Cambridge K1 Community Housing Project

Client Brief Workshop Outputs: 17 April 2013

This was the first of our Client Brief evening sessions so thanks to everyone who turned out. In the first half of the evening we reviewed the previous session in some depth and in the second we looked at 'Land use' on the site. The second section didn't reach the stage I hoped, but none the less we covered a lot of ground, identified some approaches to the site which hadn't been raised before and refined the approach to the existing environmental conditions on the site.

To address the over run, I have attempted to distil the direction of the discussion into a series of statements for further consideration. At the meeting it was agreed that subsequent evening sessions will start earlier 6:30 for 7:00 aiming to finish at 9:00.

Part 1, Initial discussion, Review of issues from previous workshop:

We provided feedback on the tasks and outputs from the last main workshop held on 6 April 2013. These included:

- Demographics
- Activities, Priorities and Privacy
- Identifying and Prioritising Spaces

These activities were summarised and where possible outcomes adopted.

Demographics

In the last workshop we asked the group to consider "group composition and spatial needs, now and over the next 15-20 years." Information was gathered in the form of a graph completed by each household present at the workshop, and then explored in discussion. The information collated through the exercise, shown here as an aggregate of images is already proving to be useful in assessing the needs of the current group, understanding possible distribution of dwellings types and as indication of future demands on the K1 homes. Once all households are represented we can incorporate the data more certainly into a proposal for type and distribution of dwelling types, this can later be reviewed for adoption by the group.

Adopted: It was confirmed by Chris Wilson that the statements, relating to Demographics, resulting from Workshop 2 06 April 2013 and posted on the K1 Website, had not been opposed and therefor are adopted by the group. These can now be developed further both by the management meetings and as part of the client brief workshops.

The statements were:

- We would like a broad age range across the site.
- We will encourage households from the missing demographic groups (older families with teenage children, possibility of lodgers, students, and older adults of retirement age).
- We want flexible dwellings that can be adapted/ extended to accommodate changes in family life.
- We will design a social system where houses can be swapped between residents of differing needs, to allow those with changing needs to remain as part of the co-housing community. (This raised legal issues which were parked)

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Action: Remaining households to complete graph, Here, or available from Chris Wilson at meetings. We will need this information by 08 May.

Activities, Priorities and Privacy

In the last workshop we asked the group to prioritise the relative importance of a number of activities and then to identify if the activity was primarily a shared or private activity. "How important are these activities? And are they private or shared?"

The resulting visualisation provides a representation of the overall emphasis of the group toward different activities. The information was shown and is represented Here. Based on this information the following was agreed in principle by those present.

Driving – "Overall the group identified driving as a low priority activity which may be shared."
Eating – "Overall the group identified eating as a shared, high priority activity."
Gardening – "Most people agreed gardening is a shared activity, some people find it more important than others."
Making – "People's opinions varied, but most people thought making was a mid-priority, shared activity."
Playing – "Playing was identified as a high priority, shared activity."
Sleeping – "Although everybody agreed sleeping is a private activity, people gave it a range of priorities."
Talking – "Overall the group identified talking as a high priority activity, with a range of private to shared preferences represented."
Thinking – "Overall the group identified thinking as a private activity, with various levels of importance."
TV/Film – "Opinions on TV and Film covered the whole spectrum of privacy and importance within the group."
Waiting – "Waiting was identified as a low priority, generally shared activity."
Work – "Five members of the group added the activity "Work" further discussion is needed to establish the priorities and privacy people associate with this activity." (*This will be addressed during the workshop scheduled for the 8 June 2013, a working party of those interested in working provision should be set up to identify their requirements.*)

(The statements above have been rephrased for the originals still on sheets, for clarity of meaning)

Caveats were raised regarding the need for disabled parking and the high importance of some activities to individuals. These statements need not be adopted but will carry weight in developing the Client Brief.

Action: Form working party on work to report back to the group on 8 June

Identifying and Prioritising Spaces

The priority of activities, established in the last session, were reviewed and as there had been no objections following posting on the web site, the items that the group were all positive about can now be assumed to be accepted and items that were actively rejected are discarded. The middle items 'desirable' and 'possible' now have a weighing which can be refined during the client brief process.

