

## **URBAN DESIGN CONSULTEE RESPONSE –REVISED SCHEME**

### **FRIMHURST FARM, DEEPCUT**

#### **REVISED PLANS AND ELEVATIONS DISTRIBUTED FOR RECONSULTATION ON THE 6<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022**

#### **21/0769/FFU**

The scheme has undergone a series of revisions following officers' advice since it was initially submitted in the form of early sketches in 2019. I refer to my previous written comments submitted at formal pre-app stage in March 2020, secondly on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 and subsequently on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December for revisions submitted on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2021.

#### Summary

The redevelopment of this pre-dominantly commercial brownfield site is considered an opportunity to enhance the character and intensify the land use within the area identified for regeneration in the 2017 SLAA submission. The regeneration scheme is supported from an urban design point of view following a series of revisions to the overall footprint, principal layout, density, green structure, entrance/arrival approach, provision of a LAP and a separate small children's play space and minor adjustments to the elevational design.

#### Layout, density, scale, character and setting

The proposed density of the final submission, 14 dwellings/ha gross, 28 dwellings/ha net, is a notable reduction from the initial pre-application scheme, which was more urban in character.

The Surrey Heath Residential Design Guide (RDG) SPD, of material consideration, emphasises the importance of well balanced, design-driven streetscapes with a focus on placemaking to deliver a vibrant, small scale, green streetscene, an essential quality of Surrey Heath's local distinctiveness.

The layout has consequently been redesigned, and now creates a meandering approach to the site with natural tree groups and large open grass areas which will reinforce the rural, natural setting. The curving streetscene continues as a central feature throughout the site, generating a traditional, rural village character with mainly detached and semi-detached dwellings, providing active frontages along the streetscene. A glimpse of the development is also provided along Deepcut Bridge Road, which contributes to announce the development. The scheme includes a few shorter terraces, also of traditional appearance. The general scale is modest and all building types are two storeys high, which is considered appropriate in this rural location.

The site layout benefits from a coherent layout which creates variety and legibility throughout the site with well-defined fronts and backs of buildings, integrated landscaping, on plot parking and smaller car parking courts. The central part of the scheme is organised around a generous open green link, which provides a direct physical, and visual, connection to the open landscape corridor to the north of the development. The open green heart provides seating in the shade of trees overlooking the main street. There is also plenty of space for informal games etc. The many open, green spaces of different scale and character provide plenty of opportunities for recreation, outdoor activities and social engagement for everyone, which is one of the main qualities of the scheme.

The layout provides a spacious, organic pattern at the western end, including Frimhurst Cottage and Frimhurst Family Centre (FFC), formerly known as Frimhurst House. The former pleasure grounds of Frimhurst House are extensive, include some large specimen trees and are important to retain in a long-term perspective as an attractive setting. The existing crinkle crankle wall, a serpentine brick

wall which defines the grounds of Frimhurst House, is a particularly interesting built feature and a heritage asset.

As a result the revised development scheme now creates a gentle and more balanced interface in relation to Frimhurst House, and also provides a respectful distance to the locally listed Frimhurst Cottage and its setting. Additional tree planting at dwelling Nos. 41 and 42 obscure direct views from Frimhurst Cottage. The staggered building line of Nos. 32-36 and Nos. 37-39 is also helpful in integrating this major, new development in its rural context.

#### Recreation and play space provision

As established early in the design process, the continuous open landscape corridor to the north of the development is a valuable asset for its visual contribution from Deepcut Bridge Road, and forms part of the site character. This open corridor also defines the southern edge of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area. As a consequence, the northern building line of the development has been adjusted to retain a continuous, open green space of great importance for daily recreation. The corridor forms part of a longer, circular walking route around the site. It is therefore important to ensure that the ground for the proposed attenuation ponds is porous and provide effective drainage as the land level changes, to create a robust pedestrian walk which can accommodate daily recreation during all seasons. Otherwise the location of the attenuation ponds should be slightly adjusted to a less strategic part of the scheme.

A separate small children's' play space has been provided on the triangular, south-eastern green. This complements the larger LAP situated at the interface of the green link and the landscape corridor. The LAP also includes a trim trail suitable for this woodland setting. A large, open green space is also provided in the north-western corner of the site, suitable for play, ball games, picnics and larger gatherings.

#### Design vision, building design, materials and detailing

Local Plan policy DM9 Design Principles emphasises the importance of high-quality design to achieve sustainable, attractive, healthy environments, built to last well over time. The scheme provides a mix of detached and semi-detached houses as well as a few shorter terraces. The scheme is characterised by a wide range of different building types. The design cue is a blend of traditional vernacular with some classical features including distinctive porches and characteristic oriel windows. This kind of mixture of characters is commonly found in old villages in the countryside. The prevalent building materials are traditional brickwork, tile hanging and white render with rustic timber features, evoking traditional timber framed vernacular buildings.

The elevational design of some of the building types has been adjusted and now benefits from a stronger element of traditional tile hanging, especially in the in the village core, which is strongly supported. Recent adjustments also provide a more streamlined approach to fenestration and distinct recesses. Traditional, high quality doors and robust window details are critical for a genuine appearance and longevity.

#### Location and context

The application site is situated in the countryside between defined settlements, between the settlements of Deepcut and Frimley Green, to the west of Deepcut Bridge Road. The overall objective for the defined countryside is to safeguard the green character and openness of the rural landscape, retain the separation between settlements and protect the undeveloped area from urban sprawl. The Farnborough to Woking railway line lies in a deep cutting immediately to the south of

the site. Along the northern site boundary lies the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area, centred along the Basingstoke Canal. The application site is separated from the towpath and the canal by a wooded earth bank. The existing higher vegetation and the earth bank form part of the heritage values of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area and needs to be retained for the future. The increased use of the footpath along the canal appeared well used before the Covid -19 lockdown. As the population increases and the use are likely to intensify, a strategy for the long-term management of the Conservation Area is strongly recommended.

Conditions:

I) All boundary treatment surrounding any dwellings should be coherent. Individual types of fences, walls or gates will not be permitted and have to be controlled by informatives. All boundaries along the main access road as well as along the green link in the village centre should be hedge planting only. Reason: To retain a coherent, verdant character in the centre of the scheme as well as along the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area long term.

II) Samples should be submitted of all external building materials including facing bricks, tile hanging, weather boarding and roof tiles to the Local Planning Authority and should be approved in writing prior to the commencement of any construction works.

III) Samples should also be submitted of all hard landscaping materials, street furniture and any fencing materials to the Local Planning Authority and should be approved in writing prior to the commencement of any construction works.

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On behalf of Surrey Heath Borough Council

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