

URBAN DESIGN AND HERITAGE CONSULTATION

23/0326/PCM Consultation application from Surrey County Council for the outline application for the erection of part 1, 2, 3 and 4 storey building for extra care accommodation comprising self-contained apartments, staff and communal facilities and associated parking (landscaping and appearance reserved

Pinehurst, 141 Park Road Camberley Surrey GU15 2LL

Urban design aspects

Very tranquil, secluded site surrounded by higher, mature vegetation, notably pine trees, just outside the town centre.

The site is situated in the Historic Route Character Area, a Mixed and Commercial Building Character Area in Surrey Heath, which is subject to detailed design guidelines, defined in the Western Urban Area Character SPD. The plot itself lies in the Victorian/Edwardian Character sub area.

Sustainable location, within short walking distance from Camberley train station and town centre. A bus stop is located opposite the adjacent Doctor's Surgery.

Although buildings in the area were traditionally 2-2,5 storey high with steeply pitched roofs, later infill the neighbourhood include a mix of 2-3 stories. The immediate built context is mixed with larger, quality apartment buildings of up to 4 storeys high within the vicinity, an adjacent doctor's surgery and several substantial, two storey dwelling houses in generous, wooded plots on the other side of Park Road, many with vigorous hedge boundaries contributing to the verdant street scene character.

Detailed design advice was provided by Surrey Heath Borough Council at pre-app stage in 2021. The proposed outline scheme is not considered to fully address the following urban design concerns raised two years ago:

- "The existing footprint, c. 2880 sq. meter, can be redeveloped up to a height of largely 3 storeys plus occasional accommodation in the roof, provided that an element of variation of the roofscape can be demonstrated ." The combined scale, massing and height of the the four storey elements of the development is considered to be out of character with the immediately adjoining, residential built context, and thereby contrary to policy DM9. The proximity to existing residential dwellings to the North, and immediately to the South of the site, raises concerns in terms of perceived and factual overlooking. The scale of the building will appear overbearing and will affect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties, especially to the the North of the site due to the lack of separating vegetation.
- Simplistic 3D models would be required as the next step to demonstrate a suitable scale, height, massing and design approach for the site and its surroundings, *reflecting the historic references in the area.*

- The proposed building character is composed of a few, rather large scale elements, appears bulky and would need to be more balanced and refined to give a harmonious impression and to blend in with the Victorian/Edwardian character setting.
- “The scheme does not conform with the WUAC SPD “VS3 Buildings with large footprints that include large areas of flat roof to span the building depth will be resisted. The massing of the building and roof elevations should be broken down to avoid this problem.”. The current scheme is characterised by large, flat roofs and large scale, bulky built elements.
- “The proposed building design requires further consideration in terms of character, scale, massing as well as elevational appearance to comply with adopted design policies .” The now proposed scheme is considered out of scale in terms of footprint, height and massing. It will have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties to the North due to height, massing and position of the car park, which leaves insufficient space and screening along the Northern boundary to provide visual relief and an appropriate setting. Principle 7.4 of the Surrey Heath Residential Design Guide SPD, requires new residential developments to reflect the spacing, heights and building footprints of existing buildings, especially when these are local historic patterns.
- “High quality, sustainable architecture with a timeless character which responds positively to the Victorian/Edwardian character in terms of scale, rhythm, varied roof scape, materials and detailing will be required.” The proposed roof form lacks articulation. The scheme is characterised by a simplistic, contemporary design approach in stark contrast to the existing built context and local distinctiveness. High quality detailing is required in the next phase, including balconies, which currently do not appear to be well integrated.
- The extensive footprint, the layout and proposed depth of the development result in a loss of existing vegetation to an extent that will have a detrimental impact on the character of the site, providing less screening and a more built up character. This will have an urbanising effect on the neighbourhood overall and fails to retain and enhance current characteristics. Concerns were raised at pre-app stage regarding the proposed bulk and height of the then 3-4 storey building.
- As highlighted at pre-app stage in 2021, the abundance of trees and shrubberies within the site creates a very attractive woodland setting, which creates the special verdant character of the neighbourhood as a whole. The existing trees must therefore be retained long-term to the greatest extent. The few, smaller gaps in the vegetation along the perimeter fence should be filled in by new planting to prevent an unnecessary harsh visual impact on existing neighbouring properties.
- External break out areas for staff should be integrated into the scheme and forms part of the sustainability concept.
- In the forthcoming detailed design, public art should be an integral part of the scheme, both within the building as well as the landscaped areas. This could be developed as a collaborative, local project.

The Western Urban Area Character SPD (2012) Design principles for new development in the Victorian/Edwardian character area

New development is required to pay particular regard to the following criteria:

VS1 (a) The need to reflect historic plot dimensions, architectural detailing and scale and massing in all development.

(b) High quality architectural detailing of publicly visible elevations

(c) Provision of opportunities to soften the closely set buildings with vegetation

(d) Buildings should predominantly contain traditional elements such as the use of gables, chimneys, varied roof heights, decorative mix of materials and pitched roofs. There should be a high quality of architectural materials appropriate to the character of the building.

(e) Be principally of red brick with the occasional use of render, stone and boarding with slate or tiled roofs

(f) Development to incorporate front boundary treatments in the form of brick walls and/or hedges.

(g) Buildings to strongly address the road frontage with a traditional front/back relationship to the street.

VS3 Buildings with large footprints that include large areas of flat roof to span the building depth will be resisted. The massing of building and roof elevations should be broken down to avoid this problem.

VS4 Where buildings are replaced, high quality designs with fine architectural detailing will be expected. Poor quality pastiche design and after-thought add-on historic features will not be acceptable.

Impact on heritage assets

A fine, Grade II listed Arts- och Craft building, Wiltwood, designed by one of Britain's most renowned architects, is situated to the south west of the application site, on the western side of Park Street. The listing description reads:

“House. 1898 by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Whitewashed brick with plain tiled roof. One storey and attic in centre gable and end gables; square brick stacks to rear of ridge left and right of centre. Concave centre with roof extending down over single storey projecting ends. 2 camber head 8 pane casement windows to centre of first floor. Central half glazed door with margin light in recessed porch behind projecting curved flat hood. Screen walls to ends under hipped roofs with arched entrances to centre. Casement windows to return fronts, parallel range and wing at right angles to rear. “

The proposed building would be positioned over 50m away from Wiltwood and the access at the far northern end of the site sited around 80m from the listed building. The impact of the

proposals upon this heritage asset is considered to be less than substantial. The proposals are not considered to have any adverse impact upon the setting of the listed building.

Sustainable design

The scheme benefits from sustainable technology and construction, including a combination of pre-fab volumetric modular and traditional on-site construction. We encourage sustainable, urban drainage systems that are made visible and integrated into the proposed landscape scheme to contribute to the visual qualities of the scheme and to support wildlife (as opposed to creating subterranean, hidden SuDS).

High quality communal amenity space as well as private patios/balconies should be provided in line with existing general guidelines for care homes (as applicable).

External break out areas for staff should be integrated into the scheme as part of a sustainability approach.

The detailed design should provide high quality communal internal space as well as good visual contact between the internal areas and the surrounding landscaped areas.

We encourage sustainable, urban drainage systems that are made visible and integrated into the proposed landscape scheme to contribute to the visual qualities of the scheme and to support wildlife (as opposed to creating subterranean, hidden SuDS)

The sustainable location lends itself to a green travel scheme.

M. Gustafsson MSc MA
Urban Design and Heritage Consultant

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