



Proposed Healthcare Development

Land on West Street, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7AP



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



Job No 14-133
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Design Statement

Condy & Lofthouse Architects Ltd.



Fig 1. Google Maps image of the existing site main entrance

Project Brief:

This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant, Porthaven Care Homes, to support a full planning application for the re-development of land located off West Street, Farnham, Surrey. The application seeks to develop the 0.453Ha site with a purpose built 64 bed care home for frail elderly and those living with dementia.

Following the closure of existing building on the site (Farnham Gospel Hall, which was part of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church), both the building and the site currently remain vacant. The requirement to invest in the land is now key, and a high quality re-development would vastly improve the land and in turn, the surrounding area.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying planning submission drawings and documents.

The Client:

Porthaven is a small, independent, care home company building and operating market leading care homes providing Nursing Care for Frail Elderly, and those living with Dementia. The majority of the elderly residents will have acute physical or cognitive impairment requiring specialist care, and the homes provide 24-hour nursing care supervised by full-time registered nurses and care assistants.

Porthaven provide some of the highest quality care homes in the country, and pride themselves in keeping ahead of the market in meeting high resident/family expectation, and serving demanding care needs, all fit for the 21st century.

Meaningful activities are at the heart of Porthaven's unique approach to care, illustrated by their winning of a national award by NAPA, a charity dedicated to improving the lives of elderly people through activity. Not only are their homes tastefully appointed and comfortable, their varied and nutritious menus use, wherever possible, locally sourced produce in support of the local community.



Fig 3 & 4. Google Maps images of the site boundary along West Street

Transport Links:

The site has access to a range of good transport links:

- The railway station, 1.5km from the site, provides direct routes to London.
- West Street leads on to the Farnham Bypass (500m from the site) from which the M3/Winchester can be accessed to the west and A3/Guildford to the east.
- Existing bus stops are easily accessible and are located just 100m from the site with routes terminating in Alton, Hook and Guildford, from which further connections can be made.
- Main UK airports including London Heathrow, Gatwick and Southampton are approximately 28-45miles away from the site.
- The National Cycle Route 22 also passes through Farnham.



Fig 5. Google Maps image showing architectural styles and character of Farnham Village



Fig 6. Google Maps image showing architectural styles and character of Farnham Village

Local Context and Character:

The immediate surrounding area is an urban grain of buildings with a mixture of residential dwellings, open community parkland and agricultural land. The dwellings are predominantly a mixture of two storey semi-detached houses, terrace properties and apartment buildings.

Surrounding buildings date back to differing eras and although styles vary, the predominant building material is brick with pitched roofs commonly used on residential properties. The proposed building and materials will be designed to best integrate with the existing urban character locally.



Fig 7 - 11. Google Maps images of local architectural styles

The Proposal:

It is proposed that the existing Gospel Hall building is demolished and site re-developed to provide a 64 bedroom care home. The proposals will bring back into use a vacant and disused site adding vitality to the immediate area and introducing visual interaction to the street with a new well thought out contemporary healthcare scheme. The proposed use will also complement the existing surrounding residential housing, providing elderly care facilities to encourage sustainable communities.

The existing row of well-established mature trees along West Street will be retained with the street facing main elevation of the care home designed to provide better frontage and interest to the existing street scene. The existing high brick wall is to be demolished, and replaced with a low wall and railings, to provide improved visual connection between the care home and road. The height of the railings has been restricted, so as not to overly screen the building, which is set at a lower level. Additional planting and features will further assist in grounding the proposed building into the existing wider landscape.



Fig 12. Proposed Site Plan.

The site levels fall from the site access point towards the rear of the site, by almost 2 metres. This provides opportunity to drop the ground floor level of the building to optimise the building level to best assist resident access to external amenity areas. This also serves to reduce the visual scale and height of the building when viewed from the road.

The roofscape has been designed to follow the scale of adjacent buildings, stepping up from left to right when viewed from the road, with ridge heights not exceeding the ridge levels to adjacent properties. Additional dummy chimneys have been added to provide a historic reference. The building design promotes good architectural design whilst maintaining the aesthetics present in the local area.

The building footprint maximises the development potential of the site, offering a frontage on to West Street whilst maintaining a continuous green buffer zone between the building and the site boundaries.

The Care Home massing is designed over two floors in a horseshoe formation which encloses a protected courtyard at the centre. The overall height of the care home has been carefully designed with massing broken by the introduction of lower roof lines which step down at the building ends to link with the heights of adjacent buildings.



Fig 13. Proposed Sketch of front façade facing onto West Street.

