

TEST VALLEY DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS

Date of meeting:	14th April 2026
Site:	Land at OS ref. 437433 124709, Braishfield Road, Braishfield
Proposal:	Outline application - residential development of up to 60 dwellings including affordable housing. All matters reserved except external access.
Planning Reference:	25/003028/OUTS
Design Review Panel Members present:	Emma Gibbs - Design M2 Robert Adam - Robert Adam Consultancy Mike Ricketts Matthew Gibbs - Architecture PLB
Apologies:	Neill Beasley Robyn Butcher - The Terra Firma Consultancy Mark Johnson - UBU Design Ltd
Applicant Representatives present:	Aaron Smith - Planning Consultant Lisa Ellis - Mosaic Urban Design Ltd Laura Mills - Bargate Homes Henrietta Coles - Planning Consultant
Council Officers in attendance:	Katie Nethersole - Planning Officer
Declarations of Interest declared:	None

Application Background Information:

This application is an outline application for the residential development on land on the edge of Braishfield village. The site has been included within the Test Valley Local Plan as suitable for development subject to policy requirements with an allocation for up to 60 dwellings. The current outline application is for a total of 54 dwellings located mainly on the northern part of the site. All matters are reserved excluding access, which relates to vehicular, safe pedestrian routes and all associated visibilities.

A detailed presentation had been prepared by the design team, providing the Panel with a clear outline of the existing site constraints, the indicative development proposals and overall site layouts, along with road layouts and vehicle accesses.

The proposals were defined by the architect as character-led, picking up details from the surrounding village, in terms of layout, plot size and orientation, dwelling design and general detailing. A perimeter block design approach had been adopted utilising 'swale streets' and the existing mature landscape to inform the designs.

Panel Comments:

The Panel were concerned that the proposals submitted appeared to be a final design option rather than a developmental one, as is usual for an outline application. The level of detail included within the presentation, down to landscape layouts and proposed play equipment, suggested the design was much more finalised than an outline application might need to be. The Panel questioned whether amendments to the design would be undertaken as the project progresses to incorporate the feedback and comments of the Panel, given the level of detail already apparent within the design proposals.

There was some concern amongst the Panel that this design might not be the most suitable for the plot, despite the effort that had been put in to get to this stage. The intention of a Design Review Panel at pre-app stage is for design advice and suggestions to be offered to allow proposals to be developed further with the aim of achieving a positive planning outcome. There was a concern during this meeting that the Panel's advice would not be considered for this application during the next stage of the design process.

Whilst the Panel appreciated the various constraints imposed upon the design, due to local policies, design codes and other planning and logistical guidelines, it was felt that adhering too closely to the guidelines could in this instance be restricting the overall design. Maybe there is a solution that pushes the boundaries of the design codes, that could be more successful and therefore is easier to justify as the correct solution for the site. Despite the presentation promoting otherwise, it was felt that the current proposals were not site specific enough, and could be situated on the outskirts of any other Hampshire village.

Overall, the Panel felt that the layout of the dwellings should have greater reference to the village setting and the village vernacular with properties being more individual in design. Repetition of identical dwelling types is unusual in a rural village setting. The inclusion of a variety of dwelling types, can lead to enhanced site layouts, creating focal points, areas of interest and places for a community to thrive. The Panel would like to see a greater variety of building types and a more rural feel to the development.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the Panel felt that the current proposals achieved the necessary design considerations to prove that the site access would be achievable for a development of 54 dwellings and the Panel agreed that containing the proposals within the northern half of the site was a successful approach. It is however essential that the remaining site is not proposed for further development at a later stage, to secure the landscaped southern end for community enjoyment. The Panel concluded that overall further design work is required to achieve a successful development which benefits from a strong sense of place and creates a successful long term community.

The Panel agreed that the following items should be addressed if a further application is to be made on this site:

- A more defined relationship with the adjacent village,
- A more considered and subservient vehicle route through the site, defined by focal points, access points, community zones and pedestrian areas. The site layout should not be designed around vehicles.
- The final design option should compliment the Braishfield village typology,
- Greater variation in density and dwelling type is required across the site.

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Please note these comments have been prepared on behalf of the Design Review Panel for Test Valley Borough Council and should be considered as a collaborative response from the Panel members present at the meeting, for the application in question.

- All affordable housing should be well integrated across the site and should not appear distinctly different in design or style.

It was agreed that whilst this application was for outline permission, the tabled proposals should be further developed in accordance with the above comments, with an emphasis on reducing the suburban nature of the proposals and enhancing the sense of place and community within the development. The Panel agreed that a further Design Review Panel meeting should be held for any further applications for the site.

*Prepared on behalf of the Design Review Panel,
Date: 6th May 2026*