

ONLINE CONSULTEE RESPONSE ON PLANNING APPLICATION 22/10813

Location	ORCHARD GATE, NOADS WAY, DIBDEN PURLIEU, HYTHE SO45 4PD
Received Date	18 August 2022
Objection received from	NFDC Urban Design

The following is combined feedback covering Environmental Design (both Urban and Landscape design).

This proposal is too intensively built up to be considered as contextually appropriate. The proposal not only fails to respect the character and context of sylvan and spacious setting for houses and bungalows here, but as a result will over time ensure that the sense of trees and greenery as a key characteristic of the setting would be depleted for an area wider than its own site.

Individual settings within the scheme, lack of meaningful front gardens, lack of greenery between dwellings, intensively hard surfaced courtyards and parking areas, lack of significant tree species or space for such trees to grow altogether would create an external environment that is completely at odds with the context and fails to support local distinctiveness.

The one meaningful greenspace – the green is laid out to appear as private to some dwellings and not others and does not invite use by children through its design despite the fact that this is a proposal for mainly family housing. It is almost entirely encumbered by an underground drainage tank for which there is no certainty yet that even this will suffice and not require further expansion.

Other spaces are along edges where trees would need to dominate the space but where there is not enough room to readily perpetuate such tree groups for the future.

As a result, I find that the proposal does not follow policy ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness. It also fails for the same reasons to accord with similar aspirations for local distinctiveness and character held by the neighbourhood plan, through its failure to take reasonable cognisance of the Housing Design Density and Character SPD.

Other impact on the neighbourhood is the wide Belmouth created for cars to access the site. The severance of the existing footpath route need not be so drastic – cars could enter the site across a table/change of surface which highlights the pedestrians' right of way along the existing route. Design should favour the pedestrian and cyclist over the car driver in creating this access point.

Further, more detailed landscape concerns are as follows:

- The sylvan landscape character of the site and its surrounds is very much driven by the mature canopy trees that are existing on the sites perimeter. The species chosen for the internal tree planting are relatively short lived and will not provide replacement for any trees that are lost in the future.
- There is a preponderance of fastigate trees as though the existence of natural tree canopies to characterise the place is something to be avoided.
- Carparking area: This area is not a good place in its own right but rather dominated by hard standing addressed by rear boundaries. Trees might be better moved to end of beds with larger species specified and an underground root cell product to enable full establishment. The rear

boundary should be of permanent quality with some intervisibility and also some additional greenery to the courtyard

- The facing back of the hedge along the northern boundary is very drastic. The back gardens in this area are too shallow. More of the hedge should be retained (although we were unable to access this area of the site so we do not know the quality of the existing hedge and it may need to be cleaned and enhanced in areas).
- The verge on the eastern boundary currently has a dense understory hedge row which will be important for the character of the site and the outlook for the neighbouring plots and should be retained. Plans show this as grass. The track of the road does not provide enough space along that edge.
- The design of the main POS only invites use from the plots directly adjacent to it and should be opened up to encourage access and use. There is not much in the space to engage with or encourage use of the space. There is a lot of shade loving species used in a south facing bed and I am not sure that there will be enough shade from the trees in the first few growing seasons to protect these species.

I consider that a far greater consideration of the landscape as a dominant characteristic of the area needs to be undertaken before designs will be good enough to enable new housing in this site most likely resulting in a reduction in dwelling numbers.