PLANNING DESIGN ENVIRONMENT

CHAPEL HILL, LONGRIDGE
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY REPORT
(Ref: 3100.001 version 1.0)
October 2011

for

United Utilities
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Lingley Green Avenue
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Written:	Checked:	Approved:
RJC	NH	NH

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TEP was appointed by United Utilities to prepare a landscape strategy for the proposed redevelopment of Land off Chapel Hill, Longridge to support a planning application for a residential development of up to 60 units.

1.2 The development includes residential dwellings, and associated infrastructure, public realm and landscaping works.

1.3 The following landscape strategy has been developed based on the Conservation Statement, ecological and arboricultural assessments, and in liaison with the architects MCK Associates Ltd who are preparing the development proposals for the site.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND APPRAISAL

2.1 Longridge lies within the Ribble Valley in Lancashire, located approximately 8 miles north east of Preston. The site is accessible from Chapel Hill (B6243) which lies adjacent to the northern edge of the site.

2.2 The site is surrounded by residential developments to the west and east. To the north is St Cecilia's High School, industrial buildings and a waste facility. Directly adjacent to the south of the site is Alston Reservoirs.

2.3 The eastern part of the site, including the existing residential dwelling and associated barn, is located within the St Lawrence Conservation Area. The western part of the site resides outside of the Conservation Area. The residential buildings to the west of the site are of brick construction, with low brick walls and/or hedges defining the boundaries. The residential dwellings to the east of the site, within the Conservation Area are of sandstone construction with slate roofs, and small front gardens defined by low sandstone walls with Hawthorn hedges in some plots.

2.4 The site is approximately 2.75ha (3.36ha application boundary) in size and consists of an existing residential dwelling and associated barn to the north, set in fields currently used for grazing and with two main clumps of mature trees and vegetation. The land generally falls from north to south with a change in level of up to 8m at its most extreme points. The site also falls gradually by up to 1.5m from east to west.

2.5 The site is separated into two clear areas by a mature belt of Sycamore trees across the centre. A further belt of predominantly Sycamore also spurs off at a central point to the west on a steep embankment. An area of woodland scrub is located to the north east boundary, with a further patch located to the south east of the site. There is also an intermittent line of native species along the northern boundary providing a limited screen to some of the adjacent properties on Chapel Hill.

2.6 The existing residential dwelling and associated barn are bound by sandstone walls of up to 2m high, generally with a peaked (either rounded or pointed) coping. The walls are incomplete in places. The southern boundary with the reservoir is also

defined by a 2m high sandstone wall with a cock and hen (castellated) coping style. The remainder of the land is defined by parkland fencing with a rounded top along the roadside, and post and wire stock fencing to the rear of the properties to the east.

2.7 There are no public rights of way within the site; however, a bridleway is located along Chapel Brow, to the east of the site, providing links to the countryside and nearby villages.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 The development proposals include the retention of the existing residential property and former barn (known as 53 Chapel Hill), the construction of new residential dwellings, a new access road off Chapel Hill and the creation of 1.295 hectares of public open space along the southern boundary and to the east of the site.

3.2 The proposals aim to enhance the St Lawrence Conservation Area by creating a more gradual transition with more recent surrounding developments and retaining views of the area from established key locations along Chapel Hill and Chapel Brow.

4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

4.1 The landscape design strategy for the site has been prepared in response to the landscape and following an ecological and arboricultural assessment of the site and review of the Conservation Area Statement.

4.2 An objective of the landscape strategy is to consider the character and appearance of the Conservation Area which is desirable to preserve and enhance, whilst providing a high quality landscape scheme that responds to surrounding buildings, green spaces and the footpath and road networks.

4.3 The Conservation Statement highlights specific aims to ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced where possible. The aims relevant to the landscape include:

- Any new development on the site should consider and the retention of key views into the site, such as:
  - At the access road to 53 Chapel Hill (to the west of the buildings) towards the reservoir;
  - View to the south through a former field gate (between 53 Chapel Hill and the properties on Chapel Brow) and along the line of Sycamore trees;
  - Through the narrow alleyway on Chapel Brow (to the rear of the houses) towards the fields and reservoir beyond;
  - From the west of the site towards the Conservation Area; and
  - Towards 53 Chapel Hill from the bend in the road as the reservoir is passed.