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Part 2, Site Strategy and the Prioritising of Outdoor Land Use

The way that dwellings organise the spaces between them and define territories around them will have a fundamental effect on the use of outdoor spaces. What can be seen from a dwelling, the distance between dwellings, if thresholds are sheltered, solar access all contribute to how spaces are used, by whom and how often.

What is seen from the dwelling imparts a sense of shared ownership, security and responsibility for the site. At the same time there is a need for quite places out of sight where people can take quietly or sit and think, this balance between active and quiet space common space.

The discussion covered a lot of ground, but not all areas reached a clear conclusion. Rather than going through the second part of the evening chronologically, I have taken what was said and rephrased it into a series of statements for consideration and added in those which we didn't get to.

Statements for consideration:

- The boundaries may be visually permeable. i.e. not a solid fence, wall or dense hedging.
- The existing trees have a value for climbing, wild life and providing shade.
- The existing trees are not handsome, will cast long shadows and need not be maintained.
- The existing trees on the site have a value but should not dictate the overall scheme.
- Overlooking of the site from surrounding developments is not a major issue.
- Routes should not be encouraged through the site. i.e. as cut through between other developments.
- Approaches to buildings and areas between buildings to be lit sensitively to provide a sense of safety.
- *There should be no formal designed play area but rather the whole of the common space be prioritised for the safe and free access of children, (free range kids)*
- We want children to be able to run out the house and play without worry.
- All out outdoor spaces to be regarded primarily as child friendly.
- The site is not to be a gated community, i.e. no one single entrance on and off the site.
- The view in to the site from the South is important. i.e. from King's Hedges Road.
- The sound from the north of the site should be mitigated (or militated) against.
- Generally the views East and West from the site are negative.
- Generally the views North and South from the site are positive.
- Any risks associated with keeping the sub-station should be quantified.
- Covered streets are something that should be explored further. (Spaces between dwellings)
- Grazing is a good way of managing landscape.
- There should be an outdoor hard surfaced area possibly connected to a workshop for fixing and building things. (communal Yard)
- Using the excavation spoil from the site to form hills for free range playing is a good use of resources and will make for a more interesting common space.
- The site should be designed to provide wind and noise breaks. i.e. minimise noise and provide shelter.
- The co-housing scheme should have some form of shared, on-site, productive gardens.
- There should be some wild spaces on the site. (Less managed space that could be for kids and other wildlife.)
- Provision should be made for some secluded space with in the shared space. (peaceful, restful, quiet, meditative)

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- Dwellings should have some form of private outdoor space primarily accessible through the house. (i.e. garden, yard, roof garden)
- Dwellings should have some form of tended garden space between the house and the shared space. (a transition between private and shared)
- Residents should be responsible for the patch of ground outside their dwelling.
- It is important to have an outdoor communal space to gather socially, cook and eat food.
- Smoke is never acceptable near a house.
- A space for sitting out in poor weather should be provided within the shared space.
- Children and adults need a space to perform to an audience.
- Space should be allocated for the generation of energy for the site.
- There should be a duck/wildlife pond on the site.
- All water should be safe for kids.
- The sound of running water should be heard somewhere on the site.

From my front door…

We asked the question, **"From my front door it is important for me to be able to see…"**, from this questions reference to *'front door'*, and the majority of answers given below, can we assume that the *'front door'* is the door that looks onto the life and activity of the co-housing development?

From my front door it is important for me to be able to see…
Communal gardens…
Kids playing…
What's going on…
Nothing – to day dream… (Weather vane on common house)
People and activity…
Children playing… (Back door)
People…
My car parked…
Green space…
Garden…
People…
Garden / People / Space lit at night – security…
Greet neighbours…

Proposed actions from meeting:

- CAR to issue online survey
- Group to Form working party on "home/shared work requirements" to report back to the group on 8 June
- Chris to investigate Sub-station
- Remaining households to complete graph, Click Here, or available from Chris Wilson at meetings. We will need this information by 08 May.

Contact details:
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