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Design and Access Statement

In support of an application by
Hollins Strategic Land LLP
for
outline planning permission for the
erection of up to 65No. dwellings (46% Affordable Homes)
at land off Forest Grove, Barton

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Sedgwick Associates in association with Grant Erskine Architects. It has been undertaken on behalf of Hollins Strategic Land LLP in support of a planning application for outline permission for the erection of up to 65No. dwellings (46% Affordable Homes) at land off Forest Grove, Barton.

All matters are reserved other than access. As such, the design of the proposals are not discussed in great detail. But the general design principles are established. An assessment of the site and its surrounds has been provided for use at reserved matters stage and to demonstrate the appropriateness of residential development of the site.

An indicative layout is also provided which demonstrates that the erection of up to 65No. dwellings will make efficient and effective use of the site whilst also retaining sufficient space for significant open space gains for the local community.

This statement identifies important considerations which support the proposals including the approach to design of the scheme and accessibility.



Image 1: Site as existing



Image 2: site as proposed

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Application Site and its Setting

Application Site

The application site is some 2.76ha in extent. It is allocated as open countryside in the saved Local Plan but is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary of Barton and is well contained greenfield land.

To the north and west the site is bound by existing residential development as shown in images 3 – 4 and further demonstrated in photograph 1 (taken from Forest Grove); the rear garden to 1 Mosslea Drive is in the foreground with the rear elevations of dwellings off Jepps Avenue in the background.

The site's eastern boundary is formed by a dense tree belt (approximately 20m by 135m) which visually separates the site from the open countryside beyond and is allocated as existing woodland in the Local Plan.



