

AWW Response to AONB Unit comments, dated 2nd November 2023

P/FUL/2022/06840 - Knoll House Hotel, amended application

Thank you for consulting the AONB Team on the amended application. It is understood that the amendments include:

- A reduction in the height of the apartments situated at the north of the site, from 4 storeys to 3 storeys. This results in a reduction in the ridge height of one part of the redevelopment by 2.5m, from 36.8m AOD to 34.3m AOD. This part of the development continues to have a large number of solar panels arranged in pitched rows on the roof. There is some uncertainty as to whether the revised plans seek to extend the green roof to areas containing these panels. The roof plan for the hotel uses a rendering that suggests this may be the intention, whereas the roof plan for the overall site suggest a green roof will not be used above the apartments, as per the original application.
- Clarifications are made within the DAS addendum concerning materials, such as the use of zinc, in response to concerns about reflectivity.
- Modifications to fenestration in relation to the mitigation of light spill are made within the DAS addendum and reflected within some corresponding images/plans, particularly the elevation for the hotel complex.

It is noted that the information is accompanied by addendums to the LVIA. These states that “a detailed landscape masterplan has been submitted to provide further information and detail on the proposed landscape treatments within the site”. It has not been possible to locate this document and therefore we are unable to comment on the details of what is proposed. This presents some challenges in responding to an aspect of the DAS addendum, particularly section 3, which addresses the southern boundary (this being one area where enhanced planting was recommended).

The LVIA addendum responds to some observations concerning the format of visualisations. The addendum suggests that the images should be printed at A2 to achieve an enlargement factor closer to 150%. However, this is not an option available to most people. Cropped visualisation centred on the development and produced at a suitable enlargement factor and provided at A3 format would assist. This may supplement the presentation of the development in a wider panorama using a larger sheet size. It is assumed that the recommendation to print at A2 does not refer to the wide-angle panoramas provided on pages 7, 8 & 11 of the addendum, as these would presumably require a greater enlargement than has been suggested. Overall, despite the explanation provided within the addendum, the images appear to lack the usual information on the sheets that would enable better understanding of the images, including the required viewing distances for the sheet size.

Concerning the amendment to the apartments situated at the north of the site, from 4 storeys to 3 storeys, this is noted to result in only marginal improvements to the overall impact of the redevelopment. Although the AONB Team’s advice included a recommendation to make this change, there were also numerous other amendments suggested, including the reduction in the height of the proposed 3 storey villas, which are located in the most elevated part of the site.

AWW- the 3 storeys villas are not visible from outside the site beyond the view shown on page 12 of the addendum, the update improves the massing so that from the viewpoint it is less impactful. It provides no greater impact, and we would consider is much less, than the existing built form facing this boundary: The materials selected ensure that the new buildings blend more sympathetically with the surrounding landscape and natural environment.



Existing view from the south

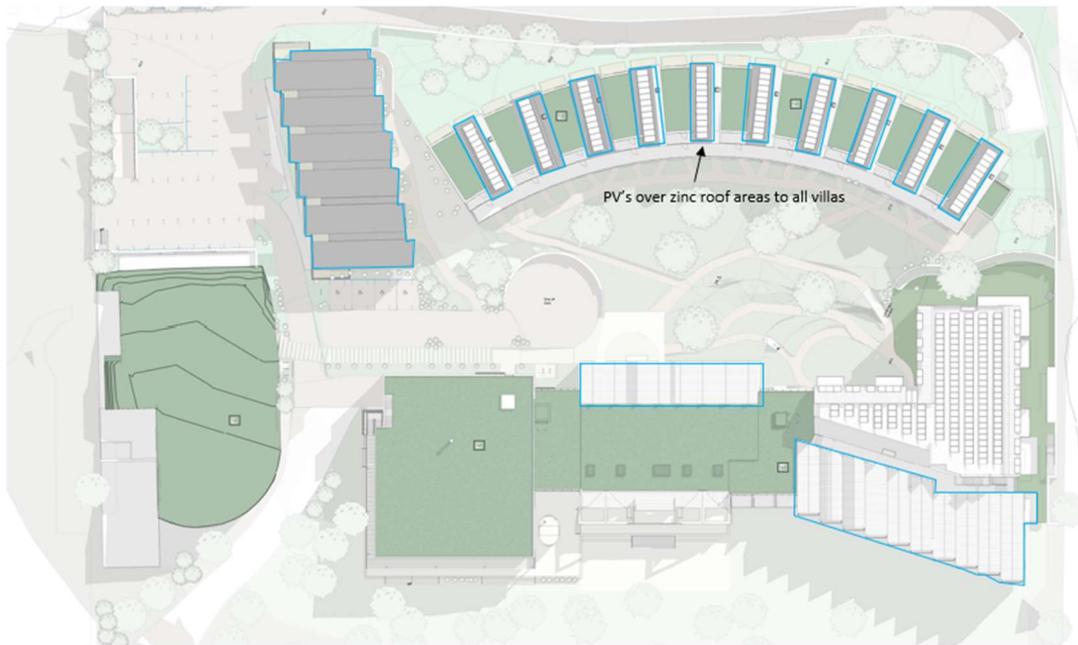


Revised proposed view from the south

Section 5 of the DAS amendment notes that zinc is available in pre-weathered finishes. It is not explicitly stated that a pre-weathered finish will be used, although the document suggests a specification of low reflectivity material. More detail would be appreciated. Overall, it is expected that some use of zinc may be resolved through appropriate specification. As per our earlier response, there may also be aspects of the design that could be reconfigured to reduce the outward visibility of this material in favour of green architecture.

