



CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY PANEL

REPORT OF PANEL MEETING

Scheme: Wing Development

Date: 28th August 2013

Venue: Room 3B1/3B2, Castle Court, Cambridgeshire County Council

Time: 09:30 – 12:30

Quality Panel Members

John Worthington (Chair)
Simon Carne
David Prichard
Canda Smith
David Birkbeck

Panel secretariat and support

Antony Proietti (Cambridgeshire County Council)
Judit Carballo (Cambridgeshire County Council)

Local Authority Attendees

Edward Durrant (South Cambridgeshire District Council)
Afrieen Patel (South Cambridgeshire District Council)
Sharon Brown (Cambridge City Council)
Sarah Chubb (Cambridge City Council)

Applicant and Representatives

Steve Sillery (Marshall)
Andrew Beharrell (PTE Architects)
John Hicks (WSP - Highways)
Michael Cross (Motts)
Emma Fletcher (Marshall)
Robin Saha (Choudhury -PTE Architects)
Julia Jardine (Terrance O'Rourke planning)
Robert Myers (Robert Myers Associates – Landscape architects)

1. Scheme description and presentation

Architect/Designer	Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects
Applicant	Marshall Group
Planning status	Pre application stage

2. Overview

The site for Wing covers 63.6 hectares of land on the northern side of Newmarket Road directly opposite Cambridge Airport, to the South East of Fen Ditton Conservation Area and next to Newmarket Road Park and Ride site.

In terms of policy, South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and Cambridge City Council jointly adopted an Area Action Plan (AAP) in February 2008, as part of the wider 'Cambridge East' area. SCDC are also currently working on a revised Local Plan.

The Panel previously reviewed the Wing Masterplan in May 2013 and made a number of recommendations. These included the following:

- Further work needs to be undertaken in order to identify how residents can be incentivised to achieve predicted mode shares (e.g. use of technology, and the use of car share schemes/car clubs/car lending schemes);
- A system of 'monitor and manage' is used to identify whether mode share targets are being reached and if not implement measures to address the problem;
- Parking needs to use maximum standards rather than minimum, which will allow greater flexibility later on;
- Main entrance will encourage high traffic speeds, therefore needs further work to reduce vehicle speeds;
- How the edge to the car businesses relates to the development needs further work;
- Streets to be created rather than roads where cars should feel like they are 'guests';
- Issue of the perimeter blocks – shared spaces in private courts could be problematic and generate tensions with residents. Further work is required on the organisation of the blocks and parking, with further details on the perimeter blocks being provided at a future Panel meeting;
- Panel would welcome a 3D massing diagram to be produced to help understand the character of the 'island' area of the site;
- Further work on how Zero Carbon can be achieved;
- Question whether more green space could be located nearer the local centre shops.

In addition, Marshalls had organised a second public engagement event on the emerging Masterplan in July 2013, where input was sought from local residents, community representatives, Marshall employees and Council Members. Responses and feedback from these events have helped inform the revisions to the Masterplan, reviewed by the Panel at this meeting.

Marshalls is aiming to submit an outline planning application in October 2013, with a planning decision proposed for spring/summer 2014.

3. Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views

Introduction

The Panel were pleased to note that Marshalls had analysed and responded to the issues and recommendations received from the Quality Panel at the previous Panel meeting. The continuing dialogue with the applicant, as part of an iterative design process, was welcomed, as was reviewing the proposals at an early stage.

The Panel also commended the presentation materials, the consultation process, which had been undertaken, and the clear instructions that had been received of which issues the Panel could assist with.

The Panel's advice reflects the issues associated with each of the four 'C's' in the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter. The comments below include both those raised in the open session of the meeting and those from the close session discussions.

Community

The Panel were supportive of the vision for the scheme and Marshalls' commitment to building a Community. The Panel queried how the site planning encourages activity around community resources (open spaces, school, etc) and, although the scheme was particularly community-minded, it currently did not offer a focal point for the community. What is going to glue the scheme together?

