



BMJ - Parkfield House Design Response

The following report contains the justifications and drivers behind the amendments which occurred after meeting with the Rochdale Council on April 2nd.

It was clear in the meeting that connection, context and hierarchy were crucial in delivering a scheme on this site.

The connections and pedestrian routes we highlighted as critical for the scheme to be successful. We have responded to the comments and made sure to allow for as much permeability as possible whilst retaining privacy and security where most important. The road layout and materiality ensures the clear distinction between primary and secondary areas, as well as clearly highlighting where parking spaces are designated. The use of materiality will be key to this remaining clear yet in-keeping with the surrounding environment.

In order to further the reduction of the parking provision impact, much attention has been paid to the green spaces between parking areas and in front of houses. It is intended that the architecture and landscape and pedestrian level feels as green as possible by integrating large segments of significant planting around and behind cars rather than trying to place less meaningful planting between which would be harder to maintain. At ground level, the use of timber and glazed facades help to reflect the green buffers and allow for a more gentle pedestrian experience through the residential areas of the site.

The design of the care home was generally seen as positive. The comments about the hierarchy and use of elements for the residential design picked out areas of ground floor dominance and decoration. Highlighting the previous point about achieving a lower impact pedestrian experience through the residential areas, the care home proposal works hard to introduce detailing and form at ground floor level. The buildings highlighted in the response were buildings where the ground floor is clearly visible from the main road/pedestrians, set back from the pathway and built as statement elements which punctuate the streetscape for Manchester Old Road. We have ensured that the elements seen from the main road, critically the gables, enjoy detailing with the same vigour as those seen elsewhere, thus developing the language between the old and new typologies using the main road pedestrian as the target. Types O and P have been introduced, these focus on creating a rear facade which seeks to look more like a front gable and further enhance this narrative.

Elsewhere on the site, a hedgerow opening along the northern edge will allow care home residents to enjoy unbroken views across the park and a sensory garden has been proposed to the North East of the care home, both with the intention of prioritising the residents well-being. A

footpath now connects the residents more easily from the care home to the site. Footpath connections generally have been prioritised and now pedestrians can walk throughout the site with level access, using raised speed restricting tables as crossings as seen in parts of Europe which rebalance the pedestrian hierarchy.

The gateway entrance has been one element we are keen to improve whilst retaining its substance and character. Whilst the current opening is generous in its width for vehicle access, there is not space to accommodate the footpath too. Our proposal is to create a modern yet minimal solution which encourages the use of the public footpath, has a positive effect on the site gateway and allows the retention of as much original stonework as possible. As was discussed during the site visit, The pillars are a key part of the conservation aesthetic and should look to be retained. Our proposal seeks to support the pillar with a corten steel frame and redirect the stonework adjacent to invite the pedestrians into the site. The difficulty surrounding the tree behind the left side of the gateway rules it out from being used whilst the significance of ground works and interference with the wall further along the site show our proposal as the path of least resistance. Especially since that section of wall has been moved previously and is therefore less established from a heritage point of view.

In conclusion, the amendments which have been made to the original proposal have been considered with the character and context of the site alongside the user experience of residents and members of the public in equal measure. The architectural and landscape design have sought to highlight the hierarchy of spaces whilst creating a dynamic atmosphere which embraces the surrounding built and green environments.