- Proposals should aim to retain or re-plant the trees that define the southern curtilage boundary of 53 Chapel Hill. This should particularly include those visible from the west, and the group of trees that defines the road edge from 53 Chapel Hill to the group of buildings at Chapel Brow;

- Proposed landscaping regimes should be simple and rural in structure; and

- The existing north-south trackway, adjacent to 53 Chapel Hill, should be incorporated into the scheme if possible, to form a pedestrian route into the site, and to join a new east-west route that starts at Chapel Brow.

4.4 The landscape strategy proposes a network of open spaces within the development that maintains the legibility, coherence and safe function of the reservoir, sustains the most important aspects of the site's identity and reinforces important visual buffers and existing wildlife corridors. This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- To provide an overall landscape framework for the proposed development that is both appropriate to the immediate area and makes a contribution to the landscape in the wider area;

- To retain, enhance and protect, wherever possible, existing vegetation that is ecologically or visually important;

- To provide an effective landscape buffer to existing properties which surround the site to the north, east and west;

- To enhance the existing landscape of the site and to provide an appropriate landscape setting for the proposed development;

- To provide footpath links through the development and to the wider community;

- To create new opportunities for nature conservation; and

- To utilise plant species that are in sympathy with the character of the existing vegetation in the local area.

5.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.1 The overall landscape framework will be formed around existing landscape features. It has been prepared with regard to the Conservation Statement which is submitted as part of this planning application.

Site Features

5.2 The site will be accessed from Chapel Hill (B6243) to the north. The access road provides a circular route around the housing development. Car parking for residents and visitors will be located within the development on internal lay-bys, or parking courts, reducing conflict with movements along Chapel Hill.

5.3 As outlined in the Conservation Statement the following key views have been safeguarded in the preparation of the landscape scheme:

- At the access road to 53 Chapel Hill (to the west of the buildings) towards the reservoir;
- View to the south through a former field gate (between 53 Chapel Hill and the properties on Chapel Brow) and along the line of Sycamore trees;
- Through the narrow alleyway on Chapel Brow (to the rear of the houses) towards the fields and reservoir beyond;
- From the west of the site towards the Conservation Area; and
- Towards 53 Chapel Hill from the bend in the road as the reservoir is passed.

5.4 The existing landscape features will be enhanced and supported by new landscape elements comprising:

- Pedestrian footways;
- Existing trees and vegetation;
- Feature Pond & Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) ditches;
- Hard landscaping;
- Boundary treatments;
- Road boundary planting;
- General tree planting;
- Structure planting;
- Hedgerow planting;
- Ornamental planting; and
- Grassland areas.

5.5 Proposals relating to each landscape element are described below and are illustrated on drawing D3100.001A Landscape Strategy Plan.

Pedestrian movement

5.6 Pedestrian access into the development will be provided to the north, east and west of the public open space. The existing trackway at the centre of the site will be retained to provide an additional pedestrian entrance that will create better connectivity and reflect the sites history.

5.7 The positioning of the paths in relation to the dwellings will enable a suitable landscape buffer from the property boundaries whilst allowing the opportunity to maximise habitat and surface water attenuation facilities. Seating areas will be provided in key locations to provide areas of public reflection. These will be positioned away from property windows to reduce privacy issues.

5.8 Pedestrian entrances into the open spaces will be defined by stone piers with block paved thresholds to provide strong gateways into the spaces from outside of the development. This will help to define the public open spaces and provide a strong 'sense of place'.

5.9 It is envisaged that the open space footpaths will be surfaced in self binding gravel with timber edging boards to provide a rural setting that is appropriate to the local area.

Existing trees and vegetation

5.10 There will be some tree loss to secure the development, although these are mainly trees of relatively low quality and value. This will be offset by a large increase in proposed new native tree planting across the development.

5.11 Most existing trees identified as trees of landscape and amenity value will be retained, maintaining the current integrity of the landscape. Where possible the retention of existing vegetation will maintain the maturity of the area and aid integration of the development within the existing site and wider landscape.

Feature Pond & Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) ditches

5.12 The current proposals allow for a new feature pond and a series of swales that will help to attenuate the surface water created by the new development. If required, additional underground attenuation could be provided.

5.13 It is envisaged that the proposed pond will be lined with either a bentonite or natural clay bed to create a permanent (weather permitting) waterbody. The banks of the pond and swales will be designed to provide a varied profile that will increase biodiversity and ensure public safety through ease of egress. The use of weirs / sluices or culverts will help to control the flow of water through the system, before entering the local sewer network.