Image 3: site boundary

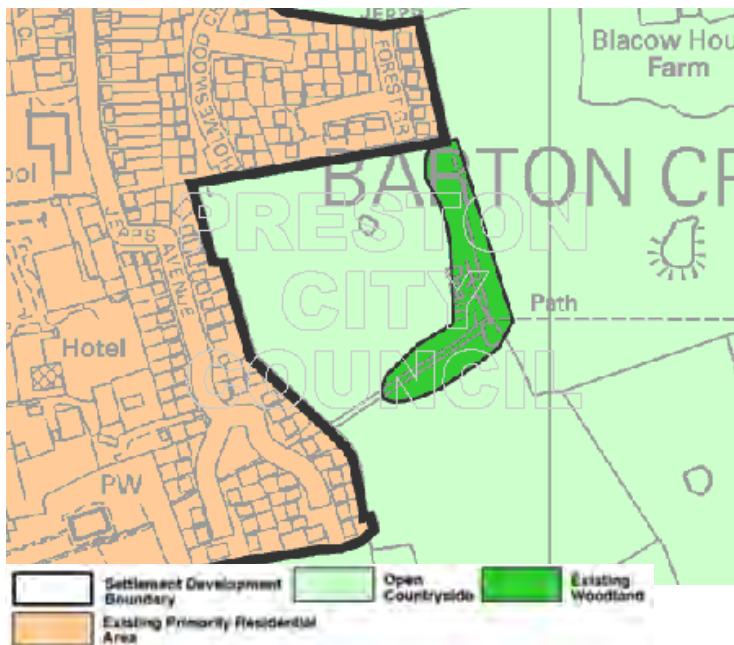


Image 4: Extract from Proposals Map



Photograph 1: view to west from north eastern corner of site



Photograph 2: View of existing woodland along site's eastern boundary

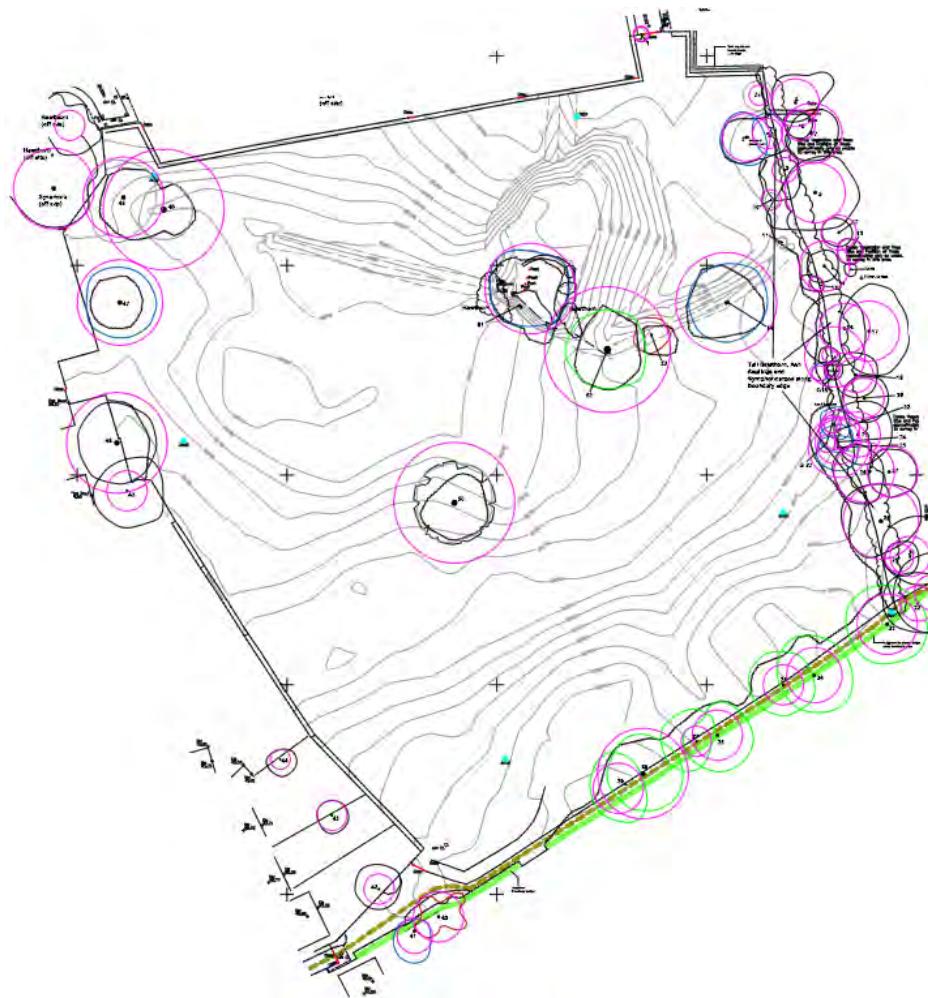


Image 5: Tree Survey

	CATEGORY A: Good/moderately good quality and value. Retention most desirable.
	CATEGORY B: Moderately/fair quality and value. Retention desirable but has some defect which downgrades value.
	CATEGORY C: Low quality and value. Tree possibly expendable but should be retained if appropriate to development.

There are also a number of trees within the site as shown in photographs 3 - 5. A Tree Survey has been undertaken which demonstrates that there are some trees which are worthy of retention, particularly those around the wet hollow. The three mature oak trees to the south of the hollow are of good vigour and have a positive impact on the visual amenities of the area.

Photograph 5 below is of the wet hollow. It is shown on plans of the area as a pond, but no open water accumulated in Spring 2012. It is colonised by plants tolerant of water-logged soils and forms an attractive part of the application site.

Photographs 3 – 5 and image 5 also demonstrate that the levels across the site vary. However, land along the site's perimeter is relatively level with the land it adjoins.



Photograph 3: view across site from north west corner



Photograph 4: trees around wet hollow



Photograph 5: wet hollow



Photograph 6: existing access from Forest Grove



Photograph 7: Forest Grove

North of the Site

The site can be accessed directly from two points to the north of the site. As shown at photograph 6, the existing road and footways of Forest Grove run right up to the site boundary. This also occurs at Holmeswood Crescent. Both of these cul-de-sac form junctions with Jepps Lane, a 20mph road. Adequate visibility splays are provided.

Development to the north of the site is varied. As shown in photographs 7 - 9, whilst detached homes dominate, there are a number of groupings of different designs along Forest Grove and Holmeswood Drive. None however are of any particular architectural merit.

As is evident in the photographs, there are a number of mature trees in the area to the north of the site and these result in the area having a leafy character. This feature is repeated throughout Barton with trees dominating view, particularly along Garstang Road.

Image 6 shows an area of some 3.3ha to the north of the site; there are (approximately) 63 dwellings within this area which equates to a development density of some 19 dwellings per hectare (dph) to the north of the site.



Photograph 8: Street scene north of site



Photograph 9: Street scene north of site



Image 6: density of development to north



Image 7: density of development to west



Photograph 10: Jepps Avenue

West of the Site

Image 7 shows an area of some 3ha to the west of the site; there are (approximately) 52 dwellings within this area which equates to a development density of some 17 dwellings per hectare (dph) to the west of the site.

Again, detached dwellings dominate in this area. They consist of standard dwelling types from a developer's portfolio but as can be seen from photograph 10, they are reasonably attractive and contain features that may be worthy of reflection at the application site.

Trees are prominent in photographs 10 - 11, again demonstrating the leafy character of Barton. Photograph 11 is of a small area of open space which serves the Jepps Avenue development. It also provides a footpath connection (Footpath 22) that runs through to the site.

Photograph 12 is of the existing eastern access into the site. The footpath runs along the access route and through to the A6 Garstang Road. It provides excellent connectivity from the site to the services and facilities on offer in the village such as the bus stops, school, nursery, church and public houses.

FP 22 continues along the site's southern boundary before extending out into the countryside. It is a pleasant route but is some 850m from the dwellings north of the site due to the lack of connectivity.



