Phase 2, Land at NW Haverhill, Ann Suckling Road, Little Wratting

Urban Design Response

Application no: **DC/20/0615/RM**

Date: **July 2020**

Summary

This urban design response relates to the Reserved Matters Application for 168 dwellings at land north of Ann Suckling Road, Little Wratting. The response assesses the Design, Access and Compliance Statement (DACS) and associated drawings and plans submitted in April and May 2020, and focuses on the development's character and context, streets and spaces, building heights and scale. Overall, the development is still highway dominated, lacks clearly defined character areas and focal spaces undermining the ability to create a legible, distinctive and development with a strong sense of place. In particular, there are a lack of informal local squares creating a clear hierarchy of routes and spaces. It is also considered that the proposed apartments are out of scale with the surrounding residential area and the design should be reworked to create more enclosure of these spaces and break down the large conspicuous parking courts.

Character and context

In terms of the wider Masterplan of NW Haverhill, the development sits within two broad character areas (Wratting Gardens and Boyton Place – referred to as Boyton Hall in the DACS). Section 6.2 (Masterplan Principles) and Figure 17: Analysis Plan also identifies 6 sub-character areas: The Gateway, The Boulevard/Primary Street, The Terrace, The Main Street, The Link, and The Reeds. However, the 4 character areas indicated in the character areas plan and section 6.8 are not consistent with these sub-character areas focussing instead on architectural styles, materials and detailing. Consistent and clearer definition of the character areas is therefore required to differentiate each area in terms of built form, streets and spaces, landscaping and green infrastructure.

In addition, one of the Masterplan principles in the DACS is the 'Main Boulevard stretches through the centre of the site with a hierarchy of streets and mews stemming from this main road'. However, in the Planning Layout the proposed areas of lanes and mews indicated in Figure 21: Street Hierarchy are highway dominated, and lack the key characteristics of mews described in the adopted masterplan such as 'a building line will be continuous but stepped back to create different spaces within the mews'. It is considered that clear definition of these distinctive areas has therefore been overlooked in the Planning Layout and character area descriptions.

Streets and spaces

One of the key structuring principles of the adopted Masterplan for land at North West Haverhill is the creation of informal local squares, creating a clear hierarchy of routes and spaces. However, there are a lack of informal local squares across the development and the proposed focal square option in the Planning Layout is highway dominated and lacks any meaningful public open space. Other potential informal local squares such as

between the proposed apartment blocks also lack any sense of enclosure of the space. Annex 1 contains an urban design concept plan proposing additional options to create stronger focal points, enclosure and less traffic dominated layouts at these locations.

Building heights and scale

In Section 6.1 (Use and Amount) the DACS states that 'Phase 2 comprises the construction of 168 no. terraced, semi-detached and detached residential dwellings' although there is no reference to the proposed apartments shown in Figure 11: Proposed Layout. In the Accommodation section, there is also duplication of the text in paragraph 3.

It is also considered that the building height (4 storeys) of the proposed apartments is not consistent with the height and density frameworks in the adopted Masterplan and is out of scale with the surrounding residential area. In addition to the scale of the apartments, the design should also be reworked to break down the large conspicuous parking courts which are particularly visible from the southern edge of the development.

Annex 1 – Urban design concept plan