

Hemnal Street QRP Summary Reports:

20.03.20 – Formal review of Epping Town Centre Sites

- While supporting the emerging work, the panel thinks there is scope to be bolder.
- The panel recommends further work to define, proactively manage, protect and measure 'quality', through each RIBA stage of work.
- The panel recommends embedding clear sustainability commitments at RIBA Stage 1 or 2, which could include precedent research for criteria such as Passivhaus.
- It highlights the benefits of early community engagement.
- The panel encourages options testing for the mix and location of key Town Centre functions and non-residential land uses. It also suggests broadening the spatial scope of the Brief, to look beyond red line boundaries and consider the relationship between the five sites and the high street, including potential public realm improvements.
- The panel urges a holistic view of the whole town centre to inform key design moves on each site.
- The panel thinks the current approach to car parking is unresolved. It highlights the huge potential to encourage sustainable travel and adopt a flexible future-proofed strategy to car parking and travel.

10.07.20 – Formal review of Epping Town Centre Sites

- The panel thinks a more convincingly comprehensive approach is developing.
- It strongly welcomes reconsideration of the leisure centre location and multi-storey car park proposals.
- The panel is yet to be convinced on the analysis undertaken to support the current approach to town centre functions, or rationale for the housing typologies, tenure and mix. While it broadly supports the uses suggested, it is unclear why specific uses are being directed to specific sites.
- It strongly recommends further work to ensure exemplary housing design, including revisiting typologies, internal arrangements and layouts. The panel would like to see more detail at a framework level before planning application details are developed, including on: routes, broader connectivity, servicing, edges, integration and retail arrangements.
- It continues to strongly urge early engagement to develop the project vision – so people can feel genuine agency in informing proposals.

17.09.20 – Workshop review of Epping Town Centre Sites

- The Panel applauds the substantial work undertaken since the last review.
- The approach taken to engagement is commendable and should be valuable in informing ongoing design work.
- The panel continues to stress the importance of looking beyond physical building elements – to engage with the social, not just physical development of the centre. It would have expected to see mapping – analysing the social and cultural offer that already exists in the centre. This would then be used to inform an approach to 'fill in these gaps'.
- The panel encourages developing a meanwhile strategy, and exploring the potential for small scale public realm interventions.

- Greater clarity is needed on how individual sites and public realm will be phased, funded and delivered including the delivery of public realm improvements.
- The panel continues to strongly urge that the council re-consider the 'no net loss' approach to car parking – and follow an evidence-based approach to parking and sustainable travel.

16.10.20 – Site Specific Workshop review

- The panel supports the broad approach of locating apartments towards Hemnall Street and suggests a terraced house typology towards Nicholl Road.
- Further work is needed to ensure that the unit mix responds to the anticipated demographic of residents, and that this informs the form and function of the shared amenity space.
- The overall site layout should be finessed to make sure that the communal private space can be maximised and reduce leftover space facing Hemnall Street.
- The panel encourages the design team to better define public and private spaces across the site, and to give all spaces a clear function.
- The team should also consider the purpose of the public route along the north-eastern site boundary, and its junction with the Hemnall Road cycle 'quietway'.
- The number of parking spaces should be reduced, and more green landscaping included to improve the outlook from apartments.
- In terms of the architecture, a more unified material palette would be welcome across the site.
- The reduction in single aspect units is welcome but should be taken further if possible.
- The panel welcomes the aspiration to achieve Passivhaus standards and encourages the development of more detail on how this can be delivered.

05.03.21 – Site Specific Formal review

- The panel finds much to admire in the proposals for the Epping Sports Centre site.
- It suggests some refinements to entrance sequences, the car park, the boundary treatments, and the relationship between communal and private spaces.
- The architectural expression of the terraced houses on Nicholl Street is positive, and key details should be secured through the planning application.
- The design team needs to ensure the apartment block entrance on Hemnall Street is not compromised by the bin storage. The arrival sequence on Nicholl Road could also be improved by reviewing the car park configuration.
- There is further opportunity to review the parking spaces on the front gardens of the terraced houses, to increase soft landscape areas on Nicholl Road.
- The panel questions the useability of the courtyard, since residents may add walls or screening elements in the adjacent private gardens. A duplex typology with access from the courtyard could improve this relationship.
- The location of planting and seating areas should be guided by sunlight exposure.
- The panel feels there is an opportunity to develop a comprehensive and site-specific sustainability strategy. This work should be coordinated with any redesign of the elevational composition.

General comments relating to all five town centre sites:

- These developments on council owned land create an opportunity to deliver exemplar development, in terms of design quality and environmental sustainability.

- A lot of valuable work was done looking at the relationship between the five Qualis sites and Epping town centre. This should be captured in an Area Action Plan, or similar document, endorsed by the council, so that this work is not lost.
- Generally, a more site-specific approach to environmental sustainability is needed, so that the layout and façade design of buildings responds to orientation and context.
- Achieving modal shift will require new development to make car use less convenient, so that walking and cycling become preferred options.
- The panel thinks the relationship between the architectural character of each site needs further thought.