

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response URBAN DESIGN

Officer name:

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Application No: PL/2023/10495

Application: Conversion of Elmfield House and outbuildings to 6 x dwellings and the erection of 15 dwellings, hard and soft landscaping and associated works

Site Address: Elmfield House, Petersfinger.

Case Officer: Lynda King

Reference:

Drawings on Wiltshire Council planning application webpage for PL/2023/10495 indexed 5th December 2023.

Policy and guidance:

Wiltshire Core Strategy, Core Policy 57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping' (abbreviated CP57 below).

National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (abbreviated NPPF) .

National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government July 2021).

Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England June 2020) (referenced in the NPPF) (abbreviated BfHL below).

Objection

The proposed development would not meet the high quality of design and place shaping required by Core Policy 57 as it would not adequately draw on the local context & be complimentary to the locality or provide adequate amenity (where identified), for the following reasons:

1) Plots 13/14/15: (drawing 963.07 C 'Proposed Site Plan and 963.189 Rev C Plots 13/14/15 Plans & Elevations)

- a) The proposed expanse of hardstanding and run of car parking bays over this forward of the houses, and removing the hedge/walled boundary and garden frontage to the lane which is a key component of the intrinsic rural character of Petersfinger Road, would introduce a distinctly urban character into this setting, and compounded by the existing garaging and forecourt opposite, a car dominated street scene. This would not enhance but significantly diminish the essentially rural quality of the lane that it would be desirable to maintain. It would be reasonable therefore to expect only a single vehicle width access as with the existing gated boundary here, should therefore be maintained.

The National Design Guide paragraph 65 while advocating a compact form of development indicates that layout, form and scale should combine in a way that responds positively to context and that the appropriate density will result from this and accessibility. In this case the proposed density of a terrace of three compact town houses and their car parking would not respond positively to the context. This would not accord with CP57 iii i.e. respond positively to existing enclosed boundary features or CP57 vi - it would not relate effectively to the immediate setting and to the wider character of the area.

- b) The combined roof span, depth and height of the terrace shown to achieve a significant attic second floor, in proximity to the lane would be of a singular mass that would appear visually awkward (cumbersome) appreciated with the neighbouring properties along the lane, including its relatively uniform form and appearance which also imparts a typically urban estate housing character in juxtaposition with the comparable greater degree of articulation of building form and roofscape of the grouping of Elmfield House /Yew Tree cottage alongside.

The overall scale (height and mass) of the terrace in proximity would detract from the predominance and stature of this existing Victorian villa in its setting. It is greater than Yew tree cottage which is an appropriately subservient appendage to Elmfield House.

This would not accord with CP57 iii i.e. respond positively to the existing in terms of layout, built form , height and mass to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

I observe that nearby 'Hughendon Manor' a comparably large old house set back facing the A36 has appendages alongside its main façade of a lesser scale and façade height, typically with the first floor being largely a part attic storey as does the example frontage (below left) opposite Elmfield House drawn upon in the Design and Access Statement as being the character, in context, which being of this form and lesser façade height relates to an established rural 'cottage' rather than the uncharacteristic urban 'town house' vernacular conveyed by the proposed housing terrace in this setting.

This village house (below right) from a recent Brick Bulletin newsletter I also show here as an example of a comparably similar length as the subject two housing terraces but of lesser main building depth, roof span and roof pitch , limited single vehicle width gated access and positioned such that an mid height attractive boundary treatment and front garden is maintained (to deter potential future paving over of this for parking it has more than just a hedge with attractive plinth wall and railings and house positioned to present inadequate depth for end on parking) and to limit concentration of car parking in the street scene as a single house with parking in driveway set well back down side of the house.



- c) The large side /end of terrace elevation of house 13 is shown blank and in this essentially street corner position would be visibly austere from the lane and A36(T) in proximity. Existing or proposed vegetation forward of this would do little to moderate this and may be cut back , die back or be removed at any time and cannot be practically ensured by planning condition). This would not accord with CP57 iii (elevational design). This would represent in principle BfHL page 54/55 'what red looks like' photos and third and eighth buliit points whereas 'what green looks like pages 52/53 photos of dual aspect homes with significant windows on outward facing side elevation serving 'habitable 'rooms' (i.e. not a toilet or bathroom or small obscured glazed opening) .

A house on the relatively recent nearby Clarendon Place facing the former A36 road (above centre) illustrates one possible approach to this for example , with its comprehensive use of flint banding characteristic of the locality across the gable end and incorporating a prominent placed and significant sized clear glazed window.

- 2) Similarly in this context the identical side /end of terrace of house 6 would be austere seen from the end of the close and is likely to be readily apparent seen above the acoustic fence and vegetation and between the tree canopy from the A36 notably in months of leaf fall.
- 3) The chimney stacks shown on the two housing terraces appear to be false in relation to the floor plan and set in from the gable end wall. Applied prefabricated grp stacks and pots would be visually poor in this setting. Any chimneys should be of matching masonry construction continued off the gable end and ideally have a practical purpose. This would not accord in principle with CP57 xii.
- 4) The small size of the rear garden of plot 12 would represent a poor level of amenity for a family sized dwelling. It is widely recognised and practiced by house builders that rear gardens of 'houses' (including chalet bungalows under this general term) should ideally be at least equal to the footprint of the dwelling (and of regular shape). This would not accord with CP57 ii (plot size) and vii (amenity) . I observe that all the other rear gardens appear to be on or only just above this minimum area.)
- 5) The Proposed North west Elevation (side elevation) of Plot 10 by presenting its garage and driveway and high fenced side passageway forward of this at this prominent road corner would present a visually austere face to the close and in juxtaposition with the high wall carried forward of the side of plot 1 opposite and the high enclosure up to the bridge (point 6 below) would be a not well overlooked and visually a not well defined street and space Re In principle again as BfHL page 54/55 'what red looks like' photos and third and eighth buliit points whereas 'what green looks like' pages 52/53 photos and first and sixth bullitt points..
- 6) The 'dry canal' (drawing 963.07 C 'Proposed Site Plan' and 414 PN 01 Rev B Landscape Plan)

This significant existing strip through the site which appears to be part of the local watercourse and is bordered by existing landscape is now proposed to be sandwiched between and bounded by the enclosed rear gardens of the proposed plots on both sides (whereas in previous 19/00967/OUT & PL/2021/07611REM the proposed density and lesser overall number of houses enabled retaining an appreciable landscape down one side of this which would maintain a landscape context and setting for the watercourse).

Contained by and largely hidden from view by the proposed rear garden fences would leave this strip outside of and not visually contribute to practical residents accessible (public) open space. This includes where the watercourse is shown 'wet' bridged by the road with the high fencing carried up to the bridge edge on both sides which would appear ungainly as a barrier restricting views along the close.

This would not accord with CP 57ii. It would not represent a feature that would be of a maintained quality appearance or enhancement or well-integrated into the development to support quality of place (National Design Guide paragraph 91) and as effectively a shut away area would not represent BfHL pages 74 to 77 'what green looks like' photos and text - a 'creative surface water management' design approach providing 'accessible' and 'natural surveillance' opportunities through plots and dwellings not turning their back on this.