



Planning and Regeneration  
Rochford District Council  
South Street  
Rochford  
Essex  
SS4 1BW

21/02/2018

Dear Arwel Evans

**Ref: 66 Lower Road Hullbridge - 17/01037/FUL**

Thank you for consulting us on the full planning application to demolish the existing retail and residential building and construct a three storey residential building comprising 2 no one bedroomed and 6 no two bedroomed flats with parking and additional access. This letter sets out our comments and observations based upon the plans and documents submitted as part of the application.

It is our understanding that there has been an ongoing dialog between Rochford District Council and the applicant with regards to comments surrounding the application. These comments have been reviewed and taken into consideration in relation to the below response.

#### Scale

It is deemed that the principle of a three storey building has very little justification within Hullbridge. The surrounding context is made up of 1 and 2 storey dwellings, and the introduction of a three storey building provides a contrasting approach to the vernacular and character to Hullbridge.

In order to assess the scale on a streetscape perspective it would be requested that a street elevation is included in the application to allow the proposed building to be considered in context to the existing street's character and scale. Several elevations could be provided demonstrating scale along the street as well as across the street [relationship with the existing retail building].

Based on the submitted information it would be recommended the overall scale of the building is reduced to a two storey proposal. This retains the overall building height of the street and more widely the contextual scale of Hullbridge.

#### Form

It has been outlined by the applicant that Hullbridge holds no precedence in architectural prominence to be followed by this proposal. It would be argued this is not necessarily correct and that there are certainly architectural features and character that run through the vernacular of Hullbridge. Pitched roof lines, grey tiles, red brick and 1 to 2 storey height are present through the area, particularly along Ferry Road with its maritime nature towards the River Crouch. It is agreed this is limited but these small references provide the character and reference to the wider area.

The use of a 'gull wing'/flat roof form mirrors that of the retail unit adjacent to the application site. Given the application has removed the retail element of the site it would be deemed the roof profile would mirror that of a residential form rather than a commercial reference.

It would be deemed the combination of angular and curved forms within the buildings elevation can create a busy and cluttered appearance. It would be recommended that a singular approach is adopted to ensure strong presence and legibility of the architectural form.

### Materials

The 'traditional' palette of the three materials can create a busy appearance to a buildings elevation of this scale, however the justification around the use of materials to aid in breaking up the large form of the built form is justifiable. It would be recommended that further review is undertaken to reduce this palette to create a simplified and cleaner approach. One material which we continue to find fails or often detracts from a buildings character and longevity would be render and the extents used. The use of a simplified brick and timber palette through the use of high quality products would future enhance the build form. The buildings massing can still be broken up with the use of varying colours and applications of the material.

### Services

It is questioned whether the strategy for overhead services conflicts with the proposed build. This is particularly prominent to the eastern elevation and a strategy for treatment of plant apparatus and justification would be required.

### Externals

The external layout is parking led and subsequently setting and screening have been compromised. As outlined in the DAS document parking numbers are below the parking standards for Essex. It is found that where standards are compromised the justification rarely reflects a reality. It is felt that assumptions should not be made when assessing a high density development within an existing community despite the sites' access to bus services.

Based on the submitted scheme it would be recommended that the massing of the building is broken up through the use of landscape features which will introduce a variance in height and scale. Tree planting will be key in detracting from the overall height and massing of the building on the existing streetscene. The current proposal for 1 tree to the front of the site will require further details in terms of planting details, species and specification when planted.

Tree planting to the rear of the development also holds key precedence in aiding with the screening strategy. Proposed trees have been shown to the rear but it would be required species and size would be needed to assess if these would uphold the screening strategy. Semi mature evergreen species would be recommended to ensure instant impact and year round screening to neighbouring properties.

### Elevation

Prominence of the entrance is lost through the use of a pergola. It would be deemed stronger where the building elevation responds to the entrance through a variation in material and scale.

As outlined above the combined use of curved and straight forms within the elevations can provide a confused approach. It would be encouraged that a single approach is applied to provide a strong frontage.

It is considered the use of render to frame and accent certain aspects of the elevations is overbearing. It would be considered that a simplified palette would consider more practical in providing a stronger appearance to the streetscene.

The rear elevation shows a blind window arrangement. It is questioned why the use of a timber finish has been proposed where this holds no relation to other features. It would be encouraged this is amended to respond to the surrounding brick detail.

The east elevation shows an array for materials and features arranged across the elevation. This arrangement has led to pockets of materials being clustered throughout this elevation. This in turn has created a very busy appearance in comparison to the northern and southern elevations. It is recommended that arrangements of materials can be grouped to form stronger groupings to the elevation and move away from this busy arrangement. This comment can also be applied to the window arrangement to this elevation. There are several styles and finishes to which it is felt can be condensed into a coherent approach to mirror that of the north and south elevation.

#### Design and Access Statement

It would be recommended that the core design principles for the development are outlined further; this would include reasoning for form and style of the building along with precedence architecture from the surrounding context.

Further justification surrounding the landscape approach would be required. This can be in the form of a strategy for the approach and reasoning for this. This is particularly important given the sensitivity of screening. The approach that landscape elements will be picked up as part of the conditions is not considered sufficient in this instance. Details for the landscaping can be picked up in the conditions but the approach and strategy will need to be addressed as part of the planning application. This will include both a soft and hard landscape approach.

Should you require further clarification on any of the above points please feel free to call to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,  
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N.B. This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to the particular matter.