

Application ref: 13/02257/REM
Reserved matters
Barton Farm, Andover Road, Winchester



Comments from
THE CITY OF WINCHESTER TRUST

These comments are an addition to the [objection](#) to the diversion of Andover Road, submitted by the Trust on 25 November 2013.

The applicant has submitted a large body of material which takes some time to read, digest and navigate on a computer screen so that it is difficult to ensure that comments cover everything. But the Trust commends the clarity and high quality of the drawings that have been produced and the comprehensive Design Code that has been compiled and submitted. They combine in most respects to produce a very full picture of the multitude of issues that have to be considered when presenting a development of this magnitude.

The Trust sets out in this submission a range of broad comments followed by detailed comments on proposals for Phase 1A and Phase 1B.

1. LANDSCAPE

The essential quality of rolling Hampshire Downland landscape, that the site is, does not emerge as the dominant underlying influence to which the development has to respond.

The southern end of the site falls away from the gardens of Park Road and fans out to the north between the railway line to the east and Andover Road to the west towards Well House Lane for about 2.4 kilometres. In that distance the site falls from the 60 metre contour on the southern boundary into a shallow valley at 50-55m then ascends to the tree lined ridge at 65m and then falls to the 50m contour along the northern boundary.

The response to the topography of the roads, the siting of the houses and boundary walls comes across as muted after being introduced to the site with the drawing of the Existing topographical survey.

More use of cross sections to show the relationship between topography and roads and buildings would have assisted in understanding the development in its landscape setting. If these and/or digital modelling images can be provided for future applications for subsequent phases of the development, this would be helpful.

2. LAYOUT

The scheme feels apart and self contained from the City, rather than an extension to and part of Winchester, This arises from a lack of connectivity and integration in terms of circulation to the centre of the City to the south, to the Stoney Lane area to the west and access to the east to Worthy Road.

The centre of the development, to be built in a later phase, is described as the “heart”, but the current proposals highlight one “artery”, the rerouted Andover

Road to serve the heart. A network of pedestrian and cycle routes, linking and passing through open spaces and housing areas to the centre, to provide vitality to the quality of life for those who are going to buy into and live on the development needs to be strongly integrated into the scheme.

A good example of a component of such a network is Oram's Arbour, in Fulflood. This is an attractive open space enclosed by houses, with a network of footpaths with strong desire lines, used throughout the day, a play area and provides for a range of recreational activities.

The proposed areas of open space need to be central to the function and enjoyment of the development.

There is a similarity about the overall layout and buildings that a visitor could find confusing. The housing layouts lack character, pattern definition, community spirit and high points of architectural interest. All the houses tend to look the same. Although we understand that it is the intention to vary the character for different areas, the means for doing this are not yet apparent.

The sense of belonging and identity has been partly destroyed by the needs of the car. Car parking and movement appears as a dominant feature of this estate, resulting in a collection of roads dominated by the car.

In addition to this visual aspect, the arrangement is at odds with the stated intention of prioritising cycle and pedestrian movement, so that there is little apparent incentive to travel other than by car

3. PLAY AND OPEN SPACES

What is the purpose/meaning of 'buffer'? Children need to be free and protected from traffic, but not confined to cages: they restrict movement and activity, Have the play areas been designed to comply with WCC Policy? If so it needs to be challenged. It is contrary to contemporary good practice as set out in 'Design for Play', produced by Play England and DCMS.

Play areas need to be overlooked, sited on well used pedestrian routes, with safe access, to enable children 8+ to have independent use.

The use of Multi Use Games Areas is questioned. They are appropriate in high density urban areas, costly, have limited play value, occupy space and tend to cater only for boys. Informal kick about is more appropriate for this development.

The design of the first area with a LEAP/NEAP, and subsequent areas should be designed by a landscape architect, in consultation with schools.

Public art, where required, should be integrated and bespoke.

No allotments have been allocated until Phases 4A and 5A, where two allocations are of restricted size. Residents most likely to want allotments will be those with small gardens that are evident in Phase 2A and 2B. They should be more widely distributed across the development.

4. ROLE OF THE EXISTING ANDOVER ROAD

Reference is made to the fact that Andover Road will have the character of a "lane". Lanes go somewhere, they have origin and destination. The rationale for its future in terms of usage is poor. It could have a positive role if it formed part of

an integrated route around the development for pedestrians, cyclists, and those keen on fitness, but there is little evidence of this.

