



# Report

GVA  
81 Fountain Street  
Manchester  
M2 2EE

## **Land at Chapel Hill** **Design & Access Statement**

United Utilities  
December 2011

## Contents

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Site Context and Proposals.....	2
3.	Policy Background.....	3
4.	Design Response .....	7
5.	Conclusion .....	16

Prepared By:



Status: Planner

Date: December 2011

Reviewed By:



Status: Associate

Date: December 2011

**For and on behalf of GVA Ltd**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Design & Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by GVA Ltd on behalf of United Utilities (UU) as part of the submission for: *Full planning permission for access, landscaping and the erection of 52 new build residential properties, the conversion of the former barn to one dwelling unit and refurbishment of existing residential unit (53 Chapel Hill) at Chapel Hill in Longridge.*
- 1.2 This statement seeks to provide the justification and information required in order for the Ribble Valley Borough Council to be in a position to deem the proposals acceptable and grant planning consent. The DAS should also be read in conjunction with the accompanying planning statement and other technical reports that have been submitted with this planning application.
- 1.3 This planning application has been prepared over the last 2 years to ensure that the views of the local community and other stakeholders could be given full consideration throughout the design process. Consultation with stakeholders has included numerous discussions with English Heritage and Ribble Valley Borough Council, the nature of such discussions have focussed on the St Lawrence's Conservation Area and the need for a comprehensive design response to ensure the proposed development makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 1.4 The statement will incorporate the following topics, as taken from Ribble Valley Borough Council's guidelines:
- [Site Context;](#)
  - [Policy Background;](#)
  - [Design Principles – Use, Layout design, Scale, Appearance design, Amount, Landscaping, Access and Parking.](#)

---

## 2. Site context and proposals

### Site Context

- 2.1 The application site is located within the authority of Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC). It is situated on the edge of an established built up area, approximately 0.5 miles from the centre of Longridge.
- 2.2 The site is located off Chapel Hill (B6243) and Chapel Brow, measuring c. 2.75ha (red line application boundary for the scheme is 3.4ha) with the majority of land considered as Greenfield. An element of the site can be considered to form previously developed land given that 53 Chapel Hill (an existing dwelling) and a former barn (which was last used for purposes ancillary to the residential use of 53 Chapel Hill), are in the development boundary and will be retained for a residential use.
- 2.3 The surroundings of the site consist of St Cecilia's RC High School, an existing industrial unit, a recycling centre and residential properties. Alston Reservoir is to the south of the site, this remains in UU's ownership as an operational asset. The site also partly falls within the St Lawrence's Conservation Area.

### Summary of Proposals

- 2.4 The planning application is submitted in full and seeks consent for a residential development (Use Class C3) consisting of 52 new build dwelling units with a large element of open space.
- 2.5 As part of the application a new access into the site will be taken from Chapel Hill, to the east of the recycling centre. The point of access has been agreed with Lancashire County Council during pre-application discussions. Access through the site for pedestrians and cyclists will be enhanced through the creation of a public footway running east to west across the southern section of the site to connect Chapel Hill to Chapel Brow.
- 2.6 The existing residential dwelling and barn (53 Chapel Hill) are included within the red line boundary and will be retained for residential use. These buildings fall within the Conservation Area and are considered to be buildings of townscape merit, although neither building is listed. As part of the application UU are seeking consent for the conversion of the existing barn for residential use, the existing house will also be brought back into active use.

---

## 3. Policy Background

- 3.1 Local planning policy is set out in the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan, adopted in 1998. The review and replacement of the Local Plan with the Local Development Framework is now underway.
- 3.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 saved all Development Plans for a period of 3 years following their adoption. Authorities have now been required to identify the policies they wish to be 'saved' and continue to use. For the purposes of this application, only 'saved' policies have been considered within this review.
- 3.3 The site is located in a sustainable location, falling within the settlement boundary for Longridge, it is within walking distance of a range of services and transport choices in line with national guidance. Whilst the site is unallocated within the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan, the site does fall partly within a conservation area and therefore the proposals have regard to the relevant policies as set out within the Local Plan.
- 3.4 A detailed assessment of the proposals against national, regional and local planning policies is set out within the accompanying Planning Statement which is submitted as part of the application package. Local Planning Policies are considered below.

