



SUNNINGDALE PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk: Ruth Davies

Susan Sharman
Planning Officer
RBWM

8 July 2021

Dear Susan

Application 21/01721/FULL: Sunningdale Park Larch Avenue Ascot SL5 0QE

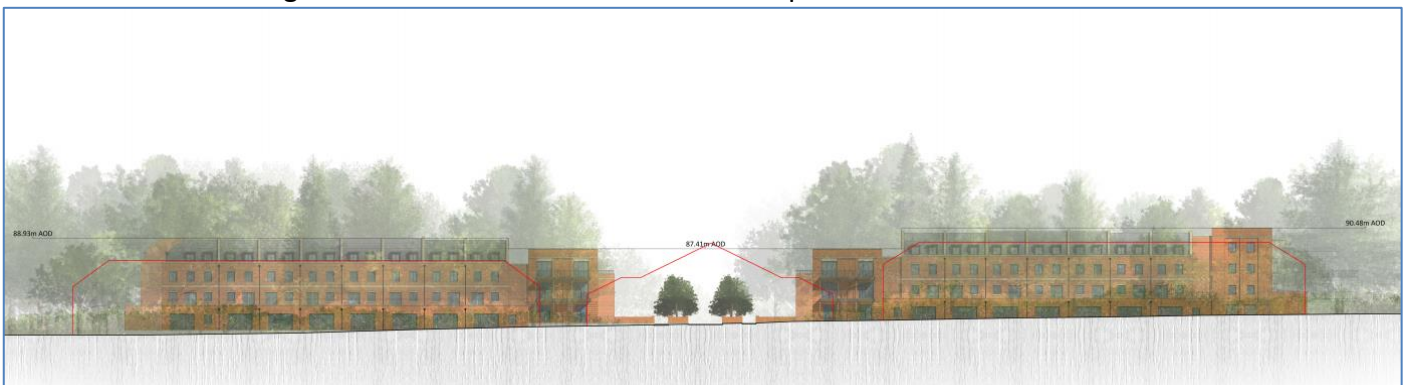
The redevelopment of part of the Sunningdale Park estate including the erection of new buildings to provide 96 homes (Class C3), conversion of 3x market dwellings to shared ownership in Mackenzie House alongside associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, footpaths, drainage, provision of 19 hectares of SANG and other associated works.

The Planning Committee considered this application at its meeting on 7 July 2021. We would like to thank Berkeley Homes for their presentation and responding to questions from the Parish Council and residents.

However, there remain a number of issues and concerns related to this application. These reference back to the approved scheme 18/00356.

Scale and Bulk

The street scene for the approved scheme for Crosley and Steuart (shown below), although described as '*repetitive and symmetrical*' in the Design and Access Statement, does blend in as a single ridge height behind the trees along Larch Avenue and screens the development to a certain extent.



Steuart and Crosley- approved scheme- street view from Larch Avenue

However, in the proposed scheme, the developer has now introduced large sections at the corners which are significantly higher than the approved scheme. This increases the overall bulk of the building.



Crossley – proposed Northern elevation



Steuart- proposed Southern view - note that the trees are indicative. They are much further away but have been drawn to look closer to disguise the bulk and height of the building.

One of the Parish Council's main concerns is the change to Crosley Court and the view of the apartment block from Larch Avenue. The developer might take note of the description of this block in the letters received from local residents objecting to the scheme. These include: *'Equivalent to a 19th century army barracks'*, *'student halls of residence'* and *'Pentonville Parade'*.

A four- storey monolithic structure like this does not sit comfortably opposite the houses in Larch Avenue where the Townscape is described as *'Villas in a Woodland Setting.'*



Crosley- Proposed Western elevation – as seen from Larch Avenue -shown above

The proposed development is therefore contrary to policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2 and NP/DG3 of the Neighbourhood Plan which states that new development should respond positively to the local townscape. New development should also be similar in density, footprint, separation, scale and bulk of the buildings in the surrounding area.

We would argue that this added bulk at the corners adds significantly to the perception of scale which would be contrary to policy NP/DG2.

Questions about the actual height of the highest structures within the development were answered by Berkeley at the planning meeting as *'a bit higher than the approved scheme.'* Subsequently Berkeley accept that Crosley Court is taller than the approved scheme in places by c.3m.

Inappropriate Architectural Style and Layout

This application proposes architectural changes to Crosley and Steuart Court which are significantly different to the architectural style of the approved scheme. The three pictures below show the architecture of the approved scheme with respect to these blocks.



The layout of the approved scheme is shown below.



Approved Scheme (2019)

The developers have used a Collegiate theme as their new architectural link to distance themselves from the previously approved design. Now there are references to *Scholars Row*, *Crosley Classrooms* and *The Great Hall* in the Design and Access statements to reflect this new scholarly theme.

