**18/00807/ERES - Former MOD Foxhill Site, Bradford Road, Combe Down**

*Approval of reserved matters in regards to outline application 14/04354/EOUT for the development of 166 dwellings; parking; landscaping and all associated infrastructure.*

Comment: The Trust is largely comfortable with the overriding character and appearance of the Phase 3 scheme however we do have some observations and concerns as set out below:

* As we expressed in the pre-app meeting with Curo and their architects, we find the shape of the ‘crescent’ fronting the park to be awkward and incorrect as a crescent form. Whilst we understand there are constraints which mean the plan form is designed at it is, we assume these are to do with housing unit numbers and not environmental constraints. In our view for these two straight terraces to be a correct crescent architecturally, it should be amended to form a pure curve as per the outline planning application, or a number of semi-detached pairs arranged on a curve, to form a crescent which is a strong tradition in estate layout. Whether or not this is an important planning issue we will leave to the judgement of the planning officer. Perhaps it is all in a name, if the form is retained then it would be sensible to drop any reference to a crescent and re-name these terraces.
* The building forms, design and materials of this scheme are similar to those found in Phase 1 and obviously an overall distinct built character to the site is crucial to its success as a community and a neighbourhood. This begs the question of how well this scheme will assimilate with Phase 2 (to which we maintain a strong objection) should it be permitted. In our view the two schemes look to be entirely different visually in terms of impact and character and there does not appear to be any real form of architectural transition to knit the two phases together.
* Our primary concern is the issue of the adequacy of the tree shelter belt to the north of the site. We do not think this has been properly detailed by the applicant and it is not clear what is to happen in terms of responsibility for succession planting for those trees that are not part of the Mulberry demise but which form part of the ridge shelter belt and therefore play an important role in screening the development. Whilst there are supporting documents regarding arboriculture, the provisions of these are not detailed in the drawings (nor is the real extent and actual content of the tree belt) and so it is difficult to get a visual idea of the robustness of the plans for the shelter belt; in fact this section of the wooded ridge looks to be quite thin. As always our primary concern is that this development should not be visible in long views from the city as the undeveloped wooded ridge of the city in the bowl is a crucial element of the OUV of the WHS. Glimpses of urban development through the shelter belt would urbanise the ridge and harm the setting of the WHS.
* We welcome the provision of 4 experimental ‘passivhaus’ houses and 37% affordable housing and commend Curo on their continuing efforts to create a high quality scheme as is being evidenced in Phase 1 as it is being built out.