06/01201/FUL

25 OCT 2006

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

LAND OFF CANDLE LANE, EARL SHILTON, LEICESTERSHIRE

Introduction

This Statement has been produced to accompany a detailed planning application for the residential development of a 'windfall' site within the village of Earl Shilton.

The contents provide an assessment of the context of the site and its surroundings and will explain the design rationale of the scheme including the built form and architectural details of the development proposed together with the treatment of open spaces and landscape features within the site.

The submission of a Design and Access Statement has been a legislative requirement since 10th August 2006 and the publication of Department of Culture and Local Government (DCLG) circular 01/06. The content of the Statement reflects the framework set out in the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) guide entitled 'Design and access statements – How to write, read and use them' which was published in 2006.

Assessment of the context of the site and its surroundings

The context of the application site and its surroundings is derived from a number of factors which are assessed in turn (with illustrative photographs) in the following sections of this Statement:

Physical context

The application site is located within the southern part of the village and comprises the landscaped gardens of two existing residential properties, *Beechrome*, a two storey house, and *Cedar Grove*, a detached bungalow. Whilst *Beechrome* is being demolished, *Cedar Grove* is being retained. The character of the site and the surrounding area is derived from the appearance of the existing buildings, which are residential and date from within the last 25 years but more particularly from the existing landscape features, which include a substantial number of trees. The majority of the existing trees are proposed to be retained in accordance with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) dating from 1981. The existing trees are shown on the submitted Topographical Survey and detailed in an arboricultural survey and report. The impact of the development on the trees is considered in an Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by qualified arboriculturalists, Symbiosis Consulting. The design of the scheme submitted has been very strongly influenced by the desire to retain the most important trees on site and root protection areas or 'no-build' zones have been identified on a Constraints Plan which was drawn up prior to the formulation of the scheme layout. The reports and other documents referred to are reproduced as part of this Statement.



Social context

It is important to assess the affect that any development proposal will have on people in the locality and the formulation of the scheme has considered carefully the need to ensure that this no adverse affect results in terms of direct affects on amenity or the character and appearance of the area. The layout formulated demonstrates that the occupiers of the nearby properties on Candle Lane, in Cottage Gardens, Ivydene Close and in Windermere Close will not be adversely affected in terms of overlooking, loss of light or by the creation of any overbearing affect. The retention of the majority of trees on site will ensure that the overall character and feel of the area remains heavily treed and that the site remains 'tucked away' to the rear of the existing properties on Ivydene Close and Candle Lane with only a minimal number of properties visible from the main entrance to the site.





The development will deliver a large and diverse range of housing accommodation, including 9 affordable houses/flats, which represents 20% of the total to be constructed on site, split between rented and shared ownership, and these will be made available through a Housing Association. The general mix of housing will be accessible to a very wide sector of the local population and will help to address the deficit of affordable housing in Earl Shilton and the surrounding area. The diversity of accommodation proposed affords the prospect of an inclusive community.

The development will clearly increase the requirement for new school accommodation, and these needs will be met by making funds available through the Education Authority for extensions and improvements to local schools.

Economic context

In addition to the contributions that will be made in relation to education, the propose will give rise to contributions to secure improved local library and civic amenities facilities, and accordingly, the development will generate additional funds for the improvement of these community facilities in or near the village.

It is considered that whilst the development proposed is residential (as opposed to an employment generating commercial scheme), it will make a valuable contribution to the economy in terms of employment of skilled and unskilled workers from the local area and the supply of locally sourced materials.

Planning policies

National Planning Guidance

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development places sustainable development at the heart of national planning policy.

Paragraph 33 states that "good design is indivisible from good planning."

Paragraph 13 (iv) requires the planning system to promote "high quality, inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings". Those involved in new development need to demonstrate that they have taken account of the need for good design, and had proper regard to relevant development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance.

This theme is continued in *PPG3 Housing*, which encourages local planning authorities to promote sustainable residential environments. The guidance places considerable emphasis on quality and designing places for people, whilst making the most effective use of land. Paragraph 56 states that "considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard not just to any immediate neighbouring buildings, but the townscape and landscape of the wider locality".

