

Land off Langley Lane, Birch

Design and Access Statement



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Design and Access Statement

1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of Eccleston Homes planning application to redevelop the land off Langley Lane, Birch for residential use.

The structure and content of the statement follows the Guidance provided by CABE. The content page lists the main headings that have been considered.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the proposed drawings and the documents submitted in support of the planning application.



2. Location and Analysis

The site comprises approximately 3.28 acres and is located in the Birch/Bowlee area of the West Middleton Ward, between the urban areas of Middleton and Heywood. The site is to the south of Langley Lane (which forms its access point) and east of Heywood Old Road (A6045). It is bound to the west by dwellings and their gardens along Heywood Old Road. Whittle Brook is located to the south and to the east are residential properties and their gardens. The site is bound by Langley Lane to the north, which is characterised by tall, mature vegetation along the length of the application site. St Mary's Church lies on the opposite side of Langley Lane with the Birch Pet Hotel in situ further east.

The site is located east of the Birch Conservation Area which extends north along Heywood Old Road into Birch village from the southwest corner of the wider grazing land where it meets Whittle Brook. The site itself comprises a broadly square greenfield parcel of land in the form of a field. The site lies outside of the Defined Urban Area and is designated as Protected Open Land and a Green Space Corridor as set out in the UDP Proposals Map.

The site has an existing agricultural access via Langley Lane. There are footways along both sides of Langley Lane, connecting the site to Heywood Old Road to the west and Hollin Lane to the east.

The site rises from the south to the north, with the highest point being fairly central. The northern boundary is formed by a post and wire fence and a vegetated belt, which is mainly comprised of semi to early mature Ash and Oak trees. The fence continues along the eastern boundary and part of the western boundary. The remainder of the western boundary is formed by varied domestic boundary treatment. The southern boundary is formed by Whittle Brook.

The rear gardens of residential dwellings are present along the eastern and western boundaries of the site.

Birch Village Conservation Area

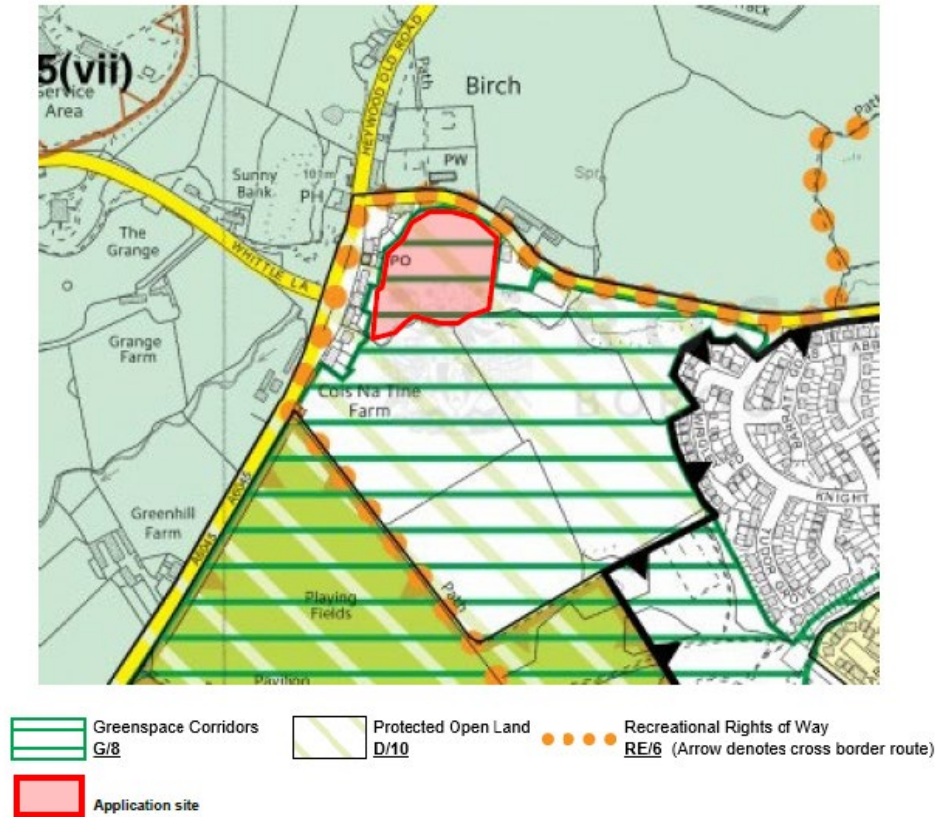
The Conservation Area Appraisal adopted as supplementary planning guidance in 2013 fully assesses the special interest of the Conservation Area using the above assessment criteria. The following excerpt from the Conservation Area Appraisal summarises the special interest and significance of the Birch Village Conservation Area.

