

Building for a Healthy Life Assessment

Moortown Lane Planning Application (ref. 21/11723)

V1.1 Feb 2022

Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan Design & Heritage Team

Introduction

Following assessment of the Beaumont Park development, the Design & Heritage team has proposed the Building for a Healthy Life assessment tool be used to assess all major applications in Ringwood.

The NPPF (133) says that *“Local Authorities should ensure that they ... make appropriate use of tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development..such as **Building for a Healthy Life**. ...In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes... (134) Development that is not well designed should be refused...”*

Submission of the above application provided an opportunity for the team to undertake such an assessment on a *live* application.

The applicants have not submitted a Building for a Healthy Life assessment despite the tool being referred to on pages 11, 12 & 39 of the Design & Access Statement.

Limitations on this assessment

The team responsible for this assessment includes 3 registered architects & a town planner. This assesment was undertaken by 2-3 team members over 5 hours, including time spent on the structure of the report. As such the report below is outline in scope.

Main Findings

The Moortown Lane scheme

The assesment raised significant concerns relating to the proposed overall layout. As these concerns relate to fundamental principles such as prioritising cycle & walking routes, streets dominated by parking or avoiding curvilinear street forms it seems likely use of the tool would result in a significant revision to the proposal.

The phase 1 layout fails to integrate green spaces into the street layouts.

It was also noted that the lack of strong concept drawings, street sections & elevations & 3D model imagery may indicate a lack of proper evaluation.

The Building for a Healthy Life tool

The assesment tool effectively prompts and organises assesment of key urban design principles which may otherwise be difficult to undertake, especially for those unfamiliar with such principles. The team therefore recommends a policy requiring use of BfHL.

Other design related aspects such as material choice, detailing & use of renewables (which also raised concern) are more easily identified.

The team is hopeful the local authority will undertake a thorough BfHL assesment of the Moortown Lane scheme.

Assesment Summary

INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS	DISTINCTIVE PLACES	STREETS FOR ALL
Natural connections	Making the most of what's there	Healthy Streets
Walking, cycling and public transport	A memorable character	Cycle and car parking
Facilities and services	Well defined streets and spaces	Green and blue infrastructure
Homes for everyone	Easy to find your way around	Back of pavement, front of home

INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

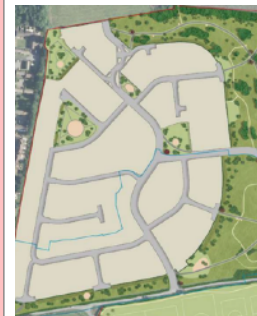
Natural Connections



On the assumption that the wider scheme is implemented, provision is made for connections (and future connections) including traffic, pedestrian and cycle links to the areas around the site. Pedestrian connections to the existing POS to the south of Moortown Lane are included, which is allocated as part of the NFDC LP for a new school. It is understood there is potential for a future bus route through the site.



Street pattern and pedestrian routes are convoluted and need reconsideration to provide strong and direct routes which respond to desire lines through the site for ease of accessibility.



Missed opportunities for filtered permeability demonstrate a low priority for cycling and walking routes.



Opportunities to create corridors for wildlife appear to have been missed. Proposed landscaping (such as tree planting) appears random and disconnected.



Walking, Cycling and Public Transport



Retains existing footpath and provides additional link through to opposite POS.

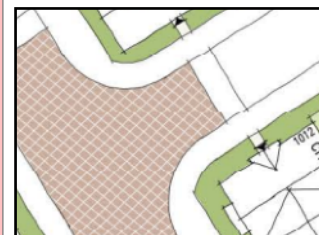


Pedestrian link would be provided to Christchurch Road and nearest bus routes.



It is understood that the road design plans for a potential future bus route through the site.

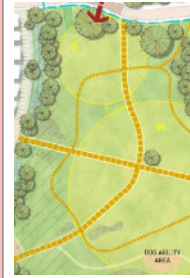
Street layout is focused on highways engineered design with wide carriageways with large corner radii. This is not in line with the guidance in Manual For Streets, does not prioritise pedestrian users and can create undesirable situations by encouraging cars to turn more quickly while pedestrians navigate wider crossing points. Pedestrian routes would also be frustrated by on street parking layouts which see constant cross over of pavements and can lead to resulting hazards from vehicular movements and potential future parking obstruction.



The scheme does not demonstrate how the space will be shared between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists or how navigable features for those with visual, mobility or other limitations have been integrated into the design.

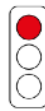


Pedestrian and cycle routes through the site are convoluted which elongates routes, does not encourage travelling by these means and, can lead to alternative desire lines prevailing through landscaped areas.



Scheme does not demonstrate that it has fully explored desire lines across the area or the realities of pedestrian and cycle routes to existing key facilities or the future school site. This could result in new residents relying on car usage.

Facilities and Services



Incorporates formal and informal recreation space (POS, LAP/ LEAP/ ANGR/MUGA, walking and cycle routes / dog agility area), however some of this is not new provision and relies on that existing. The wider open spaces are also segregated from the built development, rather than being integrated through within Phase 1.



This is a major housing development which does not incorporate any community facilities, such as a small convenience shop. The walkability and cyclability of routes to existing key facilities needs to be further explored as there are concerns these would not present feasible options for all users and as such, will likely see journeys by car being made.

