

Appendix – EM1

Note on Landscape Strategy, issued on 16 June 2022

2 Station Road, Great Shelford, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB22 5LR1

Appellant: Churchill Retirement Living Ltd

PINS Ref: APP/W0530/W/22/3296300 / LPA Ref: 21/05276/FUL

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This note has been prepared jointly by Principal Landscape Architects for the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS), Bana Elzein CMLI and Helen Sayers CMLI. Our qualifications and experience are set out in an Appendix at the end of this Note.
- 1.2 We have produced this statement on behalf of the GCSPS, to assist with matters of Landscape design quality relating to the above scheme. Our assessment focusses on the design of the landscape strategy, which forms part of putative Reason for Refusal 2 – Character and appearance of the area, outlined in South Cambridgeshire District Council’s (SCDC) Statement of Case. It is understood that this Note will form an Appendix to the proof of evidence of Elizabeth Moon who will be giving evidence on Urban Design matters relating to putative Reason for Refusal 2.
- 1.3 Our colleague, Dinah Foley-Norman, also a Chartered Landscape Architect, provided comments to the original application submission, which we have reviewed in producing this Note.
- 1.4 The following application documents have been considered:
 - JBA 21- 312 SK02 Rev. A – Landscape Strategy
 - 40040GS/PA01 – Site Plan

- Design and Access Statement
- Retirement Living Explained

1.5 In addition to considering all relevant reports, plans and drawings (including appendices) submitted with the application, we have, in particular, considered the South Cambridgeshire District Design Guide SPD 2010.

1.6 This note is given in accordance with the guidance of our professional institution. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional opinions.

2.0 Relevant planning policies

2.1 The policies relevant to putative Reason for Refusal 2 are referred to in Ms. Moon's proof of evidence and will not be repeated here. We have referred to relevant SPD Guidance above.

2.2 Other Best Practice Advice

2.3 The HAPPI Report 2009 is referred to in Ms. Moon's proof and we also considered this a relevant document to consider when reviewing the landscape and amenity design for the proposals.

2.4 Of the 10 Key principles, the following are of relevance to the Landscape strategy:

- Care is taken in the design of homes and shared spaces, with the placement, size and detail of windows, and to ensure plenty of natural light, and to allow daylight into circulation spaces;
- Building layouts maximise natural light and ventilation by avoiding internal corridors and single-aspect flats, and apartments have balconies, patios, or terraces with enough space for tables and chairs as well as plants;
- Building layouts promote circulation areas as shared spaces that offer connections to the wider context, encouraging interaction, supporting interdependence and avoiding an 'institutional feel', including the imaginative use of shared balcony access to front doors and thresholds, promoting natural surveillance and providing for 'defensible space';

- In giving thought to the public realm, design measures ensure that homes engage positively with the street, and that the natural environment is nurtured through new trees and hedges and the preservation of mature planting, and providing wildlife habitats as well as colour, shade and shelter.

3.0 Appeal site, context, and proposed scheme.

- 3.1 For the purposes of this Note, the appeal site, context, and proposed scheme are adequately described in Ms. Moon's proof of evidence.
- 3.2 The landscape design includes small private amenity spaces to the south facing flats at ground level and a shared garden on the south and east edges of the site with tree and shrub planting. The Northern side of the site is occupied by the refuse and mobility scooter storage areas and by 16 parking bays. The landscape strategy drawing (JBA 21-312 - SK02) indicates 5 new trees on the north side of the building and 16 new trees to the south. Shrub and hedge planting is proposed to the edges of the site and around the perimeter of the building. A formal, communal outdoor space is shown on the north side of the building linked to the internal, shared residents' lounge.

4.0 Putative Reason for Refusal 2 - Character and appearance of the area

4.1 Site Layout and Landscape Strategy

- 4.1.1 The site layout has been designed so that the building is positioned across the centre of the site and this design decision, alongside the size of the building, means that the building occupies the bulk of the site area, pushing the landscape areas to the edges of the site and dividing the external amenity spaces into separate, unlinked areas. The site layout also means that the building overshadows the entire northern side of the site, making this area less suitable for outdoor activities, gardens and shared amenity spaces than the south.
- 4.1.2 The main planted areas and outdoor amenity areas are located to the south, east and west edges of the site and include tree and shrub planting and lawns but,

due to the position of the building there is limited space for structural tree planting or substantial areas of planting. Private amenity spaces are also located at ground level on the south, east and west sides of the building. Other than the larger areas of lawn, there are no additional shared terrace spaces in these areas and no additional facilities for outdoor activities and social interaction. There are also no footpath connections between the external areas around the building and so it will be difficult for residents to access and use external spaces.

4.1.3 A smaller communal amenity area associated with the Owner's Lounge is located on the north side of the building and is separated from the scooter storage, the access road and main entrance access route by hedges and planting. The location on the northern aspect of the proposed 3-storey building means that the small space will be considerably overshadowed.

