

APPLICATION NO: 15/00681/FUL		OFFICER: Mr Craig Hemphill	
DATE REGISTERED: 2nd May 2015		DATE OF EXPIRY: 1st August 2015	
WARD: Leckhampton		PARISH: Leckhampton With Warden Hill	
APPLICANT:	Boo Homes (Leckhampton) Ltd		
AGENT:	Mr Richard Manning		
LOCATION:	Land south of 205 Leckhampton Road, Leckhampton Road, Cheltenham		
PROPOSAL:	Erection of 10 houses and associated works (revised scheme)		

Update to Officer Report

1. CONSULTATIONS ON REVISED PLANS

Landscape Architect

13th November 2015

Revised Soft Landscape Proposals (Drawing No. BOO19700-11C)

South and West Boundaries - Existing Vegetation

The proposal site lies adjacent to the boundary of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is, therefore, a sensitive site.

The existing vegetation along the south and west boundaries helps to screen the proposal site when viewed from the AONB. Should planning permission be granted, the existing boundary vegetation should be preserved, enhanced and managed to provide a continuing, substantial landscape buffer through all stages of development – construction, completion and maturity. This is required in order to maintain adequate screening and so help to mitigate the effect of development.

Discussions with the developer have highlighted the desirability of this boundary vegetation being placed in the ownership of a management company, in order for it to be maintained in perpetuity. (When trees and hedging are incorporated into private gardens they are vulnerable to removal by householders). The developer has agreed to this.

Revised Soft Landscape Proposals (Drawing No. BOO19700-11C) have been submitted showing a post and rail fence along the south, west and east boundaries of the site. This fence constitutes the boundary between rear gardens and the land to be maintained by the management company. However, the boundary line has been drawn very neatly along the proposed hedge line, whereas the existing vegetation is of varying width. As a result 6 trees scheduled for retention are now located in private gardens where they will be vulnerable to removal. The blue dotted line, representing the post and rail fence, should be redrawn to accurately reflect the existing boundary vegetation in order to preserve its screening effect.

In addition, the revised drawing shows 4 fewer existing hawthorn trees to be retained as specimens along the south boundary. This is not acceptable. The retained trees along the south boundary should be as shown in Drawing No. BOO19700 11B and the blue dotted line – the post and rail fence – drawn to accommodate this.

South Boundary – Proposed Hedge

Height

Soft Landscape Proposals (Drawing No. BOO19700-11C) states that the proposed native hedge should be maintained at a height of 1.8m maximum. Along the south boundary this should be revised to a height of 1.8m minimum. This is in order to address concerns about the ridge height of the roofs when viewed from the AONB – a higher hedge would contribute to softening the built form. Please could this be conditioned.

Extra Tree

As previously discussed with the applicant's landscape architect an extra specimen tree could be planted in the section of hedgerow to the rear of Plots 7 & 8 where the existing hawthorn trees shown on the plan are proposed to be laid to form a field hedge.

Proposed Planting Plan

Apart from the issues mentioned above, the soft landscape proposals submitted are acceptable.

Revised Hard Landscape Proposals - Drawing No. BOO19700-12B

Fencing

The drawing shows the dividing boundaries of private rear gardens being formed by 1.8m and 1.2m high close-board fences. The rear boundary is a post and rail fence. Construction details will be required for the fencing.

It is important to avoid the possibility of residents erecting close-board fences along the rear boundaries of their gardens as this would be an inappropriate boundary with the AONB.

Drawing No. MB070-211 Site Sections

Rear Gardens

Drawing No. MB070-211 Site Sections indicates that a dwelling on the southern boundary of the AONB will have a patio width of approximately 3m between the house and a retaining wall of approximately 600mm height. From the retaining wall the garden slopes up to the boundary of the AONB with a slope of approximately 1 in 4. It may be that future residents would seek to create more useable garden space by further terracing of their gardens. The result of this could be that domestic/garden paraphernalia becomes visible above and through the boundary hedge giving rise to an adverse impact when viewed from the AONB. Please could Permitted Development rights be removed to ensure there is no adverse impact upon the adjacent AONB from either inappropriate garden fencing or domestic/garden structures and paraphernalia.