Additionally, the developer has used photographs of existing architecture in the Design and Access statements as reference points for the design of the proposed new buildings at Sunningdale Park. Examples of these are shown below for Crosley Hall and The Chapel. However, in every instance the architect has selected urban examples as the reference photographs. These are large, multi-storey urban buildings. However, it should be noted the environment where the buildings are to be located. Sunningdale is a village. It is not a town and it is not a city centre. Hence, the style, scale, size and bulk of the proposed buildings would probably not be out of place in a city centre but they are not appropriate for a village.

Crosley Hall

Crosley Hall is very similar in architectural style as the Great Hall, however introduces gables, buff brick and large openings with deep reveals, which, coupled with the stone detailing and rendered pilings, creates a stronger and deliberate entrance into the building which is accessed from Park Avenue. This will make the journey for its residents more legible which is emphasised by the use of signage.



The Chapel

The Chapel takes inspiration from traditional chapel buildings including the Salisbury Chapel shown within the precedent images. For this building focus has been given to the scale of the openings with deep reveals creating opportunities for private amenity space for the apartments. In addition, the building will have a clipped verge and eaves roofs similar to that of the precedent image.

The building will be predominately red brick with stone detailing and blue snapped headers.



Proposed Eastern Elevation - Bay Study (1:100)



Precedent Images

The NPPF Section 12. paragraph 127 states:

- developments should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- they should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

The Parish Council believe that in selecting this urban reference point the developers are contrary to the NPPF Section 12.

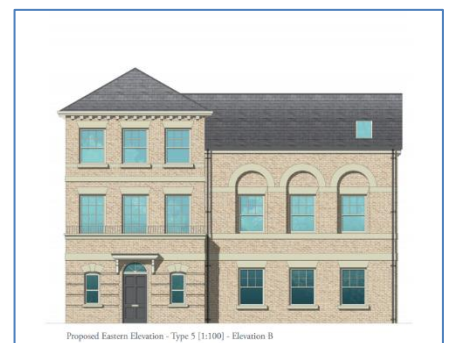
The sheer scale, bulk and height of the proposed changes can be seen in the illustrations below. These also now include the introduction of a wide variety of architectural features.



Proposed Eastern Elevation - Bay Study (1:100)



Proposed Eastern Elevation - Bay Study (1:100)



Proposed Eastern Elevation - Type 5 (1:100) - Elevation B

The layout out and positioning of these build elements has also changed as shown below. Continuing the urban theme, the positioning of the Crosley buildings in a square is more concentrated with less open views than on the approved scheme.

The Southern flank of The Crosley Great Hall also appears to be dangerously close to a TPO tree as can be seen in the diagram below. It is difficult to see how the RPA of this tree will not be compromised. It is noted that no additional tree works are envisaged with this latest proposal.



The Parish Council believe that this juxtaposition of architectural styles together with the size, scale and bulk does not represent “Good Quality Design” as defined in policy NP/DG3 in the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan.

Green Belt

The Sunningdale Park estate lies entirely within the Green Belt.

Paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF states that “*certain developments are permitted within the Green Belt*” but they should not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The Parish Council would argue that the revised design of the Crosley building together with the new building style centred around a square as well as the extension of The Great (Crosley) Hall further into the existing green space and undeveloped area of the site does affect the openness of the Green Belt and is therefore contrary to paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF.

Local Plan

The developers refer to The Local Plan as a key reference document but when focusing their attention on maximising the number of dwellings on the site the Local Plan tends to recede into the background. Sunningdale Park was allocated 230 homes under The Local Plan. Planning permission was approved for 168 homes (Class C3) and 103 units of accommodation (Class C2) for the Care Community (Audley). A total of 271 dwellings.

Under the approved 18/00356 scheme there was a total of 74 homes approved for Crosley and Steuart. Under this new proposal a further 22 homes are being added bringing the total to 96 homes in Crosley and Steuart, an increase of 30%. Town houses have been replaced by flats. One bedroom apartments have increased from zero to 10 and two bedroom apartments have increased from 37 to 49. The total number of dwellings on the entire Sunningdale park site is now proposed to be 293.

Parking Provision

As quoted in the Neighbourhood Plan “*It is however a recognised reality that an affluent, non-urban neighbourhood like ours will continue to have a high level of car ownership. This is aggravated by the*

limited routes and low frequency of bus services in our area, especially the lack of buses during the peak morning and evening periods.

Evidence shows that we have a higher level of car ownership per household (1.66) than the average in our Borough (1.50), which already has a high level of car ownership by national standards”.

Given its location, Sunningdale Park is not a sustainable location close to major transport hubs. There are no buses and it is a 1.1 mile walk to Sunningdale Railway Station that takes 24 minutes. Town planners consider that the most people will walk is only 10 minutes otherwise they will drive.

It is questionable whether there is adequate parking for this density of development.

In the latest plans only 7 spaces are provided for visitors and trades people for a total of 96 apartments (up from 74 in the extant permission). This is inadequate. We also note that there are 34 private parking spaces allocated for Scholars Row but just 161 spaces allocated for the entire Crosley and Steuart blocks. This excludes the 7 visitor places.

