

From: Vicky Phillips
Sent: Wed, 27 Nov 2019 17:06:16 +0000
To: Mills, Penelope
Subject: DC/19/1940/RM

[THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Penny

Please find below comments made on application DC/19/1940/RM at last night's planning committee meeting:

Parcel A8 is a parcel of land isolated from the main NE development but in close proximity to the Chalkstone and Bird Estates which are characterised by wide verges, trees and green spaces. The proposal is out of keeping with this townscape (CS2n). The proposal over-develops the land parcel and creates massing which is uncharacteristic and creates a problem townscape:

1. The proposed front 'gardens' are effectively non-existent. Suffolk Preservation Society warns against this type of urban design: 'well planted borders & hedges create green infrastructure along the street scene, avoiding narrow grass strips that fail to give privacy or visual aesthetics to street frontages. Good design would add privacy; create a better defined street scene; prevents dog fouling and can still be low maintenance'. (Elwood Landscape Design 2019, for SPS)
2. The plans purport to show the location of new trees, but in reality with so little space the planting will be too close to utilities and foundations.

Core Strategy Policy CS2 - Sustainable Development: 4.19 quotes: *There are certain broad requirements which all development should meet if it is to be acceptable. Proposals must be acceptable in terms of their: impact on the landscape, natural environment and cultural heritage; quality of design; sustainable use of resources; amenity; highway safety; and infrastructure.*

A high quality, sustainable environment will be achieved by designing and incorporating measures appropriate to the nature and scale of development, including: the protection and enhancement of natural resources.

This proposal is not in accordance with CS2

NPPF para 8b social objective: *To support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;*

This proposal is not in accordance with NPPF p8b

Mental Health and Urban Living

The applicant is providing 'pocket parks' in Parcels A1 and A2, which will predominately consist of large detached dwellings with reasonable gardens. However, the proposed layout for parcel A8 has very little green verge and no pocket park, despite A8 having a greater density of smaller houses and flats. The lack of pocket park impacts negatively on social interactions and opportunities for informal play without having to leave the development.

There is a growing body of evidence that even modest greening of urban areas can have an important positive impact on mental health incomes. (Roe, Aspinall, & Ward Thompson, 2016) This research indicates that people in affordable housing got more pronounced benefits from this greening. This emphasises the importance of good urban design, incorporating immediate access to small green spaces. It is not acceptable to treat the future residents of A8 differently to those who are able to afford to live in A1 & A2. There is no difference in access to the green buffer areas. Another benefit to creating greenspace with soft landscaping is this helps absorb noise. A8 is offering a very hard urban townscape, which is out of step with good practice for creating healthy places to live.

Core Strategy Policy CS3 - Building for Life 4.32 *The Building for Life standard is the national benchmark for well-designed housing and neighbourhoods in England, influencing good design in terms of how it contributes positively to place-making and 'Design and Local Distinctiveness 4.44 Successful places depend upon good design. 'the creation of attractive open spaces can make a significant difference to the quality of the urban environment'.*

This proposal is not in accordance with CS3

NPPF Policy para 127e - Achieving well-designed places: *'optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space)'*

This proposal is not in accordance with NPPF p127e

The overall development does meet the 23% affordable housing requirement, however, there are concerns over affordable housing mix and room sizes. There are noticeable blocks of affordable housing, which clearly does not meet West Suffolk's Policy to be visually indistinguishable from the open market housing. Room sizes are small and would not meet the recognised National Minimal Space Standards.

Overall, the Town Council regards the proposal as over-development of the site and recommend that the housing density is reduced to allow for the creation of better verges, a pocket park and room sizes that meet the NMSS.

Other matters:

1. The green corridor buffer zone provides potential for a natural walking area on the edge of the site by using the height of the SUDS bunds to create a natural footpath for walkers. It is important that these do not create dangerous permanent ponds.
2. Whilst access through the site is available, there is no obvious footpath from Green Road to Westfield School; the provision of a footpath would enable a safe, accessible route for pedestrians and cyclists, including a crossing point adjacent to the new roundabout on Chalkstone Way. (policy CS2m)
3. To meet Suffolk Council's Climate Emergency Policy to cut harmful emissions, infrastructure to be put in place for the provision of electric charging points.

Regards

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Assistant Town Clerk

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