

<b>APPLICATION NO:</b> 13/00800/FUL	<b>OFFICER:</b> Miss Michelle Payne
<b>DATE REGISTERED:</b> 5th June 2013	<b>DATE OF EXPIRY:</b> 4th September 2013
<b>WARD:</b> St Pauls	<b>PARISH:</b> None
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Kier Partnership Homes Ltd & Cheltenham Borough Homes
<b>AGENT:</b>	Healer Associates
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Land At Crabtree Place Cheltenham
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Construction of 56 residential units including 24 affordable units and associated works

## Update to Officer Report

### 1. CONSULTATIONS

1.1. The following consultation response was omitted from the main report:

**Urban Design Manager**

**31st July 2013**

Conclusion

There have been significant improvements in this scheme from early pre-application discussions and further improvements since the "initial urban design comment". As such, the scheme is now broadly acceptable and the comments below should be seen within this context. There remain a few issues which in my view need to be resolved.

Urban Design Objectives

This site has emerged as part of the regeneration of the St Paul's area. The objective has been to introduce new housing which is visually distinct from the existing, striking and contemporary but contextually appropriate in order to give the streets a lift. Crab Tree Place has been largely cleared of buildings and the objective here has been to arrive at a proposal which matches the quality and design ethos of both the recent nearby housing developments - St. Paul's Walk and Circa - the characteristics of these are summarised as: - Calm vernacular architecture with a contemporary use of shapes, colours, materials etc. - Parking regimes which are well integrated into the landscape, street scene and plot and which contribute to a sense of place. - Greening of streets.

Achievement of objectives

Officers have worked hard to deliver proposals which meet the urban design objectives. Initial drafts of the proposal struggled to deliver, but there have been significant amendments throughout the negotiations and the proposal as it now stands is at a standard which is acceptable and which has taken some lessons from St Paul's Walk and Circa. - The architecture of the proposal has been adjusted to more reflect the principles of these two neighbouring sites and has introduced contemporary forms, colours and materials to what are clearly buildings grounded in a vernacular style. - Parking layout is improved and is acceptable. - Landscape treatment has improved considerably. The recent amendments to the proposals address a number of matters of concern - including the supervision and layout of the parking areas in the north-east of the site (around units 27 - 33); improved level and distribution of street tree planting; introduction of elements in the architecture reflective of the two recent nearby developments; and rationalisation of most of the left over spaces and their incorporation into garden space.

Outstanding issues

A number of issues remain; it seems likely that the majority could be addressed by condition, but they do need clarifying

1. Plots 42 & 43 have been shifted in the latest layout, both away from each other and approximately 1m further from the boundary of existing neighbouring housing. It is possible that this will address concerns over the dominance and shadow impact on neighbouring gardens, by reducing to a degree both their combined mass and proximity to neighbours. However, the shadow diagram on page 10 of the DAS remains as per the previous layout and is not an adequate basis for assessing impacts, showing as it does midday images for December and June. Any significant impact on neighbours is likely to occur in the afternoon and it is generally considered more appropriate to provide sun diagrams at the equinox. It is recommended that an amended shadow diagram is requested. If this demonstrates that the problem remains, there may be a solution in introducing bungalows here or buildings with a single aspect roof over a single storey at the rear and two-storey at the front (possibly a mezzanine floor).

2. There remains some inconsistency between the layout, landscape and street scene drawings in terms of how they depict street tree positions. In general the distribution in the layout is unacceptable; that in the landscape drawing is acceptable; however, the street scenes show street trees to be more prolific than either of the other two drawings and would be the preferred drawing to inform the landscape layout, assuming there is space to achieve the design shown. However, there needs to be a clear steer through the conditions as to which of these drawings is leading the landscape design.

3. There still remain odd patches of landscape around the site, with no purpose or no real owner. Small spaces, tight spaces or awkwardly shaped spaces are unlikely to be adopted by the highway authority or the borough council, will not be maintained and will degrade the character of the site. These need to be addressed. The most prominent remaining is adjacent to plot 36.

4. Conversely there are areas of hard surface (forming notional squares) at some of the junctions, where the corner elements would be better incorporated into private garden space and softened; their function as part of a square seems unnecessary. These are at NW corner of plot 36, SW corner of plot 37 and NW corner of plot 48.

5. Alleys between units 45 & 40 and their respective garages seem unnecessary - waste potential garden space and are unlikely to be used; at unit 40 the relationship to the parking court additionally creates a security risk. They should be removed and incorporated into adjacent gardens.

6. The proximity of the site to Honeybourne Line, Pittville Park cycle route and the town centre makes it an attractive location for cycling. The design of the units overall should better reflect this. Cycle storage arrangements for the housing are unclear. Cycle parking for the flats has been introduced at a rate of 1 per unit. There remains a question as to whether this is adequate. Additionally, the storage arrangements appear neither convenient nor particularly secure. One area shares access with the bin store; the second is prominent and likely to be easily accessible from public areas and not well overlooked by the owners. This needs resolving.

7. Unit 56 has a side door from the street to the utility room. This is probably a drawing error; it should have the same unit layout as the revised plot 4.

8. The bin store for the flats remains in close proximity to rooms in the eastern block. This doesn't seem to be a convincing location and is likely to disturb residents. See also comments on cycle storage.

9. There appears to be no explanation of the bin storage strategy for the housing. How are bins stored? Can they be conveniently moved from their collection point to the storage point? The layout needs to avoid a situation where the most convenient solution for occupants is to leave the bin on public display on the frontage throughout the week. If bins

are not to be kept in rear gardens, there needs to be a bespoke design solution for discretely storing those that remain to the front of properties.

## **2. OFFICER COMMENTS**

- 2.1. As set out in the previous update, a revised site layout has been received which largely addresses the outstanding issues referred to in the Urban Design Manager's comments above.
- 2.2. The recommendation remains to grant planning permission subject to conditions.