The special architectural and historic interest of the Birch Conservation Area lies predominantly in its distinctive townscape (formed along the line of Heywood Old Road) as well as its association with notable architect, Edgar Wood.

The character of the Conservation Area therefore lies in the linear, road-orientated form of the townscape and the quality of the architecture along its length. This special interest can be summarised as follows;

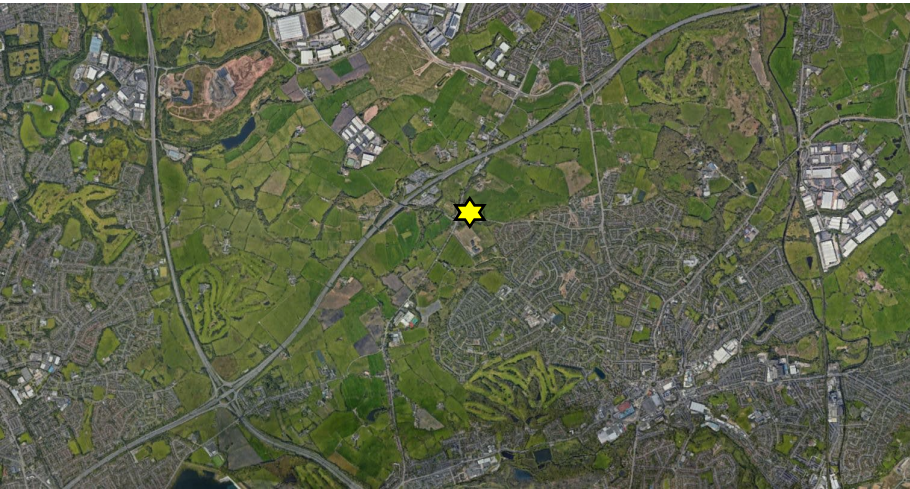
- Strong association with influential architect, Edgar Wood (including the Grade II listed Birch Drinking Fountain);
- The close historic and spatial relationship between the architecture of the village and Heywood Old Road, creating a linear townscape;
- The characteristic combination of early 19th century industrial architecture and late 19th century high quality Arts and Crafts style residences;
- Distinctive local architectural detail - such as stylised gable ends, decorative roof ridges, flower-motif terracotta tile work and projecting bay windows;
- Following the ICOMOS criteria, the Conservation Area is assessed as having a medium level of significance, as it is a Conservation Area containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character.

Design and Access Statement



Local context

There are local services within the area and beyond which are well served by shops and services with a varied local housing stock that includes estates of terraced, semi detached and detached houses, which reflects the social mix. The area has a mixed community that includes many at or above the national salary, over time it has achieved a natural density and diversity to support a strong local economy and infrastructure, with a wide variety of local facilities and services readily available, and well able to support this modest residential development.



2. Location and Analysis CONT

Local character

A more detailed analysis of the local area (within 500m of the site) reveals a wide variety of urban grain, built form & footprint, scale, massing, architectural styles, detailing and materials.

This ranges from large detached houses to semi detached and terraced houses all built at various times over the last century or so and reflecting the fashions of the day. Consequently it is difficult, if not impossible, to define a local character. What can be defined is the dominance of residential properties of broadly domestic scale and proportions characterised by brick facing, contrast brick detailing and sandstone dressing in many instances.

Within the immediate location of the site, the houses along Heywood Old Road form a strong building line which have all been constructed in different materials

