



Building for a Healthy Life Assessment

Higham-on-the-Hill

April 2023



1.0 Integrated Neighbourhoods

1.01 Natural Connections

Create places that are well integrated into the site and their wider natural and built surroundings. Avoid creating isolated and disconnected places that are not easy places to move through and around

The following pages outline how the scheme addresses the BHL's 12 considerations organised over 3 headings. The traffic light system used within BHL has been suggested next to each criteria to aid discussions.

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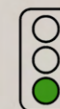
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- Both the Southern and Western edges of the site open out on to a rural landscape with no public rights of way. Therefore, natural connections are maximised along the sites Northern edge, fronting on to Wood Lane.
- Where retained, hedgerows and trees are kept within the public realm, safeguarding their future retention and management.
- The landscape framework of existing landscape features of note (including existing retained hedgerows and trees), are reinforced with additional habitats to create movement corridors for nature and people alike.
- The Spine Road of the development stretches to the Southern most part of the site, allowing for future connections if necessary. The secondary street to the West also allows for the opportunity of future development.

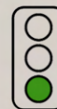




1.03 Facilities & Services

Places that offer social, leisure and recreational opportunities a short walk or cycle from their homes.

- There are no longer any shops within the village, therefore a new convenience store will be provided at the entrance to the site, making it accessible for both new residents and residents of Higham village.
- The new shop will be walking distance for most members of the community, with the furthest dwelling away on Main Street being only a 10 minute walk.
- As previously mentioned the King George Playing field is within walking distance and a new play area is provided to the South of the site..
- All routes have active frontages.



1.04 Homes for Everyone

A range of homes that meet local community needs.

- A full range of homes are provided, from 1 bed masionettes through to 4 bed detached homes, to make a broad-based community.
- A mix of housing tenures are provided. The agreed s106 provides an agreed mix of affordable homes that meet the needs of the community.
- Overall the site consists of 40% affordable homes and 60% open market. Of the affordable homes 6 are shared ownership and 19 are affordable rent.
- In accordance with best practice, the affordable homes are spread throughout the site. The design of homes and streets make it difficult to determine the tenure of properties through architectural, landscape or other differences.



1.02 Walking, Cycling & Public Transport

Short trips of up to three miles can be easily made on foot or bicycle if the right infrastructure is in place, helping to improve public health and air quality whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions

- The existing agricultural access to the site in the North Eastern corner will be upgraded to a pedestrian route allowing easy access out towards the village centre.
- The Higham-on-the-Hill Church of England Primary school is a 6 minute walk away, 0.3miles, along Main street.
- King George V playing field is also just a 1 minute walk away down Main Street.
- The main footway network within the development extends to the POS allowing for ease of access for recreation and dog walking,
- As part of the S278 works a 2m footpath will be provided to upgrade Main Street and allow for pedestrian connectivity to the main village.



2.0 Distinctive Places

2.01 Making the Most of What's There *Understand and respond.*

- The design has been developed from the initial Outline Masterplan, which had been discussed and explored with the LA previously.
- The Design team has walked the site and surrounding areas before developing the plan.
- The assets of the site have been explored within the design team, and comments have been taken on board from Pre-Application advice received from the Local Authority.
- One of key assets identified by all are the expansive views out to the surrounding landscape and countryside. This has been explored through the design of the scheme, and is reflected in the orientation and density of the buildings along the development edge.
- The site forms a new settlement edge and gateway to the village along the northern edge. The existing build line along Main Street has been adhered to, to create continuity.
- The existing hedges have been retained, not only as a landscape framework of habitat connectivity and biodiversity enhancement, but also to help break up any perceived mass of development from views toward the site.



2.02 A Memorable Character

Create places that are memorable.