### Local Planning Policies

#### The Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan (1998)

- 3.5 The proposed development site is unallocated, however following an amendment to the Conservation Boundary in 2007, it partly falls under Policy ENV16, within the St Lawrence's Conservation Area. Policy ENV16 is a 'saved policy', and relates to the restriction of development within conservation areas.
- 3.6 **Policy ENV16** states that development within conservation areas will be strictly controlled to reflect the character of the area in terms of scale, size, design and materials. Trees, important open spaces and natural features will also be protected. The desirability of preserving or enhancing its character is also a material consideration when deciding development proposals outside the conservation area which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.
- 3.7 The submitted application includes a Conservation Statement which identifies the key features of the conservation area that need to be reflected within the design and layout of the proposed development. The scheme seeks to retain all trees and will enhance the landscaping through the creation of a significant area of open space

and enhanced planting. It is therefore considered that the proposals are wholly in accordance with Policy ENV16.

#### *Other Policies of relevance*

- 3.8 **Policy ENV14** states the Ribble Valley Borough Council will apply a presumption in favour of the preservation of archaeological and historic heritage, with their importance being weighed against the need for development.
- 3.9 Whilst the site falls partly within the conservation area, there is little in the way of historic heritage within the site. The two existing buildings considered to have townscape merit are to be retained and brought into residential use.
- 3.10 **Policy ENV17** relates to applications for planning permission within or affecting conservation areas and requires any submission to be accompanied by information (where appropriate) relating to elevations, means of access and landscaping.
- 3.11 The application seeks full planning consent and therefore is supplemented by full details of the proposals for consideration by the Council.
- 3.12 **Policy ENV18** states there will be a presumption to retain buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 3.13 As stated, the existing residential property and associated barn are to be retained for residential use. This will improve the quality of both buildings and will therefore have a positive impact on the CA.
- 3.14 **Policy G1** deals with the design and landscape quality and ensures that development is sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses.
- 3.15 Residential development of the land is consistent with the surrounding uses with enhanced public access through the site. The existing landscaping is to be retained and improved through a significant level of new planting and delivery of a large area of public open space.
- 3.16 **Policy G2** identifies Longridge as a main settlement area and states that development should be within the built part of the settlement or the rounding-off of the built up area.
- 3.17 The location of the site falls inside the settlement boundary for Longridge and therefore should be considered as acceptable for residential development.

---

## Local Development Framework

- 3.18 The Ribble Valley Borough Council are progressing with their Core Strategy, having recently consulted on additional alternative development strategy options for Ribble Valley (August 2011). Ribble Valley Borough Council has now considered these responses and intends to publish the Core Strategy Preferred Option for public consultation in early 2012. The Planning and Development Committee were presented with a discussion paper on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011 regarding the Preferred Option. If this option is carried forward, there will be a requirement for an additional 454 dwellings over the plan period.
- 3.19 The adopted Local Plan which will remain the principal consideration when assessing the planning application in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Planning Act (2004), however, it is clear that the emerging LDF is gaining momentum and appropriate weight should be attached to the emerging Preferred Option given the evidence base upon which it is based and consistency with current and emerging national planning policy.

### Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 3.20 The Ribble Valley Borough Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The key documents to note in the context of the proposals are:

#### *Interim Supplementary Planning Guidance: Housing (2002)*

- 3.21 Published as a response to PPS3, it provides guidance for new housing development in the borough however does not replace or supersede the adopted local plan. When determining planning applications for residential development, the Ribble Valley Borough Council will consider as material considerations issues including:

- The current housing land supply position;
- The availability of previously developed land which would be capable of accommodating the development; and
- Any particular housing needs which can be shown to exist within the settlement.

#### *Affordable Housing Memorandum of Understanding*

- 3.22 The document is intended to be supplemental to the relevant policies contained within the Development Plan; it was produced in accordance with national planning policy as contained in PPS3, the Guidance on Delivering Affordable Housing Statement and the adopted North West RSS. The document states that 'within

---

*Longridge on housing developments of 10 or more dwellings, the Council will seek affordable housing provision at 30% of the units on the site.'*

- 3.23 It is considered that residential development consisting of 52 new build units on land falling inside Longridge's Settlement Boundary providing the required 30% affordable housing contribution in line with the Council's guidance is acceptable in planning policy terms both at the national and local level.
- 3.24 The scheme has been submitted as a full planning application to give Ribble Valley Borough Council confidence that the proposals are wholly appropriate for development falling partly within a conservation area. An up to date Conservation Statement has been undertaken to ensure that all key features were captured and enhanced when designing the proposed scheme.
- 3.25 The above section demonstrates that residential development of the land at Chapel Hill should be considered acceptable when assessed against current planning policy.