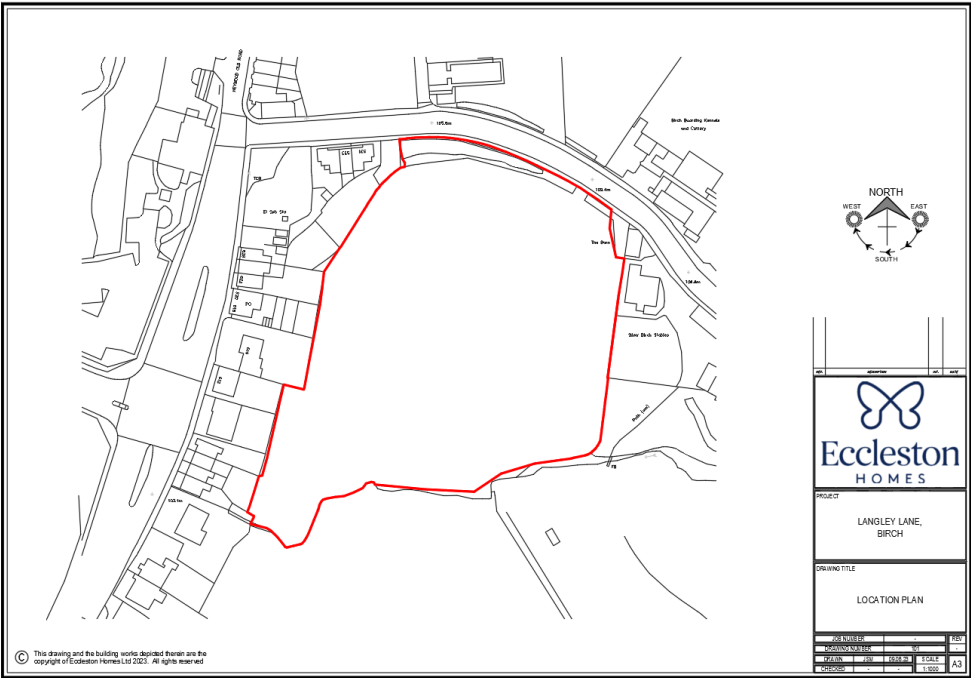
Photographic analysis

On the following page, there is a photographic analysis of the site and it's immediate surroundings.



Local Character

Location Plan



Design and Access Statement



Plate 6

Plate 5

Plate 1

Plate 2

Plate 3

Plate 4

Our vision for the redevelopment of the site is to create places for people which can improve their quality of life. To do this we introduce all of the social environmental and economic elements that help to make attractive vibrant places to live, so far as the scale of the development will allow.

Details

The proposal is to construct 23 no. 3 & 4 bedroom, 1, 2 and 2.5 storey dwellings with associated access roads, parking and gardens.

The house types designed by MCK Associates reflect the setting of the site and the wider area. MCK have avoided pastiche design techniques and opted for Arts & Crafts style quality housing with a historical setting underpinned by nature. This approach is an effort to add the next layer of design to the area and enhance visual interest. The properties replicate the external appearance of the properties within the area and will comprise of red/brown brick and grey roof tiles.

The key development principles listed below respond to the aspirations of the relevant policies and guidance to achieve high quality design.

Key development principles include:

- Create a high quality sustainable redevelopment making the most efficient use of the land whilst reflecting the grain and character of the surrounding area, respecting the privacy and amenity of both new and existing residents.
- Create a public realm that is permeable, active and integrated with the existing neighbourhood, promoting supervision and security, whilst including access and facilities for servicing the new dwellings.
- Provide open space and facilities, in the form of private gardens proportionate to the scale and context of the development.
- Vary building heights and forms to provide articulation and interest in the street scene, whilst respecting the amenity and character of the surrounding area.
- Provide a range of dwelling types and sizes to create an inclusive and sustainable development whilst contributing to the diversity of the wider community.
- Create a development that embraces the principles of sustainability and energy conservation.

4. Consultation and Design progression

The proposals are the result of a process of discussion, layering of information, design progression, consultation and review, taking account of all of the opportunities and constraints. The approved Planning Application – 18/00869/FUL has accepted the principle of residential development and the comments received during the application process have fed into the design evolution of the scheme.

Design progression

The extent and shape of the site as well as the various constraints and opportunities that it presents have guided the layout which responds to the character of the landscape and local context, the site constraints and to the opportunities presented by the existing features.



5. Site Context

This section provides an appraisal of the wider site context in order to ensure the physical, social and economic integration of the development proposals. The Context Plan illustrates the site's location relative to the surrounding context, including land uses, local facilities and public transport infrastructure.

The site is located in Birch to the North West of Middleton, Greater Manchester in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, approximately 2.5 miles from Middleton to the south and 5 miles to Bury, north west of the site.

The site is well connected via public transport, allowing for reaching the Middleton Bus Station within 35-46 minutes and Bury Station within 44 minutes by bus. Bus stops on Heywood Old Road are a short distance from the site and provide regular services to the wider area.

The site forms part of a junction with the A6045, Heywood Old Road to the west and Langley Lane to the north, while the south edge is confined by open green space.

