

Design rebuttal to Proof of Evidence prepared by Warren Lever

**Proposed Development for the erection of 44 retirement apartments
for the elderly at the site of The Rise and Three Neighbouring
Properties, Stanford Hill, Lymington SO41 8DE**

LPA Reference 20/10481

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Introduction

This rebuttal has been prepared in response to the Proof of Evidence submitted by Warren Lever, New Forest District Council. I have reviewed and considered Mr Warrens evidence at length with particular regard to points / issues that Mr Warren raises in connection with the design of the appeal scheme. As set out within my proof of evidence the appeal scheme has been designed based on a detail contextual appraisal of the site and surrounding area and has well founded design principles based on combining local precedent with good design practice. I respectfully disagree with Mr Warrens position. The below is not an exhaustive commentary but a summary of the main design points raised and my response to them. Heritage issues and the impact of the design upon the street scene and surrounding character have been delt separately with by the respective experts within the appeal team.

Para: 4.2.1

Point: *The overly deep plan, massing, form and T shaped plan of the proposed development is at odds with the layout of buildings in this character area*

Response: The plan and T shaped form are dealt with in my evidence at 7.1.1 and in more detail throughout 8.4. In addition, the projecting rear leg responds to the character of Bucklers mews which exists to the rear of Bucklers court. Bucklers Mews is a direct example of existing development located to the rear of the street forming part of the overall character of the area. The design draws a precedent from this established context.

The massing of the scheme is delt with in my evidence throughout 8.6 and is entirely acceptable given the shape and size of the site as well as the spatial arrangement surrounding it.

Para: 4.2.2

Point: *The overly deep plan has an uncomfortable roof shape with endless articulation and buildings additions. Little thought has been given to arranging the proposed building into a coherent form and as such the contrived roof with*

large flat area lacks the simplicity of the buildings around it. Even the late 20th century form of Bucklers Court makes meaningful attempt to double pitch its roof and break its elevation into distinguishing elements of blocks and links.

Response: Section 7 of my evidence explains the design evolution and that careful thought was given to the building's arrangement both in plan and also in elevation. The plan is not overly deep but responds to the shape and size of the site which is considerable larger than surrounding plots. The roof shape is not uncomfortable but allows the site to be developed efficiently and with a form that both responds to and compliments roof forms seen within the direct surrounding area. There is no harm in principle with flat roof sections. The flat roof elements will not be perceivable from anywhere other than a bird's eye location and are not harmful to the visual appearance of the scheme. It is noted that Bucklers Court does not have as many flat roofed areas however if parts of flat roofs were to be incorporated into the design of Bucklers court they would not be harmful to the character. Parts of buildings at Highfield have flat roofs. Mr Lever's reference to 'Endless articulation' is incorrect. Different parts of the facade have been intentionally articulated differently as I set out in evidence throughout 8.9. Mr Lever has mis understood that there are only 3 main takes on articulation / style which are all similar but provide enough considered difference for an effective reading of the façade to be experienced in sections. This was encouraged by the Local Authority to consider ways in which the visual effect of the building could be broken down into smaller elements during Pre Application discussions. My evidence sets out why the façade is highly considered and not confused.

Para: 4.2.2

Point: *The volume of the building is proposed with little relief in the form or expression apart from minor articulation of the elevations. The roof plan struggles to sit comfortably on the building form which is articulated by the submitted roof plan.*

Response: Mr Lever states previously that the building has endless articulation, now its minor! The façade, form and mass of the building is articulated appropriately to create a visual aesthetic that both responds to the shape and nature of the plot but one that also compliments the surrounding character. Why does the roof plan struggle to sit comfortably? It combines the main 3d elements together to create a single building. There is nothing overly complex about the roof form. Note the diverse and varied forms seen within buildings at Highfield. These buildings are considered to be good examples and incorporate highly contrasting elements in places. This is supported in evidence throughout 8.9.

