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**REF: 21/02337/DISC**

**Location: Proposed Himley Village North West Bicester  
Middleton Stoney Road Bicester, Oxfordshire**

10 August 2021

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for consulting with me on the above planning application in relation to the discharge of conditions.

Having reviewed the submitted documents I would ask that suitable amendments are provided in terms of the Design Code to address the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour. I raise the following points and ask that adequate guidance is included to ensure the resultant phases meet the requirements of the NPPF as quoted from the Design Code;

*‘create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.’ (Paragraph 127, NPPF 2019)’.*

Design Code 2 (Page 53) bullet points the key aspects ensuring the development meets the above paragraph this should highlight the importance of active surveillance. Windows in the building façade are too often considered to be sufficient in terms of surveillance however if the rooms are not occupied or the glass is obscured surveillance may be absent regardless. Active surveillance is defined as those rooms not likely to be occupied and therefore able to deter and offender with the risk of being seen. E.g. Kitchens and lounge areas.

It also refers to ‘ease of movement for all users’ and the importance of green links. Whilst connectivity is important, excessive permeability can undermine the defensive space of residents and support those intent on crime and antisocial behaviour. Connective routes should therefore lead to where people need to go appealing to many and therefore ensuring a high level of usage at all times and preventing the emergence of desire lines.

The scheme promotes the usage of communal parking areas including rear courtyards. These are particularly problematic in terms of crime and anti-social behaviour due to the lack of surveillance present with neighbouring high boundary treatments as well as issues with lighting. Their inclusion therefore in the design should only be included with clear guidance relating to mitigating features. Which have been detailed in subsequent points.

Access and Movement section (Page 105)

Refers to the green pedestrian and cycle routes and says they will be 3 m wide to accommodate both however they will not be lit so are likely to be utilised only during daylight hours.

Again the guidance needs to address the potential for the site to become excessively permeable which would support those intent on crime and anti-social behaviour. Connective pedestrian and cycle routes should have a high level of legitimate usage associated with them. They should have

clear sightlines along the route making them as straight as possible and ensuring landscaping doesn't hinder these. They should not track vulnerable side and rear elevations which are the point of entry for the majority of burglaries but also restrict views from buildings out to the public realm. In particular, it refers to 'meandering' however this could lead to shorter desire lines being created through the development if not appropriately addressed and positioned.

#### Road Hierarchy (page 108)

'Parking strategies depending upon the location, density and building typology. Tandem parking to be reduced where possible to ensure parking is on-plot and visitor parking bays to be provided' With the acknowledgement of some courtyard, rear and private parking areas it should be highlighted that visitor parking should only be positioned within the public realm with a high level of surveillance over seeing them. They should not be positioned in a courtyard designated for private residential parking.

#### Parking Typologies (Page 106)

This needs to include a statement regarding the positioning of a parked vehicle which should be in clear visibility of the dwelling it serves to allow the most appropriate guardian to safeguard it.

#### (Page 117)

The mews and courtyard refers to the need for doors to be omitted ensuring they are used for vehicle parking and not storage. It should be highlighted that this design restricts surveillance from the residents above whilst providing no additional physical security. Therefore other mitigating factors would have to be considered eg. a high level of surveillance from neighbouring plots, appropriate positioning within the development to ensure a sense of ownership is present and that the public realm/footpaths etc are positioned further away.

Where rear courtyard parking/drive through areas are proposed these should only cater for a small number of cars with a high level of ownership and surveillance associated with them. Particularly in relation to communal dwellings and drive through parking the floor plans should provide active surveillance to both the public and private realm including the parking provisions. Lighting should be present regardless of whether these are part of the adopted highway. A substandard lighting scheme should not be the solution to ownership issues.

School site (page 97) – In terms of boundary treatments the Design code refers to the use of box hedging and soft landscaping to distinguish between public and private areas. Box hedging could be used in conjunction with a robust boundary treatment provided sightlines were not obscured but would be insufficient alone to provide appropriate safeguarding for this area. Schools should have a robust visually permeable perimeter preventing unauthorised access by means of more than a visual demarcation.

Community Centre (page 98) – as above, boundary treatments are proposed to be box hedging and soft landscaping which will offer no security to the perimeter of the building. Again these would be considered insufficient to secure this site. This area is likely to attract a number of activities, uses, groups where box hedging would provide insufficient safeguarding of the private areas of this section of the development.

I hope that you find my comments of assistance in determining the application and if you or the applicants have any queries relating to CPTED in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Kevin Cox.