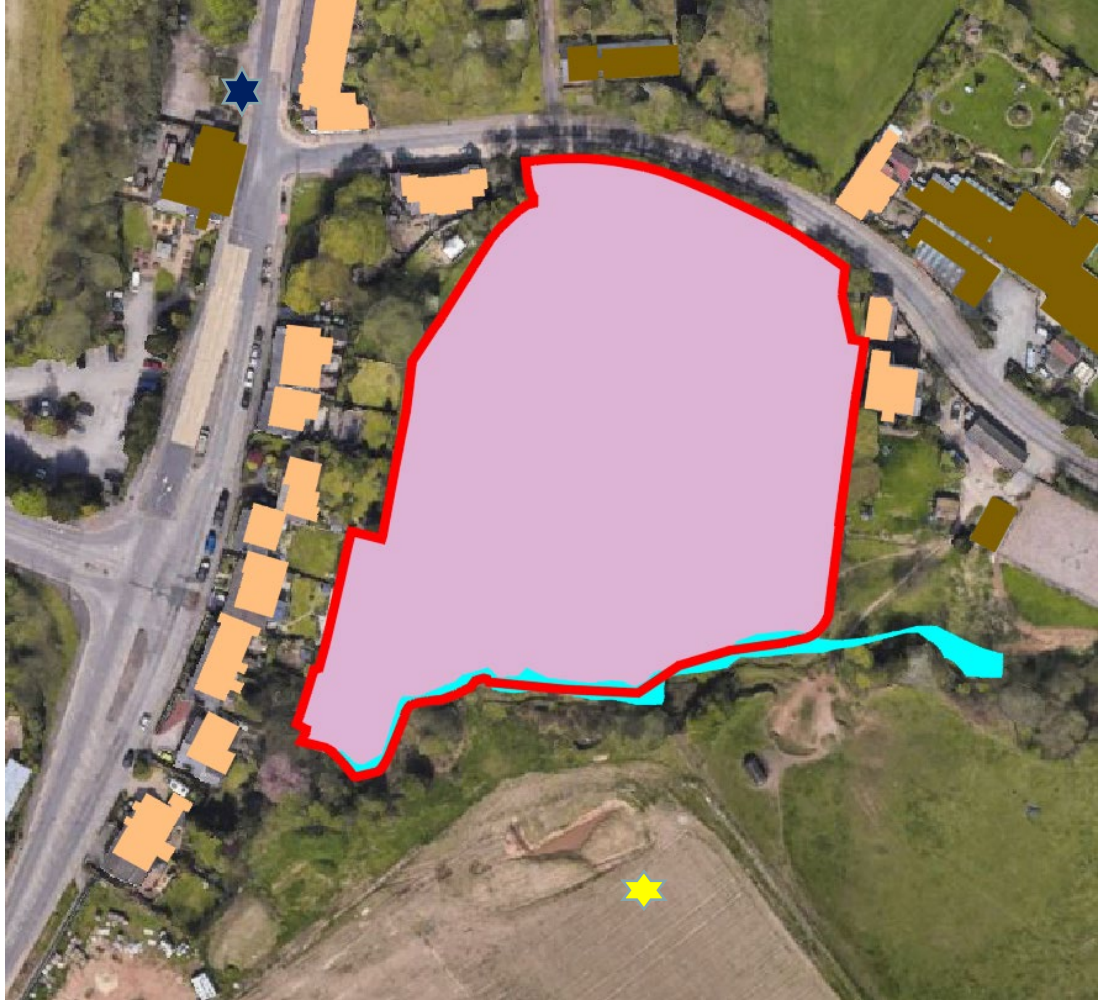
The proximity to the M66 and M62 provides strategic connections to the wider area, including Middleton and Bury. The network of A roads also provides strategic connections to Manchester (34 - 36 minutes).

A public right of way (PROW) runs along the northern boundary of the POS south of the application site. Whilst views of the site are available from the PROW previously, they will be obstructed by the new secondary school.

A network of PROW paths exist to the north of the site linking Langley Lane to Top O Th' Hill and the wider countryside.

The nearest bus stops to the site are located to the west of the site on Heywood Old Road approximately 180 metres from the centre of the site, around a 2 minute walk, consisting of a bus stop pole and timetable information. There are also further bus stops located further along Windermere Road approximately 1,220 metres from the site, around 15 minutes' walk.

The surrounding context is strongly influenced by its heritage, with clearly defined character areas reflecting the growth of the village over time. It is noticeable that the historic context of Birch, developed along Heywood Old Road, has a distinct character with its linear settlement form following the road and traditional architectural features. The properties are often arranged in runs of terraces facing the street, with the occasional larger detached property interspersed. Generally, the urban form is well-defined with a clear build line addressing the street, contributing to a feel of comfortable enclosure. The urban grain is loosened by agricultural fields, providing strong visual ties with the surrounding landscape and countryside.