Para: 4.2.4

Point: *The use of a large and dominant built form and a design which works from the inside to the outside means the scheme ends up with an overly complicated roof form and a resultant chaotic streetscape frontage.*

Response: The built form is large compared to the buildings that it replaces; however large buildings exist within the immediate character of the area and the scheme is not overly dominant. Its size is supported in my evidence throughout 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8. The height of the scheme causes no harm as the building does not appear to be too tall or incongruous within the street scene. The scheme does not appear to be out of context and responds to the overall height of both neighbouring buildings: Concord and Bucklers Court. This is dealt with in evidence at section 8.8. Evidence at 8.9 justifies the façade / elevational appearance which is clearly not chaotic.

Para: 4.2.4

Point: *The elevation above has a discordant and contrived appearance. In general appearance terms it lacks the symmetry illustrated on the buildings along Highfield and the later design influence of Bucklers Court. Building elements jar with one another and rooflines come together awkwardly over-sailing frontage elements.*

Response: I set out in evidence throughout 8.9 why the appearance is appropriate and how it relates to the surrounding context. Buildings at Highfield are not always symmetrical in form but do have symmetrical elements, similar to the appeal scheme. The schemes building element's do not jar with one another, it's a matter of opinion but the elevations are coherent and the minor differences in detail / articulation work together in the desired way rather than detracting from one and other.

Para: 4.2.4

Point: *The central brick block is formed of two elements which compete architecturally with those either side. The attempt to tier building elements back and down at differing heights at the left-hand brick block adds yet more discordance to the proposal.*

Response: This is a matter of opinion, the different elements of the façade have been designed to work together rather than to compete. Changes in articulation are subtle and not in great contrast. Bucklers court displays greater tonal differences through material selection. The appeal schemes draws inspiration from Highfield where material selection is more subtle and allows elements to compliment. Tiering the scheme down at the edges has been done in direct response to the lower height at Concord and also to the form of buildings at Highfield where this is common. Refer to evidence fig 41, 42 and 45.

Para: 4.2.4

Point: *The use of the pediment element does not allow the classical depth below it and windows and balcony openings hit directly under the pediment. This is at odds with the classical proportion of how pediments work with a frieze and architrave. This can be seen at the listed buildings along Highfield and again where there is a gap above the window heads at Bucklers court. Furthermore, the narrow window and much wider balcony arrangement below the pediment is asymmetrical and unbalances its composition. This can be reflected against the more refined pediment details of the buildings along Highfield.*

Overall appearance looks like several unrelated buildings with poor classical detailing joined together in an incoherent way. It has made the mistake of over complicating what should have been a simple well refined elevation.

Response: The façade is not a direct copy of a Georgian building. It has been clearly influenced by Georgian proportions and buildings within the context of the site. It does not need to be an exact replica of a Georgian façade, so as not to create visual discordancy, or a copy any particular building at Highfield. The scheme stands in its own right and is not a misunderstanding of Georgian architecture. The introduction of balconies to the façade, for example, contribute greater to the quality of life for the occupants and do not jar with the selected design language. The site is not in the Conservation Area but the building does relate well to buildings that are, Bucklers Court and buildings at Highfield for example. The appearance of the elements of the building do not appear unrelated but contrast effectively in breaking up the appearance of the building. This was encouraged by WR during the Pre Application.

Para: 4.2.7

Point: *This aspect follows very much from the issues of appearance and the rather confused nature of the elevations. This is evident in complicated massing on all elevations and treating details more like wallpaper. This kind of design ends up with varying elements competing with each other and taking away from the street scene as a whole.*

Response: In my opinion, and that of the appeal team that includes a considerable combined experience, the elements that create the combined design and elevation do not compete with each other. They display subtle differences that allow parts to be read individually whilst working together as a whole. The elevations are not confused, nor are they a mis understanding of Georgian architecture. The scheme has been influenced by Georgian architecture but is not intended to be a replica or pastiche. It stands in its own right drawing references from within local context as I have demonstrated in evidence.