The entrance foyer to the building will provide a spacious and airy welcome, with views through into the Cafe, Terrace and the gardens beyond. Also accessed off the central core will be an administration office, manager's office, private dining room and visitor's lounge. A resident activity room, cinema and hair salon will be accessed from this central core at first floor level.

Two wings of accommodation can be accessed from the central core with day spaces centrally positioned to offer easy access to residents on both floors. Staff accommodation is accessed at the end of one of the wings, from which staff can access both floors via a dedicated service lift and stair.

The elevations have been designed to a high standard, with bays, detailing and materiality used to add rhythm and to proportion the mass of the elevations. The massing of the elevations is further broken up by sections of boarding, gable ends and key areas of glazing.

Facing materials have been selected from the palette of local buildings and streetscapes. The main brick and feature timber effect boarding materials are in-keeping with the area and provide an attractive and modern incision into the town. The proposal also incorporates Artstone detailing at key elevations which is also used in a similar manner in other residential developments within the area.

The roof is designed with consideration of the traditional vernacular. Roofs are steeply pitched with gable features to bays and the main roof line broken in a number of places with hipped returns introduced to reduce the mass of the built form. The proposed roofs do not exceed the height of the existing neighbouring buildings.

The size and location of windows and doors have been arranged to reference massing and fenestration of the traditional vernacular, and used to maximise the availability of natural light within the building, enhancing the internal environment and quality of life for residents. Access to natural light and maintaining diurnal cycles are particularly important therapeutic effects in elderly care.

As the existing site has limited vegetation and is predominately hard landscaped, the proposed scheme has a fresh landscaping approach which seeks to improve the character of the local area. Any hard landscaped areas will be broken up with the introduction of planting beds wherever possible.

Page | 8 Experience suggests that residents use the external landscaped areas predominantly as a visual amenity from dayrooms, bedrooms, and from the external patio areas. The proposed building provides residents with a secure private external courtyard space, located within the centre of the building, as well as another themed garden spaces which have been carefully designed by the Landscape Architects. A terraced balcony area from the main central day space allow the views and landscaped gardens to be more accessible for residents at first floor.

The building will be operated and staffed 24 hours, and an external CCTV system will be in operation. The car parking and pedestrian access routes will be overlooked by staff offices and facilities. To protect residents, all windows are to be fitted with keyed lockable restrictors and the private garden areas surrounded by 1.8m high fencing. As such it is considered that the opportunities for crime have been minimised.

Waste facilities have been provided to allow the separation of refuse, and enable recycling to take place with the dedicated waste store integrated into the design.

The building layout enables car parking, refuse turning, servicing, and emergency service access within the curtilage of the site. There are 26 no. car parking bays (including 2 no. disabled bays) and a drop off bay along with 3 No cycle hoops located close to the main entrance.



Fig 14. Proposed main entrance elevation and approach.

Landscape Strategy (Prepared by Influence Consulting Landscape Architects):

Influence has been appointed by Porthaven Care Home Group to provide landscape architectural services for the care home site on Land South of West Street, Farnham. The landscape strategy for the care home has been carefully considered to respond to the findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and site specific recommendations and landscape mitigation set out within that report. It seeks to retain and enhance the surrounding landscape character while providing an attractive, safe and healthy environment for the residents which significantly enhances on-site landscape character. Whilst the landscape will read as one cohesive design, it is understood that the care home will include a series of spaces, both intimate and open, which will also be reflected within a variety of garden spaces or 'rooms'. This will ensure that every resident is given the opportunity to gain health and wellbeing benefits from the use of the external spaces and instil a sense of ownership. The landscape strategy focuses on creating a series of key zones and links which bring consistency and legibility to the external spaces and are made up of the following elements:

Frontage:

- Creating a welcoming frontage with a sense of arrival, emphasising the local built and landscape character;
- Opening the frontage visually with a new, low brick wall and railings;
- Greening the car park to include a hedgerow to screen the existing brick wall, and use of small ornamental trees to provide seasonal interest, shade and screening;
- An entrance garden with ornamental sensory planting offering visitors and families a sense of arrival and creating points of interest;
- Together, the above will provide a formal landscape frontage that complements the streetscape whilst providing privacy and a sense of security to the ground floor bedroom suites – effective demarcation of public and private open space.