---

## 4. Design Response

- 4.1 This section of the Statement provides a description of the main design objectives that have informed the scope and layout of the proposals. This section should be read in conjunction with the application drawings and further supporting documentation as detailed in GVA's letter accompanying the application.
- 4.2 As the site falls partly within a conservation area, UU has sought guidance from a conservation consultant to which the design and layout of the proposed residential units is linked to. A full assessment of the important characteristics that the proposals will have regard to is found within the Conservation Statement which accompanies this application. It is important to ensure the design and appearance of the proposals enhances the original character of the area and is sympathetic to its surrounds. The layout of the scheme has been produced following consultation with English Heritage who have confirmed that they do not object to the proposals.
- 4.3 The application is submitted in full and therefore the following section sets out the design principles that have been followed in developing the scheme.

### Design Principles

- 4.4 The following key principles for the development have been identified from the detailed assessment of the site and surroundings and an evaluation of issues and opportunities which guide the proposals.

### Use

- 4.5 The site is currently rough grazing land and contains an empty house with outbuildings. The existing house and barn (53 Chapel Hill) are to be retained and brought back into active use. The surrounding uses include residential, school, industrial and a recycling centre, it is considered the proposed uses are compatible with those that already exist.
- 4.6 The land is proposed wholly for residential development (Use Class C3) with a significant element (c. 1.3 ha) of open space to enhance and protect the conservation area and the amenity of the nearby residents. The application seeks planning consent for the development of the site for 52 new build dwelling units. 53 Chapel Hill and the former barn are already in residential use. This would result in 1.5 ha of land being developed for a residential use which would equate to 36 dwellings per hectare.

## Layout design

- 4.7 The Masterplan (Ref: 08-107-0008) shows the site can accommodate the proposed residential units and also deliver a large parcel of public open space.
- 4.8 The layout has given full consideration to the principles set out in the conservation statement. It also embraces the principles of Manual for Streets.
- 4.9 The layout has been designed to retain the existing former farm building of no.53 Chapel Hill, see figures 1 and 2 below.



**Figure 1: No.53 Chapel Hill**



**Figure 2: Disused barn – adjacent to No.53 Chapel Hill**

- 4.10 53 Chapel Hill and the former Barn are identified as buildings of townscape merit within the conservation area, careful consideration has therefore been given to these buildings throughout the design process.

- 4.11 The Conservation Area Statement that accompanies this planning application identifies that much of the development site is not visible from public spaces and does not contribute directly to the Conservation Area. It is noted that much of the CA relies on a tight urban grain and linear built form and enclosure to define its character, this part of the CA is reliant on openness and views. It should be noted that these views are toward the Conservation area, rather than from it, as the site is largely invisible except from within. There are some glimpsed views across the site, such as the access road to 53 Chapel Hill, to the west of the buildings, through the narrow alleyway on Chapel Brow and from the west across towards the CA to 53 Chapel Hill at the bend in the road as the reservoir is passed.
- 4.12 The Conservation Statement suggests that any new development on the site should allow for viewing cones in these locations. The Masterplan and Concept Plan have given full consideration to these recommendations with the final layout protecting these glimpsed views and maximising the benefit of these to the proposed development.
- 4.13 It is considered that development of this site will not only contribute to a housing need but will provide a high quality residential development that will compliment the CA and add to the wider townscape in this part of Longridge.



**Figure 3: Development Concept**

- 4.14 A public consultation exercise was held and comments from residents were collated and where possible incorporated into the initial concept.
- 4.15 Following public consultation the overwhelming view was that development appeared over intense in the CA. In response to these concerns an alternate design solution developed a more open approach. This design response has resulted in a less dense scheme which enhances the overall setting of the CA, see figure 4 below.