5.14 It may be possible to provide a dipping platform on the ornamental pond to provide potential educational opportunities for the nearby school. Areas around the ponds and swales will be planted with a variety of native aquatic and wet grassland species that will provide valuable habitat to the local wildlife.

5.15 The final design of the pond and swales will be dependent on the restrictions created by the site levels and the presence of a water main.

Hard Landscaping

5.16 Hard landscaping will be used in various areas within the residential development to define public spaces. These areas of paving will reinforce identity and create a strong 'sense of place', whilst being sympathetic to the surrounding materials and soft landscape proposals.

5.17 High quality paving is proposed with the use of softly contrasting colours and unit sizes which will break up large expanses of paving. Changes in colour, and where appropriate texture, will be used to provide direction and define edges.

5.18 Street furniture within the development will be high quality, robust and sustainably sourced. Furniture must also be suitable for people of all ages and abilities to use. This will include appropriate siting to reduce clutter and provide seating at appropriate intervals. The use of information boards could also be utilised to inform visitors and local school children of the local wildlife.

Boundary Treatments

5.19 The proposals include the use of sandstone walls and parkland fencing along the Chapel Hill boundary of the site. This will be in keeping with the existing boundary types on site and those used in the local area. Existing hedgerow trees will be removed to open up views and improve visibility for motorists using Chapel Hill. The southern boundary of the site will remain as an existing sandstone wall.

5.20 Property boundary treatments will vary depending on the location. Dwellings within the Conservation Area will comprise of a low sandstone wall, with Hawthorn hedge to the rear in certain locations. Dwellings outside the Conservation Area will include either a Hawthorn or Holly hedge.

5.21 Timber panel fencing will be used to define the extent of property gardens.

Road Boundary Planting

5.22 The boundary along Chapel Hill will be planted with a hedgerow and linear groupings of trees. This will provide a naturalistic boundary to the site, reminiscent of a field boundary, and filter views to the new dwellings from the surrounding area. The line of trees will help to define the development and aesthetically improve and enhance the boundary and create a strong entrance for the site.

5.23 The tree and hedgerow species along the Chapel Hill boundary are defined in paragraph 5.24 and 5.35 respectively.

General Tree Planting

5.24 New trees will be planted across the site in association with the residential dwellings, general car parking areas and within areas of public open space. These will comprise native tree species that will offer diversity to the scheme and accentuate certain areas providing further visual interest. Tree species should reflect the existing species on site and the local area, such as:

- Acer campestre (Field Maple)
- Alnus glutinosa (Alder)
- Betula pendula (Birch)
- Fraxinus excelsior (Ash)
- Prunus avium (Cherry)
- Quercus robur (Oak)
- Salix caprea (Goat Willow)
- Sorbus aucuparia (Mountain Ash/Rowan)

5.25 Some of these proposed trees will be planted within ornamental shrub beds to provide a vertical 'green' element, so as to aid in diffusing the visual appearance of the buildings, whilst minimising maintenance operations.

5.26 Trees to be planted within residential plots will need to consider future growth and root spread and therefore may include species such as:

- Acer campestre (Field Maple)
- Betula pendula (Birch)

- Fraxinus excelsior (Ash)
- Prunus avium (Cherry)
- Sorbus aucuparia (Mountain Ash/Rowan)

5.27 Trees will be planted in car parking areas and dwelling gardens with 14-16cm girths, and with 16-18cm girths for planting in the public open spaces around the development. These trees should be supported using a short double stake.

5.28 Trees are also proposed in areas of hard standing around the development. Where trees are planted in paved areas, tree grilles and tree guards are to be provided for protection from pedestrians and potential conflict with vehicles.

5.29 The exact species to be used in each area will be determined by the location and proximity to the road and buildings.

Structure Planting

5.30 'Structure planting' refers to areas of planting used for general space definition and screening, or separation of areas of different function or particular emphasis. Areas of structure planting may be established, and existing buffer planting bolstered to the northeast and southeast of the site to enhance the landscape screen along the boundary to the adjacent residential developments. This will help to provide an appropriate setting for the proposed built development while screening views from existing residential dwellings and increasing wildlife opportunities.

5.31 Structure planting will consist of feathered trees (including species from the general tree palette above) and understorey whip planting. Planting will be predominantly native species to encourage birdlife and enhance biodiversity.

5.32 It is intended that the structure planting between the existing and proposed developments will complement and bolster the retained tree planting, helping to dilute views to the new buildings, whilst bolstering and strengthening the wildlife corridor link along the eastern boundary of the site. A native hedgerow with linear groups of trees will be planted between these two areas of structure planting to reinforce this objective.

