



Hertsmere Borough Council
Planning Department
Civic Offices
Elstree Way
Borehamwood
WD6 1WA

08/04/2021

Dear Amit Patel

Ref: Pre-application advice 55 Richfield Road, Bushey Heath, WD23 4JY

Thank you for consulting us on the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and the construction of 4 2-bed flats at 55 Richfield Road, Bushey Heath. This letter sets our comments and observations based upon the submitted documents.

Layout and Massing

The proposal will result in an intensification in terms of site use and built area, however the built form and massing appears to have been designed sympathetically to the neighbouring properties and existing street scene. As a result of the site's topography, two storeys have been accommodated without increasing the building height by developing a lower ground floor level. This ensures that the building massing is consistent with existing bungalow typologies.

The proposals appear to increase separation distances with the neighbouring 53 Richfield Road. Despite this distance there are two windows overlooking the proposed western elevation which also includes two windows and further justification should be provided to ensure overlooking and privacy is designed in accordance with section 9.2 of the Hertsmere Planning and Design Guide Part D. It is unclear from the submitted drawings whether W3 on 53 Richfield Road is in direct view of the proposed kitchen window on flat 1 and the separation distance appears to be approximately 5m. Further information on daylight provision should also be provided to ensure that the lower ground floor dwelling will receive adequate natural light (particularly as the primary source of light is the north facing aspect) and that the proposals do not adversely impact on overshadowing of number 53.

Materials and Design

The proposed design is contemporary which is welcomed, it appears to be a new architectural style to the area so we would request justification of the design included with the application. Where possible the design and materiality should take cues from materials present within the area. There is some concern of the appearance of the front elevation from an active frontage perspective, due to the potential screening impact of the fence and further justification should be provided to ensure that the frontage ties into the existing character of the street scene. Furthermore, due to the neighbouring turning circle the eastern elevation will become quite a prominent elevation, framing views from

Richfield Road down into Bushey Heath. The existing elevation has some character in the form of the window, brickwork, roof and chimney features. To help frame this view we would welcome further consideration of the design of this elevation, which could include features such as protruding or oversized window frames helping to add character to this elevation. We would request details of materials and justification of their choice included within the application.

It is positive to see cycle storage included within the design, however it is unclear what form this will take and where possible we would request secure and covered cycle storage. Further consideration should also be given to bin storage as this is unclear and could result in bins cluttering the front elevation. We would request covered bin stores constructed with a high-quality finish that ties into the materiality of the building.

Access

The proposals include an increase in parking on the site and this will in turn increase the area of hardstanding. To offset this impact on surface water runoff we would welcome permeable surfacing of driveway areas. Further consultation should also be sought from highways as there will be new driveway points onto Richfield Road.

Sustainability and Landscaping

In addition to the permeable surfacing and cycle storage we would welcome electric vehicle charging points and consideration of future trends such as homeworking desk space. A hard and soft landscaping plan should also be provided at application stage detailing any lost vegetation, and areas of new landscaping should be incorporated into the proposals. It would also be good to see information on how the space at the rear of the building will be used and maintained.

Summary

Whilst this letter sets out a series of comments and recommendations on layout, massing, materials, design, access, sustainability and landscaping, we believe that once addressed the proposal will be acceptable on urban design grounds and therefore should be actioned as part of the next iteration of design refinement.

If you wish to discuss any of these comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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Urban Designer

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Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.