

ITEM 6 - 17/00488/FUL - LAND R/O 12 TO 26 EASTWOOD ROAD, RAYLEIGH

This application has been withdrawn.

ITEM 7 - 17/00431/OUT - FAIRWAYS GARDEN CENTRE, HULLBRIDGE ROAD, RAYLEIGH

1. Applicant Correspondence re. Affordable Housing

The applicants have stated that they are willing to pay a capital contribution towards the provision of affordable housing. The sum is what the Council's viability assessor - DVS - has stated is the surplus between the residual land value and the benchmark land value, thus making the scheme viable for the provision of affordable housing. This surplus sum is £663,429.

2. ECC Urban Design Comments

Housing Mix

The Rochford District Council affordable housing policy requires 35% of proposed housing to be affordable for schemes of 15 units or more; however, the proposed scheme will be 100% private market homes. The provision of affordable housing requires further development in order to ensure the scheme provides all or a number of the required six affordable dwellings.

The layout

The proposed layout is still based around a single spine loop road arrangement. The proposed main access spine road has not been revised since pre application stage and still appears over engineered and over complicated for this scale of development. There is still an opportunity to create a more efficient layout reducing the area of infrastructure on site. There are no proposed surface materials specified for the shared surface and no detailing of speed reducing factors to ensure a 20 mph speed limit, e.g., street trees.

All dwellings are arranged in order to front onto the main road and central landscaped space; as discussed in our previous response, this creates a very inward looking development with high levels of over surveillance on the central amenity space and other dwelling frontages.

It is clear that our previous advice regarding plots 17, 16 and 15 has been addressed; these units have been re orientated slightly to increase the distance between the frontages. Although these three dwellings are still very

close to each other the distance is now more acceptable. It is also positive that plots 7 and 10 (previously 11 and 8) have now been re oriented and reduced in size to better address their plots. These dwellings now front the main spine loop rather than neighbouring dwellings.

It is positive to see that house type D has been amended to create the 2-bedroom home option. The dwellings generally follow the Arcadian style; making use of equally spaced buildings, located within regular plot frontages and landscape dominated set backs. Although the 1.5 storey dwelling is typical of the local area, these are often dispersed within two storey developments; the proposal requires further evidence of how the local context of Rayleigh has been used to influence the design and layout of the proposed development.

The orientation of plots 1 and 16 mean the dwellings struggle to address the street, which is vital on these entrance dwellings/corner addressing plots. These plots require further layout iterations to ensure an active frontage occurs on both the main spine road and a sense of arrival is felt on entry from Hullbridge Road. Plot 16 may be more suitable as a handed type E dwelling and plot 1 could be rotated 90 degrees so that the main spine road is better addressed.

Elevations

Excluding the golf club, all of the surrounding buildings are detached dwellings up to 2.5 storeys in height. All proposed dwellings are 1.5 storeys, which are in keeping with a number of bungalows in the surrounding area. A height comparison drawing shows that the proposed dwellings do not exceed the roof line of the shortest surrounding dwellings; avoiding any issues of overlooking and ensuring the proposed dwellings do not dominate the street frontage and wider landscape.

As discussed in our previous response, there is still very little variety throughout the development. There are still five house type options, which are handed to create a sense of variety. The use of a contextually informed material pallet that can be applied to dwellings to create a number of finish combinations would enable the scheme to have a varied but cohesive street frontage.

Refuse and Cycle Storage

The proposed plans do not currently identify the positions of cycle storage and refuse storage for each dwelling. Although detailed drawings are not required at this stage it is advised that the indicative locations and spatial provisions are identifiable on plans.

Parking

All dwellings appear to provide adequate driveways to accommodate two cars, meeting the standard detailed in Rochford's Parking Standards Design and Good Practice SPD. The current approach to parking, however, dominates the street scene where a number of units have plot frontage parking.

Detailed parking drawings should include hard and soft landscaping material choices. To prevent run off and assist with drainage it is advised that all driveways are constructed of permeable paving. Additionally, these plans should demonstrate how the proposals meet the equivalent space requirements of Rochford District Council's preferred 5.5m x 2.9m bay size.

The Rochford Parking Standards Design and Good Practice SPD indicates the need for 0.25 visitor spaces per dwelling; no visitor spaces are indicated on the proposed plans. It is suggested that these are incorporated into the perimeter of central amenity space.

Garden Size and Public Open Space

It is positive to see plots 1 and 2 (previously plots 1 to 3) have made better use of garden space by removing one dwelling. The garden sizes seem adequate in size; however, it should be demonstrated on plans that they meet Rochford District Council's preferred garden size of 100m².

The inclusion of the amenity space provides the opportunity for communal interaction between residents. The inclusion of incidental play equipment could be explored and this would provide a benefit to the wider community, as well as residents.

Landscaping

There is no soft or hard landscape plan submitted as part of this application. In further planning stages we would expect to see these with full plant and material specifications, any SuDS requirements, for example; attenuation ponds should also be integrated into landscape proposals.

The main access road could benefit from additional tree planting, creating an avenue effect to the entrance, as well as providing screening and a setting for plots. It is positive to see that a tree report has been undertaken and only two trees are proposed for removal, replaced with additional mitigation tree planting elsewhere on site.

Access

It is positive to see that the proposal is no longer referred to as a gated community, ensuring that there is only one proposed access for the site, which will serve both pedestrians and vehicles. There is concern that the

pedestrian route ends at the site boundary, meaning that residents will have to cross the 40 mph road to reach a paved route. It is suggested that the pedestrian route is extended further and a pedestrian crossing is explored to provide a safe route to nearby bus services and amenities.

The proposal has a lack of pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the wider area; although the site is in a rural location the provision of additional pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the wider area could be explored.

It should be demonstrated that the proposed spine road provides adequate access for refuse vehicles and fire appliances through vehicle tracking drawings.

Summary

If the outline planning application is approved, we would like to see a reconsidered layout which addresses the number of points within this response. The current layout is inefficient, lacking clarity and variety. There are a number of suggested amendments listed in this response which highlight a series of actions to refine the current proposal. These have been listed below:-

- Ensure the required affordable housing provision has been addressed.
- Explore a greater variety of dwelling design through the use of a contextually informed material palette.
- Reconsider the layout of the main access spine road - designed to be an integral part of the housing layout rather than a road to position dwellings around.
- Demonstrate that all gardens meet Rochford District Council's standard of 100m².
- Identify locations of refuse and cycle stores.
- Provide a detailed landscape proposal, including hard landscaping, soft landscaping and SuDS.
- Provide a greater clarity on the public/private areas.
- Include details of residential parking spaces and propose visitor parking locations.
- Explore the opportunity for greater pedestrian connectivity to the surrounding area.

Officers' Comment

Officers consider that the layout and design of the proposed development is satisfactory and meets local and national design policy requirements. As the application is in outline form with landscaping as the sole reserved matter the comments from Urban Design regarding landscaping could be addressed at the reserved matters stage.

As the application is recommended for refusal, the applicants' attention would be drawn to Urban Design comments in an informative so that they could seek to address some of the issues in any revised application.