

Design and Access Statement



Proposed residential development

Land at Highmoor Farm, Clitheroe

June 2020

Contents

1. Site Location
2. Planning Policies
3. Site Context
4. The Design
5. Conclusion

1. Site Location

The site, which extends to approximately 5 ha, is shown in Figure 1. It lies at the eastern edge of the built-up area of Clitheroe. It is located adjacent to an existing residential area, to the north of Pendle Road. The site comprises agricultural land, part of the former Highmoor Farm. The Highmoor Farm complex itself, which benefits from planning permission for residential development, is excluded from the application site. The net developable area of the site is approximately 3.46 ha.

The surrounding area to the north and west forms part of the built up area of Clitheroe. Land to the east, north east and south east is open and agricultural in character.

The site in context



2. Planning Policies

The following policies are relevant to the design of this proposed development:

Development Plan

Ribble Valley Core Strategy, Adopted 2014

The Ribble Valley Core Strategy was adopted in December 2014 and forms the central document of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Ribble Valley. Due weight should be given to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

One of the Council's Strategic Objectives, as set out at 3.12 in the Core Strategy, is "to increase the supply of affordable and decent homes in the Borough to help meet identified needs." A further Objective at 3.13 seeks to "ensure a suitable proportion of housing meets local needs."

The following Key Statements are of particular relevance to the design of this development:

EN2 – Landscape

EN3 – Sustainable Development and Climate Change

EN4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

DMG1 – General Considerations

DMG3 – Transport and Mobility

DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection

DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation

DME6 – Water Management

DMH3 – Dwellings in the Open Countryside and the AONB

DMB4 – Open Space Provision

DMB5 – Footpaths and Bridleways

Housing and Economic Development DPD

The Housing and Economic Development DPD (HED DPD) was adopted on 15th October 2019.

The DPD allocates the site for housing (Allocation HAL5).

National Planning Policy

The main national planning policy guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework says, in Paragraph 8, that there are 3 overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development. These are an economic role

(contributing to the economy), a social role (supporting communities) and an environmental role (protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment).

Paragraph 11 requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Section 5 is titled "Delivering a sufficient supply of homes". Paragraph 59 says: "To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed."

Paragraph 123 says that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. It goes on to say that in these circumstances: "...when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).

Paragraph 127 sets out the aim of planning policies to ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Section 12 of the NPPF is headed "Achieving well designed places"
Paragraph 124 says that: "The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve."; and that "Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

Paragraph 170 sets out the aim of planning policies to contribute and enhance the natural and local environment by "protecting and enhancing valued landscapes,...in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan"

It also sets out the need to "recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland"

Paragraph 172 advises that: "Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues".

Paragraph 180. Sets out the aims of planning policies to "ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should: identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light".

The National Design Guide

The National Design Guide published in October 2019 sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides planning guidance on a range of planning matters and supplements the policies contained in the NPPF.

3. Site Context

The site and its surroundings/ Built environment

The site lies adjacent to the south eastern end of the built up area of Clitheroe.

Like the application site at present, land to the east, north east and south east is open and agricultural in character.

Highmoor Farm is located on the eastern edge of the site and comprises a traditional stone-built farmhouse and outbuildings, with more recent agricultural sheds. The farmhouse, barn and outbuildings have planning permission for conversion to residential use (Planning Application Ref. 3/2017/1221).

The site is accessed via a track from Highmoor Park, /Pendle Road. The track leads to Page House, an isolated property to the north of the site, and provides access to Highmoor Farm.

The site is gently undulating with an overall fall from east to west, affording long distance views across Clitheroe and the Ribble Valley to the east. The highest point within the site (100m AOD) is the northeast corner (on the track towards Page Farm) and lowest

point is the northwest corner (94 m AOD) towards the site entrance.

There are two minor watercourses adjacent to the site:

- Shaw Brook adjacent to the southwest corner, which flows underneath Highmoor Park adjacent to the site entrance; and
- a minor unnamed watercourse along the northern site boundary, which flows under Bracken Hey.

Neither of these watercourses, nor the associated flood plains are within the proposed development area.

The site includes, or is bounded by, a number of large broadleaf trees and native hedgerows which provide a moderate degree of shelter and visual enclosure. They also make a notable contribution to the scenic quality of the site and its surroundings.

Landscape character

The Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) accompanying this application summarises the landscape context and the landscape sensitivity of the site as follows:

" It is considered that the study area as a whole is reasonably attractive, particularly towards Pendle Hill, which lies to the east of the site, within the Forest of Bowland AONB and which is highly sensitive to new development.

However, closer to the site there are a number of detracting features which locally reduce the scenic value and susceptibility of the application area and its environs.

The western part of the site is overlooked by 'modern' detached and semi-detached housing on the edge of Clitheroe. The suburban character of the housing estate with a 'hard', unbuffered edge to the settlement detracts from the semi-rural landscape to the east in which the site is located.

