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SUPPORTING INFORMATION INCLUDING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THREE TOWN HOUSES LAND OFF BACK LANE, LEEK

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1. Introduction

The application site comprises a vacant plot of land situated on the south side of Back Lane, adjoining existing apartments which continue along this unadopted highway onto Belle Vue Road. The intention is to excavate the site and set into the slope of the land 3 storey town houses with garages at ground floor level and parking within the site curtilage. Vehicular access would be via the lane onto Belle Vue Road.
It is considered that the development would provide traditional family housing comprising three bedroom properties on a site area of less than 0.1 hectares. This is considered to be in accordance with market requirements for this part of Leek.

2. Planning Policies

09/0113/F OUT 27 OCT 2009

2.1 The site is situated within the development boundary for Leek as identified in the adopted Local Plan and which the emerging core strategy would recognise as being an appropriate location in terms of sustainable development policies. The site would also meet the "potentially suitable" requirements of the Housing Land Availability Assessment in May 2009 in that it is within the settlement boundary with no known significant policy restrictions, physical problems, potential impacts or adverse environmental conditions.

2.2 In addition in respect of advice in P.P.S 3 Housing and sustainable development policies generally it is contended that:-

- The site is a suitable location to offer access to jobs, shops and services by means other than the car, Leek town centre being approximately 10-15 minutes walking distance away.
- There is known to be capacity in the existing infrastructure to absorb this limited development.
- The scheme would support local services and facilities
- Other than excavation of the site (the applicant has an end user for the materials) there are no known physical or environmental constraints on the development of the lands
- It will be argued that the scheme is of a scale and characters appropriate (see Design Issues) to the locality, in particular the existing adjoining apartments.

3. Design Issues

3.1 It is the intention to create a form of development which would take account of the physical nature if the site, by cutting into the slope of the land. This would in turn require a three storey design to utilise the ground space in a similar manner to the adjoining apartments, but in the case of this submission accommodation at ground floor level would be limited and mainly for access and garaging. It is intended that the design parameters for the individual properties would be very similar to those on the indicative plan in the range;-

a) Height 9m-10m
b) Width 6m-6.5m
c) Depth 8m-9m

3.2 As the plans indicate, the scale and mass of the three houses seeks to mirror that of the adjoining apartments. This idea has been further developed in respect of window openings on the front elevation which seeks to maximise the level of daylight on this side to compensate for the reduction of light which would occur on the rear elevation with the height of the surrounding land, particularly with the ground floor, although this is where habitable rooms are restricted to a study. Garden areas would be in accordance with the Council's normal standards, and although the middle property would only achieve some 66sq.m of private space, and all the properties would not achieve a mean length of 11metres, the two end dwellings would have very generous sized gardens overall.

Access

3.3 Back Lane is un-adopted and although the highway is not of good construction, the informal view of the Highway Authority in their letter of the 6th July 2009 (Appendix 1) was that a modest scheme for residential development would be considered favourably, subject to adequate parking and turning and safe access and egress off the main highway. The scheme provides for garage space at ground level and parking/ manoeuvring space on the site frontage which would enable cars to reverse onto Back Lane and proceed in forward gear towards Belle Vue.

4. Conclusion

The scheme proposed would make optimum use of a vacant plot of land in an essentially residential part of Leek. In terms of latest government advice as set out in PPS3 Housing it would represent an efficient use of land which might not otherwise be developed because of the need to excavate the site. This factor is not considered to represent an issue or constraint which should prevent development as the cost would not fall on the public purse, and in other respects the scheme would not be out of keeping with the adjoining housing development which is similarly set into the hillside. It would also meet sustainable development objectives in that the site is close to all facilities and services of Leek Town centre and would therefore reduce dependence on and use of the car.