning authority to obtain a better understanding of the balance between ‘fixed’ matters based on the outline permission, the s.106 obligations and the weight to be given to new planning policy and guidance. The wording of the conditions offers flexibility that should be taken on board when designing the detailed matters of this application.
- 1.2. Whether or not a school (or care home) will be located on site plays a significant role in the design proposal. The uncertainty faced by the design team is not allowing them to maximise the potential around that area or make clear placemaking moves.
- 1.3. The introduction of water-sensitive design elements is positive, yet the provision of a large number of car parking spaces is unfortunate. The commitment to sustainable development remains unclear and a sustainability strategy needs to be produced as soon as possible to address and balance the matters of parking, the extent of hardstanding and creating a water-sensitive design.
- 1.4. The way people will move around the development and connect with adjoining areas and nearby facilities needs to be explored and modelled. Possible scenarios, including the school or care home, will help define the baseline movement strategy that ought inevitably to lead to review and revision of the vehicular, pedestrian and cycling layouts.
- 1.5. The phasing of the development from west to east will result in construction vehicles going past the most recently sold properties. This is not the most appropriate solution and we encourage the applicant to explore other alternatives.

2. Masterplan and site layout

- 2.1. The supposedly ‘landscape-led’ masterplan is missing ‘destinations’. The two entrances/egresses are clear destinations and should be emphasised further. The main open space is another key feature. However, if the school/care home does not proceed, there would be no termination on that diagonal route. If the anti-tank drain were to be used to create a green edge, then that could form a significant piece of landscape identity and a destination point.
- 2.2. The site layout does not match the surrounding context and a different arrangement, where front gardens are offered, should be found. The local characteristic of longer street frontages provides a more appropriate figure ground than the current layout of cul-de-sac.

- 2.3. A thorough analysis of the local street patterns could also offer alternatives to the perimeter route, as suggested at the previous review. We remain unconvinced that this route is the optimal solution for this site. We advise the applicant to create a perimeter of rear gardens backing onto the boundary and allocate more public open space centrally. A central space would be better overlooked and could perform the landscape and community function of a village green.
- 2.4. As designed, the site would be dominated by car parking and we would recommend a more pedestrian-friendly approach. Moreover, the extensive areas of hardstanding and roads could in all likelihood create further issues with drainage, which should be avoided.
- 2.5. The street layout would be of low-traffic and low-speed suburban roads which could easily accommodate safe cycle lanes. A segregated 3m wide cycle lane feels excessive in this context and increases even further the total area of hard surfaces.
3. Landscape and open spaces
 - 3.1. We applaud the aspiration of a landscape-led masterplan, yet this has failed to materialise in the overall design. The proposal does not integrate with its surroundings, mainly as a result of the landscape-led vision not starting with understanding the context. The missed opportunity of utilising the northern edge and the anti-tank drain is a clear indication of this error.
 - 3.2. The importance of the edge as a perimeter to the development makes it worthy of a more robust green edge; the local use of shelter belt planting may assist in developing a character in this regard.
 - 3.3. The wider connections, for example to the residential square beyond the southern boundary, are missing. During the presentation the design team referred to opening up the development to its surroundings, contrary to how other recent developments in the area have responded. However, the proposed development does not connect effectively to its surroundings.
 - 3.4. The existing anti-tank drain and the northern edge can be incorporated into the design of the proposal and contribute positively in three ways: firstly, as part of the sustainable drainage system of the site if surface water is directed towards them; secondly, enhancing the value of the non-designated heritage asset; and thirdly, enhancing the biodiversity of the site. Therefore, we urge the design team to reconsider their approach to drain surface water to the south of the site and then back to the north and to utilise what is already in place to address flood risk.

- 3.5. The central open space should be a place for all residents to enjoy and to feel welcome. The provision of a play area only might make it exclusive to parents and carers with children and could be unattractive, or even unacceptable, for use by single people or older residents with no children to be around.
- 3.6. Play structures could be distributed across the site, to address all ages. Designated areas for younger children are welcome, yet older children tend to find informal play more interesting.
4. Architecture and materials
 - 4.1. We believe that a deeper understanding of the surrounding area, the materials and street patterns is needed. As mentioned above, front gardens and long linear frontages are key characteristics. Local materials, such as flint, are proposed to be utilised, a more contemporary approach is encouraged.
 - 4.2. Several surrounding buildings are rendered. Lighter tones can highlight greenery and should be encouraged.
 - 4.3. The approach to materials and detailing was not discussed in great detail at this review. Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) states: *'Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).'*
 - 4.4. In order to be consistent with this national policy, the applicant team and local authority should note Design South East's general guidance on material quality and detail. The quality of the detailing should be demonstrated through large scale drawings at 1:20 and 1:5 of key elements of the building/landscape and should be accompanied by actual material samples.

Confidentiality

If the scheme was not the subject of a planning application when it came to the panel, this report is offered in confidence to those who attended the review meeting. There is no objection to the report being shared within the recipients' organisations provided that the content of the report is treated in the strictest confidence. Neither the content of the report, nor the report itself can be shared with anyone outside the recipients' organisations. Design South East reserves the right to make the content of this report known should the views contained in this report be made public in whole or in part (either accurately or inaccurately). Unless previously agreed, pre-application reports will be made publicly available if the scheme becomes the subject of a planning application or public inquiry. Design South East also reserves the right to make this report available to another design review panel should the scheme go before them. If you do not require this report to be kept confidential, please inform us.

If the scheme is the subject of a planning application the report will be made publicly available and we expect the local authority to include it in the case documents.

Role of design review

This is the report of a design review panel, forum or workshop. Design review is endorsed by the National Planning Policy Framework and the opinions and recommendations of properly conducted, independent design review panels should be given weight in planning decisions including appeals. The panel does not take planning decisions. Its role is advisory. The panel's advice is only one of a number of considerations that local planning authorities have to take into account in making their decisions.

The role of design review is to provide independent expert advice to both the applicant and the local planning authority. We will try to make sure that the panel are informed about the views of local residents and businesses to inform their understanding of the context of the proposal. However, design review is a separate process to community engagement and consultation.

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