More detailed advice is contained in the companion guide to PPG3, *By Design – urban design in the planning system: towards better practice*, which seeks to promote higher standards in urban design. The broad design objectives for new development set out in the guidance include the following:

Character - a place with its own identity

Continuity and enclosure – a place where public and private space is clearly distinguished

Quality of public realm – a place with attractive and successful public areas

Ease of movement – a place that is easy to get to and move through

Legibility – a place which has a clear image and is easy to understand

Adaptability – a place that can change easily

Diversity – a place with variety and choice

Draft *PPS3 Housing* continues the theme in PPS1. Paragraph 34 suggests that local planning authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the type of residential environments they wish to see and to develop plans and policies aimed at:

(a) creating places, streets and spaces which meet the needs of people, which are attractive, have their own distinctive identity, and positively improve local character; and

(b) which promote designs and layouts which are inclusive, safe, take account of public health, crime prevention and community safety, ensure adequate natural surveillance and make space for water where there is flood risk.

Paragraph 37 requires new development to be of high quality inclusive design and layout...and be informed by its wider context, having regard not just to neighbouring buildings but to the townscape and landscape

Local Planning Policy Guidance

Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan

The District Council's policy guidance on design is set out in Policy RES5 of the Local Plan, in relation to sites not allocated for housing, and this policy advises that new residential development will only be permitted if it is within the urban area and is of a suitable siting, design and layout.

Policy BE1 is also relevant and this emphasises the need for a high standard of design and provides a number of criteria with which the development must

comply with, including complementing or enhancing the surrounding area with regard to density, scale and layout, incorporating high quality landscaping and adequate parking. For residential proposals, neighbouring residents should not be adversely affected, particularly in terms of privacy and living conditions. In addition, there should be a strong common link between the proposal and its surroundings, an adequate degree of amenity and privacy for residents and sufficient garden areas with boundary treatment that reflects existing features in the area.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

The District Council's published guidance relating to play and open space, affordable housing and residential development standards have all be referred to in compiling the application. However, it is not proposed to discuss them in detail in this document.

Other Guidance

The County Council guidance entitled Highways, transport and development (Htd) provides highway design principles for new developments and is applied across the County. This guidance seeks good quality design as an integral part of new development proposals. Developers are encouraged to consider urban design early on in the development process.

Community involvement

The site development has been the subject of detailed discussions with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) planners with the most recent meeting being in July 2006. At that time there was acceptance of the proposed layout and the detailed comments made by them have resulted in revisions being made to the layout. An example of this is the removal of three storey properties on plots 34-36 adjoining the existing Cedar Court bungalow. It is intended to hold a further discussion with HBBC shortly after the submission of the application.

The HBBC Statement of Community Involvement does not specify a minimum number of dwellings over which the authority expects additional publicity, presentation or exhibition to take place, however, it does specify that this should be the subject of pre-application discussions with HBBC planners. This has been undertaken and it is considered that given the scale of the development proposed, a public presentation day will be organised for members of the community to view the submitted plans and ask the prospective developers any questions. It is intended that this presentation day will be held at a local venue shortly after the application has been registered.

Evaluation

This section of the Statement identifies the options for development that have been evaluated prior to the formulation of the final scheme. In this case, it is considered that the development of the application site represents a significant opportunity to create a high quality environment provided the existing constraints are fully taken into account. To this end, at the inception of the design process, a Constraints Plan was formulated detailing the important site issues including access, the existing tree cover and the need to respect an existing sewer easement. In addition to these site constraints, the need to ensure that the relationship with existing residential properties is satisfactory is a primary concern and to this end, the scheme demonstrates separation distances (between principal windows) of in excess of 24 metres to Windermere Close and 20 metres (at an angle) to Cottage Gardens.

The Constraints Plan indicates the line of an existing public footpath (T91), however, as can be seen from this plan, its existing line is obstructed by an existing property on Cottage Gardens. An alternative footpath route is available adjoining the application site and a photograph of this is included on page 13 of this Statement.

