

**HORSE CROFT FARM
LEEK
ST13 6PT,**



**DESIGN AND ACCESS
STATEMENT**

In support of a Full Planning Application
Submitted in June 2013





Fig 1. View across site



Fig 2. View towards rear of existing housing on Tittesworth Avenue



Fig 3. View of existing access off Tittesworth Avenue

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Ascent Housing Limited to support a Full Planning Application of a proposal to develop 35 new family houses for Rent, SO and Sale, on the field to the front of Horse Croft Farm and behind Tittesworth Avenue, off Haregate Road, Leek. Ascent Housing is a joint venture company formed between Harvest housing Group known locally as Moorlands Housing and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) Moorlands Housing are a key local housing provider and manage over 800 properties in the local and surrounding area. Ascent have been formed as the delivery company with SMDC and aspires to develop approximately 400 new affordable homes over the next 3 years on sites across Leek, Biddulph and rural North Staffordshire. The proposed development on Horse Croft Farm forms part of the Haregate masterplan which has looked at 5 sites for affordable housing with a new community centre, public realm and improved play space provision.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the detailed planning application drawings and its accompanying documents including :-

Tree Survey

prepared by TEP

Ecological Assessment

prepared by TEP

Flood Risk Assessment

Prepared by Sutcliffes

Ground Investigation and Risk Report

prepared by Sutcliffes

BACKGROUND

The proposed site at Horse Croft Farm is located adjacent to the Haregate Estate and is located approximately 1km to the East of Leek Town Centre and extends to approximately 1.14 hectares.

The site itself is a grassed field which was part of the former Farm holdings for Horse Croft Farm. The site is served via an existing access road off Tittesworth Avenue, half of which will also be widened and improved in order to support the scheme as required by Highways.



Fig 4 Aerial View.

PLANNING HISTORY

Whilst the small area to the top of the site in the front of the farm has been subject to a planning application for 1 house previously, the main bulk of the site has no real planning history.

The site does not form part of a Conservation Area and there are no buildings of historic importance within the immediate vicinity.

Although listed as poor quality grassland, most of this site was however included as part of a Site of Biological Interest covering the old waste tip area. Having discussed this with both

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Staffordshire Moorlands Council and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, they have now reviewed its original inclusion and determined that this was incorrect, and subsequently they have amended their plans to exclude this from within the SBI boundary. Having confirmed this, it was also therefore agreed that a standard methodological approach in terms of the Phase 1 Habitat survey would also be acceptable. (This report by TEP has been included as part of the application.)

POLICY

As part of the requirement to comply with the Building Regulations, Code for Sustainable Homes and Building for Life, the intention is that all units are to be accessible by persons of varying abilities in a high quality environment.

LOCATION

The town of Leek has a population of approximately 19,000 inhabitants and is located approximately 10kms north east of Stock on Trent and around 21Kms east of the M6 Motorway. The town is served by both the A53 and A523 which offer links to and from towns and cities in the wider region. The site itself is located within the Haregate Estate which is located approximately 1Km to the East of Leek town centre and extends approximately 1.14 hectares.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Due to the sites close proximity to the town centre the site benefits from excellent public transport links with services running through the estate with Bus stops not far from the site with connections along Haregate Road connecting the site to the town centre and wider area.

ACCESS AROUND LOCAL AREA

There are a number of local facilities such as shops, schools,

ACCESS

medical centres and play facilities located on Haregate and all within a short walk from the site and, as can be seen from the attached photos, the area surrounding the site area is generally flat and easily accessible. Leek town centre provides a wide range of retail facilities for the town and its residents.

ACCESS TO AND WITHIN DWELLINGS

The aim is where possible to provide a mix of 100% / 200% 'in-curtilage' car parking to all new 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings, and apartments will be provided with 100% in-curtilage car parking. External footpaths will be at least 1000mm wide and any required external ramp will be of a maximum gradient of 1 in 12. Level areas of 1200mm x 1200mm will be provided at the entrances to all new houses.

The proposed new dwellings **will be designed to Lifetime Homes standards** and therefore will be adaptable if required to incorporate either a lift or stair chair and will meet Level 3 of the **Code for Sustainable Homes & Secured by design standards**.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The proposed site lies between contrasting developments.