AWW- all zinc will be provided preweathered and this is a common roofing material used in natural environments, it is a natural product. More detail has been provided on page 17 of the addendum where the typical materials proposed are described in detail. Flat roof areas will be planted to provide a green landscaped appearance as described on the plans. The quantity of roof that will be zinc is shown on the plan below. In summary these include; the roof areas over the bedroom block facing Ferry Road, small sections of the 3-storey villas and the 2-storey villas to the southern part of the site. The 3 storey villas have small sections of pitched roof that will be a preweathered zinc, these roofs are designed to maximise the opportunity to benefit from a southerly aspect and will also include PV cells to provide a renewable source of energy for the hotel. These are shown outlined in blue and the total overall percentage is approximately 50% of the overall roof plan area. To summarise, all flat roof areas and the spa roof will be green and make up the balance and are a significant part of the design approach, with zinc only used on small pitch areas.

The recent amendment revised the southern elevation of the villa from zinc to timber cladding, all elevations that are visible from beyond the site boundary use a combination of timber cladding and natural stone to provide a sympathetic façade to the surrounding landscape.



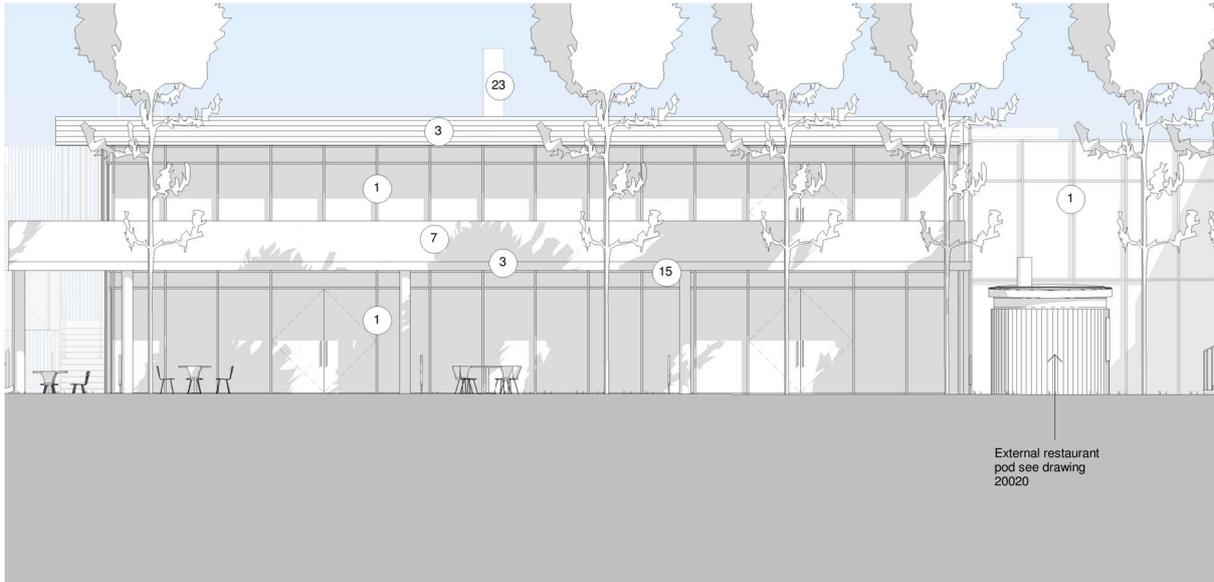
Section 6 of the DAS amendment deals with potential mitigation to address light spill in lieu of the extensive glazing that continues to be included in the design. The section refers to measures that could be utilised for the hotel complex and villas. However, the associated documents only appear to include revised elevational drawings for the hotel complex. Mitigation includes:

- Specification of all external glazing with an appropriate visible light transmittance (LVT)
- The use of solid panels to break up the extent of glazing in some areas, notably the first-floor frontage of the restaurant building addressing Ferry Road and the southern elevation of the spa building
- Extension to roof eaves to enclose balconies
- External slatted screens, for example within the upper portion of an extensive area of glazing included on the southern elevation of the spa building
- Internal blackout blinds within some buildings, such as the spa and villas, with residents receiving advice as to the importance of using these

Whereas the amendments appear to be reflected in some elevational drawings and sections, the DAS addendum and wider materials containing photomontages do not appear to show the changes. From the information that is provided, some modest improvements are noted, particularly in relation to the first floor of the restaurant's aspect toward Ferry Road and the southern elevation of the spa building. However, the overall appearance is not substantively altered through these changes.