In relation to the existing protected trees on site, the Constraints Plan shows the 'stand off' areas around the existing tree roots designed to comply with the 2005 British Standard for tree protection. The extent of the tree cover and the desire to retain as many trees as possible to retain the woodland feel to the development has lead naturally to the creation of three linked but distinct areas. These three main development areas have been individually designed with relatively small groups of terraced, detached and terraced and detached houses. A copy of the Constraints Plan is included in the application submission.

Other options for developing the site have been considered including a lower density scheme which would have provided less dwellings, however, the government's stated policy is that available sites should be developed at the most efficient density (whilst respecting the character of an area). In this case, the overall site density is 27.3 dwellings per hectare (dph). However, the retained tree areas (including the no-build zones) should be excluded from the density calculation as they constitute 'significant landscape features' (as defined in PPG3 and draft PPS3). Using this calculation, the density increases to 34.8 dph. It is considered that whilst the overall site density is less than 30 dph figure set out in policy guidance, the proposed density is appropriate for this site and its surroundings given the constraints to development.

Design

A very significant aim in relation to the design of the proposed scheme is that it assimilates as comfortably as possible into its surroundings. It is also considered important that the form and layout of the proposals should be appropriate to its local setting and that the finished development should

produce a strong identity and sense of place for its occupiers and visitors. It is considered that this aim has been achieved by giving considerable thought to the individual buildings and the way that they relate to each other and to their surroundings. This is demonstrated by the streetscene drawings that have been prepared for the planning application.

The CABE guide to Design and Access Statements indicates that the following topics should be amongst the main areas that a Statement focuses on.

Use

The use of the site for residential purposes is considered the most appropriate use to apply for planning permission for given its surroundings, which although including Ivydene Rest Home, are exclusively residential. Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposed use requires further justification as a use in principle, although clearly it is necessary to identify how the access needs of all users will be accommodated and this will be done in the Access section of this Statement.

Amount

The proposal provides 47 dwellings in a mix of houses and apartments and a range of sizes ranging from one to four bedrooms. The proposed dwellings are a mix of two and two and a half storey and it is considered that both types of properties can be included within the layout without detriment to residential amenity or the character of the area. It is considered that this number and mix of dwellings reflects its surroundings whilst respecting the need to maximise the use of new residential sites that come forward.

It is considered that this amount of development can be assimilated into its surroundings without detriment to the neighbourhood by virtue of disturbance from vehicles, adverse affect on local services or other amenity concerns such as overlooking, loss of light or overbearing affect.

Layout

As indicated earlier in this Statement, the proposed layout has evolved as part of an iterative process once the important site constraints had been identified. The siting of houses near the road, particularly plots 19-37 inclusive, which are served by road 3, reflects a desire to ensure that strong, integrated building groups and streetscenes are created with vehicle parking at the side of the houses set back from the road. Such an approach avoids the creation of a car-dominated streetscene whilst ensuring that an excellent level of overlooking of the pedestrian and vehicular routes within the proposed development is possible.

The creation of an almost continuous streetscene which wraps around the bends in the access road injects interest and variety into the proposed development whilst allowing the main trees on the site to be retained as a balance to the built development.

The accessibility of the site will be primarily addressed in the access section of this Statement, however, it is considered that the provision of distinct building groups served with limited specification access roads promotes a clear definition of public and private realm areas whilst being mindful of the need to ensure that crime is prevented. To this end, whilst it may have been desirable, in accessibility terms, to include a pedestrian link between Candle Lane and Ivydene Close through the application proposal, this would not be desirable in terms of 'designing out crime'.

Scale

As indicated under the Amount heading earlier, it is proposed to construct a mix of dwelling sizes ranging from 355 square feet (33 sq.m.) to 1802 square feet (157.4 sq.m.). It is considered that this range provides opportunity for a maximum number of new purchasers whilst recognising the need to ensure that the proposed development is economical viable. Whilst it is recognised that the existing dwellings in the neighbourhood are of a different form to the application proposal, there are clearly similarities in so far as semi-detached dwellings and detached dwellings are an important part of the proposed scheme. Three storey properties are evident in Candle Lane and it is accordingly considered that two and a half storey houses can be acceptably included within the proposed layout.