Conclusion

The revised plans have overcome a number of previous concerns. Subject to the suggested amendments being resolved there is no landscape objection to the application

Architects Panel

13th November 2015

The panel had reviewed this application previously and revised plans had subsequently been submitted. These plans show a reduced density which increases the gap between properties, the cross section also works better with the significant level change across the site. Elevationally, the properties are better proportioned and the roof pitch has been lowered which reduces the relative amount of visible roof. This scheme represents an overall improvement and it would therefore be supported by the panel.

2. OFFICER COMMENT

- 2.1. The Officer Report deferred from October 2015 Planning Committee meeting set out the determining issues for this application. These included the principle of the development, affordable housing, its impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, access and highway matters, amenity considerations, drainage and ecology.
- 2.2. In considering these issues the Officer Report recommended refusal on the grounds of the proposed development being an inappropriate urban development on the rural edge of Cheltenham to the detriment of the scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the setting of the town.
- 2.3. This update is to review the recently submitted revised plans, consider if they have overcome the previous concerns and provide a recommendation to Members.
- 2.4. Layout and Design
- 2.5. The original application proposed 12 residential units at the site. This was reduced to 11 in September and further reduced to 10 in the recently submitted revised plans. This has reduced the density from 30dph (which is the density of Leckhampton View, the site adjacent which is currently under construction) to 20dph. The dwellings have been moved 2 metres further away from the southern boundary along with an increase in the gaps between the proposed dwellings, on average from 1.5 m to 3 metres.
- 2.6. The reduction in numbers and the amendments to the layout allows for each dwelling to have a more generous garden space, and, along with the increased gaps between the dwellings, provides for a more suitable density and layout, which responds in a more successful manner to the transition between the existing urban grain and the rural edge of Cheltenham.
- 2.7. The design of the proposed dwellings are contemporary with the exterior faced in render, buff brick and timber cladding with the roofs finished in slate. This design approach is consistent with the adjacent site currently under construction; members are advised that it is the same developer. The Architects' Panel have reviewed the revised plans providing comments now in support of the application. The design and layout of the proposed dwellings is considered to be acceptable.
- 2.8. Landscape and levels
- 2.9. The south and west boundaries of the site are a significant consideration, and have been subject to extensive discussions with the Tree Officer and Landscape Architect. The revised landscape and planting plans have been submitted following these discussions. These revisions are extensive and necessary in this instance due to the landscape sensitivity of the site. An improved landscape plan and planting scheme has been provided along with the landscape boundaries being removed from the residential properties. A protection zone is being proposed to ensure that future residents cannot remove any of the trees or planting, with a management company to be established to manage and maintain these boundaries (and other areas of open space). This would be secured through a S106 agreement.
- 2.10. Both the Tree Officer and the Landscape Architect are satisfied that the revisions to the layout, landscaping and planting details are satisfactory and will successfully mitigate the impact of the proposed dwellings (subject to conditions and the S106). The Landscape Architect has raised additional points on the detail to which the applicant has agreed to incorporate and submit a further revised plan.

- 2.11. It is worth noting that there are currently two significant Ash Trees on the south boundary which are to be removed. Initially the removal of these trees, which are visible from Leckhampton Hill, caused Officers concern. The Tree Officer has subsequently advised that these trees are likely to succumb to Ash die back and are therefore unlikely to last beyond 10 years and that this application provides a good opportunity to establish new planting on this boundary.
- 2.12. The site has a significant change in levels; a slope rises upwards from the middle on the site towards the south boundary. Following discussions, revised plans have been submitted to reduce the heights of the proposed dwellings. The combination of these revisions and the landscape proposals ensure that the proposed dwellings are screened as much as possible from public vantage points. Typically, level conditions are attached to planning permissions, however, due to the sensitivity of this site Officers considered it necessary for the site level information across the site to be submitted in advance of determination, which has now been provided. Should Members be minded to permit the application it is recommendation that a condition is attached requiring works to be carried out in strict accordance with the submitted plans.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1. In considering the revised plans and information set out above, the recommended refusal reasons set out in the original Committee report and the overall planning balance, Officers are of the view that the revised plans have overcome the previous concerns. The recommendation is therefore for permission to be granted subject to the S106 being agreed and conditions.

4. CONDITIONS

- 4.1. To follow.