

Development of Townlands

Comments on Planning Applications: P12/S1424/FUL; P12/S1425/CA; P12S1426/LB

1 General

The overall principle of devoting the whole site to community care is supported. It is noted that the (open market) value of the Care Home and Assisted Living Units is providing funds to develop the new Hospital.

2 Site

The general arrangement of the site is accepted, subject to comments below

3 Listed Buildings

Their retention is supported.

4 Landscaping

The retention of the principal and historic open space is supported as is the reported approach to 'green' the overall site. However the loss of mature trees is lamented and the 'greenness' promised is not reflected in the illustrations, which show considerable 'hard' landscaping. The latter should be reduced to minimum.

5 Access and movement around site

It is acknowledged that, given the various uses on site plus surrounding constraints, movement especially by vehicles is complicated; and it is acknowledged that a demand for additional car parking is contrary to more sustainable forms of transport. It is noted that approx. 40% additional car parking will be provided over and above that recommended for such a development. The movement generated by this car traffic coupled with movement of heavier service vehicles will impact on occupants of houses, particularly those in York and Clarence Roads. It is noted that access to the Hospital is via York Road with exit via Clarence Road. Leaving aside the merit or otherwise of one way systems (as referred to in the Planning statement para. 5.21), has the possibility of linking the upper ends of York Road and Clarence Road by a public highway been considered? This could allow less constricted (one or two-way) access and circulation to both roads and provide frontage for re-located KeyWorker housing (see below).

In respect to access to the Care Home will vehicular access from West Street be possible at some time in the future?

The lack of bus access to the site is a negative and should be encouraged.

Given the provision (over that recommended) of car parking, what provision has been made for the 'useful' reclamation of these areas if/when a sustainable transport plan is instigated?

6 Hospital

The facilities to be provided within the Hospital are welcomed.

Although its location is acceptable, notwithstanding claims of the applicant, it will be dominant. The inclusion, even in broken units of plant housing to the roof will be particularly intrusive. Although there are claims (within the Planning Statement) of 'considerable' additional costs for 'digging into the site gradient', the additional excavation to accommodate plant areas would incur costs but also provide benefits i.e. reduced visible bulk and allow a useable green roof for example for the Hospice element of the development, which perhaps could be treated with more imagination.

The proposed green roofs are perfunctory and seem irrelevant in environmental terms.

The privacy aspect of the Hospice is acknowledged, but direct access to the Garden would be a major plus; or at least have easy access or be in close vicinity of green open space - hence suggestion of roof garden.

The whole site is situated in a CA and quality of architecture should reflect this. Although the designers' intent is laudable the representations project 'CAD' design rather than quality contemporary design.

7 Key Worker Units

The location and bulk of these units should be re-considered, given their apparent impact on the western end of Clarence Road.

Has contemporary low rise construction (with green roofs) been considered ?

8 Assisted Living Units

As a re-use of Listed Building this is welcomed. Adaptations should be sensitive to the existing be durable and provide a high quality living environment. Costs should be appropriate to adapting Listed Building (and should not be 'abnormal' as quoted in Planning Statement para. 3.13)

9 Care Home

The concept of the Care Home (to replace Chiltern End) is accepted.

It is noted that the area designated on Townlands for the Care Home will be sold freehold to the developers, so essentially the Care Home is a private development which will arrange to make available a proportion of units to OCC with the remainder offered on the open market. SODC will judge the eligibility of the proposal in affordable housing terms (see also below).

In regard to the building itself, despite analytical studies, it appears the least considered and impoverished element of the Townlands project.

- it impacts unfavourably on its neighbours - can it be re-located northwards?
- it does not respect or respond to aspect - north-south-east-west
- it does not respond to topography - relate/respond to gradient of the site
- it does not relate to its surroundings - can it relate more effectively to the open space?
- its internal spaces are poorly conceived
- its exterior form is that of a basic commercial office block

Common rooms appear lifeless and with cramped views out.

Care units could/should have balconies (without causing excessive 'over-looking')

Would the perpetrators of this scheme wish to live in it?

Please go back to the drawing board.

10 Elements deemed Affordable Housing

Notwithstanding proposals as in the Planning Statement (by Property Agents GVA) in respect to affordable housing provision, it is expected that, following assessment of the balance between market and affordable housing allocations, SODC will enable protection of the affordable provision into the future.