Landscaping

In addition to the fundamental design principle that the majority of the existing TPO trees on site are to be retained, the incorporation of additional supplementary landscaping, both in terms of hard landscaping and planting, has been a guiding principle that has been used in drawing up the overall scheme details.

The majority of the trees to the site boundaries are also to be retained as they provide substantial screening to the development and should ensure that the character of the surrounding area is retained.

With the exception of the small number of apartment units being proposed, all of the proposed houses will be provided with private, useable gardens designed to provide a pleasant, restful space for the occupiers. The occupiers of the apartments, together with their visitors and residents of the development and the existing dwellings nearby will be able to take advantage of the well proportioned open spaces being provided within the development including the main, broadly triangular area to the south of the site. These open spaces will be grassed with existing trees retained, providing pleasant areas with varying degrees of tree cover. The proposed open spaces are intended to be overlooked by the maximum number of properties to increase

supervision and promote safe use whilst providing a pleasant aspect for the occupiers of the proposed houses.

Although tarmacadam will be used for the main site access, this will quickly change to a more sympathetic road material in the form of block paving for roads 2 and 3 and for the shared courtyard to the rear of plots 31 and 32 and serving the group of dwellings in the southern portion of the site. It is intended that with careful conveyance of all areas of incidental space (excluding the main areas of public open space) any maintenance and management issues associated with such areas will be able to be dealt with 'by design' rather than needing resolution by the occupiers.

Appearance

In designing the scheme, the incorporation of local architectural styles such as high pitched roofs, sash or cottage style windows with brick headers, bay windows and open porches, has been a fundamental principle. Although articulated through a range of 'housetypes', drawn from an extensive portfolio, it is considered that the inclusion of these features in a comparatively simple approach to form and elevational treatments, achieves a high quality environment reflecting the best aspects of building design found locally. An example of a previous David Wilson Homes development at Barlestone is shown below:



In terms of elevational treatment, the houses are largely traditional to reflect the village location of the site, with a discreet minimum of applied details. However, where features such as open toed rafters and brick corbels and

eaves are included, as these reflect the vernacular building style of the county in order that the proposed houses may assimilate into their surroundings. An example of an other development indicating such features is shown below.



In relation to materials, high quality red/orange facing bricks, typical of the area, will be used together with cream or white render to provide interest and variety. Roof tiles will be grey/brown also to reflect the site's surroundings. An example of a recent development is included on the following page to show the appropriateness of such an approach in integrating the proposed development into its surroundings.