The existing farm building to the east of the site have been converted and are a mix of 1 or 1.5 +storey units. To the west of the site, the local physical context within the estate is a large inter-war housing estate with a mix of tenure largely split between Owner Occupation and social rent. The character is all two storey in height, with large rear gardens and consist predominantly of semi-detached houses and short terraces. These local characteristics have been addressed in the development of the new housing proposal and discussed in more detail elsewhere in this Design and Access statement.

To the North are the playing fields of a local school and to the south of the site is the site of a former refuse tip which has now been formed into a local nature reserve and is a site of Biological Interest .

POLICY

The site has a fall across from West to East of Approximately 4 –5 metres and the scheme will be designed accordingly so as to minimise slopes etc. As previously stated, there is one main access off Tittesworth Avenue and this will be retained and improved as part of the development proposals.

In terms of the rich social context, the local neighbourhood will benefit greatly from the delivery of new affordable housing on the site by the provision of 35 well designed and constructed dwellings with private gardens and in-curtilage car parking. The legacy of this development will be the enhanced provision of housing as well as the provision of a new community centre which is subject to a separate planning application and which is proposed to be located on the corner of the Horsecroft Crescent. This new fit for purpose and DDA accessible facility will provide a valuable resource for local people.

PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT

Government Guidance in the form of the National Policy Planning Framework sets the context within which those involved in the development process should promote excellence in design in achieving a high quality sustainable development.

LOCAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Local Policy and Guidance.

Policy and guidance, which covers the local area, has been utilised to inform the design process. These include

Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

Housing for local people and Affordable housing SPD

Public Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance

Leek Town Centre: Final Master Plan.

Staffordshire Moorlands Open Space Sport and Recreation Facility Guidance Document.

Design Principles for Development in Staffordshire Moorlands.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The application has been developed to address key local planning policies within the Districts Council's Saved Policy Framework

POLICY

B13 Design.

The policy sets out 6 key design drivers to be considered in the development of a design which we believe our proposed scheme address as follows.

Our scheme demonstrates good quality design and is of a scale which is appropriate for its context, using materials which are sympathetic to adjoining dwellings around the site and the context of the estate. The scheme has a traditional appearance with brickwork and dual-pitched roofs and siting, alignment and massing all respect the character of the neighbourhood and is complementary to the existing estate fabric.

Our scheme has been developed with a balance between public and private space and seamlessly integrates existing public footpath routes and trees where required. Details of principal public/private boundary intersections are shown on our application drawings.

As part of the proposals, a new green public space will be created at the heart of the scheme which will maintain and increase the green open space within the Haregate area and help create green views and linkage through the site. A green open space strategy which covers 5 sites in the Haregate Area has been submitted as part of this application.

A robust Landscaping strategy has been developed with our Landscape Architects at TEP and their detailed landscape proposals form part of this application. Please refer to TEP Drawing number D3938.02.001A.

Amenity space and window provision reflects the standards required within appendix 3 refer to separate statement within the document.

Although the site does slope the scheme will be developed so as to accommodate the needs of people with restricted mobility. The scheme has been designed Lifetime Homes to provide access for all throughout the life of the dwelling.



Fig 5. Typical 2B3P Bungalow Type



Fig 6. Typical 1B2P Apartment Type

POLICY

The scheme has been designed in conjunction with the local ALO officer at Staffordshire Police and a Secure By Design Application will be submitted upon planning resolution.

H4 Location.

This site has been identified in the SHLAA as having potential for housing and given its proximity to the town centre and its transport links is considered to be located in a sustainable location. As such this is in accordance with the NPPF which presumes a favourable approach to those schemes which are sustainable.

This proposal for new affordable housing complies fully with this policy with the need to locate new development within the existing boundaries of towns, where it can be serviced effectively by using existing access roads and utility infrastructure and is sympathetic with the character of the existing area.

The fact that this site is now also exclude from the SBI further serves to reinforce and support the view that the needs/ requirements for new affordable housing in this area outweigh the loss of this 'poor quality' field.

H14 Local Need.

The Ascent Programme is a JV between Moorlands Housing and SMDC and has been formed to provide affordable housing. The development programme is only delivered within the SMDC area and its sole aim is to provide affordable housing for local people delivered and managed by a local RSL Moorlands Housing.

