



CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY PANEL

REPORT OF PANEL MEETING

Scheme: Plot M3, North West Cambridge Development

Date: Wednesday 20th July 2016

Venue: Shire Hall Room 128, Cambridgeshire County Council, CB3 0AP

Time: 09:30 – 12:30

Quality Panel Members

Lynne Sullivan (Chair)

David Birkbeck

David Prichard

Kirk Archibald

Panel secretariat and support

Judit Carballo – Cambridgeshire County Council

Alokiir Ajang – Cambridgeshire County Council

Local Authority Attendees

John Evans - Senior Planning Officer (New Neighbourhoods), Cambridge City Council

Applicant and Representatives

Jamie Wilding – Hill Residential

Teresa Borsuk – Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects

Alexis Butterfield - Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects

Robert Myers – Robert Myers Landscape Architects

Tom Anthony – AECOM



1. Scheme description and presentation

Architect/Designer	Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects/ Robert Myers Landscape Architects
Applicant	Hill Residential/University of Cambridge
Planning status	Pre Reserved Matters Submission

2. Overview

Plot M3 (CBC) is located within the local centre and covers an area of covers an area of 0.413ha.

The development comprises the following:

- 106 market units
- 106 allocated car parking spaces, of which 6 are disabled spaces.
- 180 cycle parking spaces.

The proposal consists of a single building, broadly rectangular in footprint, with a central inner linear courtyard space (described as the 'long gallery'). A main concierge managed entrance is currently intended to the north of the block from Community Square. A secondary access will be located to the south. The western Eddington Avenue side of the building will have five levels of accommodation. The eastern, cricket pitch elevation of the building will have three levels of accommodation with a communal rooftop garden area. Motor vehicle access will be from Eddington Avenue with a semi basement providing car and some of the required bicycle parking.

The majority of the application site M3 falls within the Local Centre Character Area in the Design Code, with a small area to the south falling within the Storeys Field Character Area.

It is anticipated that a reserved matters planning application will be submitted at the end of the year.

3. Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review the designs at an early stage and comment on the emerging layout plans.

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 closed session discussions.

Community

The proposal's main entrance is adjacent to market and community square, two important character areas of North West Cambridge public realm. The Applicant explained the relationship between the public and private space, with the concierge at the threshold to



the courtyard or 'long gallery' for use of residents only. The Panel questioned the impact on service charges but the Applicant explained that this would be reasonable although upper end.

The Panel welcomed the possibility of trees to be planted within the gallery, and a continuous water feature which may deliver the sound of water within. The Panel commended the visual links out from the courtyard, and hoped that the light modelling would deliver good daylight quality.

The Panel had concerns that the level of activity at the ground floor level with entrances, and bicycle racks, (along with balconies, bridges and roof gardens over) could be noisy and hoped acoustic modelling would be undertaken to inform mitigation of excessive noise.

The Panel were supportive of the proposed communal roof garden, with a possible rooftop lounge and they were interested to hear of possible growing opportunities for herbs etc. There was some discussion regarding the likely profile of residents, and the Panel felt it was appropriate to consider a very wide range including down-sizing active elderly.

Connectivity

The Applicant highlighted that the proposal is located at a key connection route in between Huntington Road and Madingley Road, with a cycleway alongside Storeys Field, and explained that there was a planted 'bund' between the cycleway and the building. The Panel queried the location of the cycle parking for residents, and were reassured that the secondary southern entrance provided a convenient access to the lower ground floor cycle storage. The Panel questioned whether it might be possible to have a cycle club for residents, though this would require dedicated space and management, over and above allocated spaces.

The Panel welcomed the proposed electric vehicle charging points, and questioned if this could be carbon neutral powered by the PV array, and if an electric car club could be provided. They also asked if additional allocated storage would be provided in the lower ground floor parking, but the Applicant aims to provide internal storage to London Housing Guide standards.

Character

The Applicant described how the scheme has evolved into a landscape led project with transitional spaces through the courtyards.

The Panel questioned the acoustic quality within the gallery if brick is the predominant material, and suggested some softer more absorbent material might be needed at ground floor level. Daylighting in relation to the lower apartments gallery edge was questioned, and the Panel wondered if there was any potential to widen the gallery; the Applicant explained that they are currently looking at increasing the windows and extending the gallery space.

The Panel supported the ethos of the Eastern elevation and the need to promote softness at roof level through planting on the roof (although they accepted artificial grass may be more robust in proposed more open areas). The Panel encouraged the exploration of diverse, colourful planting and/or a sensory garden.



Materiality was discussed and the Applicant explained how they wish to develop the organic feel through the use of material such as zinc which patinates well. The Panel supported this approach, commenting that detailing of projecting bays, cappings, copings, soffits and drainage etc. should not distract or diminish the proposed effect. The character of the vision slots was discussed, and the Panel's concerns regarding possible blank edges were allayed by the Applicant explaining their aspirations to animate this with features such as the corner windows.

The Panel noted that there is no outdoor sheltered space on the roof, and suggested some shelter and pergolas be introduced to maximise the usability year-round. Furthermore, it would be useful to describe what happens to the parapets.

The Panel were supportive of the softer edge and its contrast with the sculptural edge to the West, which as illustrated had impressive quality and great potential. The Panel supported the use of stone or pre-cast reconstituted stone to deliver the monumentality and faceting. They had doubts that pre-cast concrete would deliver the appropriate quality, and had concerns that the introduction of shading to minimise overheating might alter the character as currently suggested.

The Panel supported the provision of generous balconies throughout, and highlighted that the execution of the scheme will rely on the quality of the detail.

Climate

The Panel recognised and appreciated the challenges of achieving Code Level 5.

The Panel were supportive of the choice of natural materials that age gracefully which complements the ethos of the proposal.

The Panel considered overheating to be a risk; there is a need to address the south-western aspects currently shown with very large windows, and possibly modelling with future climate data should be undertaken.

The Panel observed there is little exposed thermal mass to exploit, as this could provide some mitigation.

Heat recovery ventilation was discussed, the Panel queried whether this was a conscious choice – the Applicant reinforced their high level of experience with MVHR and how this was the adopted solution for M1 and M2.

The Panel supported the proposed approach to climate and ecology and water.

4. Conclusion

The Panel felt that the scheme has great potential and recognised through discussions that the Applicant is conscious of the many aspects needed further developing to deliver the ambition of this Code Level 5 scheme.

The Panel made the following recommendations. Further details can be found above:



- Think about future climate and overheating potential, particularly for the Western elevation, which may require some reconsideration.
- Model the acoustic quality of the courtyard 'gallery'. The Panel would be interested to see how the courtyard is developed and were supportive of the environmental modelling of wind and light which now should include acoustic quality as well. Incorporate tree planting in the gallery as indicated.
- Exploit the organic Eastern edge by including as much as diversity in planting and uses at roof level as possible.
- Daylight studies needed for rooms with windows into the long gallery, particularly at lower levels.