Photograph 11: open space on Jepps Avenue



Photograph 12: public right of way from Jepps Avenue



Photograph 13: FP 22 along site's southern boundary

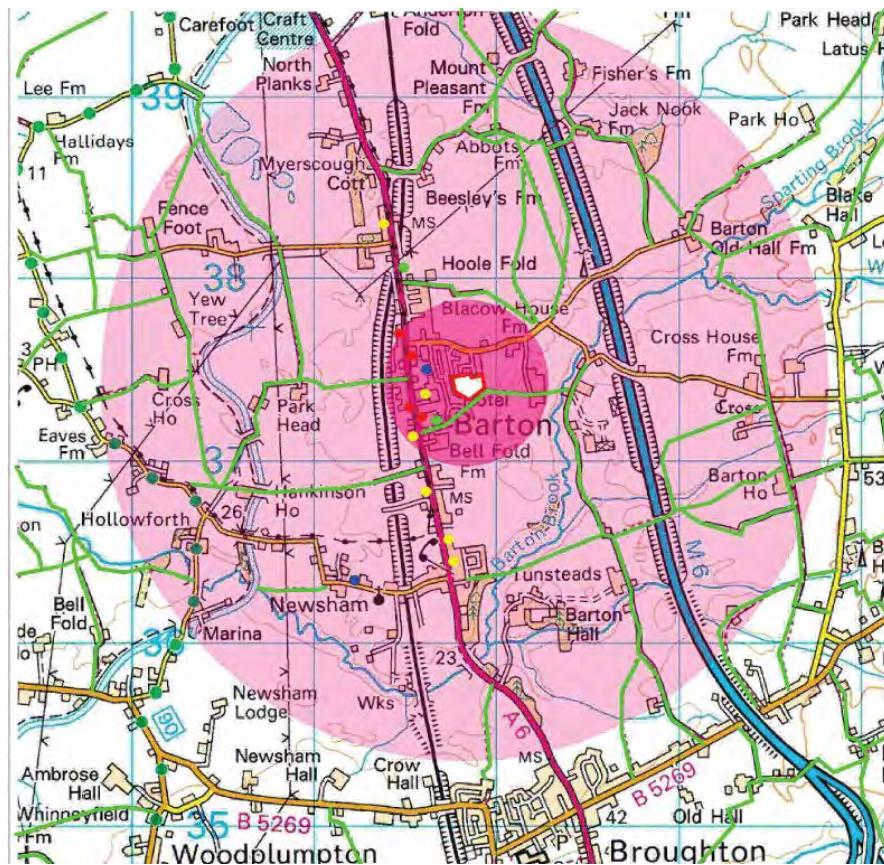
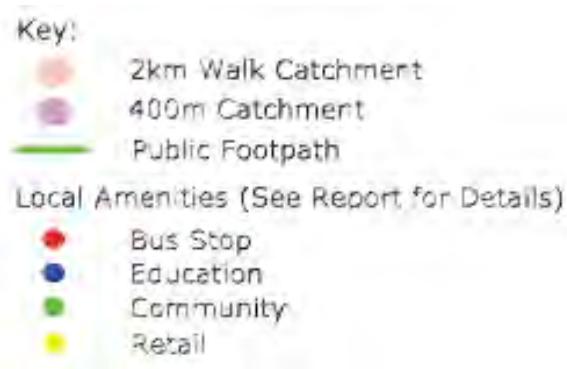


Image 12: Pedestrian routes



Transport Assessment

This confirms that the local highway network can easily accommodate the proposed development traffic. It also confirms that the site is in a sustainable location and will be accessible by foot, cycle and bus (as shown in images 12 and 13).

Utilities and Foul Sewerage Statement

This identifies no significant concerns regarding the provision of the following services: BT services, gas, electricity, water and sewer.