Out of the overall proposed programme of 424 units, 245 are rent, 125 are shared ownership and the remaining 54 units for outright sale which in percentage terms is 12.7%. The monies generated from the sale of these units helps to cross subsidize the affordable units within the programme. Residents for both rental and shared ownership units must meet the requirements of local planning policy H14,H15 and Core Strategy Policy H2,

Typical 2B4P House Type



Fig 7. 2B4P First Floor



Fig 8. 2B4P Ground Floor

POLICY

shared ownership purchasers will also need to meet the affordability criteria on the homebuy web site. Any units within an individual scheme staircasing for the shared ownership units will be ring fenced for the Ascent programme and reinvested in new opportunities exclusively in the Staffordshire Moorlands area. A more detailed explanation of how this provision will be delivered can be found in the Affordability Document supporting all the Ascent planning applications



Fig 9. Proposed Site Plan

T14 Roads.

This proposal embraces the requirements of T14 and complies fully with the need to avoid additional vehicular traffic flow by the utilising a site adjacent to the existing estate on Haregate. We have had discussions with Highways prior to the submission of the application and as the scheme is for 35 units, this falls below the threshold for a transport statement.

Tittesworth Avenue itself is different widths along its length and subject to some improvement works to this and the entrance of the site, Highway's have confirmed that they are supportive of the scheme. The applicant recognises the need to develop and submit detailed proposals to the Highway Authority for approval, in accordance with the design intent to seek adoption by the Local Authority using the manual for street principles as agreed

Typical 3B5P House Type



Fig 10. 3B5P First Floor



Fig 11. 3B5P Ground Floor

POLICY

during pre-application dialogue.

Appendix 3.

Our design proposal satisfies these policy conditions by All principle windows are located to comply with Policy A3.4 items (1-3) inclusive, it should also be noted that to ensure optimum natural lighting of deep rooms, some secondary windows have been proposed in some rooms that may not comply with the requirements for principal windows.

Garden size and length comply with standards identified in Policy A3.4 items 6 and 7

Ensuring that Day lighting standards identified in Policy A3.4 items 11 and 12 have been satisfied.

FLOOD RISK

ST13 6HA at scale 1:15,000



Fig 12. Flood Risk Map Environment Agency

Risk assessment

As shown above, information from the Environment Agency website illustrates that the proposed site is not located within a potential flood zone. A Full and detailed flood risk Assessment has been prepared as part of the application documentation by our engineering consultant Sutcliffe



Fig 13. Local Brick Housing



Fig 14. Existing Farm House



Fig 15. Converted Barn

APPEARANCE



Fig 16. 3D Model

AMBITIONS

John McCall Architects have produced this proposal based on specific requirements of Ascent Housing who will manage the properties for affordable rent.

The design brief was set to look at various site which had been provided by SMDC and to investigate there potential suitability for new family housing which would enhance the location and existing estate context.

The general desire is to provide a high-quality living environment which is sympathetic to its surroundings and reflects the distinctive characteristics of the area.

The proposed dwellings, based on our client's current requirements, are a mix of 3 basic unit types:

- 3 x 2 bedroom 3 person Bungalow,
- 12 x 2 bedroom 4 person House,
- 12 x 3 bedroom 5 person House.
- 8 x 1 bedroom 2 person Apts



Fig 17. Street View

EXTERNAL WORKS

The general orientation of the proposed houses needs to reinforce the current street scene, whilst preserving the visual amenity enjoyed by the existing residential building that surround the site.

In line with our brief, houses are to be provided with 'in-curtilage' car parking areas and private open space to the front, as well as private gardens to the rear. The car parking bays will be accessible directly from a new road accessed off Tittesworth Avenue which will also have improvement works.

This general layout should retain a fairly open aspect which will promote natural surveillance by the residents in and around the scheme.

The scheme in general forms part of the Haregate Master Plan providing new, much needed, high-quality family homes which will further benefit the area by supporting the local schools, shops and facilities.

Distances between the new buildings and existing residential units are defined to form a notional building line and has influenced the type of accommodation that is appropriate.

Our scheme aims to respect its surroundings in terms scale, massing and proportions.

In summary, the initial design principles are to :

- provide a desired range of house types,
- complement the existing urban fabric,
- reinforce current communal amenities,
- foster a sense of pride and identity within the local community.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

PRINCIPLES

As explained above, the proposal seeks to reinforce the existing street scene without unduly affecting the surrounding houses.

The opportunities and constraints of the site have been balanced and utilised in order to respond with a solution which satisfies the original design intentions.

The houses themselves are based on a traditional layout with front gardens and private rear gardens. A simple rectangular plan and double pitched roof characterises the main volume of the houses. Projecting boxes to the front will form entrance canopies and give the scheme a distinctive character.

