Design and Access Statement

In Support of Proposed Development
Land to the West of The Pinfold
and
South of Station Road
Ratby
Leicester

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June 2010

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In Support of Proposed Development, Land to the West of The Pinfold and South of Station Road, Ratby, Leicester

1.0 Introduction

1.01 The purpose of this statement is to set out the context for, and to explain the design principles behind, development of land west of The Pinfold, Ratby for 6 dwellings.

1.02 The **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (Section 42)** requires a design and access statement to accompany applications of this scale for planning permission.

1.03 This statement is based on the frameworks set out in **PPS1 (2005)**, where design is considered to be an important theme within the planning system; and the **DETR & CABE** publication **By Design (2000)**, which aims to raise standards of urban design. Good design, it states, is central to good planning. The brief also recognises safer places (2004) published by the office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Office which aims to reduce crime through good design. Safety and security it says is essential to successful sustainable communities.

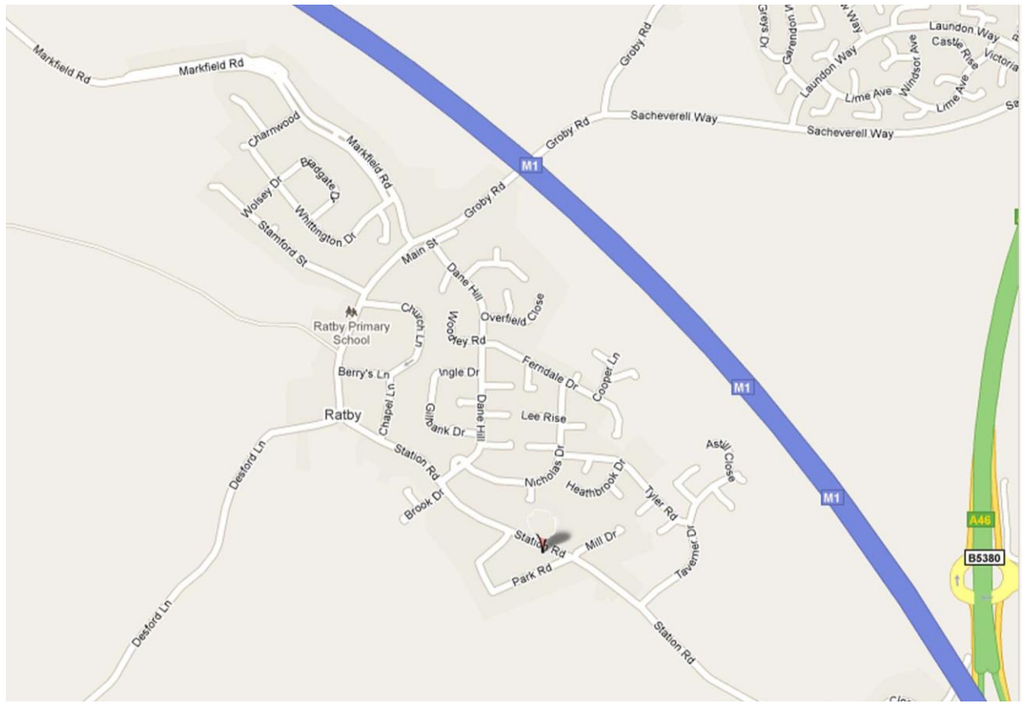
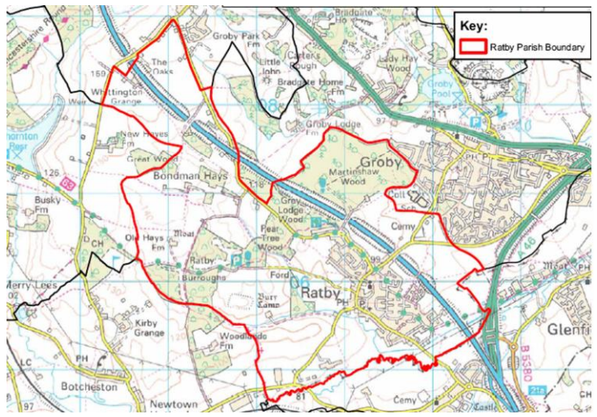


Fig 1 – Map

Fig 2 – OS Map (not to scale)



Fig 3 – Ratby Parish Boundary



1.04 It is important to note that the DCLG **Circular 01/06 Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System** explains that the request for the access component of the statement relates only to access to the development and not to the internal aspects of individual buildings.