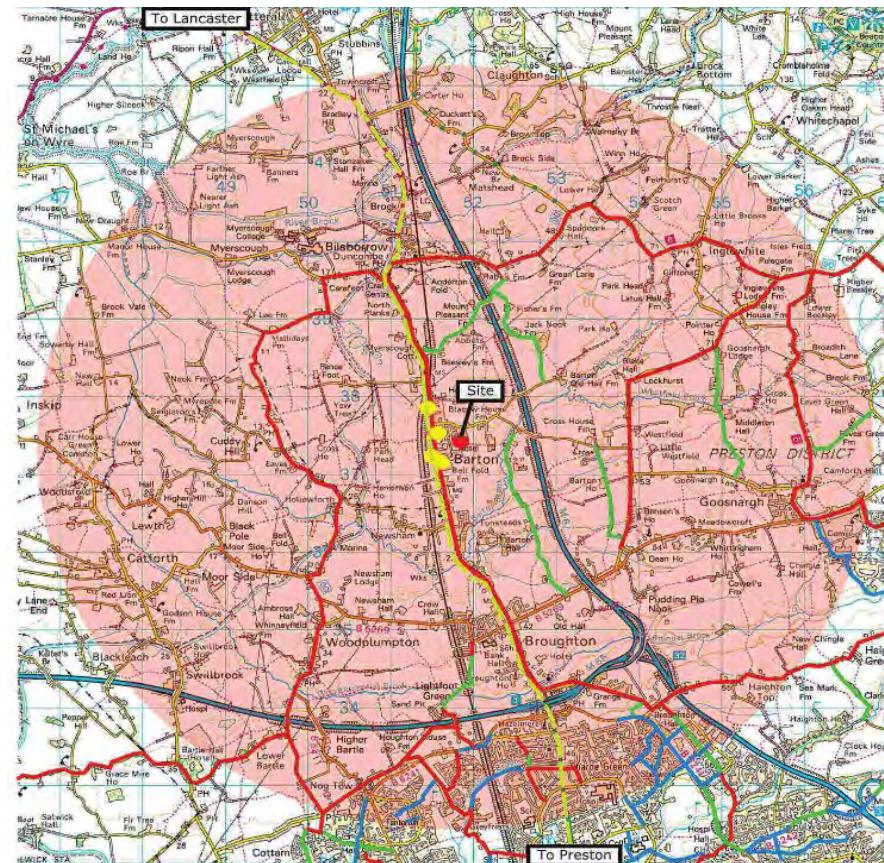


Image 13: cycle routes and Bus Access



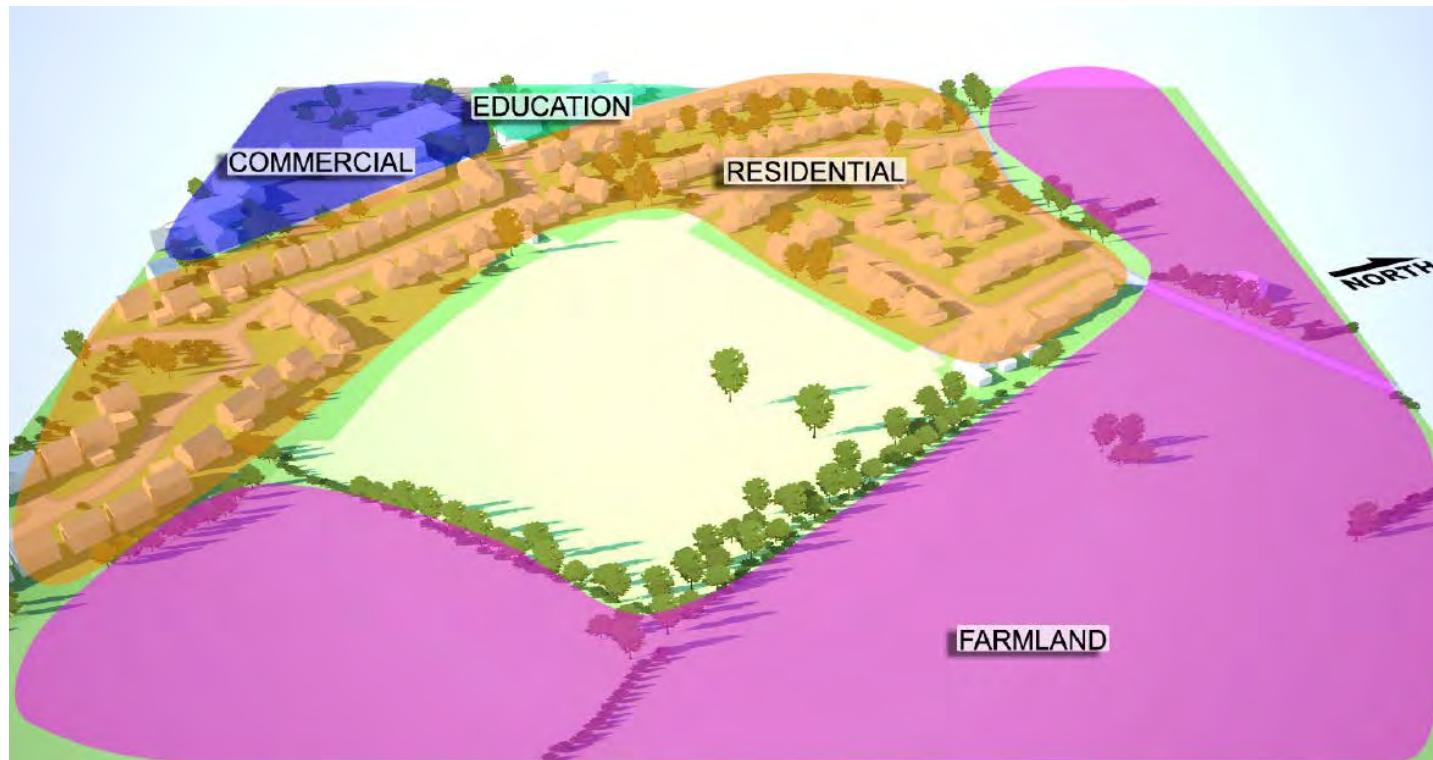


Image 14: Site Analysis 1 of 2



Image 15: Site Analysis 2 of 2

Key considerations

The above assessment of the application site and its setting has revealed that the following key considerations (shown diagrammatically in images 14 - 15) must be taken into account:

