

Planning Application 15/01326/OUT

Gladman/ Barrett/ David Wilson Homes (DWH) Development

Drawing Number DR-5000 Ref 2832-5-2

Looking at the plan I have the following comments regarding the site:

Play Area/ Provision

1. The proposals for the play equipment provides poor play value and as every item is wooden the life span of the equipment is short with a maximum life span of 10 years approximately.
 - a. The multiuse games area is located too close to the sports pitches and will suffer from balls being kicked into it from the pitches likewise the play equipment will also be susceptible.
 - b. Unfortunately in an urban environment wood is not robust enough for the location. Wooden equipment has been installed at other parks around the town with little success. Unless the wooden equipment is fitted with metal "shoes" / ground anchors its decay is quite rapid. Wooden equipment certainly does have a better feel than metal but as mentioned it is not appropriate in an urban environment in my opinion of dealing with this sort of issue, for over 25 years experience.
 - c. With multiple manufacturers involved it is likely in my opinion to be more difficult to get spares.
 - d. The proposal is for a mound to be constructed to incorporate an embankment slide, climbing pole and climbing net installed on it. This will be a potential maintenance issue as the proposal shows no surfacing over the mound to prevent erosion that will take place. It is appreciated that the items do not require safer surfacing due to the fall height of the equipment but some form of surfacing should be incorporated in the design if this feature is approved not only for the prevention of erosion but also movement between the items..
 - e. In the proposal a single seat swing is identified with all swing items next to each other and no indication of any free fall space and movement areas around the items, this would not conform to current play standards and would therefore not be adopted. This was something that was in fashion back in the 1960's and is no longer viable at least this should be a 2 seat swing so that users can socialise and will reduce any potential areas of conflict.
 - f. The planting shown appears to also impinge on the free space required around the play equipment so this will also fail an inspection to ensure compliance with current standards.
 - g. There is no indication of any fencing around the play area or how it is constructed (if installed) It is not clear where the signage is going near the play area or its size but it

should be installed on the hinge side of any gates (if installed) and be roughly A2 or A1 size.

- h. The litter bins for the play area are identified as being located outside the facility whereas they should be situated close to the seating and be "lidded" to prevent excess waste being deposited and avoid birds and other animals pulling out the rubbish.
- i. None of the equipment is linked by pathways to make them fully DDA compliant with access across grass areas
- j. Finally the proposal for the play area is very poor especially when it is catering for the large number of residents who will be living on the estate and as previously mentioned has limited play value and in my opinion with over 25 years of experience in dealing with play development poorly designed. As a consequence of all the issues identified with this play provision it should not be accepted and granted Planning Permission.

Landscaping

- 2. There is a significant amount of landscaping in this scheme and if this does come to Banbury Town Council then due consideration needs to be given to ensure it is fit for purpose and that the site is quickly transferred over to the local authority with red line boundaries encompassing all areas to be transferred and not sections. We are still negotiating with DWH over 2 sites:-
 - Ø One that has already transferred eventually to BTC The Pavilions, Grange Road (that was a Wilcon Homes development originally but the company has been subsumed by DWH) now DWH don't want to know about or deal with areas missed off the red line drawing.
 - This drawing does show some areas that are to be landscaped/ constructed etc. that are not fully included within the red line boundary.
 - Ø The second site developed in the 1990's off Middleton Road is still awaiting transfer from the developers (now DWH) although BTC maintains the land. We have had problems with this site in that a well was found when the land inside it collapsed making it a serious H & S hazard.
- a. There has been identification of a senior and junior football pitch on the site but with no changing facilities, this makes the provision unfit for its intended purpose. Senior football leagues require changing rooms for teams playing in their leagues so the lack of these facilities will make the senior pitch redundant before it's built. It is not essential for teams using a junior pitch but it is desirable that junior teams have access to toilets.
 - The identified grass seed sowing mixture for the sports turf is a recreational one that seems to be satisfactory but with BTC sites suffering very wet and boggy conditions how does this mix stand up to moisture in the ground?
 - To date BTC has adopted 2 sites containing sports facilities one is not fit for purpose and the second is untried but it is essential that the pitch areas are well drained and are free draining to enable AYR play on them. More details of their construction/ specification is required to enable BTC (as the end provider) to comment on the proposals. It is not clear at this stage where any drainage is to run following removal of water from the pitch areas.