1.05 As well as the design and access statement the application is supported by the following;

- Aboricultural Report
- Topographical Ground Survey

The design and access statement assesses the physical context of the site, relevant planning policy and planning history. The constraints and opportunities for the site have been identified in order to generate design principles as a basis for assessing the proposal.

The assessment is undertaken using the seven headings: Use, Layout, Scale, Appearance, Landscaping, Access and Parking and Building Sustainability.

2.0 Physical Context

2.01 Location

2.02 The site is located to the south west of the village of Ratby which itself lies 5 miles to the west of Leicester on the southern edge of the Charnwood Forest.

2.03 The application site lies on land to the north of the relatively new (2001) residential estate, 'The Pinfold' and South of Station Road, Ratby. To the north of the site is the former Gearys Bakery whilst to the south is an area of open space which lies within low lying ground. The site lies within zone B within the Ratby Village Design Statement. The estate was built on the site of a former bus garage and filling station.

2.04 Local Built Character

2.05 The village of Ratby is a medium sized settlement which has a rich array of buildings in a variety of attractive styles as well as an assortment of bland mid 1970-1980 residential designs. The use of a diverse collection of materials is also in evidence with a variety of local brickwork as well as render together with a mixture of welsh slate and concrete tiled roofing.

2.06 The existing site lies within a street scene of medium sized modern two storey dwellings of differing individual styles. A mature screen of hedges and trees softens the impact of the access to the site and the built form as viewed from the approach along The Pinfold.



Fig 4 – View looking north toward the site access

2.07 The mix of dwellings along Brook Drive and The Pinfold which make up the approach to the site are predominantly two storey detached and semi detached rectangular houses which front onto the roadway. Small front gardens and enclosed rear gardens form the estate. The buildings incorporate design features such as solid porch projections and small side utility room extensions, plinth and eaves brick detailing, chimneys and symmetrical pattern to the windows, with some dormer windows in evidence. To the south of the site Little Brook and Wetland Meadow given to the parish by the previous developer is located.

2.08 Site Description

2.09 The proposed site consist of 0.13 hectres (1330 sqm) of scrub land adjoined by dwelling houses built on the site of a former bus garage and filling station in approximately (2001). The northern boundary line is adjacent to the former Gearys Bakery whilst the south western boundary adjoins the Little Brook Meadow land within the ownership of the Parish Council.

2.10 The land has been unused for many years with the majority of the site being grass covered with perimeter hedges and some trees. There are no existing buildings currently on the site.

2.11 The site access is from the cul de sac known as The Pinfold, an estate road which contains a turning head off which a metalled road runs up to the site boundary (see Fig 4).