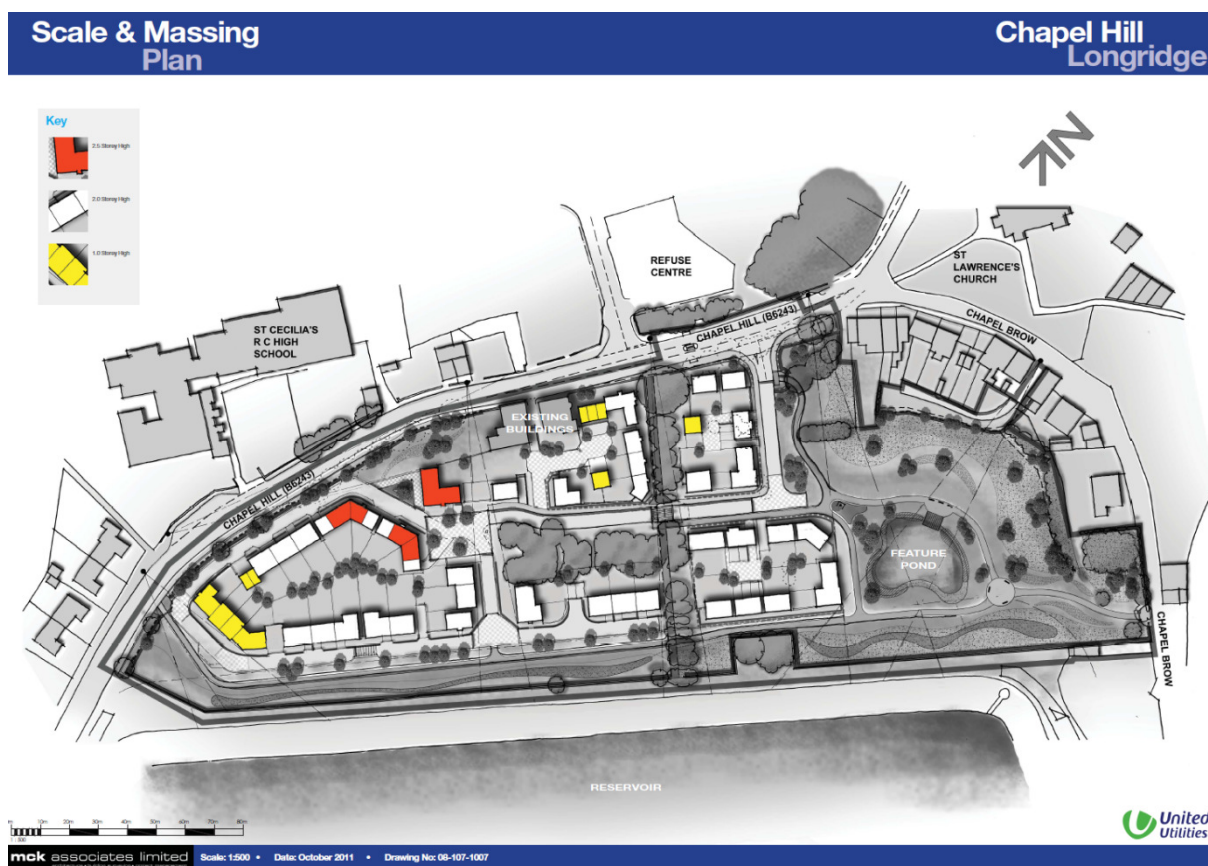
**Figure 4: Indicative Layout**

- 4.16 The layout also accommodates the existing trees and root protection areas and where possible the recommendations of the tree condition report.
- 4.17 The conservation statement describes the built form that exists in the conservation area. It contains three typologies - The linear row, the courtyard farm complex and the standalone buildings. The proposed layout portrays all three of these.



## Scale

- 4.18 In terms of scale, the proposed development contains a mix of units, some bungalows in the southern area, up to two and a half storey focal buildings within the central area. The scale has regard to the existing buildings within the surrounding area.



**Figure 5: Scale and Massing Plan**

- 4.19 The need for varied roofscape was an outcome of discussions with English Heritage. A varied roofscape within this scheme has been developed so as to give the appearance that this development has evolved incrementally, rather than the result of a modern development using uniform house types and materials. This approach reflects good design policy.
- 4.20 In accordance with Ribble Valley Council's affordable housing policy, the scheme will provide 30% affordable housing, of which an element will be housing for the elderly in the form of bungalows. Affordable housing will be distributed throughout the proposed scheme and built to the same high standards as the market housing to ensure that tenure of housing is indistinguishable.

## Appearance Design

- 4.21 In studying the findings of the conservation statement it was felt important that the choice of dwelling types and materials was fully considered in relation to the conservation boundary.
- 4.22 The dwellings within the conservation area are all 2 storeys built in natural stone with stone detailing and natural slate roofs. This approach ensures that the new development will reflect existing buildings within the Conservation Area.
- 4.23 This fenestration is sympathetic to the vernacular within the Longridge conservation area.
- 4.24 The dwellings adjacent to the conservation areas have been designed with a change in material and fenestration to contrast but compliment the dwellings adjacent to them in the conservation area. This approach results in a holistic and bespoke scheme which reflects the way in which housing has developed in Longridge over a period of time and respects the local vernacular. During discussions with English Heritage it became clear that any proposals should avoid 'over detailing' dwellings in terms of design as this would not be characteristic of a Lancashire Town like Longridge. The bespoke designs have therefore sought to reflect local vernacular, whilst creating interesting street scenes. This has been achieved through the careful use and integration of materials throughout the scheme and the inclusion of simple detail such as chimneys.