Formal Courtyard Garden:

- The outline of the proposed building creates the opportunity for a main courtyard surrounded by the care home wings on three sides, overlooked by communal areas and private bedrooms. As such, external spaces have a good degree of natural surveillance;
- A communal terrace accessed directly from the communal day lounge will be paved to provide flexibility and outdoor dining opportunities;
- Equally enticing will be the central seating area with a water feature and sensory planting that will create a vibrant and colourful atmosphere;
- A communal lawn to provide a formal garden for residents and visitors alike to access on sunny days. Its flexible nature will also allow for events to be held such as garden parties;
- Private Breakout Spaces - A number of resident's bedrooms will have private gardens / breakout space which will be simple paved terraces with small planting beds that will provide a 'blank canvas' for residents, their families and friends to personalize and instill a sense of ownership and homeliness. To complement these spaces the private breakout spaces will look out over the communal lawn areas and will be secured by low formal hedgerow.

Wildlife Garden:

- Accessible from the main communal hall, a wildlife garden will be created to provide a more naturalistic open space;

- The wildlife garden will include an informal footpath, closely cut grass and wildflower meadow area, with a naturalistic backdrop of informal shrub planting;
- The garden design seeks to connect outdoors and indoors, and there is a good opportunity to connect the wildlife garden with the communal rooms.

Informal Path / Woodland Walk:

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- On the southern edge, below the existing mature trees, an informal garden path will provide an opportunity for recreational access and circulation;
- Seating areas will provide an outdoor resting place, with raised planters that can be personalised by residents and staff;
- Sensory planting will screen the private terraces from the footpath, while woodland understorey planting will frame the walk on the opposite side. The existing mature trees on the southern boundary will provide screening and shading to the woodland character of the area, and microclimate in warm weather.
- Specimen and feature shrubs will provide stunning seasonal / all year round interest and act as focal points along the winding footpath. Herbaceous, bulb planting and evergreen shrubs will also provide different seasonal interest for the residents and visitors.

Arboricultural Impact/Tree Planting:

- A small number of existing trees will need to be removed during the construction stage on site. On the boundaries, some lower category trees have been marked for removal to lighten the shady garden areas and offer glimpsed views to the countryside.
- The landscape design seeks to create minimal impact on the existing trees: the proposed hard surfaces have been pulled back to avoid the tree Root Protection Areas. Also, shrub planting will not take place beneath existing tree canopies to avoid digging within Root Protection Areas. Instead, shade tolerant seed mixes will be sown in these areas to provide species rich ground cover and a characteristic woodland edge.

Boundary Treatments:

- The site boundaries will partly consist of the existing high brick wall and timber close board fencing, complemented with a new low brick wall and railings to the front;
- The internal garden fencing will provide secure separation between garden spaces, avoiding the creation of 'dead ends' which might confuse some residents.
- Climbers and native hedgerow planting will screen and soften the fences, whilst low formal hedgerows will separate private garden areas from the communal spaces.

Access Statement

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The proposal has been designed for use by elderly or infirm residents, and as such is designed to be accessible throughout for residents and visitors who may have physical impairments.

The main entrance to the Care Home is via a level threshold. Passenger lifts are provided, accessing all floors. Staircases throughout the building have been designed for the ambulant disabled.

The ground floor and external levels from West Street have been carefully designed to provide ambulant disabled access for residents and visitors on foot with gradients no greater than 1 in 21.

Vehicular access to the Care Home site is to be taken via West Street (A325), off a secondary shared road which is also used to access the allotments located to the south of the site. The existing access road to the site from West Street will be retained with a new entrance created off the secondary access road leading to the front of the building. It is not thought that the proposal will generate large or excessive traffic and the existing highways networks will be sufficient to accommodate the proposal.

The vehicular access and car parking has been laid out to include disabled parking bays, and drop off facilities adjacent to the covered main entrance. Secure cycle parking has also been provided close to the main entrance.

Provisions have been made to enable refuse collection and delivery services and turning within the curtilage of the site, so as not to cause inconvenience to neighbouring properties, and to allow access for emergency service vehicles.

The site is situated within walking distance of various public transport links, and has good access to other transport networks.

Conclusions

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The proposed Care Home will provide 24 hour nursing care for frail elderly and those living with dementia.

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The site layout and landscaping has been developed to maintain a number of existing mature trees bounding the site and supplement with additional tree planting to ensure a pleasant environment that is accessible to all.

The development has been designed to promote inclusiveness in terms of access and use in accordance with Local Policy, Disability Discrimination Legislation and the Building Regulations requirements. It has been designed to suit elderly residents who live with physical, visual, cognitive, or hearing impairments.

The development is accessible for pedestrians, cyclists, and through public transport infrastructure. Due consideration has been given to the ease of access and operational practicalities of the facilities incorporated within the proposal.

The massing, scale, character, and detailing of the building responds to its context, and has been developed with reference to local and county planning guidance. The style of the proposal would complement and enhance the existing surroundings.

Condy Lofthouse Architects Ltd
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