

**DURHAM CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM
RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION DM/15/03555/VOC
Variation of condition 3 (approved drawings) pursuant to planning permission
CMA/4/83 in regard to a revised masterplan that includes landscape and drainage
modifications. Mount Oswald South Road Durham DH1 3TQ**

Purpose of the application

Banks wish to vary the masterplan. The main changes are:

1. removing the 16 half-acre plots in the centre of the site
2. building more housing of the same type that is going up at the southern end instead
3. reducing the quantity of housing in the northern part of the site so that there is no actual increase in housing overall
4. realigning access routes and redistributing parkland
5. moving the convenience store and associated community to be accessed from South Road close to the Park & Ride.

Forum Comments

Cycle paths and footpaths

We welcome the access routes through the site but would like to see some amendments: provision of all through routes as clearly marked cycle paths in parallel with footpaths, provision of cycle travel parallel to the A177, dealing with the inconsistencies and ambiguities in the plan. In addition, the through connections to Millhill Lane should be made as soon as possible (designated as 01, 02 and 03 on the Masterplan Layer - Movement Framework). A detailed discussion of the cycle paths and footpaths is included with our submission (document named DCNPF-Mount-Oswald3.pdf).

Retail unit and 'community' facilities

The movement of these to the university quarter and therefore the lack of need for access to the A167 is an improvement. The size of the retail unit is not clearly stated, and this will need consideration when relevant planning applications are made in the future. The previous 'community hub' is now designated as offices/community/retirement. Clarification of what type of development is intended here is required. It might be questioned whether the siting of retirement housing next door to student accommodation is suitable. When relevant planning applications are made in the future the views of the retirement community should be obtained.

Green infrastructure

The consolidation of the green spaces is welcome. However, the strip of 'greenery' bordering the A167 for the Neighbourhood North and Neighbourhood South areas still appears far too narrow. It is not sufficient for a wildlife corridor and does not provide adequate screening from traffic for the occupants of these houses. In the Green Infrastructure Strategy map the colours used for areas of rough grass and for areas of existing trees were so similar that they could not be distinguished. The emphasis needs to be on provision of trees (to help with absorbing greenhouse gases). A management plan for the green infrastructure is needed, with appointment of an appropriate management organisation. The green spaces should be granted in perpetuity. This should be a requirement for planning approval. The developers should consult with the Woodland Trust and the Durham Wildlife Trust on such management issues.

Play areas

The proposed children's play areas - LAP and LEAP - are for children up to 6 years and 4- 8 years respectively. There should also be play area provision for older children. This would

mean that children living on the site would not need to cross main roads to access play areas located elsewhere.

Unallocated plots

We note the existence of two unallocated lots: one adjacent to the university quarter and one associated with Mount Oswald Manor. These will be the subject of future planning applications and are likely to comprise additional housing and/or additional student accommodation. The Manor site is an important component of the whole Mount Oswald site, with an effect on cycle paths, footpaths and green spaces. Therefore some constraints on future planning applications should be put in place so that this plot blends in with, and complements and supports, the rest of the Mount Oswald site. We note the comments of John McGargill, Highways Development Management, that: "The initial transport model showed that there is significant operational demand on the South Road/ New Inn junction and Neville's Cross junction. Should a proposal be brought forward to develop the unidentified land then this would inevitably lead to an unacceptable increase in demand on those junctions. It is therefore unlikely that a future application for this land could be supported if it significantly increased highway network demand over and above the outline permission."

Ros Ward
Project Manager
Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum
The Miners' Hall
Redhills,
DURHAM
DH1 4BD
npf@durhamcity.org.uk