**Heyford Park Phase 6**

Demolition of Buildings 485 & 488 & the erection of 43 dwellings with associated parking, infrastructure, landscaping & public open space.

Ref: 16/00263/F

Urban Design Comments - 12 April 2016

**Proposed Demolition**

The proposed demolition of buildings 485 and 488 is regrettable particularly as a building similar to building 488 has been converted so apparently successfully at the Garden Quarter in Bicester.

These survivors of the historic use of the site should be seen as assets that contribute to historic context and sense of place and aid legibility.

Irrespective of their heritage significance retention of one or both buildings is desirable to provide interest and help differentiate and add interest to a fairly homogeneous form of development beyond the distinctive character of the buildings around the green.

I would urge the applicant to reconsider refurbishment of these building and if not both then 488 in particular.

**Distinction and Legibility**

If loss of buildings 485 and 488 is approved then the applicant should be asked to consider compensatory introduction of a one or two distinctive ‘rogue’ buildings as incidents to relieve the homogeneity of much of the development and to aid legibility. Such buildings should be distinctive one-off designs.

**House Types**

House type SP1-V2 has poor proportions with a tall roof and too much unbroken space between the first floor window heads and the eaves.

All traditional form houses should have chimneys or flues punctuating their roofline. The affordable housing in particular should not be distinguishable by lack of chimneys.

**Street Scenes**

Not all streets scenes are covered by the submitted plans.

**Sub-Station**

Although the sub-station is not part of this application its prominence in the street needs to be considered in relation to whether there needs to be any mitigation of its visual impact within this development.

**Parking**

Although tandem parking has been approved elsewhere on the Heyford Park development it is inconvenient for users and tends to lead to more parking on the carriageway or half-on half-off footways. I note that only two on street visitor parking bays have been designed into the layout. The ‘Space to Park’ - URBED / University of Edinburgh / Design for Homes 2013 study recommended that ‘The number of unallocated spaces should at least be 20% in addition to the allocated spaces’.

On-plot parking between some buildings does not appear to be well overlooked from the adjacent houses e.g. plots 338-340.

Parking bays for plots 329 & 330 have fairly poor surveillance which should be improved.

**Trees**

A few of the proposed new trees appear to be located in impractical locations i.e. fronting plots 301, 304 & 307.

There appears to be room for some additional street trees:

* Adjacent to the side wall of the rear garden of plot 317.
* In front of plot 341
* In front of plot 313
* Adjacent to parking bay 310
* Adjacent to the visitor parking spaces

There also appears to be scope for light foliaged trees e.g. birch (e.g. Betula jacquemontii) in rear gardens. Some of these would also benefit the street e.g. close to the side rear garden wall of plot 307. Some could be located to interrupt back-to-back views and aid privacy.

**Boundary Treatments**

Some of the close-board fenced rear garden boundaries adjacent to on-plot parking will be very visible from the street. It would be better for them to be replaced with continuation of the side rear boundary brick walls in the following locations:

Rear boundaries of plot 318 & 336

The close-barded fencing behind tandem parking for plots 323, 325 & 326 and behind parking for plots 327 & 328 should also be 1.8m high brick walls.

Rear garden gates should be match-boarded, not close-boarded.

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12/04/16