5.33 Structure planting will typically comprise the following species:

- Acer campestre (Field Maple)
- Betula pubescens (Downy Birch)
- Corylus avellana (Hazel)
- Crataegus monogyna (Hawthorn)
- Ilex aquifolium (Holly)
- Fraxinus excelsior (Ash)
- Prunus spinosa (Blackthorn)
- Quercus petraea (Sessile Oak)
- Quercus robur (Oak)
- Sorbus aucuparia (Mountain Ash/Rowan)

Hedgerow Planting

5.34 New hedgerows are proposed in various locations along the development boundaries of the public open space, including along Chapel Hill and along the eastern and southern edges. The use of native species, predominantly Hawthorn, will help to provide wildlife opportunities whilst providing an increased physical barrier to the reservoir. A line of native 'prickly' hedgerow planting is also proposed along the stone wall to the south of the development to deter unauthorised access to the reservoir.

5.35 It is envisaged that the native hedgerow will include:-

- Corylus avellana (Hazel)
- Crataegus monogyna (Hawthorn)
- Ilex aquifolium (Holly)
- Prunus spinosa (Blackthorn)
- Rosa canina (Dog Rose) – only used along the southern boundary
- Viburnum opulus (Guelder Rose)

5.36 A particular feature of the planting philosophy will be the introduction of native deciduous and evergreen hedges to define the round boundary and the edges of dwellings and provide a rural character. In some instances hedgerows will follow one side of footpath routes to define them, but ensure that they are not completely enclosed.

5.37 The hedgerow species will include:-

- Crataegus monogyna (Hawthorn)
- Ilex aquifolium (Holly)

Ornamental Planting

5.38 Ornamental planting comprising of a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species will feature in the overall landscape scheme to provide appropriate 'highlights' to the development. The chosen shrubs will provide a variety of form, colour and texture.

Grassland Areas

5.39 The remaining areas of open space will be seeded with grass. Within the western area of open space and along the edges of the highway and footways, amenity grass will be established with a view to it being cut on a regular basis.

5.40 Native species-rich meadow grasses will be sown to areas within the southern and eastern open spaces with a view to less frequent cutting and the encouragement of wildlife.

5.41 Around the swales and the pond, a native wet grassland seed will be sown to provide a naturalised appearance that will flourish on the wet banks and increase the biodiversity of the area.

5.42 In addition, native bulb species will be naturalised in grass areas, particularly in the larger expanses of grass, in order to provide seasonal colour and further increase the diversity of the planting.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The landscape strategy presented in this paper, and on drawing D3100.001B, responds to the existing landscape character of the site. It draws upon the opportunities presented to integrate the new development into the strongest aspects of the present character and to enhance aspects of screening and assimilation within the wider landscape whilst retaining key features serving this function.

6.2 The strategy will result in a strong and coherent landscape character which serves the site well as a key feature within this part of Longridge and will assist in confirming the development as a valued and attractive residential development.

6.3 The scheme will enhance the St Lawrence Conservation Area, sensitively integrate the development into the town, provide a new open space for the use of the wider public and increase the biodiversity of the site.

DRAWINGS

KEY

Key views

Existing Features

- Existing trees
- Existing stone wall retained/rebuilt
- Existing stone wall retained reduced to 1m high
- Existing parkland fencing with curved top (ie. Cheshire railing)
- Existing waterbody

Proposed Features

- Footpath network
- Formal entrance points
- Dipping platform
- Informal seating
- 1.8m Brick screen wall
- 1.8m Stone screen wall
- 1.8m closeboard fence
- 1.5m Closeboard fence
- 1.0m Retaining stone wall
- 900mm Stone wall
- Parkland fencing with curved top (ie. Cheshire railing)
- Proposed waterbody
- Water attenuation pond/swale (dependent on levels & water main)
- Marginal aquatic planting
- Tree planting
- Ornamental planting
- Amenity grassland
- Species rich meadow grassland
- Bulb planting
- Hedgerow planting

Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date
B	Amendments to [illegible] layout changes	RJC	NH	10.12.11
A	Species rich grass and increased [illegible] of POS & ground [illegible]	RJC	NH	24.10.11

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Project

Chapel Hill, Longridge

Title

Landscape Strategy Plan

Drwg No		
D3100.001B		
Scale: 1:500 @ A1		Date: 11/10/11
Drawn: LG	Checked: NH	Approved: RJC