How will access be offered to existing houses on the west side? Will the existing mature trees and banks be retained?

The Trust maintains that the arguments promoted for rerouting Andover Road are weak, and should not be supported.

5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING [\(see appendix 1\)](#)

WCC's Draft Affordable Housing Reserved Matters Strategy states in S.2.1, that overall 40% of the dwellings are to be affordable, and that 63% of the affordable provision is to be in phases 1A and 1B. The table submitted by the applicant shows that this provision has been made. This provision however is far from equitable:-

13.5% of flats are for the private market, compared with 30% for the social and intermediate affordable rented sector.

44% of bedrooms in phase 1A are affordable, and 33% in phase 1B, making an average of less than 39%.

The floor area for different types of tenure is widely different, with only 30% of the overall net internal area provided for affordable housing.

66% of affordable housing is sited immediately adjacent to the new Andover Road, compared with 34% of private housing provision.

None of the affordable units are on the rural fringes, along Well House Lane or along the southern stream. It is regrettable that this first phase leaves little affordable family-sized provision to be located in subsequent, less traffic-dominated phases.

While the applicant may be technically complying with WCC's requirements, the ambition of indistinguishable affordable provision, well integrated over the site is lost.

It is also a matter of concern that S.4.1 in the Strategy implies that the developer, CALA has no Registered Social Landlord partner. S.4.3 states that rental levels will be no higher than 80% of prevailing market rents; this is not a concession. The House of Commons Library Note SN/SP/1090, 25 July 2013, Rent setting for social Housing tenancies, says "Under this new "intermediate rent" model, housing associations can offer tenancies at rents at of up to 80% of market rent levels within the local area. Note, "can" not "must" or "will". It is hoped that the intermediate rents will be closer to social rents, or the great majority of Barton Farm will be out of reach of most people.

DETAILED COMMENTS ON LAYOUT, APPEARANCE AND MATERIALS

6. The northern approach from the junction with Well House Lane is through a landscape where the land initially falls away from the junction before rising gently along the contours before reaching the 65m tree lined ridge, which runs

east/west through the site, comes into view. This new northern approach into the City has to be of a visual strength both in alignment and visual interest to relegate the dual carriageway of Andover Road into a subservient role.

The context of the new Andover Road before reaching the new housing development is the Park and Ride site on the eastern side and playing fields to the west that are to be in Phase 2B.

Work in Phase 2B will involve considerable earthworks on the north facing slopes to create playing pitches and parking areas requiring banks and terraces. Some indication of how these new landforms will relate to the new road should be offered at this stage, to enable an informed assessment of the proposed levels of the road to be made.

The housing that will come into view will be a northern edge of the City. Phase 1B offers a weak built urban edge of detached and semi detached houses on both sides of the new road that will be visible beneath the crown of the trees. The Building Scale and Views Plan 8.1 in the Design Code ~~proposes~~propose predominantly 3 storey development on either side of the approach road, The Avenue. This scale should be returned along the northern edge on plot nos. 340-343 and 324 on the east side and plot nos. 207-210, 238-247 on the west side, to provide a stronger urban edge for the City.

7. The Avenue has a width, between the terrace houses of 27m. This is a boulevard width whose attraction will rely on the stature of the London Plane trees that are to be planted. Their spatial value is given limited merit on the cross-section when compared to the generous coverage on plan in fig 29 in the Design Code. The more significant concern is that the layout of The Avenue of two service roads, two swales and a two lane carriageway, between 3 storey buildings has a visually poor width to height ratio and could also be socially divisive, as in the expression, 'living on the other side of the tracks'.

8. Stoney Lane Square in Phase 1A is a 25m diameter area of visually unrelieved paving. 25m is the width of The Broadway in front of the Guildhall in Winchester. Whatever maybe the traffic management benefits of the Square, visually this proposal offers a hostile and bleak prospect, equivalent to a small parade ground to be found in the Sir John Moore Barracks to the north, off Andover Road. This space is flanked by two blocks of flats, and forms the introduction to the development when leaving Winchester, for those travelling northbound out of the City and those living and visiting the area.