- The site is well contained greenfield land that is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary;
- It is bound to the north and west by residential development;
- A dense tree belt forms the site's eastern boundary and is allocated as existing woodland in the LP;
- There are trees within the site which are worthy of retention;
- There is also a wet hollow within the site which makes a positive contribution to the character of the site;
- The site can be accessed from both Holmeswood Crescent and Forest Grove to the north;
- Both form junctions with Jepps Lane, a 20mph road, and both junctions have adequate visibility splays;
- Detached homes dominate to the north of the site, with groupings of similar house types, none of which are of any particular architectural merit;
- The area north of the site is leafy in character and this is a feature repeated throughout Barton;
- Development to the north has been built at a density of 19dph and development to the west has been built at 17dph;
- Detached homes also dominate the area to the west of the site;
- They are standard homes from a developer's portfolio but are reasonably attractive and contain features that could be reflected in the proposed development;
- The area to the west is leafy in character with an area of open space centrally located, just to the west of the site's south-western corner;
- FP22 runs through the open space. It links up with the A6 and the various services/facilities on offer in the village to the west. It also runs along the site's southern boundary;
- There is no connectivity between FP22 and the development to the north of the site;
- The recommendations and mitigation measures set out in the Ecological Survey and Assessment should be incorporated into the development;
- increasing the elevation of localised areas is needed to alleviate any likely groundwater flooding issues.

Discussions with LPA

The indicative layout shown at image 16 was submitted as part of the application for planning permission. However, the fifth putative reason for refusal states:

The submitted application has not adequately demonstrated that the application site could accommodate the amount of proposed development with an appropriate density, scale and distribution of development within the site. As such, a development of up to 65 dwellings and the parameters of scale proposed within the application would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the edge of a rural village and the surrounding countryside as well as detrimental to the outlook of neighbouring occupiers

The following extracts from the Officer's Report provided the LPAs justification for this reason for refusal:

The proposed groups of semi-detached houses and link houses in groups of three with a heavy use of forecourt parking and levels of hard surfacing create a cramped and built-up edge.

the use of three storey development on the edge of the village which is characterised by low density two storey development would be excessive in scale and together with the proposed higher densities to the north and west sides of the site would provide a new urban edge which would fail to reflect the existing character of the village or its rural setting.

the proposed illustrative layout provides a high density development which is out of scale with its surroundings and for these reasons, would be likely to appear oppressive and overbearing, thereby adversely affecting the outlook of existing residents.

These comments have informed the amended illustrative layout.