Fig 5 – Photographs of Existing Site

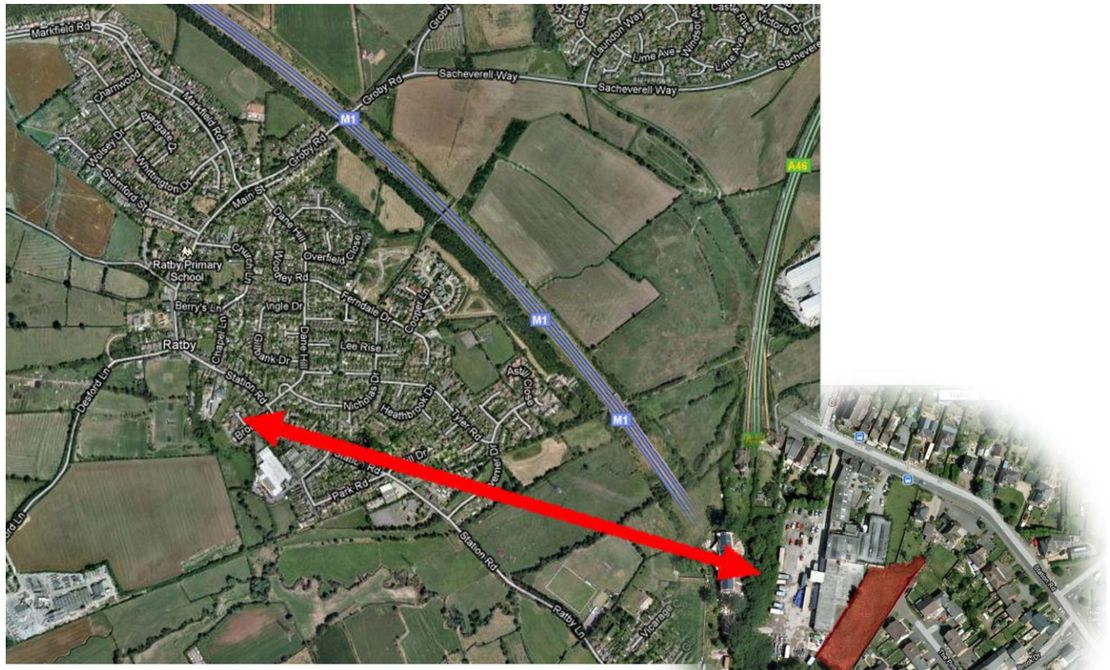


Fig 6 – Satellite Map

3.0 National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)/Planning Policy Statements (PPS)

3.01 **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (February 2005)** sets out the overarching planning policies necessary to deliver sustainable development through the planning system. PPS1 makes it quite clear that sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning (para. 3).

3.02 The design of new buildings can have a significant effect on the character and quality of an area. Good design should contribute positively towards making better places for people and improve the character and quality of an area (para. 34).

3.03 The design of new developments should optimise the potential of the site, whilst providing a visually attractive development that creates a safe and accessible environment (para. 36).

3.04 **PPS 3: Housing (2006)** emphasises in paragraph 12 that good design is fundamental to the development of high quality new housing. Design that is inappropriate in its context, or that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted (para. 13).

3.05 Developments should be attractive, safe, accessible, functional, inclusive, have their own distinct identity and maintain and improve the local character (para. 14).

3.06 The Council should maintain an adequate supply of identified housing land to enable delivery of sites. Specific sites that are available, suitable and achievable should be identified to provide a 5 year land supply, with additional developable sites identified for the next 10 years (paras. 53 – 55).

3.07 **PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)** highlights that one of the Government's main objectives is to promote more sustainable patterns of development through focusing most development in, or next to, existing towns and villages (Objective ii).

3.08 Beyond the larger urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres, where employment, housing, services and other facilities can be provided close together (para. 3).

3.09 To promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously developed land, the focus for most additional housing in rural areas should be on existing towns and identified service centres (para. 8).

3.10 **PPG 13: Transport (2001)** seeks to promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously developed land (para. 13). It states that Local Authorities should not require developers to provide more parking spaces than they themselves wish, other than in exceptional circumstances (para. 51).

3.11 **PPS25: Development and Flood Risk (2006)** aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding (para. 5).

3.12 For the determination of planning applications, local planning authorities should (para. 8):

- have regard to the policies in the PPS and the RSS for their region, as these may supersede the existing policies in their development plan;
- ensure that planning applications are supported by site-specific flood risk assessments (FRAs) as appropriate;
- apply the sequential approach at a site to minimise risk by directing the most vulnerable development to areas of lowest flood risk;
- give priority to the use of SUDS; and
- ensure that all new development in flood risk areas is appropriately flood resilient and resistant, including safe access and escape routes where required.

3.13 A sequential risk-based approach towards determining the suitability of land for development in flood risk areas should be used (para.14).

3.14 Annex D sets out this sequential test. This explains that the overall aim of decision makers should be to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (para. D5).

3.15 Flood Zone 1 are sites that has a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding in any year. All uses of land are considered appropriate in this zone. FRAs are required for development proposals on sites comprising one hectare or more (Table D1).

3.16 Flood Zone 2 comprises land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding or between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of sea flooding in any year. Sites within Zone 2 should only be developed where suitable land within Zone 1 cannot be identified (Table D1).

3.17 Flood Zone 3a comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea in any one year. Zone 3b forms the functional floodplain. All developments within Zones 2 and 3 need to be accompanied by a FRA (Table D1).

3.18 Table D2 indicates that dwellings are considered to be a more vulnerable land use. More vulnerable uses are deemed to be suitable for development within Zones 1 and 2 (Table D3).