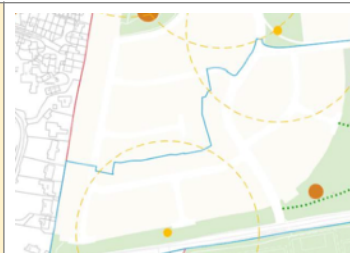
Homes for everyone



It is understood that affordable housing is distributed using a tenure blind approach, however it appears to be distributed in poorer quality settings within the development.

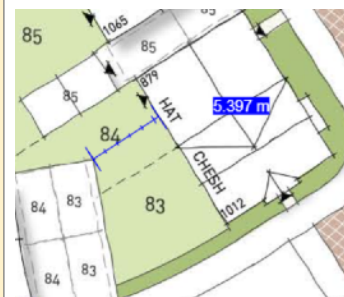


Areas with high concentration of affordable housing is not within 100m of play areas. The southern play area (LAP) is also the least well equipped.



The mix and range of housing would appear to meet with Local Plan Requirements. However, the Town is in need of smaller homes (1 bed and 2 bed units) and the proportion of these could be increased.

All new units are afforded private amenity space, albeit this is in some cases, rather limited.



Distinctive Places

Making the most of what's there

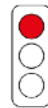


Design does not take the opportunity to create a development with a strong sense of place or distinctive character. Poor examples of development in the vicinity have been used to inform the design. It lacks the positive characteristics which would enable it to reflect key elements of local character.

The scale relationship of the development to that surrounding is not clearly demonstrated. Only a selective number of 'illustrative' street elevations are provided allowing for trees to be added under artistic license.



A memorable character



Design does not take the opportunity to create a development with a strong sense of place or distinctive character;

- Poor examples of development in the vicinity have been used to inform the design opposed to good local building typologies,
- It lacks the positive design characteristics which would enable it to reflect key elements of local character in the built design,
- Appears to use a predetermined sequence of housing types which have a poor degree of detailing and materials palette,
- Limited options appear to have been explored.



Well defined streets



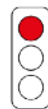
Pocket park areas (in future phases) would enjoy a good degree of passive surveillance, well overlooked.

Building lines lack strength and continuity, as a result of the street layout, stock housing design and parking arrangements. This does not enhance identity, distinctiveness or sense of place.



Dual aspect homes addressing corners in some places.

Easy to find your way around



Curvilinear street design and use of cul-de-sac's frustrates travel across the site by reducing permeability, increasing travel distances and reducing clear visibility and clarity of routes through to encourage pedestrian and cycle usage. The scheme does not demonstrate how it will incorporate navigable features for those with visual, mobility or other limitations.

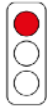


No clear distinguishable street hierarchy is presented, with limited change in highway design, minimal use of public landscaping and standardised building designs which provides weak variation across the site. This does not reinforce a sense of place or help people to use the street to find their way around, such as following a principle street through the site, and reduces legibility. It is noted some attempt has been made to differentiate junction buildings and make focal points however it is felt that this needs to be further considered.



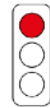
Streets for All

Healthy Streets



Street design is principally focused on vehicles and parking which does not prioritise the pedestrian, or cyclist experience. There is limited public landscaping within the built up areas of the development with poorly and occasional, informal spaces and facilities / street furniture interwoven within the built design.

Cycle and Car Parking



Car parking dominates the street environment with no meaningful landscaping relief and poses additional hazards for pedestrian users with constant crossovers.



Strong reliance on tandem parking and garages poses additional hazards for pedestrian users with constant crossovers and can lead to vehicles overhanging onto pavements and on-street parking.



Parking Strategy Plan excerpt

No integral cycle parking, relying on future residents providing their own facilities.

Parking provision does not fully meet with NFDC guidance however the scheme does not appear to fully explore how it will mitigate this. The scheme does not prioritise pedestrian and cycle routes or appear to explore alternatives to reduce car usage, such as a car club for example.

Some provision would be made for electric vehicle charging points in residential properties and visitor parking areas. However this is limited to infrastructure only for properties with on street parking (themselves primarily affordable).

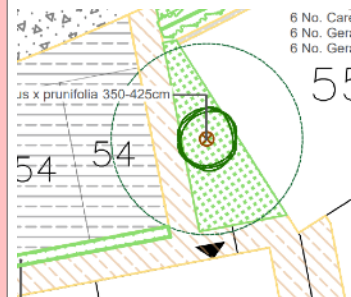
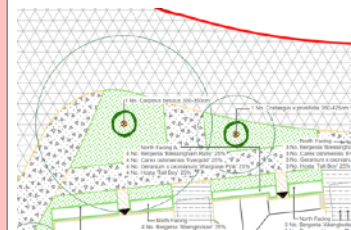
Green and Blue Infrastructure



Drainage provision includes SuDs.

The majority of green spaces on site are segregated from the built development with limited positive integration although this this appears to be improved in future phases.

Small areas of land around the development which offer limited value and can be prone to neglect. An amended layout could see these areas being of a more useable, functional size adding more value to the street environment.



Example from Detailed Landscape Strategy

Back of pavement front of home



Refuse storage is unclear and does not appear to be well incorporated to ensure that appropriate areas are provided and rubbish does not end up being left in public areas.

Some poorly considered spaces between the back of pavement and front of houses and leftover spaces with no clear private or public function which add little value to the street and are prone to neglect.