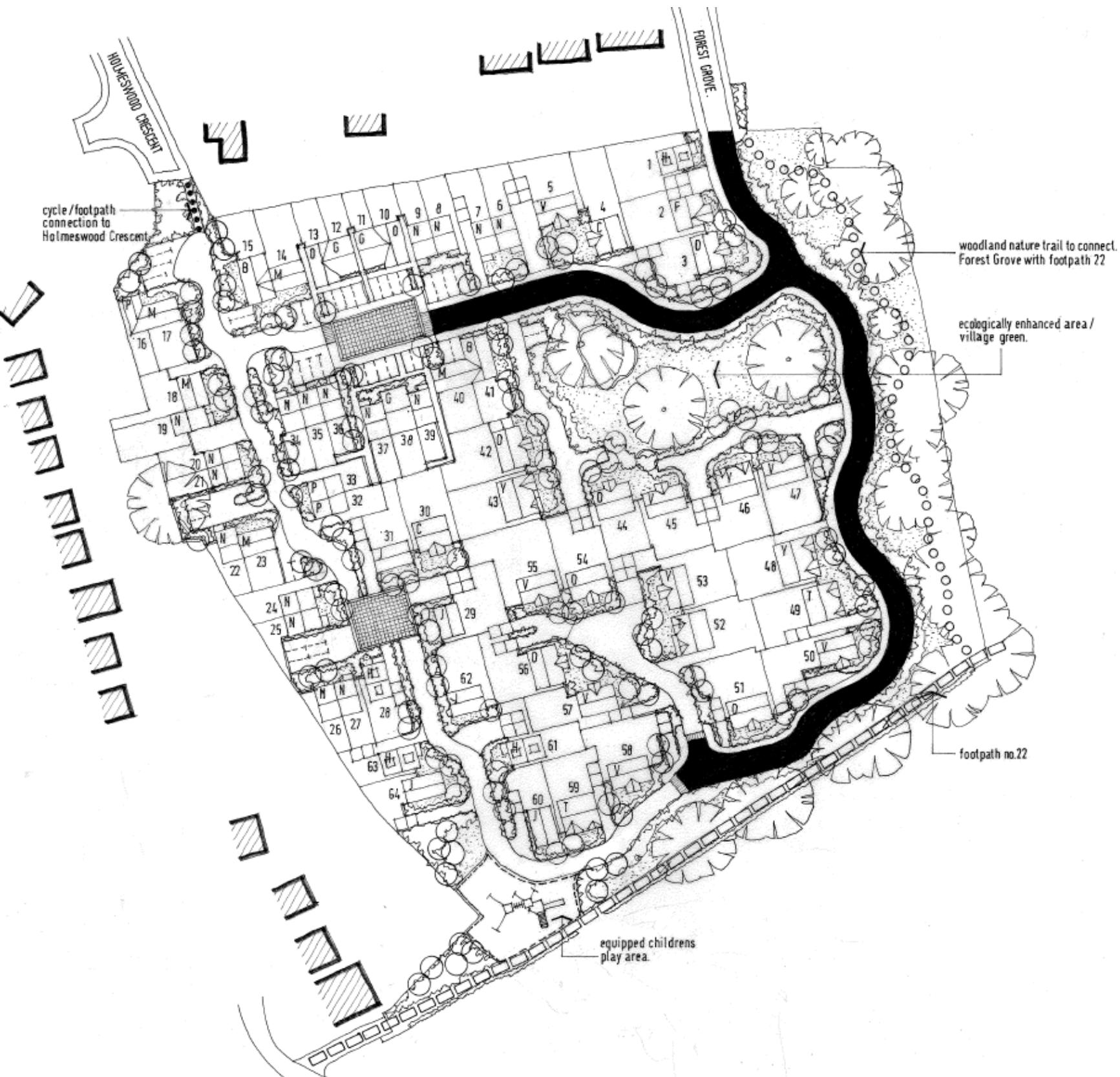


Image 16: Illustrative Layout

Design

It is proposed that up to 65No. dwellings are erected. This development density of 23.6dph has been chosen so as to make efficient and effective use of the land whilst reflecting the density of the surrounding development.

The proposed density level also enables the provision of a significant amount of open space including:

- Formal public open space;
- An ecologically enhanced wet hollow/village green; and
- Enhanced woodland area with woodland nature trail.

As only access is being applied for, the design aspects of the proposals cannot be discussed in great detail. But the illustrative layout demonstrates the development form that is anticipated will be taken forward at reserved matters stage.

The illustrative layout has been amended in response to the LPAs concerns. The key changes relate to the distribution of housing within the site. The density of development in the northern and western zones has been reduced, as has the use of forecourt parking. The central zones of the site are now higher density and the eastern zone remains lower density.

The proposed scale parameters have also been amended, confirming that only 1 or 2-storey dwellings will be erected. The parameters for each dwelling type on the illustrative layout are provided at appendix 1. Generally, the upper and lower limits across the site are as follows:

Height: 4.5m – 9m ; Width: 4m – 13.5m; Depth: 6m – 11m

The redistribution of the housing together with the reduction in the upper limit for height demonstrates that development of the site can reflect the density of existing development to the north and west whilst retaining a cohesive relationship with the countryside to the south and east. It also ensures that the outlook of neighbouring occupiers will not be adversely impacted upon.