4.0 Development Plan Policies

4.01 The Development Plan for this site consists of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS 8), the Hinckley and Bosworth LDF Core Strategy and the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan (Saved Policies).

4a RSS 8: Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (adopted March 2009)

4.02 **Policy 2** seeks to promote better layout, design and construction of new development, through taking account of the local natural and historic character. Energy use should be minimised and provision of sustainable drainage systems should be incorporated into schemes where possible. This should also include the use of sustainably sourced and recycled materials in buildings. The design of schemes should seeks to make the most efficient use of the land, enhancing safety of the area and create suitable transport links.

4b Hinckley and Bosworth LDF Core Strategy (adopted December 2009)

4.03 Para 4.31 identifies the villages considered to be Key Rural Centres. This includes Ratby.

4.04 Policy 7 indicates that to support Key Rural Centres, the Council will support housing development within settlement boundaries that provide a mix of housing types and tenures.

4.05 More specific development guidance is provided for Ratby within Policy 8. This indicates that land will be allocated for a minimum of 75 new homes for Ratby. Other objectives relating to employment, open space, sustainable transport and community facilities are also stated.

4.06 Affordable housing is covered by Policy 15. This states that within rural areas, an affordable housing on site target of 40% will be required for sites greater than 0.13 ha or 4 or more dwellings.

4c Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan (adopted February 2001)

4.07 The Proposal Map indicates that the application site is located outside of, but adjoining, the identified limits to development for Ratby. The land immediately to the south-east is also outside the limits to development, but has been developed for residential purposes since the publication of the Local Plan.

4.08 In light of the designation, the following five saved policies are relevant to this proposal:

4.09 Policy NE5: Development in the Countryside indicates that built and other forms of development will only be permitted in the countryside if the development is either:

a. important to the local economy and cannot be provided within or adjacent to an existing settlement;
b. for the change of use, reuse or extension of existing buildings; or
c. for sport and recreation purposes.

4.10 It addition, it should:

i. not have an adverse impact on the appearance or character of the landscape;
ii. in keeping with the scale and character of existing buildings and the general surroundings;
iii. where necessary, to suitably screened;
iv. not generate traffic that exceeds highway capacity or impairs road safety (Policy NE5).

4.11 Sites not specifically allocated for housing will only be granted planning permission if:

a. the site lies within the identified limits to development; and
b. the siting, design and layout of the proposal do not conflict with the relevant plan policies.

4.12 Policy BE1: Design and Sitting of Development highlights that the Council will seek a high standard of design for developments. Permission will only be granted where the development:

a. complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features;
b. avoids the loss of open spaces, important gapes in development, vegetation and features that contribute to the quality of the local environment;
c. has regard to safety and security;
d. incorporates design features to reduce energy consumption and encourage recycling;
e. incorporates landscaping to a high standard and add to the quality of the proposal;
f. ensure access for all to public areas;
g. ensure highway safety, including through the provision of adequate parking facilities;
h. does not adversely affect the operations of surrounding users;
i. does not undermine the amenity of neighbouring properties;

4.13 In considering highway design standards, Policy T5 indicates that proposals should be in line with the latest version of Leicestershire County Council's 'Highway Requirements for Development'. Parking should be provided in line with Appendix D unless otherwise justified.

4.14 Appendix D: Vehicle Parking Guidelines states the following parking requirements for housing:

- 4 or more bedroom dwellings: 3 spaces; and
- 3 or less bedroom dwellings: 2 spaces.

4d Other Relevant Planning Guidance

4.15 Leicestershire County Council's Highways, Transportation and Development (adopted 1 January 2008) sets out comprehensive design guidance for highway layouts, including road widths, curvature of roads, formation of junctions, minimum visibility splays and parking space dimensions. This document should be read in conjunction with the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets (2007).

4.16 Hinckley & Bosworth's B.C. Supplementary Planning Guidance New Residential Development (adopted Spring 2000) sets out design advice and guidelines for housing developments.

4.17 The layout of new developments should take account of existing site features and landscaping. Orientation, differing site levels and protection of amenity should be considered carefully. A minimum of 25 metres should be provided between facing windows. This typically creates garden depths of 12.5 metres minimum. Where habitable room windows face blank walls of adjoining properties, a minimum distance of 12 metres should be provided to single storey dwellings and 14 metres to houses with two or more storeys, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.18 All dwellings should have adequate private amenity space to meet the users needs. These should be in proportion to the type of dwelling and the general character of the area. A minimum of 60 sq.m. should be provided for 2 bedroom properties, and 80 sq.m. for 3 bedroom properties.