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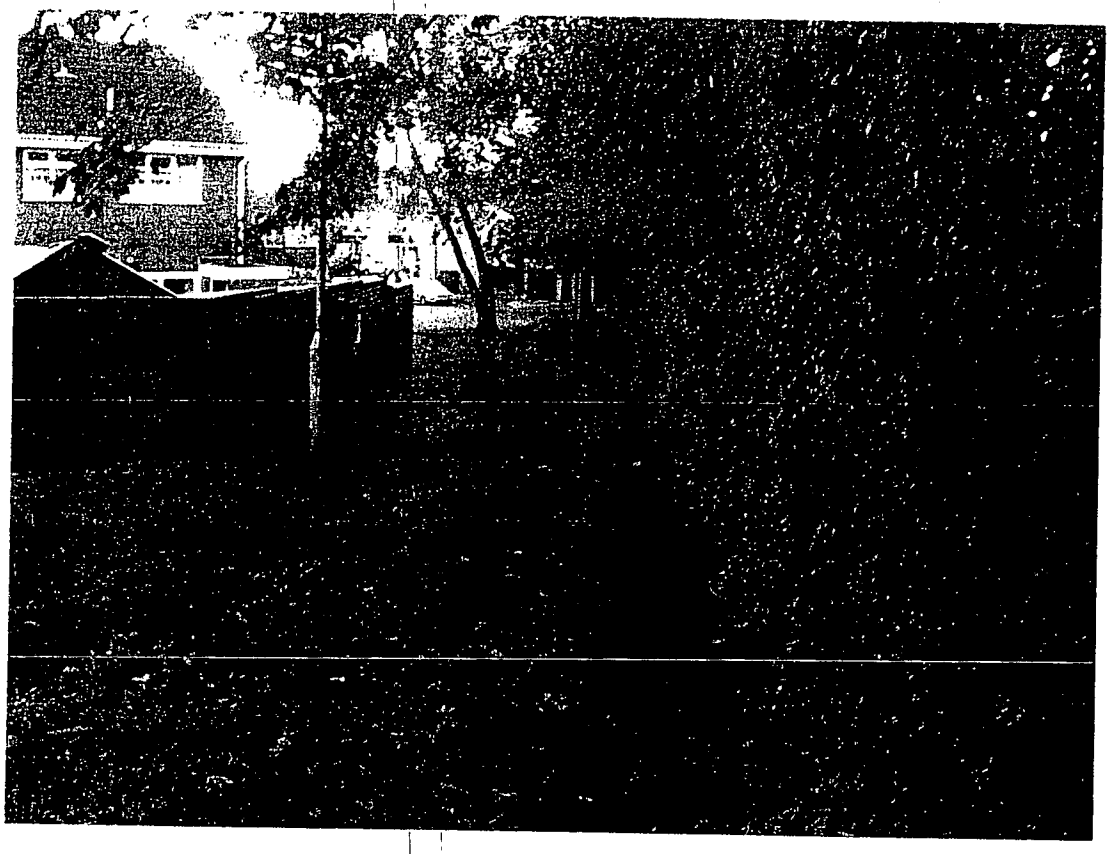
Access

The overall approach to vehicular access is firmly based on suppressing vehicle speeds and creating an environment that will be safe for pedestrians. The use of shared surface roads and private access ways, for example, at plots 42-46 inclusive, should ensure that vehicle speeds are kept below the aspirational limit of 20 mph. The main access to the application site is proposed from Candle Lane using a 5.5 metre wide access road. Only one dwelling is proposed to be accessed from Ivydene Close in recognition of its limited visibility and attractive, low density nature that may be adversely affected by a significant number of additional vehicle movements.

In terms of non-car modes, it is considered that cyclists would be safe using the access road layout designed for the site and that access via Candle Lane to Astley Road provides easy access to the facilities within the village.



Similarly, whilst no dedicated pedestrian route is provided other than through the open space in the southern part of the site, it is considered that pedestrians can move freely and safely through the site, particularly to and from the proposed open spaces.

Disabled people will not be segregated from any areas of the site as the design process has been an inclusive one. All of the access roads, shared surface areas and shared courtyards will be accessible by disabled people and the overall site layout has been designed to allow full ease of movement for all disabled people including those with visual impairments. The proposed layout will include footpaths leading off the main Candle Lane access and incorporate dropped kerbs for wheelchair access.

As none of the buildings are designed to be public buildings, internal movement of the houses has not been assessed, however, all of the dwellings will comply with Part M of the Building Regulations.

Access for emergency services is available from the adjoining main roads and the access roads within the site serving the houses the subject of this application.

In relation to bus services, the development lies within easy walking distance of existing bus routes, including one on Astley Road, providing a viable alternative to the private car for the occupiers of the proposed houses.

Conclusions

It is considered that this Statement demonstrates the design approach and evolution of this residential scheme which it is intended will provide an attractive environment for residents and visitors. The local authority have been involved in the evolution of the scheme and alterations have been made. Any further comments received during the consideration of the proposal from the authority, consultees or local residents will be evaluated and if necessary, further changes will be made.

The main design principles of providing strong streetscenes and coherent building groups whilst retaining the majority of the existing TPO trees have been stressed and the other constraints to development have been fully assessed in the design process. The resulting development will, it is considered, represent an attractive, well designed new environment for occupiers and visitors which will enhance its surroundings.