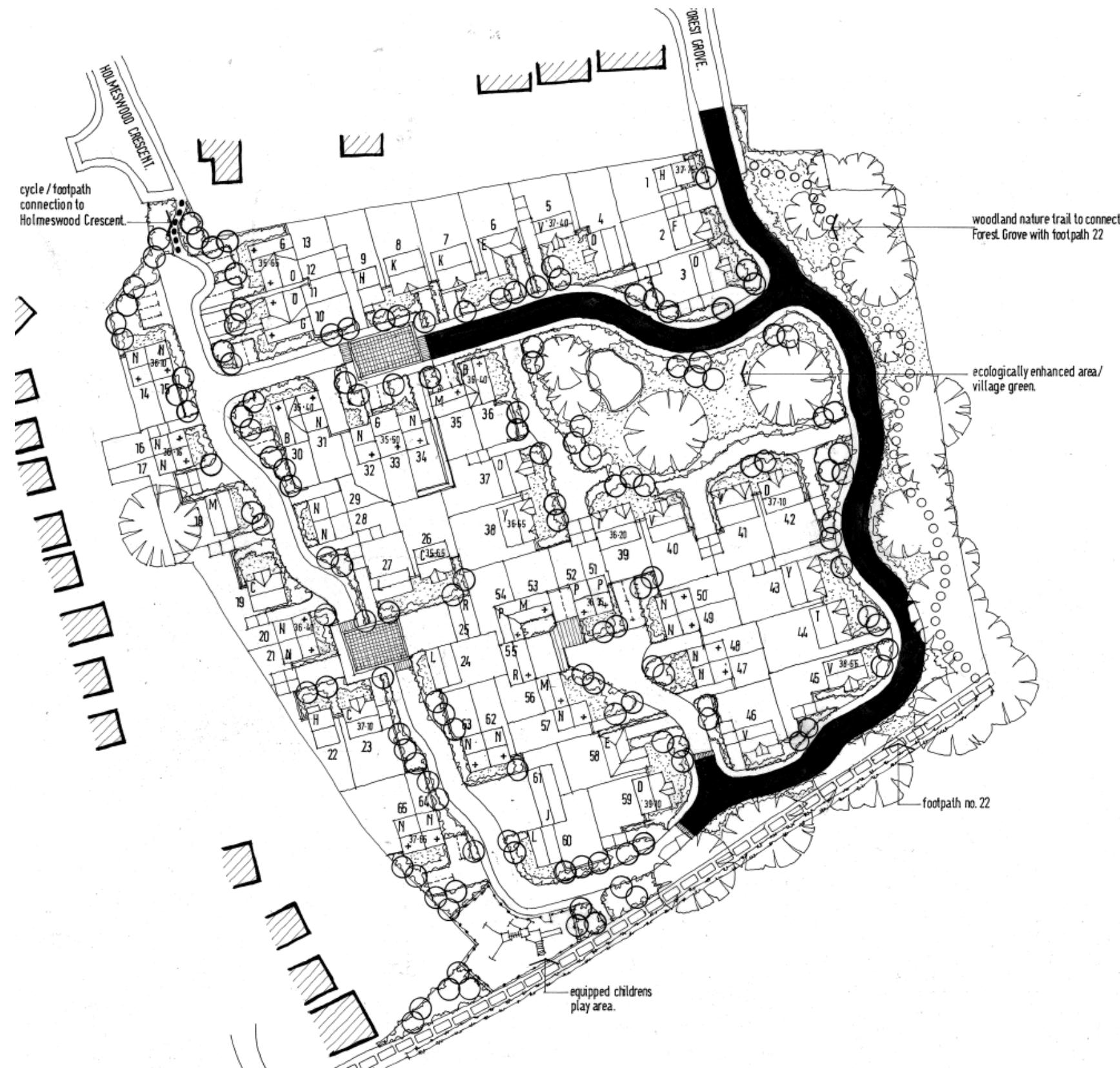


Image 17: Illustrative Layout



Image 18: access points



Image 19: pedestrian network



Image 20: linked open space strategy

It is proposed that access to the site be achieved from Forest Grove. The existing road will simply be continued into the site. However, pedestrian/cycle links into the site will also be provided via Holmeswood Crescent and FP 22 to the south west. This will create excellent permeability.

Upon entering the site via Forest Grove, pedestrians will be able to take advantage of the woodland walk that will run along the site's eastern boundary. This will provide a pleasant route for leisurely strolls. It will also provide connectivity between the existing development north of the site and FP 22 to the south (see image 19). The existing woodland will be enhanced through:

- Removal of non-native shrubs and replacement with native under-storey species;
- Installation of bird boxes;
- Introduction of native woodland herbs;
- Creation of dead wood habitat piles for colonisation by invertebrates, fungi and sheltering amphibians; and,
- Selective thinning/pruning of trees to encourage successful growth of others.

Other ecological enhancements will include:

- Retention and protection of boundary hedgerows;
- Conservation and potential to enhance wetland habitat at the wet hollow within the site;
- Landscape planting of native species; and,
- Commitment to a long-term management plan for the site.

The open space provision within the site has been sited so that it forms part of a linked open space strategy. As shown in image 20, open space will now flow from the informal area within the Jepps Avenue development, through the application site and up to the proposed access point with Forest Grove where the wet hollow and existing oak trees will be retained and enhanced. Artists impressions of the equipped play area and woodland walk are provided overleaf.



Image 21: Equipped Play Area / Amenity Space



Image 22: Woodland Walk /
Nature Trail



Image 23: orientation strategy



Image 24: indicative layout

It is anticipated that the residential layout is designed around the open space provision. Housing will front onto the woodland walk, village green and equipped play area. This will provide natural surveillance of the open public spaces which is vital for the creation of a safe and secure environment. It will also ensure an inclusive and legible development.