In addition, the recently constructed housing to the south of Pendle Road (Half Penny Meadows), approximately 350 m from the site, extends the settlement boundary towards the A59, further increasing the susceptibility of the neighbouring farmland to accommodate further residential development.

High volumes of traffic travelling along on the A59 Trunk Road east of the site, generates ambient background noise which reduces the tranquillity of the landscape through which it passes and

further reduces the susceptibility of the adjacent landscape to change.

In addition, the nearby telecommunication mast, sports pitches with dilapidated changing rooms to the east of the site also detract from the rural character of the area.

The site itself is not subject to any statutory protection, it is not within a National Park, AONB, Special Landscape Area, or Green Belt. Furthermore, there are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, or Listed Buildings, or Parks or Gardens of Historic Interest, within the immediate vicinity. However, the site contains features which make a positive contribution to the setting of Clitheroe, namely the mature trees, 'important' hedgerows and the pedestrian links between Clitheroe and Pendle Hill to the east.

Overall it is considered that the semi rural landscape within which the site is located is reasonably attractive and has some recreational value, although the lack of landscape designations and the prominence of the urban areas adjacent to it reduce the susceptibility of the landscape to further residential development."

In terms of landscape characteristics, the LVA advises that the site lies within

'National Character Area 33, Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill'

The Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill National Character Area describes the area as *"a transitional landscape that wraps around the dramatic upland core of the Bowland Fells, underpinned by Carboniferous geology. Over half of this NCA, along with the Bowland Fells, makes up the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty"*.

The Landscape Strategy for Lancashire identifies the site as lying within the 'Undulating Lowland Farmland LCT5' and the 'Lower Ribblesdale LCA 5e'.

Key features of the site

The key features of the site and its locality are also identified in the LVA and can be summarised as:

Landscape and topography

- The site is roughly triangular, covering an area of approximately 5 ha of 'Grade 3' agricultural land.
- It is currently used for grass production/grazing.
- The site is gently undulating with an overall fall from east to west, affording long distance views across Clitheroe and the Ribble Valley to the east.

- The highest point within the site (100m AOD) is the northeast corner (on the track towards Page Farm) and lowest point is the northwest corner (94 m AOD) towards the site entrance.
- There are two minor watercourses adjacent to the site.

Built Form

- Highmoor Farm is located on the eastern edge of the site and comprises a traditional stone-built farmhouse and outbuildings, with more recent agricultural sheds. The farmhouse, barn and outbuildings have planning permission for conversion to residential use (Planning Application Ref. 3/2017/1221).
- A single pole overhead transmission line crosses the southeast part of the site.

Historic Context

- Early edition OS maps indicate there have been very few changes within the site itself. The original fields and the field enclosures have not altered since the 1840s. The only notable change to this has been the construction of 'modern' agricultural storage sheds and

silage pit at Highmoor Farm, which will be removed as part of the approved redevelopment proposals for the farmstead.

Transport and connectivity

- The proposed development site is located on the edge of the existing urban area of Clitheroe.
- The pedestrian catchment area for the proposed development site extends to cover the local bus routes and services.
- There are, therefore, opportunities for residents to access a range of shopping, employment, leisure, and service facilities on foot.
- There are opportunities to travel by cycle.
- The site is accessible by bus and train.

Ecology

- A detailed arboriculture assessment has been undertaken by Bowland Tree Consultancy and outlines the existing species and their condition in detail.
- The proposal includes the removal of only a limited number of trees. As indicated on the Masterplan the scheme includes sufficient space for extensive new tree planting, in

particular in areas of proposed public open space, thereby providing a suitable opportunity to increase tree cover and species and age diversity within the site boundaries and, as a result, adequately compensating for the identified necessary losses.

- An Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken by Envirotech, ecological consultants. This outlines the existing habitats and species and recommends a series of measures. The appraisal concludes that the majority of the site is species poor grassland with low ecological value. Domestic gardens and sympathetically landscaped open space can maintain the ecological value of these areas.
- No conclusive evidence of any specifically protected species regularly occurring on the site or the surrounding areas is evident which would be negatively affected by site development following the mitigation proposed.

Heritage

- There are no designated heritage assets within the application site.
- Clitheroe Conservation Area, listed buildings and any

Registered Parks and Gardens would be unaffected by the proposal.

- There would not be an adverse impact on Highmoor Farm.

Recreation, Public Rights-of-Way and Recreational Routes

- The land within the site is within private ownership and is not a recreational resource, although there are two public rights-of-way through the site, from Highmoor Park and Bracken Hey, which link Clitheroe with Pendle Hill and the valuable recreational areas within the AONB. These routes are an important link between the town and the countryside.

Agricultural Land Classification

- According to the 1:250,000 scale Agricultural Land Classification Map 'North West Region ALC002' (Refer Figure 5), the farmland, within which the site is located, is Grade 3 'Good to Moderate'. (No distinction is made between sub-grades 3A, 3B or 3C).

