

Design Workshop 5 - Housing and Character Areas - Thursday 25 September 2014

The purpose of this Design Workshop was to review and develop the design of the proposed housing typologies to generate individual neighbourhoods and Character Areas within the Emerging Masterplan.

Attendees

Project Team

Colin Ainger - Lead Designer
Alison - Architect
Dean Aggett - Development Manager
Susan Hayter - Engagement Manager

Residents

Woodlands House (1)
Dartmouth Avenue (1)
Smith Court (1)
Hennessy Court (2)
Others (2)

Discussion and Actions

1.0 Property Layouts and Space Standards

- The Project Team provided a comparison of existing and proposed house types to demonstrate the generous space standards that would be provided in the new accommodation. A proposed 3 bedroom property of 80m² was compared with an existing 3 bedroom property of 72m².
- There was a discussion regarding the benefits and detriments of open plan floor layouts. Concerns included the potential spread of cooking smells and fire from kitchen areas
- There was general consensus that open plan kitchen / dining rooms were acceptable but only if there was a separate living room area
- The benefits of building new properties to Lifetime Homes standard were explained, including movement paths, wheelchair access, and the flexibility to adapt properties to meet the changing needs of residents,.

Actions for the Project Team

- Discuss detailed property layouts with local residents at the appropriate point in the masterplanning process

2.0 Heating and Energy Strategy

- Participants queried the possibility of including a district heating system as part of the regeneration proposals. The Project Team confirmed that this is one of the options under consideration, together with other more traditional energy solutions.
- The benefits of district heating systems were explained, specifically the potential benefits that residents might derive from Leisure and Community facilities feeding excess energy into the system
- One of the participants raised a concern about charges for energy if a district heating system were to be incorporated. It was explained that energy bills would be on a per property basis, not on a standing charge
- One of the participants queried whether the proposed new residential properties would have a gas supply. It was explained that this has not been decided yet, and may not be a suitable for reaching the required environmental standards.
- To add context to the discussions around energy use, the Project Team provided an explanation of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH), outlining that in order to meet current local and regulatory standards, the new properties would need to achieve CfSH Level 4 / 5.
- It was explained that in order to meet the requirements of CfSH Level 4 / 5, new homes would be highly energy efficient, with high levels of insulation and probably some form of renewable energy technology such as solar thermal or photovoltaics panels
- One of the participants queried how the new homes would be heated and suggested that underfloor heating would not be a popular solution
- Another participant queried whether every property would have a water meter. It was confirmed that all new residential properties now have water meters fitted as standard.

3.0 Garages and Parking

- One of the participants queried whether garages would be provided and suggested that it had previously been stated that every house would have a garage. It was confirmed that this was not, nor had ever been the case.
- Parking provision was raised as a concern. It was mentioned that some houses have a large number of taxis parked outside their properties (with people running businesses from their homes) and that this would put added pressure on the parking in the area

Actions for the Project Team

- Further develop parking provision as the Masterplan evolves

4.0 Housing Design

- Participants and the Project Team reviewed floor plans from a range of different house types covering private and affordable tenures
- Participants would like to see balconies off the living room area
- The majority of participants preferred separate lounges to open plan living
- First floor living accommodation would be acceptable, but only if there is 'a good view'
- There was a general preference for lounges to be located on the ground floor

- Participants felt it was important that flats should have a pleasant outlook and not overlook car-parking etc.
- There were a number of positive comments regarding the provision of balconies. There were however some concerns regarding the securing of first floor balconies.
- ‘Jack & Jill’ bathrooms were considered a positive proposal for social housing
- Some of the participants would like to see baths within the main bathrooms
- Participants noted that it was essential that adequate storage space was provided in all proposed house types

5.0 Secured by Design

- The Project Team explained the concept of Secured by Design (SBD) and committed to incorporate the SBD principles within the design of all new properties
- Secured by Design provides a security kitemark which is achieved by working with the Architectural Liaison Officer from the local Constabulary. Aspects of design included in the SBD assessment include lighting, overlooking, paths and locks.

6.0 Flats

- The participants raised concerns about the height of blocks of flats and the proposed location in close proximity to the ASDA supermarket
- The participants queried the number of flats on the development. The Project Team confirmed that about a quarter of the properties provided within the Masterplan would be flats.

7.0 Property Character

- Participants were shown a selection of photographs of previously developed schemes so they could consider preferred property characteristics
- Participants liked the use of Photovoltaic tiles integrated into the roof rather than the panels which sit on top of the roof
- Large floor to ceiling focal point windows to properties where living rooms are located on the first floor were seen as a positive design feature
- There was no particular preference between traditional and contemporary design approaches.
- Participants preferred elevations with well balanced proportions of windows, balconies and boundary treatments
- At the end of the workshop session attendees were shown a video of Hanham Hall, a completed HTA scheme in Bristol. The video was well received as it addressed many of the concerns that the Sheerwater community have previously raised about the design and regeneration process.