

Project Title: Residential Development (app. Ref. P/2016/0094)

Location: White Rock, Brixham Road, Paignton

Status: Advice on Planning Submission

1.0 The General Layout

- 1.1 Has the central street serving units 9, 13-16 been tested in terms of the tracking of a refuse vehicle? It is difficult to identify a suitable turning head.
- 1.2 Earlier layouts indicated changes of level between rear gardens in the centre of the site (in the vicinity of party wall between units 27/28 and running north-south across the whole development). How has this been resolved in the current proposals and will the rear gardens now shown be reduced in their size by the need to accommodate retaining structures? Site cross sections should be provided to show the proposed levels through the most challenging parts of the site.
- 1.3 The new layout presents a number of blank 'gable end' conditions to the public realm and to spaces where some natural surveillance ought to be provided in order to improve the sense of safety and security of the development. The inclusion of windows to ground floor habitable rooms should be provided on the following units. Those marked with an asterisk* would also benefit from being some form of projecting or 'bay' windows, in order to articulate the form of the building in a location that is important for the urban design of the layout:

Unit 1

Unit 5 (N and S gables)

Unit 6

Unit 9

Unit 12*

Unit 13

Unit 15

Unit 17

Unit 19*

Unit 20

Unit 23*

Unit 24 (S gable)

Unit 25

Unit 26*

Unit 30*

Unit 35

Unit 40 *

1.4 In addition, the parking areas between units 30 + 31 and 32 + 33 may be vulnerable if no over-looking of these spaces is provided. Smaller windows in these locations may suffice and therefore avoid creating problems of potential inter-visibility between dwellings.

2.0 **Parking Spaces**

2.1 The increased provision is welcomed but there are still some unsatisfactory relationships between some of the dwellings and their allocated parking:

Units 1, 2 + 3 – parking remote / not visible from the dwelling

Units 18 + 19 – parking remote / not visible from the dwelling

Unit 20 – parking remote from dwelling

Unit 25 – parking remote from dwelling

Unit 29 – parking remote from dwelling

Unit 37 – parking remote from dwelling

Units 75 + 76 – length of parking driveway encourages casual parking of additional vehicle which will obstruct the pedestrian pathway

2.2 In situations where parking has been provided in remote positions and in locations that cannot be casually surveyed by the householder, then this provides great incentive for casual and irresponsible parking on pavements and other parts of the public realm in closer proximity to the dwellings, causing nuisance and generating a car-dominated character to the development.

2.3 In addition, the parking provision for unit 7 is awkward – being located in front of the neighbouring dwelling – the layout here might be adjusted to avoid this?

3.0 **Garden Sizes**

3.1 Rear garden spaces still seem to be too small for the following dwellings:

Units 11 + 12

Units 29 + 30

Unit 34

Unit 35

3.2 Many other rear gardens seem to be 'borderline' in terms of the private amenity space that they might be able to provide to residents. Could a schedule of the external space provided for each dwelling be submitted as additional evidence of the standards being achieved?

4.0 **Inter-visibility between Dwellings**

4.1 These concerns, that might give rise to a lack of privacy and encourage excessive over-looking of properties, seem to have been successfully dealt with and separation distances now seem reasonable in the revised layout.

5.0 Building for Life 12 Assessment

5.1 We provide and update below of the earlier advice about the performance of the design against the 12 Building for Life Criteria. (New/revised observations in bold)

1. *Connections: Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site? This has been scored red, no evidence has been provided to allow a different score. The statement should refer back to plans and sections of the design and access statement or other supporting statements. **Information on p41 of the D+A Statement now adequately describes this – green score, but we must here note the proximity of the noisy industry to the North and the need to mitigate this effect on the residential amenity of the site.***

2. *Facilities and services: Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workshops, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes? This has been scored red but is likely to score amber once further evidence has been submitted. Amber is used where there is clear evidence of local constraints on the scheme beyond the control of the design team that prevent it from achieving a green. In this case the provision of the local centre is outside of the applicants control however the local shops and services at Kingsway may be relevant. The capacity of the local schools (primary and secondary) as well as the distance from the site should also be referred to here. As discussed in our meeting you may want to refer back to the transport assessment submitted as part of the outline application. **Information on p42 of the D+A Statement now adequately describes this – amber score since provision of the local centre, which will be key in satisfying this question, remains beyond the control of the development.***

3. *Public transport: Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency? This has scored amber and refers to the potential for a bus service to serve the development. Further evidence is required to achieve a green score. **Information on p42 of the D+A Statement now adequately describes this – amber score since access is relatively good, but could be improved by the additional bus service described.***