Inclusivity and legibility are key features of the proposed development. Feature arrival courtyards are proposed that will provide attractive focal points which will make the development easy to understand.

As shown in images 17 and 24 another key feature is the significant landscaping that is to be provided throughout the development. This will ensure that the leafy character of Barton is continued through the site and effectively soften the transition from open countryside to built development.

It is also anticipated that the ground levels will be elevated in the area of the site that are potentially at risk from groundwater flooding issues. This will have no impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents as the areas are central to the site as opposed to being along its periphery.

The design of the dwellings can be discussed in detail at reserved matters stage, but the assessment of the application site and its setting has shown that the proposals need not reflect development to the north whilst development to the west comprises of house types from a developer's portfolio. It is therefore anticipated that the development will comprise of house types from a developer's portfolio which incorporate some features found along Jepps Avenue and are constructed from materials that reflect the development which surrounds the site.

Climate Change and Sustainability

As only access is not reserved, aspects of the design relating to climate change and sustainability cannot be discussed in detail at this stage.

However, the indicative layout demonstrates that dwellings will be sited so as to have their main elevations facing south enabling them to benefit from passive solar gain.

There will also be shaded areas throughout the development, particularly along the woodland walk and on the “village green”, that will provide relief from the sun in the summer months.

Additionally, it is proposed that the dwellings are constructed to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, contributing to achieving a development that takes climate change and sustainability into account.

Access

It is intended that the development can be accessed by disabled and fully ambulant alike. Matters relating to access through the site can be discussed in more detail at reserved matters stage.

Summary

The proposed development is compliant with local and national planning policies on specific design related issues. The proposals meet a high standard of design and accessibility.

Character: a place should have its own identity

The design of the scheme has resulted in a development that will reflect the character of the area, whilst also being able to emit a character of its own.

Continuity and enclosure: public and private spaces should be clearly distinguished

The layout and treatment of the site defines the boundaries between public and private spaces and ensures passive surveillance of the public domain.

Quality of the public realm: a place should have attractive and successful outdoor areas.

The development will result in enhancements of views into and from the surrounding public realm.

Attention to detail of the proposed dwelling in addition to hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment will ensure that the outdoor areas provide an attractive, safe and secure public setting for the development proposals.

Ease of movement: a place should be easy to get to and move through

The site is very well located and is accessible by a range of means of travel. Its simple access and layout ensures that the development will safely meet this design consideration.

Legibility: a place should have a clear image and be easy to understand

Again, the site’s simple access and layout will ensure that the development as proposed is legible to all.

Adaptability: a place should be able to change easily

It is unrealistic to expect a purpose built residential scheme, designed to meet site and layout constraints, to be particularly adaptable.

Diversity: a place should have variety and choice.

The development will further diversify the housing types available within the locality.



Image 25: indicative layout

Conclusions

From the assessment set out above the following conclusions are drawn:

- the proposals will make efficient and effective use of the site in a manner that is reflective of the surrounding area;
- The significant open space provision proposed will be of substantial benefit to future occupiers of the development as well as residents of the surrounding area;
- The connectivity to be provided as a result of the paths through the site will also be of benefit to residents of Barton;
- The indicative scheme responds positively to the site assessment, advice provided by the various consultants and the Officer's Report to Committee;
- the proposals conform to the policies of the adopted development plan; and
- planning permission can be granted in the knowledge that no unacceptable harm will arise to residential amenity and that the appearance and character of the area will benefit from the proposed development.

This professional assessment of the proposals shows that the scheme meets all the policies of the development plan, and site specific requirements. It shows that the proposals meet a high standard of design and accessibility when tested against the requirements of national and local policy.

The proposals are therefore commended to the LPA for approval.

Appendix 1

Code	No. of beds	House type	Width (mm)	Depth (mm)	Eaves Height (mm)	Ridge Height (mm)
B	2	Semi-detached bungalow	6200	10450	2450	4800
C	4	Detached house	8100	7200	4800	7800
D	4	Detached house	9300	6300	4800	7650
E	4	Detached house	9850	9510	4800	7250
F	4	Detached house	7140	9050	4800	7850
G	3	Semi-detached house	6130	9850	4800	8250
H	3	Detached house	5460	7675	4800	7650
J	2	Flat over garage	13100	6100	4875	7350
K	4	Detached house	8350	9700	4800	7800
L	3	Detached house	9050	5550	4875	8100
M	3	Semi-detached house	8250	5550	4875	8100
N	3	Semi-detached house	5040	8150	4800	8100
O	2	Semi-detached house	5500	8000	4875	8250
P	2	Semi-detached house	4500	8100	1800	8050
R	2	Flat over garage	9850	6050	4875	7350
T	4	Detached house	8990	8200	4875	8600
V	4	Detached house	9700	6400	4875	8550
Y	4	Detached house	9200	8450	4875	8600