

## Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

### URBAN DESIGN

**Officer name:**

Brian Johnson Dip Arch RIBA  
Senior Urban Design Officer  
Wiltshire Council

**Date:** 15.06.2022

**Application No:** PL/2022/03103

**Proposal:** Outline application for up to 32 dwellings with all matters reserved (except access)

**Site Address:** Land to the east of Wagtails ,Southampton Road, Alderbury.

**Case Officer:** Lynda King

#### Reference:

Case Files on Wiltshire Council planning application webpage for PL/2022/03103 indexed April and May 2022

#### Policy and guidance:

Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping', National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021), National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (January 2021), Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England 2020) (which supersedes Building for Life 12).

#### Comment

This application seeks planning approval for the principle of housing development including access to the development from Southampton Road with all other matters including layout, appearance and landscaping reserved for any subsequent reserved matters application should the Outline planning application receive planning approval.

The application submission Case Files includes information on these reserved matters: The proposed 'Site Layout' drawing number 1215\_01 Revision 01 and Design & Access Statement November 2019 (D&AS) which includes this current 'Site Layout'. The Site Layout conveys poor design features; matters that would not constitute high quality design and placeshaping in order to accord with Core Policy 57.

To satisfactorily address these matters could also impact on the quantity and size of dwellings achievable on the site, and it is therefore appropriate that the planning application title is '*... for up to 32 dwellings*' i.e., 'Up to' rather than this being stated as an actual number. These files should therefore be given no weight in respect of the design matters in any Outline planning approval or planning conditions attached.

These matters are:

1) Landscape and Ecology related:

- a) Numerous trees shown along the two closes would appear to be within plot front gardens where they could be easily cut back or removed and the long term maintenance of these could not be practically ensured rather than these being in managed communal open space. (Re National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) Policy 131). Building for a Healthy Life page 67 '*what red looks like*' advises against '*street trees conveyed to individual occupiers*'.
- b) The strip proposed shown on the Site Layout along the site boundaries across the rear of plot rear gardens is indicated as '*rear garden buffer planting zone of 1.5 meters (inc half meter of mixed seed wildflowers*' (D&AS page 20). This strip would need to be physically separated and secured from the dwelling plots and contained by a secure site boundary to avoid possible encroachment from gardens and depletion or loss of this planting and managed access for maintenance without encroaching on the plots.

I question the restricted depth and lack of access from communal areas of this buffer in order to provide or maintain a reasonable maintenance and upkeep of this (i.e. by a management company without intruding on private gardens), and for reasonable growth/spread of a native hedge; and wildflower planting growth/survival in this strip would also be vulnerable to trampling, as repository for grass cuttings and shading/ unseen by the necessary high boundary screening (e.g. a 'solid' fence) with adjacent existing properties for privacy and security. Page 34 'Ecology' explains native hedgerow trees would be planted in this buffer zone, but it would appear that this limited depth would deter any significant canopy spread. In this context Building for a Healthy Life page 43 '*what 'red' looks like*' advises against '*unmanaged gaps between development used as privacy buffers to existing residents*' and against '*Placing retained hedges into rear gardens or into private ownership*' or page 55 '*buffers ....that create channels of movement*'.

- c) The Site Layout and Landscaping (D&AS page 31) shows no contained front gardens which are essentially shown as open plan lawn whereas D&AS page 17 says '*native hedges with occasional railings..... will largely define the front boundaries to each dwelling*'. In this regard Building for a healthy life pages 82/83 '*what green looks like*' advises '*defensible space and strong boundary treatments*' and for '*Boundary treatments that add ecological value and/or reinforce distinctive local characteristics*' i.e. In this context the enclosed front gardens of the adjacent properties along the Southampton Road and neighbourhood are a strong local characteristic.
- d) These points a), b) and c) would also appear pertinent to WC Landscape Officer consideration and the 'Biodiversity' matters raised in 19/11206/OUT with its essentially identical Site Layout: i.e., the Case Officer report referencing Core Policy 57 and the Wiltshire Council Ecology Officer consultation response.

2) The proposed car parking and pedestrian access would be a poor level of amenity for users :

- a) The visitor spaces shown are not well distributed with the majority of the dwellings in the two closes distanced from these. The 8no larger houses of 4 bedrooms + would require 3 parking spaces each not the '*at least two parking bays*' the layout and D&AS page 20 suggests.
- b) The pavement shown alongside the access road into the site is broken by the two visitor bays. The pedestrian access shown out of the north-east end of the close does not conveniently connect with the pavement and could be obstructed by vehicles manoeuvring and parking across this. The lengthy driveway to access car bays for plot 11 would involve awkward and lengthy reversing.

- 3) Driveways and garages by siding onto 'Landscape/communal gardens'/ play areas i.e., plot 10 & 11 and plots 20 and 21 would be visually poor :

These would present a visually inactive perimeter to the open space. Building for a Healthy Life pages 54/55 '*what red looks like*' advises against '*Presenting blank or largely blank elevations to streets and public spaces.*' Whereas Page 52 '*what green looks like*' shows an example lower left of substantial habitable room windows facing open space and page 78/79 '*what red looks like*' advises against '*Buildings that turn away from open spaces.*'

- 4) Potential essentially blank side elevations i.e., with little or no 'habitable room' windows would be visually poor in the street scene and from the public open space ( 'Landscape/communal gardens'/ play areas) i.e.:
- the side elevation of dwelling 20 (including its garage face ) and house 21 (including its long high sided garden boundary) as a backdrop to the public open space / play area;
  - the deep side elevation of dwellings 10 and 11 as a backdrop to the open space alongside and backdrop / pedestrian approach to the development from the adjacent new housing development under construction,
  - deep side elevation of staggered dwellings 29 and 30.
  - deep side elevation of dwellings 18 and 19 and extent of car parking abutting these and hardstanding between these two elevations forward of dwellings 16-17.

Building for a Healthy Life pages 54/55 '*what red looks like*' advises against '*Presenting blank or largely blank elevations to streets and public spaces.*' Whereas Page 52 '*what green looks like*' shows an example lower left of substantial habitable room windows facing open space and page 78/79 '*what red looks like*' advises against '*Buildings that turn away from open spaces.*'

- 5) I question the provision of equipped play area (i.e., this would be a LEAP not a LAP) shown for the number of dwellings provided, its expanse, dominating the open space and in proximity to houses where such equipped play is generally advised in respect of potential disturbance e.g. noise to be located considerably further away from residential plots than that shown on the Site Layout.
-