4.19 New dwellings should be designed to complement the character of the surrounding area. This should include the roofscape of buildings, in terms of height, orientation and width of gables. Well defined architectural features of the local environment should be incorporated. This should include the colour of brickwork, brick patterns, corbels, eaves, details door and window design and porches.

4.20 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Development framework Supplement Planning Document 'Ratby Village Design Statement' adopted December 2009.

Setting out the design parameters for further residential development within the village curtlidge. Principle design features and quality standards that should be adopted by those wishing to build, modify or extend properties in Ratby.

The document is a supporting regional and local planning policy and associated legislation adopted by the Borough Council.

5.0 Relevant Site History

5.01 The site formed part of the former bus garage and petrol station which fronted Station Road which was demolished for redevelopment by Persimmon Homes in 2001. Since that time tentative informal enquiries regarding the site have been made in respect of residential development. This has led to the current application.

6.0 Design Constraints and Opportunities

6.01 Constraints

- Take full cognisance of the local planning guidance as the site is within an area designated as zone B within the Ratby village design statement (SPD).
- Maintaining existing levels of The Pinfold approach across the site to avoid the flood levels to the south east of the site.
- Protection of the trees on site and importantly the hedges to the boundary of the site.
- The proximity of neighbouring properties needs to be taken into consideration with the new dwelling design.
- Continuation of the two storey dwelling style already existing within the approach along The Pinfold.
- Minimise access impact of the adjoining neighbours on the approach road.
- Relatively long and narrow site.

6.02 Opportunities

- Enhancement of the existing street scene.
- Addition of dwellings of the size and scale which befits the site area.

7.0 Design Principles

- To provide attractive but sympathetic buildings within the confines of the existing site boundaries, in a form and style in keeping with the adjacent dwellings and area
  To minimise the visual impact maintaining existing mature soft landscaping.
- To retain the mature nature of the existing planting to the front of the site minimising any visual impact caused by the introduction of a development.
- To provide dwellings which exceeds current constructional and sustainability requirements. Code Level 3 Housing as a minimum. To provide sufficient parking and cycle spaces within the site.

8.0 Pre application Consultation

8.01 Consultation with the Council has been undertaken informally with regards to the development of this site and the extent of works outlined earlier in this document. Meetings and telephone conversations have been conducted between the applicant, applicant's agent and Richard Wright, the Planning Officer.

8.02 Following the meetings, comments on the proposals were given to Corporate Architecture and several points highlighted to be considered. The proposals, for which this formal submission for planning consent relates, have been in line with these comments including a reduction in numbers and avoidance of the relevant flood lines crossing the site to the South East.

8.03 Discussion also took place with regard to the provision of affordable housing within the site. The development of six units will attract a 30% requirement which equates to two dwellings. The exact units are subject to further agreement with the Borough Council.

9.0 Description of Proposed Scheme

9.01 The application for full planning permission relates to the erection of a two storey development of six houses. The full application includes the provision of off street parking spaces located to the sides and rear of the dwellings.

9.02 The existing land area consists of a total of 0.13 hectares of scrub land and the proposed 6 No. dwellings will be a total of 426m² over two storeys.



Fig. 7 - *Proposed Site Layout*

10.0 Planning Justification

10.01 Use

10.02 The site comprises of scrub land enclosed on three sides by a redundant bakery soon to be developed into a residential scheme, a relatively new housing estate and an area of public open space. The site is within the Ratby village envelope and as such is served by the village centre as well as having regular public transport links with Leicester and Hinckley.

10.03 The Residential development of the site forms a natural extension to the 2001 development assessing the site from the pinfold. The scheme also provides for an affordable allocation within the existing village.

10.04 Given the established transport links and relationship to existing developments, development of this site should be considered acceptable in line with National, Regional and Local Planning Policies.

10.05 The scheme has been designed to be integrated with both the surrounding and proposed development. An attractive entrance is created into the site.

10.06 The layout of the scheme creates an intimate relationship between buildings and support facilities. Private amenity areas are proposed for each dwelling creating enclosed areas that are sufficient scale for the dwellings.