Figure 6: Street Scenes

- 4.25 The refurbishment and conversion of the existing buildings on Chapel Hill reinforce the streetscene to Chapel Hill and enhance the setting of the conservation area and reflect their existing form and detail.
- 4.26 The existing tree belt in the centre of the site creates a soft green core with dwellings set around them.
- 4.27 A feature square in the centre of the development provides a sense of arrival with a mix of 2 and 2.5 storey properties surrounding it to add to the massing in this feature area.
- 4.28 The development has been designed not to form a single residential development but to imply that the development has evolved over a period of time and as a result the conservation area takes on board previously mentioned details.
- 4.29 The remainder of the scheme is split into three distinct design solutions, two of which have a more contemporary approach to window fenestration, gable detailing and vertical emphasis with a change of material from predominantly stone to render and brickwork which is present in the local area. However all units are constructed with slate roofs. The careful use of stone and render throughout the scheme assists in the



creation of a scheme that is not overly uniform and which does not have the appearance of a development that could belong in any town.

- 4.30 The final solution being the single storey alms style units in stone render which form the approach up into Longridge, creating a transition in roof line on this vista.
- 4.31 The proposed development that fronts Chapel Hill is sympathetic to its surroundings. Development is set back from Chapel Hill to ensure a soft transition between existing and proposed development, this has been achieved by the inclusion of green amenity space bounded by stone boundary walls and high quality landscaping.

### Amount

- 4.32 The proposed development consists of 52 new-build residential dwellings, the conversion of one barn to residential and the reinstatement of the existing unused dwelling already on the site. This development will therefore yield a total of 54 residential dwellings (a total of 54,074 sqft. A full schedule of accommodation is provided on the proposed site layout plan (drawing 0008).

### Landscaping

- 4.33 A landscaping plan (Ref:D3100.001) is submitted as part of the scheme to illustrate how the development will provide a large area of open space with enhanced planting throughout. The plan also highlights the existing mature trees that are to be retained.

### Access and Parking

- 4.34 The proposed access point into the site has been agreed with Lancashire County Council and is detailed on the highways access plan. Full details can be found within the submitted Transport Assessment.
- 4.35 The access point and traffic generation for the scheme has been assessed by the Highways consultant and is considered appropriate, however following the public consultation and discussions with stakeholders it is proposed that the scheme also incorporates a realignment of the stone wall running along Chapel Hill to allow the creation of a new footway alongside the road and the provision of an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing.
- 4.36 The entrance to the site is to be formed to details supplied by the Highway consultant. The entrance provides a setting for the development with stone walls and existing



landscape. The access provides a direct approach to the open space whilst providing separation to the built form.

- 4.37 The pedestrian access connects Chapel Hill in three locations and Chapel Brow forming a complete pedestrian permeable scheme and embraces the public open space. It also opens up the existing tree lined link to public use.
- 4.38 The parking arrangement is generally within domestic curtilages and small inner parking courts. This reduces the dominance of the car within the streetscape.

---

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This DAS has clearly demonstrated the design process that has been undertaken throughout the development of the proposed scheme. The project team ensured that the views of local residents have been considered along with relevant stakeholders. Such consultation has resulted in a reduction in overall density on site and the decision to submit a full planning application (rather than outline) consisting of bespoke residential scheme for this site, and one that is unique to Longridge.
- 5.2 The proposed development will enhance the character of the surrounding area and deliver much needed housing (both market and affordable) to meet current and future demands in Longridge. The development will also open up the site for public access, providing publicly accessible open space, footpaths and cycleways, accommodate highway improvements, bring number 53 Chapel Hill back into use, convert the barn and enhance / protect existing trees and hedgerows.
- 5.3 This scheme embraces the design philosophies of the conservation statement and has been finalised after having thoroughly consulted with English Heritage, who have no objection to the proposals.
- 5.4 The proposals accord with Ribble Valley Borough Council's Local Plan Policy guidelines in relation to design and access and the scheme offers an opportunity to provide a comprehensive development of sufficient high quality to reflect the character and nature of its surroundings and also the conservation area.
- 5.5 The scheme is submitted as a full planning application thereby allowing Ribble Valley Borough Council to assess in full the impact of the development on the Conservation Area and its setting. The submitted plans have been designed with guidance from the Conservation Statement and it is UU's view that the scheme will deliver a high quality development which is wholly suitable development within a Conservation Area.