The flanking flats do not seem to reflect the importance of their position, either architecturally or by the way they are sited. The extent and form of the Square exacerbates the design weakness of this entry point to the scheme. To place living quarters in such a busy vehicle movement zone does seem perverse and reinforces the fundamental concern of the Trust of the consequence of diverting Andover Road through the development.

9. Stoney Green. This space has no purpose and could be allocated for houses. If the open space were sited north of Stoney Lane, a rationale would emerge, as described in para.2 on Layout.

The proposals for Stoney Square and Stoney Green are a fundamental failure at this critical point of the development. The Trust believes that the planning and design of this area needs to be rethought.

10. The Southern Approach to the site for the new Andover Road has a similar role to play to that of the northern entrance. The old road has to appear subservient in status.

The treatment of the triangle of redundant highway between the junction of the old road and the new road on the west side is unresolved. Examination of TPA drawings H.21,22 and 23 does not appear to offer a footpath to link the proposed footpath on the east side of the new carriageway and the junction of Andover Road and Park Road. There exists at present a raised bank between the existing footpath and the east side of Andover Road.

For this submission the landscape design, highway, signing and lighting proposals are portrayed on separate drawings. It would be helpful to have a single comprehensive drawing for both of the important northern and southern entrances to the development, to show all these proposals portrayed together.

11. Housing on the south boundary is of concern for plots 169, 175, 176,177,184,185,186,199 and 202. In their position beneath the rising ground leading up to Park Road to the south, they will receive little or no sunlight in the winter months, and could be found to reside in a frost pocket. The cul-de-sac layout in this area provides poor connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

12. At the southern entrance on the east side of the new road, the detached houses, containing an element of three storey building and detached garages, present a weak introduction to the site and setting for Stoney Green on the west side of the road. The density and height of housing in the form of terraces should be increased and introduced on plot nos. 165-167 and 171-173. This would be an extension of the scale used to enclose The Avenue and assist the limited enclosure role of the 'marker buildings, proposed on the west and east sides of Stoney Lane Square.' This higher density in turn, could assist with removing some of the houses away from the southern boundary, referred to in para 11.

13. The size of gardens offered for plots 376-381 are very small when compared to the generous size of gardens given to adjoining plots 363-367.

14. The content of the Design Code regarding materials and details proposed for house designs and landscape work is with some exceptions generally supported by the Trust.

The Code offers the opportunity with a wide palette of materials and forms, for the design of houses to have a stronger architectural character with variation at selected points of interest, referred to in para.2.

15. Boundary treatments will have a major visual impact on the appearance of the development. The Design Code proposes, 9.9.2, that brick boundary walls must be stepped. Winchester has a tradition of running brick, flint and stone boundary walls along the contours or by sloping, not stepping, the coping. This

approach visually offers a softer and flowing appearance and should be adopted on this development with its undulating topography.

16. Earthworks are of a similar concern for the spaces between houses. The scheme drawings indicate where retaining walls are to be used but they do not appear to show where existing contours will remain and proposed will be created. As with the design for brick boundary walls, landform, wherever space allows between buildings, should be flowing rather than stepped.

17. The open watercourses provided as part of the sustainable urban drainage scheme require 6m lengths of culverts to go beneath double driveways on plots 350-356 and 227-259. Their design will be important, including measures to ensure they are maintained and do not block up.

18. Parking courts to the rear of plots 21-24, 73-75, 90-93 and 302-305 show double parking bays. To enable a car in the inner bay to be removed requires the car in the outer bay to reverse and leave sufficient space for the car in the inner bay to leave the parking court. There is insufficient space to allow this manoeuvre to take place.

Some parking bays have the note FOG, a term that is not included in the abbreviation glossary of Design Code.

19. Bicycle stores are sited some distance from the entrances to houses, which will discourage their use. The provision of large halls or covered porches to store bicycles would encourage the use of cycling.

20. Other important matters such as sustainability, the design of landscape and open spaces, and transport and movement have been covered in more detail and submitted by WINACC. Their comments are generally supported by the Trust.

The issues set out in paragraphs 1-19, are matters for which the Trust and the Planning Authority should seek clarification and resolution before the reserved matters are approved, for this, the largest single development in the 2264 year old history of Winchester.

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