

Development Management Planning Application Consultation – Urban Design Comments

To: Development Management

From: Planning Policy (Urban Design)

Date: 2 June 2021

Ref: DC/21/01110/RM

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

Summary

This urban design response relates to the proposed residential development of 129 dwellings at Phase 2B in North West Haverhill and reviews the amended planning layout, streetscenes, character areas and massing plans submitted in May 2021. Overall, although there have been improvements to the development's streets and spaces and the appearance of the proposed flats, there are concerns regarding the scale, bulk and massing of the revised 3.5 storey flats, particularly their relationship and proportions compared to adjoining buildings on the Avenue.

Streets and Spaces

Across the development there is a clear hierarchy of routes and spaces, from the Urban Square, Neighbourhood Square and mews courtyard spaces. In the Urban Square the tree pits and bollards improve the definition of this focal space in the heart of the development. The redesigned parking and landscaping in the Neighbourhood Square also provides a less vehicle dominated view into the parking court. Additional greening in the mews courtyard spaces also helps to soften these streets.

The parking courts have also been improved by breaking down the larger parking areas to the north of the development into smaller areas and introducing more flats over garages (FOGs). This provides additional natural surveillance, helps to animate these spaces and creates a more permeable layout and informal routes for pedestrians. The footpath and cycleway link to the proposed toucan crossing also improves connectivity between the development and Phase 2a to the north.

Flats – Blocks 1 & 2

The appearance of the proposed flats is an improvement in terms of the projecting brickwork which provides more texture and distinctiveness to these key marker buildings. The projecting elements applied to the central stair component are also an effective contemporary interpretation of local industrial heritage such as mill buildings.

The urban character and scale of previous proposals for 4 storey flats at the gateway to the Avenue has been noted as a significant concern of local residents, particularly of the Boyton Hall estate. However, there are concerns regarding the scale, bulk and massing of the revised 3.5 storey flats, particularly their relationship and proportions compared to adjoining buildings on the Primary Street. Annex 1 provides a comparison between the proposed 3.5 storey flats and an alternative view of the streetscene with 2.5 storey flats. It is considered that 3 storey flats at this location would be more appropriate to effectively assimilate these buildings into the surrounding townscape.

Annex 1 – Streetscenes



Figure 1: Proposed streetscene with 3.5 storey flats, illustrating how the proportions are out of scale and dominate adjoining buildings on the Primary Street.



Figure 2: Alternative streetscene with 2.5 storey flats - it is considered that 3 storey flats would be more appropriate to effectively assimilate these buildings into the surrounding townscape while still acting as key marker buildings.