



Stephen Tapper
Development Control
East Hertfordshire District Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford
SG13 8EQ

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

8th April 2020 (by email)

Dear Mr Tapper,

Application No 3/20/0423/REM

Application for reserved matters in relation to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 163 one, two, three and four bedroom houses and apartments plus associated infrastructure and public open space, granted outline planning permission under ref:

3/14/2144/OP.]

Land To The South Of Hadham Road Bishops Stortford Hertfordshire

CPRE Hertfordshire note that this is an allocated infill site within the built up area and outline permission has already been granted. The principle of development is not at issue. However, with respect to overall design standards and design quality it provides an example of some wider concerns.

We refer to the results of the recent National Housing Audit (see attached article) Jan 2020. A copy of the full audit is available to view here. <https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-design-audit-2020/>

The government's own National Design Guide and the commissioned *Living With Beauty* report both demand improvement, the latter noting that the commercial volume housebuilder has a fixed set of solutions to deploy as architects do not usually write their pattern books.

In reviewing the Hadham Road scheme it would seem that there has been no provision for

- Local Design Coding
- Design Review

These were the two design tools identified as being most effective in lifting the design quality of schemes by the Housing Audit. CPRE wishes to see these become much more commonly included as part of a more rigorous approach to issues of design within development management, not least to enable the quality of schemes within the countryside to be raised.



The current process appears to be far too reliant on pre-application discussions and the inputs of key consultees which constrain any architectural or artistic vision. To all intents and purposes this appears to be a standard approach. In detail, we would raise a number of local questions with respect to the quality of the place.

- Lack of distinctive place character – designing by a mix of mostly detached house types is placeless.
- Lack of a clear spatial strategy to identify sustainable travel links within and beyond the site and a design that responds to them
- Weak green infrastructure strategy – this could be at the core of the overall layout. By example the attenuation basin appears very tight, unlikely to be a multi-functional open space for natural interest but more likely to be a steep sided engineered container offering little wider value.
- The whole approach into the site and sense of arrival is uninspired
- Predominance of rear parking courts – barren spaces to look out into. Integrating of street parking with tree planting is recommended.

Policy DES1 of the District Plan requires robust masterplanning for significant sites and this site as part of a larger allocation surely is 'significant'. The District Plan similarly promotes the use of Design Codes and Design Review (Policy DES4) which are absent from the development of this scheme.

CPRE Herts therefore object to an inadequate design process and the resulting poor design. Both fail to meet the aspirations of the NPPF or the East Herts District Plan

Yours sincerely,

Tim Hagyard
Planning Manager

Enc – CPRE Herts Article regarding the National Housing Audit