

PRE-APPLICATION 99-109 Guildford Road, Lightwater
URBAN DESIGN ADVICE

- Lightwater is a recognized local centre in the borough. Retaining and improving the design quality is increasingly considered an important goal. Lightwater was originally a Victorian village which developed around the many farms in the rural area.
- The prevalent building height is 2 storeys, with an occasional acceptance of 3 storeys.
- The local Victorian buildings are characterized by two storeys, are relatively modest buildings with pitched roofs, in red brickwork and mainly slate roofs. There are also examples of white rendered buildings.
- Traditional sash windows, wooden doors and details like soldier courses and quoins, often in buff, are typical.
- New development must pay careful attention to details.
- Traditional boundary treatment such as brick walls or hedges are common features which contribute to the quality of the environment.
- All development is guided by Lightwater Village Design Statement SPD (2007). well-designed, contemporary scheme is an interesting option to a traditional building design. If a traditional design is chosen, developing the design a step further e.g. through materiality/colour scheme and details to create a strong sense of place is encouraged.
- The idea to create a distinct building line along Guildford Road is supported in principle. However, the proposed buildings in this street are substantial buildings, characterised by large mass and bulk. As demonstrated in the illustration p.29 the 3 storey building does not create a comfortable relationship with the neighbouring, lower property Nos. 97 and 97a, and would therefore benefit from being reduced to 2.5 storeys at the eastern end. It could possibly step up and include some 3 storey elements further to the west.
- The pre-app report refers to the proposed buildings as being 2 and 2.5 storeys high, not 3 as the plan and massing diagrams show.
- Generally, the 3 built elements along Guildford Rd would benefit from having a stronger degree of differentiation by reducing the bulk and creating some set-backs from the building line, to alleviate the massing and the solid character in the streetscene.
- The frontage would benefit from being reduced in scale by introducing some variation and more verticality, reflecting traditional gable widths in Surrey heath.
- The site would benefit from a well defined boundary to soften the streetscene, for example hedges.
- We would encourage pitched roofs rather than the bulky crown roofs, as these can create a heavy and bulky impact. Double pitched roofs would integrate better in the built context.
- Unfortunately, the masterplan does not accommodate any communal green space or other placemaking, which is becoming increasingly important due to homeworking, health aspects etc. Communal greenspace is required in line with the

Surrey Heath Residential Design Guide (SHRDG). We suggest a reduction of units/reconfiguration of the layout of the scheme to incorporate coherent and positive placemaking, e.g. in the form of a green, informal courtyard to the rear.

- A distinct difference between active street frontage and a more relaxed, semi-private rear garden side would be encouraged in line with national design guidance.
- It is also important to establish a clear design vision for the development, setting out the aspirations for the development and the main character.
- A well designed contemporary scheme would be considered fully acceptable, in line with the Village Design SPD.
- Initially we recommend simple 3D diagrams to start with to establish a balanced massing and height as well as built areas/open space in the existing context
- Secondly proportions of buildings to be worked on including roofscape (currently top heavy and bulky roof forms).
- Building details are vital for functionality as well as character: 1/ A traditional fenestration hierarchy, with larger windows on the ground floor, is required - see Surrey Heath Residential Design Guide. As a result, higher ceiling heights on the ground floor can be considered. High quality fenestration and doors are expected in line with the SHRDG. Secondly the proportions of dormer windows need to be balanced (building type B).
2/ a more distinct design with regards to front doors/entrances (too much repetition, equal distances along front elevation adds to the large scale) (Building type A).
3/some simplification of the proposed design, e.g. of the entrance canopies would be recommended 4/ high quality material and proper recesses around doors and windows are essential 6/ If introducing soldier courses, these should be continuous, not interrupted by roof canopies
- A focus on placemaking is especially important for the layout of the central areas of the site. Shared streetscape could be considered, see SHRDG, p 19. The private gardens need to be properly defined and separated from traffic e.g. by hedge planting. Car parking areas need to be broken up in smaller segments and divided by vegetation in line with the SHRDG to avoid a domineering effect. We encourage the planting of fruit trees in relation to the rear gardens to create a more informal character.

For Surrey Heath Residential Design Guide please see:

<https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/residents/planning/planning-policy/ResidentialDesignGuide%20SPDsmall.pdf>

A link to Lightwater Village Design Statement SPD can be found here:

<https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/residents/planning/planning-policy/Lightwater/LightwaterVillageDesign.pdf>