

Hackbridge & Beddington Corner
Neighbourhood Development Group
www.hackbridge.net

25 September 2012

Dear Hugh and team,

I am writing on behalf of Hackbridge and Beddington Corner Neighbourhood Development Group (HBCNDG) with our feedback on your proposal to develop the Wandle Valley Trading Estate in Hackbridge. Thank you very much for sharing your proposals with us in person on 15 August 2012.

The general consensus of the group was that your presentation provided an innovative set of proposals in respect of the design of the housing and layout of the site. A great improvement on the design previously presented. One point of note is that the visuals on the evening largely related to the more open and lower density areas and it would be helpful to see some visuals of the higher density areas. Clearly, as you work-up your detailed plans with you architects and Ward Homes, this should be possible and we would welcome the opportunity to view and comment as appropriate.

The following comments are specific to the visuals presented on the evening.

For ease of reference, we have used the same set of questions as those used to critique your earlier proposals and our comments are as follows:

How does the design of the development engender a sense of neighbourliness?

More thought has been given to the quality of the spaces between buildings. Car parking has been brought into the buildings and communal gardens have been incorporated at the back of the terraces creating a protected space for families to meet. To fully encourage the residents to adopt these communal gardens a residents group needs to be formed early and communicate with the estate management. One useful example of this is the Ashley Vale Self Build Project <http://www.selfbuild-central.co.uk/first-ideas/examples/ashley-vale-bristol/>, which provides an insight into how they manage their communal spaces. It is suggested that you may like to find out how they manage their gardens because you have created some unique space between the houses and it should not go to waste. We would like to see some more natural landscaping incorporated into the communal spaces to encourage people to sit and be in these spaces.

What is the character of the place and how does this relate to the site's history?

This was not really discussed in detail but the revised layout of terraced houses with back to back gardens is more in keeping with the character of Beddington Corner. It is also good to see that you have opened up access to the Wandle River and tried to create pleasant frontages onto the river.

Are the buildings orientated to create pleasant frontages?

In general, yes. The only concern here is that at ground level the block of flats have a flat facade. This is facing onto the main road. It is suggested that you might like to about reducing the car parking provided to the flats and then provide some space at ground level, facing onto the street, for a convenience store. This is likely to create a better presence. There is a lack of convenience in this area within a comfortable walking distance.

Is there an attractive strategy for the riverside that combines building frontages, attractive landscaping for amenity and biodiversity?

We were happy that this was included in the visuals but we would wish to see more detail.

What are the environmental standards for the buildings?

This was discussed and it was good to see a large scale section through one of the terrace houses, however, we would like to see sections through other housing types to ensure the same standard of

**Hackbridge & Beddington Corner
Neighbourhood Development Group
www.hackbridge.net**

design is being achieved. Also, we would like to see a list of environmental features being considered and it noted which ones are and are not suitable with justification provided.

Landscaping proposals?

Great to see lots of images of natural landscaping but the visuals were a little flat. We would like to see more proposals in respect of this as designs are honed.

What materials are being incorporated in the design and are they sustainable, from recycled to re-use, low embodied impact and ideally locally sourced?

This is currently an area receiving much attention and publicity across construction and in terms of the proposals for Wandle Valley trading Estate, the group would wish to have more detail in respect of how you intend to address this.

What is the rationale for local employment?

Although our focus for the evening was initially on the proposals for the residential element, we are keen to ensure that employment opportunities on the site are maximised. Within the terrace houses there is an opportunity for the utility room to be adaptable if required for a home office. The ability to work from home should not be underestimated in its importance and this should be incorporated into the employment strategy for the whole site.

Is there a positive network of pedestrian routes?

It was clear from the visuals that a network of pedestrian routes had been considered. We would like to see more detail of the entrances to and from the site to ensure they are well designed.

Does parking provision dominate?

Not now and the design of the site is so much better for the parking being brought into the buildings. Creating the utility level within the terrace houses has created a better quality family home while greatly improving the streets.

Car Club?

The provision and use of a car club needs to be further investigated. We have been actively promoting the setting up of car clubs with all of the developers we have been working with over this last year.

How adaptable are the buildings?

Locating a utility space on the ground level improves the adaptability of the houses. As previously mentioned, it would be helpful to see a cross section through the rest of the housing types to see if the same quality of design is being achieved.

Are there play spaces?

We were pleased to see reference to play spaces and it would be good to see further details.

Thank you for taking the time to ensure that your visuals/proposals addressed issues in respect of One Planet Living Principles. As you are aware, we are keen to ensure that environmental standards are being adhered to. Rather than go over the same ground as before, we suggest that this set of comments is cross referenced with those contained in our previous comments to you.

We are keen to ensure that flood protection policies are being adhered to and would wish to see further detailed proposals for preventing/mitigating the risk of flooding. We view this as paramount for

Hackbridge & Beddington Corner
Neighbourhood Development Group
www.hackbridge.net

this site.

As you are aware, sustainability is a big word in Hackbridge! As a group, we continue to push for standards to be met and exceeded. We are aware that there is a growing tendency to use terms such as "wherever possible" and "we will do everything we can" regarding sustainability. It would be helpful if in answering our questions above, specifics could be stated. For example, what will be done to reduce water and energy consumption and what amount of self-generation of energy there will be? Meeting Code 4, while meaningful to those in the know, really does not help the group in terms of promoting understanding across Hackbridge.

If you need any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me or other members of the NDG as appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Helena Barrowclough
Chair
Hackbridge and Beddington Corner Neighbourhood Development Group
07982246923