4. The Design

Key design principles

The key principles underlying the development of the design for this development are:

- To achieve a sustainable development that is well integrated with the existing settlement of Clitheroe.
- To ensure that the development sits well in the existing landscape and with its neighbours.
- To achieve a high quality design delivering a mix of house types and sizes, including detached and semi-detached properties, with 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms.
- To ensure that the design is based on local character and incorporates local materials.
- To ensure that the design is based on 'best practice principles'. To provide a safe and attractive environment with pleasant streets and pedestrian routes, as well as excellent connectivity into, out of and across the site.
- To ensure that the design results in a place which is accessible for all.
- To ensure that crime and the potential for crime are discouraged.
- To ensure that the development is sustainable and contributes to combating climate change.
- To achieve a development that is 'landscape-led', with fully integrated green infrastructure.

Below we will explain how these principles have informed the development of the design of the development

Use and amount of development

The application site measures approximately 5 ha. The illustrative masterplan shows a net residential development area of 3.46 ha, with the remainder comprising public open space including landscaping.

The illustrative Masterplan demonstrates that the site could accommodate up to 125 dwellings, dependent on the final layout.

It is intended that the development would provide a variety of market housing, of 2 storey height. There would likely be a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom accommodation.

The development would include affordable housing, at a level, type and size to be agreed with the council. The

design of the affordable housing would be consistent with the market housing.

Layout

The layout will be based on a single access point off a new improved access road based on the existing track serving Highmoor Farm and Page Farm, off Highmoor Park. The street network will comprise two primary roads, one serving the northern part of the site, one serving the southern part of the site. Each primary road would have secondary cul de sac roads off it.

This 'traditional' street network will result in a series of clearly defined housing blocks. Block sizes will vary, allowing the development to have an 'organic' appearance.

The development will be easy to navigate, with a clear hierarchy of streets and a fully integrated network of pedestrian routes. This framework will provide a choice of interconnecting routes which will be easily identifiable through the use of key nodal features and other key spaces within the layout.

New pedestrian routes will connect to existing ones, to allow pedestrians accessing PROWs into, out of, and through the site.

The development will be 'landscape-led', with the incorporation of green routes and the creation of a series of public green amenity spaces, which will help break down the mass and visual prominence of the built form within the development.

It is vital that the scheme is easy to move through, and for that reason a logical framework to the development parcels is adopted.

The design will follow best practice in terms of place making, including:

- creating strong corners
- the use of building orientation and variations in orientation to provide variety and identity
- careful use of building scale and mass to add interest to the streetscape
- use of appropriate building materials and colour

Scale of Development

The scale of the development responds to the characteristics of the site and its context.

The proposed development would reflect this context, with houses being 2 storey in height.

Appearance

Clitheroe has a variety of forms of housing, reflecting its historical development.

There are therefore a variety of traditional design 'indicators' in terms of plan form and materials throughout the town. The proposed development will reflect these. The houses will therefore be essentially 'traditional' in design, without being 'pastiche'. A combination of modern and traditional building materials will ensure the provision of high quality housing, built to modern standards, with a high level of energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, whilst at the same time retaining a connection with local character.

The detailed design will achieve this through an analysis of street character, built form and materials. The detailed design will use a simple palette of high quality building materials, with colour and boundary details providing a coherence to the development.

Landscaping

Enhancing the green infrastructure within the site will help integrate the development better into the surrounding landscape and adjacent residential areas.

Integrating green routes and the creation of a series of public green amenity spaces will help break down the mass and visual prominence of the built form within the development.

Our intention is to create a wider network of green routes and establish a series of strong landscape features.

This response will not only break down the mass of any development, but could also benefit the biodiversity credentials of the site. Interlinking wildlife corridors would provide foraging routes/ habitats for birds, bats and small mammals along with providing amenity benefits for the public.

Access

The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Framework Travel Plan which examine the potential transport impacts of the proposed development. The full details of the layout and access are 'reserved', to be dealt with at a subsequent detailed stage in the event of outline planning permission being granted. The Masterplan demonstrates that sufficient parking can be provided for each dwelling.

The accompanying Transport Statement concludes as follows:

- The scheme accords with local and national policy to site development with linkages to other attractions to reduce trips and share trip movements.
- The scheme accords with local and national policy to work towards reducing trips whilst acknowledging the site's urban location.
- The layout accords with good practice.
- The site is a sustainable location for development.
- Traffic flows have previously been assessed for up to date levels, the location has no capacity issues based on a robust view of the flows and no capacity issues are expected to arise.
- All houses will meet building regulations standards in terms of accessibility into and within the property.

5. Conclusion

The proposed development, as set out in this application and its accompanying documentation, including the illustrative Masterplan, shows an initial outline of a layout which will create an attractive residential development complementing the surrounding area.