Marshalls want to help the new residents come together as a community as early as possible, so the scheme needs a delivery vehicle to make this work. This should not be paternalistic but should encourage activities such as the allotment association, to build a community spirit typically supported by Cambridge residents. Encouraging travel through cycle use and even offering bike lessons is admirable. Could this be extended to a club based around cycling that gets people out at weekends and evenings as part of their exercise regime? These clubs work excellently using social media, can be incorporated into the marketing strategy and will work well with younger residents in the development.

The Panel considered that more details should be provided of Marshalls' approach to the development, which, although clear to the organisation, may not be explicit to others. Marshalls has a commendable history of community development, which should be referenced in their submissions and publicity, and included in their agenda and aims for developing a community. Furthermore the master planners should test how Marshalls' aspirations match the physical framework (e.g. how does the primary school relate to the playing fields).

The Panel noted the importance of naming in providing an identity and sense of place. It was acknowledged that the names suggested, as part of the scheme will not be finalised until after a formal consultation. Should the names be referenced to the Marshalls story or other more familiar themes?

The Panel noted that the Office for National Statistics predicts a shift towards smaller households. Future residents are likely to live in different ways from what is currently familiar. It is important that the proposals make living in "suburbia" an attractive offer, addressing social needs (care, social spaces, play and amenities).and opportunities for working from home.

The Panel welcomed the closer relationship with Fen Ditton Parish Council, which had developed since the last meeting. This is crucial to the development of integrated and inclusive communities. The Panel questioned whether a social gap analysis had been undertaken for the Fison Road estate, to consider gaps in infrastructure and help develop



integration between the new and existing communities. If so, this should be reflected and explained.

The Panel recommended that a sense of community be built as early as possible. There needs to be consideration of transitional “meanwhile” elements, which could become transformational. It is important to get the surrounding communities involved and to build a sense of engagement.

Whilst acknowledging the constraints of the flight path to the airport, the Panel considered that the sports pitches suffered from the lack of surveillance, which could affect their value as a community resource. The Panel questioned whether more could be done to integrate the playing fields into the development. For example, whether there could be a stronger built edge, with residential overlooking the playing fields through the removal of all or part of the tree belt. It was accepted that this would need to be in conformity with the existing AAP policy.

The Panel thought that more could be done to avoid the separation of the allotments from the rest of the development. Their contribution to the residents and green spaces could be enhanced by bringing them into the development, and by distributing them more widely. In response to the “scruffy” allotments issue, the Panel considered that, given the far sighted approach from Marshalls, there was an opportunity to use planting and landscape design to create enclosures, a walled garden and possibly bespoke greenhouses.

The Panel commended the proposed proportion of dwellings with Lifetime Home Standards, and application of London Space Standards, to be applied to this development.

The Panel were concerned at the remoteness of Market Square in its current location. In addition, the Panel suggested that there is a strong logic for a commercial/retail frontage on Newmarket Road in order to capture passing trade. This could also be an important part of defining the character of the development, particularly if the shops were of an independent nature. The opportunity for cafes should also be considered, which could be utilised by Marshalls workers and generate a level of activity. The Panel welcomed the proposal for subsidised rates for the business premises to bring in trade from an early stage.

The panel were impressed with the attention to community issues and long-term commitment to stewardship of the site, which is reflected in the proportion of the discussion time given to community issues.

Connectivity

The Panel welcomed the maximum provision of spaces for people owning cars but encouraging them to use more sustainable modes of transport wherever possible.

The Panel welcomed the promotion of alternative modes of transport through a travel plan as part of the planning process, including car clubs, free bus passes and information travel packs when first moving into the site. Free cycling training, personalised travel planning and an annual survey to monitor progress will all be provided.

The Panel were concerned about the lack of connection between the various green spaces in the scheme. The Panel questioned whether there could be a more direct route linking the green areas in the development and whether these spaces could be designed for different activities. The Panel also queried whether pedestrian/cycle activity could be further encouraged along this sequence.

The Panel welcomed the proposed underground parking and suggested that the best option is part cut (for example, Den Bosch Holland, which also has a shallow lake on top).

There were however, concerns that if the proposed underground car parking is not viable then this could provide problems with the integrated parking solutions currently proposed for the wider site.