4.1.4 Summary: The site layout and landscape strategy do not comply with parts c and m of Policy HQ1 and paragraph 6.51, 6.72, 6.73, and 6.74 of the District Design Guide

4.2 Private and Communal Amenity

4.2.1 The arrangement of the building on the site divides the external spaces into two completely disconnected halves. The shared facilities for parking, entrances, buggy stores and the communal lounge and terrace are all located in the north facing area of the site. Private and communal amenity spaces are located in the south, east and west; however, the communal areas are poorly accessed for the majority of residents. A better arrangement, which would support safe and convenient access for all users and a harmonious integrated mix of uses within the site, would be to link the shared internal spaces with the south facing garden areas so that all residents could benefit from a south facing external garden which would encourage social interaction, gardening, contact with nature and exercise.

- 4.2.2 The document 'Retirement Living Explained' provided by the Appellant identifies a typical provision for a development as including 'Landscaped gardens (with raised planters and potting sheds).
- 4.2.3 Part m of Policy HQ/1 requires that high-quality landscaping and public spaces that integrate the development with its surroundings, having a clear definition between public and private space which provide opportunities for recreation, social interaction as well as support healthy lifestyles, biodiversity, sustainable drainage and climate change mitigation.
- 4.2.4 The provision of private amenity space does not meet any sort of functional requirement as there is not enough space on the supplied area of hardstanding for the positioning of a chair and table, for example. The swing of the door prevents this. There is also no clear delineation or screening between private outdoor amenity spaces at ground level and the shared gardens creating an uncomfortable relationship between the two.
- 4.2.5 **Summary: Private and communal amenity provision does not comply with part m of Policy HQ/1 and paragraphs 6.72, 6.73, 6.74 and 6.75 of the District Design Guide.**

4.3 Parking, Pedestrian Movement and Mobility Scooter Storage

- 4.3.1 In considering the design of the external areas, we would make the following comments:
- Parking dominates the main approach to the building entrance creating an illegible and poorly functioning space for pedestrians and visitors.
 - The mobility scooter storage and charging area is poorly located in the passage which leads to the refuse store and considered to not be located conveniently for the use of residents with mobility issues.

4.3.2 Summary: The points made do not accord with Parts h and m of Policy HQ/1

4.4 Garden Design and Planting Strategy

4.4.1 Overall, the garden design is provided as a setting rather than as a social, inclusive and interactive space. As proposed, the grounds are divided into the northern owner's lounge garden and terrace and the southern/eastern gardens. Drawing JBA 21-312 - SK02 - Landscape Strategy identifies a strategy and palette of plants proposed for the site. The key identifies native evergreen trees located within the boundary planting at the southern and eastern edges which does not conform with the palette identified on the same drawing.

4.4.2 We agree with the comments of our colleague Dinah Foley-Norman (consultee comments dated 31 Jan, 2022):

".. the owner's lounge and small terrace is on the north side of the building and isolated from the main garden. By placing it to the north of the building the lounge and terrace will constantly be in the shade and only have views of the car park access road. The owner's lounge should be the social hub of the garden as well as the building. All garden facilities should emanate from the lounge and its terrace. On the current building layout, it should therefore be on the south side to have immediate access to the garden. Currently the only communal entrances to the garden are from a fire door at the end of the corridor of the northwest wing or the car park. Garden entrances should be inviting to residents and not circuitous or inconvenient."

4.4.3 The HAPPI Report 2009 design principles which offer relevant best practice guidance for housing for aging populations support communal spaces which are well lit with natural daylight and engage positively with their environment.

4.4.4 The garden must be able to accommodate a variety of spaces connected by pathways to allow access for those with mobility issues. This should include raised beds and planters for residents to use for planting food or other gardening.

The garden area should also be able to accommodate storage for gardening implements such as a potting shed.

4.4.5 Summary: The garden design and planting strategy fails to achieve the principles of part m of the Policy HQ/1 and principle N1 of the National Design Guide

5.0 Summary and Conclusions

5.1 In summary, the proposed development results in a poor quality landscape design resulting in poor resident experience, contrary to national and local planning policies and guidance.

Appendix – Qualifications and Experience

Bana Elzein is a Chartered Landscape Architect and Principal Landscape Architect with the GCSPS. I have a Masters Degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Oklahoma (2003) and a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from Lawrence Technological University (1994, Southfield, Michigan, USA). I have been practising as a Landscape Architect in the UK since 2004 and qualified as a chartered member of the Landscape Institute since 2009.

I have been employed by the GCSPS since August 2019 and previously by Cambridge City Council since 2013. Prior to working in local government, I worked in private practice in Suffolk, Cheshire and Lancashire.

Helen Sayers is a Chartered Landscape Architect and Principal Landscape Architect with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service. I have been employed by GCSPS since April 2022. Prior to working with GCSPS I worked in private practice and local government in London. I have a BA(Hons) degree in Landscape Architecture from Heriot Watt University (1994) and qualified as a chartered member of the Landscape Institute in 1997.