10.7 The layout has been designed to ensure the amenity of the proposed and existing adjoining properties are not undermined with relationships protecting privacy and sunlight.

10.8 Internally the layout of the houses allows for future medication and enlargement (subject to suitable planning permissions) enabling them to be Lifetime Homes.

10.09 The scheme provides a logical and comprehensive use of the land in line with National, Regional and Local Planning Policy.

10.10 The proposal seeks to erect six dwellings on the developable part of the site creating a density of dwellings in line with current planning policies. The scheme is also comparable to the adjoining development of the Pinfold and Brooke Drive and the general character of the area.

10.11 The development is for six two storey buildings forming a discreet residential layout.

The semi-detached format is in harmony with the immediately adjoining housing continuing the character of the settlement.

10.12 All aspects of the scale of the proposed development complement the residential nature of the surrounding developments and as such is complying with the National, Regional and Local Planning Policy.

10.13 Appearance

10.14 The scheme seeks to provide dwellings of a traditional appearance that integrate into the surrounding built environment.

10.15 This has determined that the principle facing material of brick and tile is in line with the Pinfold and Brooke Drive which will principally be viewed with this development.

10.16 The brick detailing and introduction of sash style windows reinforce the sympathetic styling of the traditional two storey family dwelling.

10.17 The introduction of front garden space to the adjacent semi detached units creates a soft built development complemented by the retention of existing boundary trees where possible and a sizeable area open space to the rear of the development.

10.18 The final choice of all materials will be subject to Local Authority Approval and will be submitted as part of the resolution of the conditions to any consent.

10.19 Landscaping

10.20 The gardens to the rear will be predominately lawned with planted boarders to the periphery. The front gardens will be planted with low level shrubs adjacent to railings, paving and grassed area.

10.21 The mature trees to the rear, but not forming part of the built up area, will also be protected and maintained. The existing trees will form part of a landscaping scheme which will be submitted as part of the conditions to the consent.

10.22 A bin store to suitably screen the containers will be included within the scheme serving each of the new homes.

10.23 Parking and Access to and around the Development

10.24 Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is currently via a metalled private drive over which the applicant has a right of way and this current arrangement will be modified and retained to link to the site development. The current access provides sufficient visibility to ensure safe vehicular movements to and from the site. The road within the site provides a 5.00m width with a footpath along one side of its length ensuring safe journeys by foot.

The site provides for twelve car parking spaces predominately located to the rear of the pair of semi detached dwellings reducing its impact on the development and the existing approach to the site.

10.25 The access mouth will be in full accordance with the Highways specification with the site being finished in a hard bound surface or alternative hard surface to the approval of the Local Authority.

10.26 The new dwellings will be designed in response to the guidelines set out in approved Document M 2004 of the Building Regulations with reference to BS8300:2009 with external access designed to be accessible for ambulant disabled in all locations.

10.27 Building Sustainability

10.28 The erection of the new dwellings will incorporate where viable materials locally sourced from sustainable resources. The recycling of rainwater and the storage before release of this water into the local mains storm drainage system will be incorporated as well as part of the building regulation submission. The design of the dwelling will seek to meet the requirements of code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 under current Government Guidelines for Sustainable Homes. The benefits of photovoltaic's located on the southerly facing roof structure and installed should also be further investigated if the economics of their installation prove to be economically worthwhile to the development.

In addition to reduce heating requirements the buildings have been aligned with a southern aspect as far as possible to maximise the capture of natural light and heat from the sun.

The development of a sustainable located parcel of land with good transport links ensure a suitable location for the erection of energy efficient buildings with on site renewable energy generation should be considered appropriate.

11.0 Conclusion

11.01 This proposal seeks to provide a modest sized development of affordable housing in a sustainable location, adjacent to a collection of established buildings. Whilst technically being located beyond the settlement limits, this proposal can be considered as an exceptions site, particularly as the emerging strategy for the District identifies this area for growth.

11.02 The proposal seeks to create a development that links both visually and physically with the surrounding buildings, to create a logical scheme for this land. It will create an attractive and functional layout suitable for residential occupation without impacting upon the countryside location.

11.03 The scheme seeks to provide quality accommodation built to a high standard of energy efficiency, which coupled with on site renewable energy installations significantly reduce the energy demands of the proposal.

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