The proposed façade finishes for the scheme are a mix of brickwork and rendered features.

A total of 35 units are proposed, 12 3-bed houses 12 2-bed houses, 3 2-bed bungalows and 8 1-bed Apts. All houses are to be no taller than two storey in order to respect the scale of the surrounding streetscape, itself composed of a variety of 1 & 2 storey structures.

All proposed houses will allow easy access according to the principles enunciated by the Lifetime Homes standard and achieve a minimum rating of 3 stars for the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The homes are predominantly dual aspect and laid out perpendicular to the streets so that window positions do not facilitate overlooking of the existing properties.

Gardens are mostly single aspect and will be screened from the adjacent properties to prevent overlooking.

Windows have also been added to gable ends and corners to ensure there are no blank walls and to aid overlooking and surveillance of the general street scene and public areas.



From the main road, the massing of new houses is intended to blend-in visually with the existing layout of the estate.

Hard and soft landscaping will be carefully integrated to create outdoor spaces which are encouraging to both safe play and social interaction.

The existing public footpath routes through the site will be maintained and also extended by the provision of a new 'supervised route' through the site and onto the local Nature reserve.



Fig 18. 3D Study Model

MATERIALS

The proposed dwellings will be designed to meet level 3 of the Code for Sustainable homes and incorporate brickwork masonry facades, tiled roofs and rendered features of high-standard detailing. The aim is to provide robust, durable and low maintenance homes.

The materials proposed have been chosen to sit comfortably within the location while allowing the scheme to have its own sense of identity and modernity. The selected palette should provides a balance between a contemporary solution and a scheme that is in keeping with its surroundings. (see fig13, 14 and 15).

Externally we propose to use 'traditional' materials including: brick facades, render panels and tiled roofs. The roof pitches have been designed with sufficient falls to ensure that any variety of tiles can be used (after agreement of the Planning Officer).

A common palette of materials, colours and features similar to that of neighbouring properties has been incorporated into the design of each house type. This provides a coherent integrated appearance and sense of identity to the development.

The dwellings are set back from the footpath and articulated with projecting boxes, which at ground level contain the entrances.



Fig 19. 3D Study Model

BOUNDARY TREATMENT

All proposed boundaries are indicated on the proposed site plan and Boundary details drawing. All units in the main will have open plan frontages with low dividing fences being a mix of low railings and timber knee rail.

The sides of the site will retain the existing fences / Hedges which are present or will be marked by 2.1m close boarded fences, which will provide safe and secure private gardens at the rear of new properties.

All rear garden areas will have fences to Secure By Design standards. As indicated on the proposed plan existing landscaped boundaries will be supplemented here shown to create buffer zones so as to provide enhanced privacy where shown.

HIGHWAYS

The scheme is an extension off the existing road network and will use Tittesworth Avenue for access. As part of the proposed scheme, an existing house owned by the applicant will be demolished to allow for the formation of a new entrance access and also a length of Tittesworth Avenue will be widened so as to meet the minimum required width for vehicular traffic.

The initial scheme has been viewed by Highways as part of the Pre Application planning process and comments made have been incorporated into the final submitted application scheme. As previously mentioned enhancements will be made to a large portion of Tittesworth so as to ensure this is compliant with the minimum Highways requirements

LANDSCAPING

The landscape proposal has been designed by a specialist consultant to complement the final scheme and ensure a sympathetic and sustainable proposal.

The site has been laid out to ensure that the area will retain an open and, therefore, naturally supervised nature.

Car parking to the front of the houses will be softened by the formation of planted bay dividers and shrubs which will be located in appropriate areas of the site to enhance security, privacy and provide existing/new residences with a greener outlook.

Where shown particular emphasis will be made to create

landscaped buffer zones between existing houses and the new scheme.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A series of consultation events were made in the existing Community Centre prior to the submission of this application and details of the various comments from local residents were collected and reviewed.

Many of the issues raised during the consultations have been looked at and where possible, the plan has been adapted and amended to take on board these comments and address the issues raised.

CONCLUSION

In developing this proposal, we believe that we have taken on board the council's aspirations with regards to:

- sustainable development objectives,
- national planning policy guidance,
- regional planning policy guidance,
- social, economic and environmental considerations.

We also believe that the proposed scheme will provide a small scale intervention of high quality, which will complement the existing surroundings and satisfy a key theme of Staffordshire Moorlands Council in the promotion of a cohesive and sustainable community.