There is a risk that unless these spaces are increased there will be reliance on on-street parking and additional pressures placed on the already inadequate parking in Larch Avenue. Berkeley Homes argue that a further 14 visitor parking spaces will be provided by the Gardeners Cottages, but these are being provided for visitors to the larger SANG at Sunningdale Park and should not be used by residents of Sunningdale Park.

This is contrary to Neighbourhood Plan policy NP/T1.

Traffic and Access

The additional traffic along Larch Avenue and Silwood Road resulting from the development of Sunningdale Park continues to be of major concern to residents. The residents of Larch Avenue still understandably believe that the impact of traffic along these roads was not given sufficient consideration when application 18/00356 was approved. It is hard to comprehend how the introduction of 271 new dwellings could have resulted in a 2.2% reduction in traffic.

Adding more apartments will naturally increase the need not just for parking but also an additional number of trips made by these cars.

It is essential that a sound infrastructure plan is put in place to fully consider the infrastructure changes needed to this area to support this development. Today, Silwood Road is already a traffic bottleneck and some serious work needs to be done to mitigate the increased traffic using this road.

We would like to see an updated traffic report and plan of action from RBWM to address our concerns with respect to traffic along these two roads.

It might be argued that Berkeley Homes would willingly add more dwellings on the site with little concern for supporting infrastructure. They do however accept that Silwood Road will be a problem. The Transport statement, section 3.3, states that Silwood Road has on-street parking outside various retail units and that ***‘This parking reduces the carriageway width to between 3.2m and 3.5m and therefore to only one way operation. There are, however, spaces between the groups of parking bays which provide regular passing places but this reduction in width is likely to cause delays.***

A329 London Road / B383 Buckhurst Road / B383 Silwood Road junction

The Parish Council is concerned about the build-up of traffic at the London Road/ Silwood Road junction. Berkeley Homes reference this in their Transport statement, Section 2.36. *In the vicinity of the site, the RBWM INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN – CONSULTATION VERSION (2019)(IDP) indicates that **improvements have been identified at the A329 London Road / B383 Buckhurst Road / B383 Silwood Road junction (A27)**. This is currently a staggered T-junction around 215m north of the northern corner of Sunningdale Park. The IDP refers to a 'roundabout' and so there may be consideration to upgrade this junction into a roundabout but no further details have been identified. This scheme has, however, a low priority within the Emerging Local Plan.*

Hence, Berkeley Homes have used this 'low priority' reference in the Emerging Local Plan to distance themselves from making any changes at this critical junction. However, the Parish Council would argue that increasing the number of dwellings from the originally planned 230 to the currently proposed 293 does make a significant change to the priority of this junction. We would argue that the proposed increase in the number of dwellings at Crosley and Steuart should be conditional on Berkeley Homes funding a new roundabout at this junction. Failure to do this is likely to result in increased traffic at this junction requiring the subsequent introduction of a roundabout but then the roundabout would have to be funded solely by RBWM.

Highways

There has been a recent change of road layout at the junction of Larch Avenue and Silwood Road which is already causing problems. We request that the Highways Department of RBWM urgently carry out a site visit, review these changes and report back on the narrowing of Larch Avenue on such a critical junction. This change has exacerbated problems with a junction which is already problematic.

Mackenzie House

The Parish Council is concerned about the treatment of Mackenzie House in this application. It has largely been ignored. The extant planning permission for Sunningdale Park secured the delivery of 38 high quality shared ownership apartments in Mackenzie House.

However, it is understood that other significant aspects of Sunningdale Park such as The Glade, The Pavilion, The Dairy, The Walled Garden and The Gardeners Cottages remain as proposed in the approved scheme unless a subsequently approved variation has resulted in a design change – such as with the Gardeners Cottages.

This comprehensive complete re-design and the new proposed Collegiate architectural approach for Crosley and Steuart has obviously taken some time and considerable resources. Mackenzie House is positioned in a prominent position on Larch Avenue. Yet, in this proposed application Berkeley Homes state that: ***'should this application be approved, Berkeley are committed to reviewing the architectural proposals for Mackenzie House to more closely align with the revised architecture proposed in Phase 1'***

The Parish Council finds this **unacceptable** to make this review 'conditional'.

One conclusion from this statement is that Berkeley Homes are prepared to allocate very significant

resources to redesigning the Crosley and Steuart buildings and now all parties have to review a half-completed planning proposal. We are being asked to approve The Crosley and Steuart Buildings and then if that is approved by RBWM, Berkeley will present us with the plans for Mackenzie House.

The Parish Council **strongly requests that RBWM insist that any redesign of Mackenzie House be included under 21/01721.** Then the proposed architectural treatment of this important area of the site along Larch Avenue can be viewed in its entirety rather than on a piecemeal basis.

We ask that you **Refuse** this application.

Yours sincerely

Yvonne Jacklin and Michael Burn
Co Chairmen of the Planning Committee.