- Character is integral to the development of the scheme and has been developed through an understanding of the existing site features, as indicated previously.
- The dwellings have been designed to reflect the local vernacular, one that is typical of an English rural village. Features such as single brick arched window headers, cottage detail windows and doors and traditional red brick construction have been drawn upon from Higham.
- Key to the development, is the 'Feature square'. This is the main vista when entering the development and is at the heart of the scheme. The square has been designed to give larger front gardens for a sense of openness, with all dwellings being fully rendered. There is no other render across the site. In taking this design decision it makes the space unique. The square is designed to mimic the main vista within Higham village, that of the rendered old post office building, now a dwelling. The block paving offered in this area also highlights that this is a 'special' place within the development.
- Lower density dwellings have been plotted along the countryside edges to soften the impact of the development.



2.03 Well Defined Streets & Spaces

Create a network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and/or structural landscaping, taking care to ensure that front doors and the principal facades of buildings face streets and public spaces.

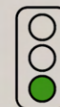
- The urban design principles adopted for development block and plot design follow best practice guidance.
- This has included using a back-to-back block arrangement as the preferred approach, as this will allow for secure private rear gardens and active frontages.
- All elevations fronting the public realm have active frontages. Dwellings on corners are dual aspect with windows serving habitable rooms.
- Key buildings terminate vistas and form key corner buildings within the scheme, which incorporate locally distinctive features such as render and cottage style windows.



2.04 Easy to Find Your Way Around

Use legible features to help people find their way around a place.

- The streets are direct and well connected so as to deliver a legible environment for all users.
- Development edges are designed to have less dense development, to help transition to the landscape beyond with more detached units and landscaping and hedgerows to reflect the landscape beyond.
- The street pattern is simple and based on a relaxed grid, in order to be as direct as possible and aid in wayfinding.



3.0 Streets for All

3.01 Healthy Streets

Streets are different to roads. Streets are places where the need to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles is balanced alongside the need for people to move along and cross streets with ease. Activity in the street is an essential part of a successful public realm

- The existing Wood Lane is to be upgraded to include a 2m footway. This provision then extends through the site along the primary routes.
- Walking and outdoor play will be encouraged by the links to the open space on site and short walking distance to the King George V playing fields.
- Landscape layers will add sensory richness to the development – visual, scent and sound.





3.02 Cycle & Car Parking

Well-designed developments will make it more attractive for people to choose to walk or cycle for short trips helping to improve levels of physical activity, air quality, local congestion and the quality of the street scene. Well-designed streets will also provide sufficient and well-integrated car parking.

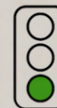
- Realistic car parking demands have been anticipated and additional car parking spaces have been allowed for along private drives to avoid unwanted road parking. These spaces also mean dwellings won't solely be parking in tandem and avoids the need to re-arrange cars constantly.
- All dwellings to have electric car charging points.
- Landscaping to be integrated in-between front of plot parking to soften the dominance of cars on the street scene.
- A number of car parking strategy's have been used through the scheme, with parking to the side of units being the priority to limit car dominance in the streetscape. Where terraces are located, frontage parking is used in conjunction with side parking, so to allow space for adequate street tree, hedgerow and shrub planting to soften the view along the street.
- There are no rear parking courtyards on site.



3.03 Green & Blue Infrastructure

Create a network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and/or structural landscaping, taking care to ensure that front doors and the principal facades of buildings face streets and public spaces.

- A 'ground-up' approach has been adopted, where existing features of note are retained as a basis for a landscape framework into which built development has been sensitively integrated.
- Active frontages have been designed to give public open space natural surveillance.
- Existing hedgerows on the Northern and Western edges of the site help break up the mass of built development from key views from the West and North.
- A biodiversity net gain will be achieved.
- The equipped play area is easily accessible and benefits from natural surveillance.



3.04 Back of Pavement, Front of Home

Garden cities, towns and suburbs used hedges to define public and private spaces, helping to create characterful and biodiverse places. The space between the back of the pavement and the face of buildings has a significant impact on the quality of a place. Clear demarcations between public and private spaces can encourage people to personalise the front of their homes whilst also offering opportunities to integrate level changes, utility boxes and waste storage.

- All spaces have a clear public or private function.
- Where possible meter boxes will be placed on side gables as to not dominate the street scene.
- Boundaries to the development edge are predominantly defined through native hedges.