- The sports pitches are orientated east/west rather than north/south looking at the plan it does appear that it may be able to turn them 90° with the senior pitch being located nearer the play area with the junior pitch located to the east of it. This would also avoid to a greater extent users of the play equipment being hit by footballs going astray, which with the current positioning may arise.
 - Without a proper plan printed to scale it is difficult to ascertain the distance between the 2 pitches to ensure that there is sufficient runoff between them and also less chance to avoid conflict if games are played on both areas at the same time?
 - One of the SUD's areas is at the side of the junior football pitch which is not preferable especially if it impinges on the run-off area for the pitch. Even if it doesn't it will still be a problem area for users of the pitch.

- b. There are a lot of SUDs being proposed, which are being identified as wetland areas with associated wetland seed mixes being used, how are these to be maintained? I presume that they are not envisaged to hold water for long periods but there is no mention of their depth or possible H & S risks (if they do) following long spells of wet weather that the country is being faced with. In addition to this where is any overflow to go and are they being linked together?
 - If the northern footpath is removed to utilise the Saltway path as suggested then the SUDs here could be better designed to look more natural and as a feature to enhance the landscaping on the estate.

- c. There are proposed 2 mounds on the open space, in my opinion it would have been better to make a large contoured (natural) feature on the larger expanse of open space here.
 - However a problem of this is its ongoing routine maintenance depending upon the angle of slope envisaged?
 - A further new mound has been identified in the play area on which I presume an embankment slide is to be located. As mentioned on other sites embankment slides are prone to erosion and therefore sufficient steps to prevent this are required including artificial surfacing on either side of the slide chute?

- d. Some bulb planting has been proposed however these appear to be thin strips, which like the mounds will not look natural and will provide a poor display. Bulbs in grass need to be in large drifts wherever possible to make a big impact otherwise they are a maintenance problem.

- e. The plan shows mown grass paths which is not financially or practicably possible in areas that are closely mown areas anyway.

- 3. I am glad to see that there are going to be dog and bins on the site but their location is not shown on the plan that I could see?

- 4. I have noted that there is a proposal to install a 1.2m high metal fence across the western side of the estate with stone pillars. As all the open space will be transferred to a local authority this seems a waste of money and superfluous. It is not as if this will be a private estate that will have security guards around and patrolling it?

- A block paved road way is identified on the plan close to the metal fencing but I can't see what its purpose is but this could be another maintenance problem once the site has passed its defects period.
5. The plan shows a water feature but no details of what this is?
 6. With the open spaces there does not appear to be any protection against unauthorised use, parking etc. with this being close to known areas that have been used for this purpose it is imperative that the sites are secure with preventative measures in place to avoid this sort of problem.
 7. A footpath is shown to be constructed within meters of a footpath that has been used for centuries surely it would be better to utilise that by providing good access to it.
 8. The balancing pond seems overly large with very steep banks, if it fills completely with water this could be another H & S hazard and then there is the maintenance requirement if the banks are too steep then mowing of the vegetation will not be possible.
 9. On the entrance to the site off White Post Road there is a large area for car parking that seems to be located in the middle of nowhere what is its purpose?

Allotments

10. The proposal is for a timber post and rail fence around the site with "Matching Gate". On all our sites the fencing has been improved due to vandalism and theft with security steel palisade fencing; this proposal is not suitable for this site.
 - a. With this being an overall design for the development Banbury TC has specific requirements for allotment sites that are to be transferred to it with one of the issues identified here is the lack of provision for waste disposal i.e. hard standing for a skip for non-compostable or compostable waste i.e. properly constructed bays?
 - b. In the key it mentions a water trough but this is not shown on the plan? Water will be required for the allotment holders. It would be great if some form of underground reservoir could be built to hold water for when it would be needed either to irrigate areas on the pitches (following end of season reinstatement), use on the allotment site or to provide for the water feature?
 - c. What access is being provided for access to the new allotments, what is shown is joint access to existing allotments so how will access be secured?
 - d. The plots seem over large and therefore the layout will need to be reviewed for smaller plots.
- 11.