4. *Meeting local housing requirements: Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements? This has scored a red and further evidence is required to achieve an amber or green score. This should refer to reasons why this mix of housing has been chosen even if this is largely based on market forces. Similarly I would advise that you refer to advice you have received in terms of the affordable housing needs and the evidence set out within the housing needs assessment for Torbay. This should also reference relevant plans, design and access statement etc. The Building for Life guidance also specifically recommends not reducing the level of parking provision for rented/shared ownership homes, whilst it is not only these homes that in some cases only have one parking space, this is also something to consider when assessing the proposal against this particular criteria. **Information on p42 of the D+A Statement still does not fully describe this – but the***

weak parking provision has been addressed - amber score, which could and should be improved by the supply of a clearer justification as discussed above.

5. *Character: Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character? The scheme follows the principles of the previous scheme and therefore has scored a green. **Amber score – character has been strengthened in terms of adjustments to layout, but requirement for fenestration on gable ends (see 1.3 above) that have now become exposed - in order to avoid presentation of blank facades.***

6. *Working with the site and its context: Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates? Revisions to the scheme will be required in terms of landscaping however this should be capable of scoring green subject to these revisions. **Amber score – see note 1.2 above – fuller information required to confirm a green score.***

7. *Creating Well Defined Streets and Spaces: Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well? This has scored a red due to the amount of dwellings which only benefit from one parking space and the instances where parking is remote from dwellings which is likely to result in streets being dominated by on street parking. The building for life guidance recommends that proposals avoid an overreliance on in front plot parking that can create streets being car dominated unless there is sufficient space to use strong and sufficient landscaping to compensate. It is noted that further landscaping will be required which may help to overcome some of these concerns. Further evidence and revisions to the scheme are required to achieve a higher score. **Amber score – see notes under 1.3 and section 2.0 above – these improvements should be addressed in order to achieve a green...***

8. *Easy to find your way around: Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around? This has scored a green however there are examples where parking is remote from the dwelling which it serves and this could cause difficulties. It is noted that the building for life guidance recommends that proposals avoid layouts that separate homes and facilities from the car, unless the scheme incorporates secure underground car parking and as such it is recommended that instances where this occurs are reduced. **No change – green score, but these earlier notes are still relevant and could be addressed to good effect. The text on p.43 of the D+A statement could usefully be updated to discuss the revised layout. The new layout is slightly weaker in terms of legibility for those in vehicles, but considered adequate for this ‘fringe of development’ location. The recommendations for inclusion of oriel or bay windows under point 1.3 above will aid legibility for pedestrians.***

9. *Streets for all: Are streets designed in a way that encourages low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces? This has scored a red. Similarly to number 7, this is due to the amount of dwellings which only benefit from one parking space and the instances where parking is remote from dwellings which is likely to result in streets being dominated by on street parking preventing the use of the street as social and play spaces. **The adjustments to***

the parking provision and other layout changes have improved this score to amber but there are still improvements that could and should be attempted as noted. See 2.3 and mention of units 75 + 76 under 2.1 above.

10. Car Parking: Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street? This has scored a red due to lack of adequate parking provision for some plots and the instances where parking is remote from the dwelling which it serves. This element of the assessment should also include reference to how you have anticipated the car parking demand for this proposal. This should take into account the location, availability and frequency of public transport together with local car ownership trends. This should also refer to the availability of visitor parking and where this has been provided. Building for life guidance also recommends that proposals make sure that occupants can see their cars from their homes. ***Provision of more parking spaces in the revised layout is welcomed and improves the score, but only to amber – very little information on strategy for provision of visitor parking and although some spaces are shown as not allocated on the plan, these would appear to be too closely linked to individual dwellings to be understood as available for visitors. Clearer distinction/identification would be helpful. Bank of parking serving units 25,26,29,37 is unfortunately positioned as a ‘stop vista’ at the end of main access street – landscape could and should be introduced to screen this (although outside the current red-line).***

11. Public and Private Space: Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe? Whilst this has scored green, there are examples where proposed gardens fall below the recommended sizes for private amenity space and could be improved. ***See further observations on garden sizes under section 3.0 above.***

12. External storage and amenity space: Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles? This has scored a red due to the lack of evidence and is likely to be improved following the submission of further information within the design and access statement. ***Score remains as red - see notes above under 1.1, 3.0. What strategy is proposed for the coach-house units (with no rear garden space)?***