AWW - the amount of glazing to the first floor of the restaurant has reduced significantly, approximately 50% less than was previously shown, see below before and after images, the shaded areas are solid:

Before



After



The light spill concerns to the bedrooms facing Ferry Road were addressed in the original application, more clarity noted in the addendum on page 20. Fixed screens and brise soleil provide some measures of mitigation along with the measure described on page 19 of the addendum. In particular the use of high quality coated glass that reduces light transmittance by 66%. Internal curtains will be provided with the bedrooms that will provide an enhanced level of reduction; these are not listed as they will be operated by the occupants. However, it should be noted that this will provide a significant reduction during sleeping hours and has not been included in the technical appraisal.

Within the AONB Team's response to the original submission, dated 20th January 2023, we noted a range of concerns about the design of the redevelopment and highlighted some key areas where we considered amendments would be beneficial. Overall, the modifications proposed through the amended application are considered to be insufficient to adequately address our concerns. We believe that a more extensive redesign is justified, focussing on primary mitigation. Key areas of outstanding concern include:

- The proposed frontage to Ferry Road continues to be too impactful, particularly due to the extensive glazing and some aspects of the architecture that are considered somewhat unsympathetic to the wider rural setting. As previously noted, reviewing designs for the restaurant, spa and hotel is recommended. The amended plans remain to be both too overtly modern in architectural design and favour materials such as extensive glazing. Further use of 'softer' building materials and more green architecture along the frontage to Ferry Road would be considered more sympathetic. Concerning the southern 'wing' of the hotel building, which is understood to contain a bar and restaurant, the scale of this appears to closely resemble the earlier plans. This is a relatively conspicuous element of the development, being at the gateway to the site, and is seen alongside the novel architecture proposed for the nearby spa building (which the AONB Team previously recommended was fundamentally amended, but remains largely unaltered). As noted previously, reducing the scale of these structures and removing wider features such as external terraces, glazed balustrades and glazed links to the hotel could be pursued in combination with a greater application of 'softer' features, such as green wall/roofs, timber cladding, etc.

AWW - The predominant material used in the design is green roofs and timber cladding throughout (refer to pages 15-17 of the addendum). The operation of the hotel requires the hotel and restaurant areas to be linked to provide shelter and security to hotel guests. Separating out these buildings would not work functionally. Note the current hotel operates with a significant amount of accommodation linked as one block and forms a near continuous solid elevation to Ferry Road. The glazed links will provide views to landscape beyond and provide a visual break between the key functional elements of the hotel.

The Ferry Road façade is entirely composed of timber cladding, natural stone and glazing to provide a sympathetic appearance within this natural setting. The terraces provide additional solar control and light mitigation to the storey below and are enclosed within timber portel frames to unify these elements within the façade. The balustrade glazing will be untinted, high quality frameless installations and therefore have minimal impact on views of the site.

- There are aspects of the development that are still considered to be too tall, particularly the 3-storey villas to the west of the hotel.
AWW- these are not visible from beyond the site boundaries
- The preference to provide the villas as a single crescent terrace of 20 units is not advisable, as this foreseeably results in a single building that is too dominant and bold. It appears that the design process look at separating the villas into smaller, separate units with varied roofs during an earlier stage and it is considered that this would be a more suitable approach, in combination with a reduction in height.
AWW - As above the form of 3-storey villas are not visible beyond the site boundaries
- In addition to amending the height of the crescent terrace of villas, and distributing the villas in a more diffuse layout, it is considered that the visual impact of these could be

further mitigated were some of the pitched sections of zinc standing seam amended to be green roofs, e.g. the leading pitches at the southern/western edges of the rearranged layout of villas and also the terrace of two-storey villas. Furthermore, depending on the positioning of the rearranged group of villas, there may be merit in using some green walls within those elevations that will be visible from the south and west.

AWW- the 3 storey villas predominantly have green roofs, see comments above

- The development also includes numerous PV panels, particularly on top of pitched sections of the villa roofs and on the roof of the apartment building. There may be opportunities for some of the standing seam roofing to utilise an integrated PV system, rather than roof mounted panels. It is our understanding that flexible PV strips are available, which can be used on metal roofs as an alternative to mounted panels.

AWW- we would be agreeable to this, it may not be available with the preweathered zinc and further investigation is therefore required.

- Built development continues to push toward the edges of the site, with the majority of new planting seemingly being proposed between the villas and hotel complex and along the frontage to Ferry Road. We await further details in the form of a landscape strategy. However, as the fundamental layout of the site is unaltered by the amendments, our earlier observations concerning the distribution of landscaping are likely to be of ongoing relevance.

The above points are only offered as general guidance and ultimately it is for the applicant to develop a scheme that delivers their ambitions for the site in a manner that is appropriate for this location. Unfortunately, the modifications that have been made to the original application are not considered to have altered the foreseeable impacts of the proposals to the degree that the AONB Team is able to support the redevelopment.

Report ends