



Cambridgeshire Quality Panel

Marleigh Masterplan Phase 1b

Wednesday 16th October 2019

Cambridgeshire County Council HQ

The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth sets out the core principles for the level of quality to be expected in new development across Cambridgeshire. The [Cambridgeshire Quality Panel](#) provides independent, expert advice to developers and local planning authorities against the four core principles of the Charter: connectivity, character, climate, and community.

Scheme Description

Architect/Designer: Pollard Thomas Edwards

Applicant: Hill Marshall LLP

Planning status: pre planning application stage

Issue date: 28th October 2019

Declarations of Interest

Panel members are required to declare any interests they may have in relation to the development before the Panel and any such interests are recorded here.

None.

Previous Panel Reviews

Wing Masterplan on 15th May 2013 and 28th August 2013

Wing Design Code on 28th September 2017 and 15th January 2018

Development Overview

Phase 1b proposals are for approximately 306 new homes, comprising 259 houses and 48 flats, playing fields, a sports pavilion and allotments. It is envisaged that a planning application will be submitted early 2020.

Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views

The Panel has been issued with background reference information from the applicant and local planning authority ahead of the review session. This information is listed at Appendix A.

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

Community – “places where people live out of choice and not necessity, creating healthy communities with a good quality of life”

The Panel broadly welcomed plans for the long term management of the green and communal spaces through the establishment of an estate management company. A service charge on residents will be imposed to fund this.

Marshall's, as the applicant and one of the landowners, will retain long term ownership of the *Plains* sport pitches and is in discussion with Cambridge United Football Club about them using it as a training ground.

The Panel supported the tenure blind nature of the affordable housing and noted that 30% of all dwellings will be of affordable tenure with these dwellings being provided in clusters across the site. The Panel suggested that all front doors should look exactly the same so there would be no distinction between affordable and market housing. Views into communal spaces and servicing a should be consistent between affordable and market housing.

The Panel questioned whether anything has changed as a result of the public consultation events over the preceding years. The applicant responded that some connections had changed, to improve accessibility as well as the location of green spaces. In general, the applicant considered the community input to be positive.

The Panel queried how safe the play areas on the eastern edge, within a woodland setting would be. The applicant advised that they will thin out some trees in the woodland to ensure the play area is overlooked by nearby flats, creating a sense of passive surveillance. The Panel suggested setting back some of the houses with front gardens to increase the sense of security.

Connectivity – “places that are well-connected enable easy access for all to jobs and services using sustainable modes”

There was discussion on why the east-west tertiary road behind the houses along the northern edge of Kingsley Woods had been removed and whether it would still be possible to walk or cycle along that route. The applicant responded that although there will be no direct route, the desire line has been moved further south and there were connections to the woods from each of the courts along this edge.

The Panel suggested that there should be planting within the parking courts to achieve good quality design.

It was noted that almost 90% of the roads within the development will be adopted by the Highway Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council).

Character – “Places with distinctive neighbourhoods and where people create ‘pride of place’

The Panel questioned the SUDs strategy and what was the net bio-diversity gain of the development. It was explained that project consultant’s (WSP) have developed a SUDs strategy but the Panel remained unclear how the strategy will work, especially in relation to run-off water. The Panel were concerned about the run-off water being piped into the ha-ha and having just one pond as a single solution for the collection of run-off water; they suggested alternative solutions should be considered and integrated with the landscape plan.

There were further concerns about the amount of paving proposed and it was suggested that this could be reduced by bringing planting closer to resident’s front doors which would also enable the capture of run-off water, especially during intense periods of rain. During dry periods, the amount of paving could inhibit some trees such that they might struggle to thrive or even survive. There is an opportunity to improve and provide more sustainable drainage measures to retain as much water on-site as possible for vegetation. The Panel liked those parts of the landscape that were shown but, in the closed session, felt that a more comprehensive scheme was required now as part of any submission.

When questioned, the applicant felt that they are generally happy with the flexibility provided within the Design Code which seems to be working well.

The Panel suggested providing active frontages on to the car parking areas and welcomed the location of the cycling parking within the car port. The Panel recommended that the car parking in front of the apartment buildings is primarily landscape focused.

Questions about security along the eastern edge were raised and how front and back gardens will be treated. The Panel suggested moving some of the houses closer to the eastern edge park to provide greater supervision.

Climate – “Places that anticipate climate change in ways that enhance the desirability of development and minimise environmental impact”

The Panel were disappointed to see little information provided on the environmental strategy for the homes and future proofing for our changing climate. New policy changes are already being consulted on for when the installation of gas boilers in new houses will be stopped by 2025 and the Panel queried if there was a plan to adapt those houses built before 2025. The Panel was pleased to hear that the Applicant had formed a partnership with the Swansea University Active Building Centre (ABC) and planned to build 5 pilot houses in Phase 1. There will be an opportunity in future phases to develop this further, once the ABC-approach had been tested.

Modelling potential overheating is required and the Panel suggested mapping the development timeframe against the proposed building regulation plans for carbon reduction. Deep window reveals and the provision for later fitting of external sunshades or blinds was recommended, especially in relation to the apartment blocks.

The Panel discussed modern methods of construction and to suggested the applicant think further about materials and soil; they recommended reading “Rapid Removal of Atmospheric CO₂” by Urban Soils.

Electric vehicle (EV) charging points for should be incorporated.

Panel Conclusions and Recommendations

The Panel welcomed the thorough presentation and noted the high aspirations for the scheme but stressed the importance of incorporating a full landscape scheme and stepping up to anticipate the new regulations proposed in response to the Climate Emergency..

In summary, the main recommendations of the Panel were:

- 1) Consideration should be given to new and emerging building regulations and whether they will be implemented retrospectively.
- 2) Questions about the long term management of the green spaces were raised and it was welcomed that there will be one estate company acting for the three different landowners.
- 3) Tenure blindness is supported incorporating simple but effective measures such as front doors looking the same.
- 4) The general road and pedestrian layout works but further consideration needed to manage security and surveillance especially along the eastern edge of the site. East-west pedestrian and cycle routes across the northern part of the development are encouraged.
- 5) More detail is needed on the residential blocks in the eastern part of the site.
- 6) Feedback needed on the results of the ABC pilot project.
- 7) Keep water close to where it falls, and mitigate the potential for flooding in the paved courts with planting and permeable paving.
- 8) Provide charging points for EVs.

References

[Rapid Removal of Atmospheric CO2 by Urban](#)

Next Steps

The Panel would welcome the opportunity for ongoing engagement with the developer and design team as proposals for this site progress.

Attendees

Chair: Robin Nicholson

Panel Members: John Dales

Lesley Johnson

Kirk Archibald

Meredith Bowles

Luke Engleback

Panel Support: Judit Carballo – Cambridgeshire County Council

Local Authority: John Evans, Principal Planner – Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

Joanne Preston – Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

Applicant Team: Kay Stout – Pollard Thomas Edwards - Architect

Alexis Butterfield – Pollard Thomas Edwards - Architect

Dan Cox - Pollard Thomas Edwards - Architect

Sean Harries – Hill - Developer

Henry James – Hill - Developer

Chris Flood – Marshall – Landowner

Lucy Jenkins – RMA – Landscape Architect

Jason Giddings - WSP - Engineer

Appendix A – Background Information List and Plan

- Applicant's background note
- Local authority background note

Documents may be available on request, subject to restrictions/confidentiality.

Illustrative Masterplan