The Panel also had the following more detailed comments:

- The pedestrian desire line between the Austin Street entrance and Market Square could be strengthened.
- The Panel noted the benefits of the frequent bus services from Newmarket Road.
- The Panel questioned the curved nature of some of the roads in the scheme. Straight roads can be beneficial in creating legibility, vistas and identity.
- Options for parking shown on pages 25 and 26 of the briefing information were preferred. Parking in courts Page 27 was not favoured. Parking should be on street or within the blocks.

Character

The Panel commended the Master planners and Master developer for taking the issues raised from the previous Panel meeting and testing options for a number of scenarios.

The Panel were asked to consider three options for Beta Square (option 1 – located on the western side, option 2 – on the eastern side, option 3 – enclosed, central). The key consideration is the relationship between Beta Square and the car businesses, and what kind of place could be created in this area. It was noted that although Beta Square could be sited in any of the three proposed locations, option 1 presents the highest risk given the uncertainty over the design of the car business. Although this will not be resolved until after the outline application is submitted, the Panel questioned whether an assessment of Option 1 could be undertaken.

Option 2 was not generally favoured in its relationship to Market Square, though this could be modified should there be any change in the retail location.

Option 3 provides a sense of enclosure and positive place making. The Panel questioned whether Beta Square could be rotated 90 degrees and become a N-S orientated space in order to reduce north-facing homes and gain solar access.

The Panel thought that the architect competition, for a row of typical Cambridge houses, was an interesting idea but it is probably unrealistic to expect a developer to sign up to building the winning design. They suggested that the competition could instead look at providing a template for blocks of say 10 houses that Marshalls could offer to project manage for self-build or co-ownership. This is in the style of the co-housing projects of North America and Northern Europe where corporate vehicles manage the development and construction risk for groups of people seeking to procure their homes as a group of up to 10 households. This would also help to build community, as these would be groups of people known to each other.

The Panel stressed the importance of the Master Developer's responsibility, advised by the Master Planner, in defining sub-division of the site into development lots. There needs to be flexibility in the parameters to respond to changing housing and other uses such as need, tenure, delivery, mix.

Selection and control of developer partners will be critical. There are lessons from Newhall in terms of the continuing role of the master planner, long-term stewardship of the landowner, and the selection of architects. Partnerships with developers employing good design teams are essential for a successful quick start.

The Panel questioned whether Marshalls could use their in-house development manager and architects to manage the housebuilders to deliver their own detailed designs for some phases, ideally the early ones. There is a real risk that early phases will set the tone and the first parcels, potentially developed by house builders, might detract from the desired quality.

The Panel considered that a flexible Newmarket Road frontage for commercial/retail and residential uses would provide a commercially viable mixed-use option and provide an active frontage. The Panel questioned whether the quality of spaces envisaged in Market Square could be incorporated into the Newmarket Road Boulevard.

The Panel also raised the following points:

- The design for Area S3 was reminiscent of Cambridge and therefore would appeal to potential residents.
- Development plots should straddle the street.
- The detailed design of junctions along Newmarket Road will be important places whose character will signal points of entry.
- The character of Austin Street was compromised by the uncertainty over the design of the motor showrooms.
- Streets are places, not roads dominated by cars.

Climate

The Panel were supportive of the proposed fabric first principle. How this is delivered will be critical.

The Panel considered Marshalls off-site airfield PV proposal as a good option.

4. Conclusion

The Panel commended the current strategy and proposals for the Wing development. In particular they praised the changes that had been made and analysis undertaken which took into account issues raised by the Panel in the May review.

The Panel made the following specific recommendations (further details of which can be found above):

- Develop a strategic delivery vehicle.
- Communicate Marshalls' approach, agenda and aims for fostering a sense of community.
- Test Marshalls' aspirations against the emerging physical framework.
- Undertake a social gap analysis for the Fison Road estate
- Thought should be given to the sports pitches being recognised as a destination better integrated into the development.
- Seek to integrate the allotments into the development.

- Consider moving the retail uses to capture passing trade on Newmarket Road.
- Develop links or greenways to enhance the various and different quality green spaces,
- Reconsider Beta Square in relation to the design and functioning of car dealerships, the local neighbourhood centre and open space provision
- Be rigorous in the development of streets as places, not roads dominated by cars.