KEY & TARGET NOTES

- Proposed Development
- Existing Residential Properties
- Commercial Buildings
- Whittle Brook and Subsidiaries
- Existing School
- Bus Stop

6. Opportunities and Constraints

Constraints

Whilst the site benefits from a small frontage onto Langley Lane, the remaining boundaries are inaccessible due to existing land-uses and fully enclosed boundaries.

The site is a green field with existing trees present along Langley Lane and to the periphery of the development. While some of the existing trees along the northern boundary will need to be removed to provide access into the site, the existing bank will largely be retained and replacement planting can be achieved. A vegetated screen will be retained along Langley Lane and further planting will be provided throughout the site.

Drainage connections from the development site will discharge the foul water into the existing infrastructure and the surface water to Whittle Brook.

There are no public rights of way affecting the site.

The site is located within flood zone 1 based on the Environment Agency Flood Zone Maps.

The development proposals are designed to incorporate as many natural landscape features which surround the site.

Careful consideration has been given to the layout of the development so that it does not impact negatively on existing residential properties. The proposed vehicular access into the site will be taken from Langley Lane and will be constructed to adoptable standards.

The site rises from south to north with the highest point being fairly central.

E3P were commissioned by the previous applicant to undertake a Noise Impact Assessment for a proposed residential development on land off Langley Lane in Birch, Rochdale.

Road traffic and Birch Pet Hotel sound measurements, undertaken in May 2018 by a third party, have been used to inform the assessment. The results of which were used to inform a 3D noise model. The model was used to assess road traffic sound impact in external amenity areas and impacting upon proposed facades. Calculations for the Birch Pet Hotel were also undertaken.

The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the criterion, for day and night, given in BS 8233:2014 as well as consideration to the IEMA Guidelines for dogs barking.

The assessment has determined that a whole dwelling ventilation system is required for certain plots due to the impact of noise when considering the need for ventilation. Overheating can be mitigated via an open window due to the lower risk noise levels and that other openings are available on much quieter facades. Acoustic barriers have also been recommended to control road traffic noise and noise from the Birch Pet Hotel.

As such, the assessment has shown, with mitigation measures in place, that no adverse impact is predicted day or night at the receptors due to road traffic sound.



KEY & TARGET NOTES

-   Existing highway
 Views into the site
 Noise Source
 Levels
 Existing dense planting

Opportunities

Development of the site for residential use presents an opportunity to significantly improve the quality of the streetscape which can be viewed from Langley Lane. The proposed development presents an opportunity to introduce trees and soft landscape elements along the site's boundaries (within both the public realm and front gardens of properties), significantly improving the visual appeal of the road.

The site will benefit from limited visual frontage to the northern boundary but creating the opportunity for plots 1 and 23, a dual aspect property to strengthen the residential character. The location of the site along an important gateway within Birch presents an opportunity to provide a landmark development to signal the transition between the suburban character of the residential estates which are located further a field. The site is within an acceptable cycle distance of a range of areas and associated facilities, cycling is considered to be a viable alternative to private car use for prospective residents and National Cycle Route 66 is located 3.2km from the centre of the site which runs from central Manchester to Bradford, Leeds, York, Beverley and Kingston upon Hull.

8. Layout Proposals

Our vision for the redevelopment of the site is to create places for people which can improve their quality of life. To do this we introduce all of the social environmental and economic elements that help to make attractive vibrant places to live, so far as the scale of the development will allow.

Details

The proposal is to construct 23 no. 3 & 4 bedroom dwellings with associated access roads, parking and gardens.

The proposed layout has been designed to respond to the site-specific characteristics and to protect the amenities of both neighbouring residents and future occupiers.

While some of the existing trees along the northern boundary will need to be removed to provide access into the site, the existing bank will largely be retained and replacement planting can be achieved.

A vegetated screen will be created along Langley Lane and further planting will be provided throughout the site.

Along the eastern and western boundaries, dwellings have been sited to ensure that the amenities of neighbouring residents and future occupiers are protected. Appropriate interface distances have been achieved and there will be no overbearing impact. Furthermore, the dwellings have been sited to avoid the root protection zones of the mature trees adjacent to the eastern boundary.

The dwellings at plots 8 – 15 are sited so that they front towards Whittle Brook. This will ensure natural surveillance of the public open space. Together with the ecological buffer zone to the Brook and level of planting proposed, this will create a positive and transitional relationship between the development and the land to the south.

The size, shape, topography and access arrangements together with the constraints and opportunities of the site identified by surveys and urban design analysis are major factors in driving the proposed site layout.

In Summary

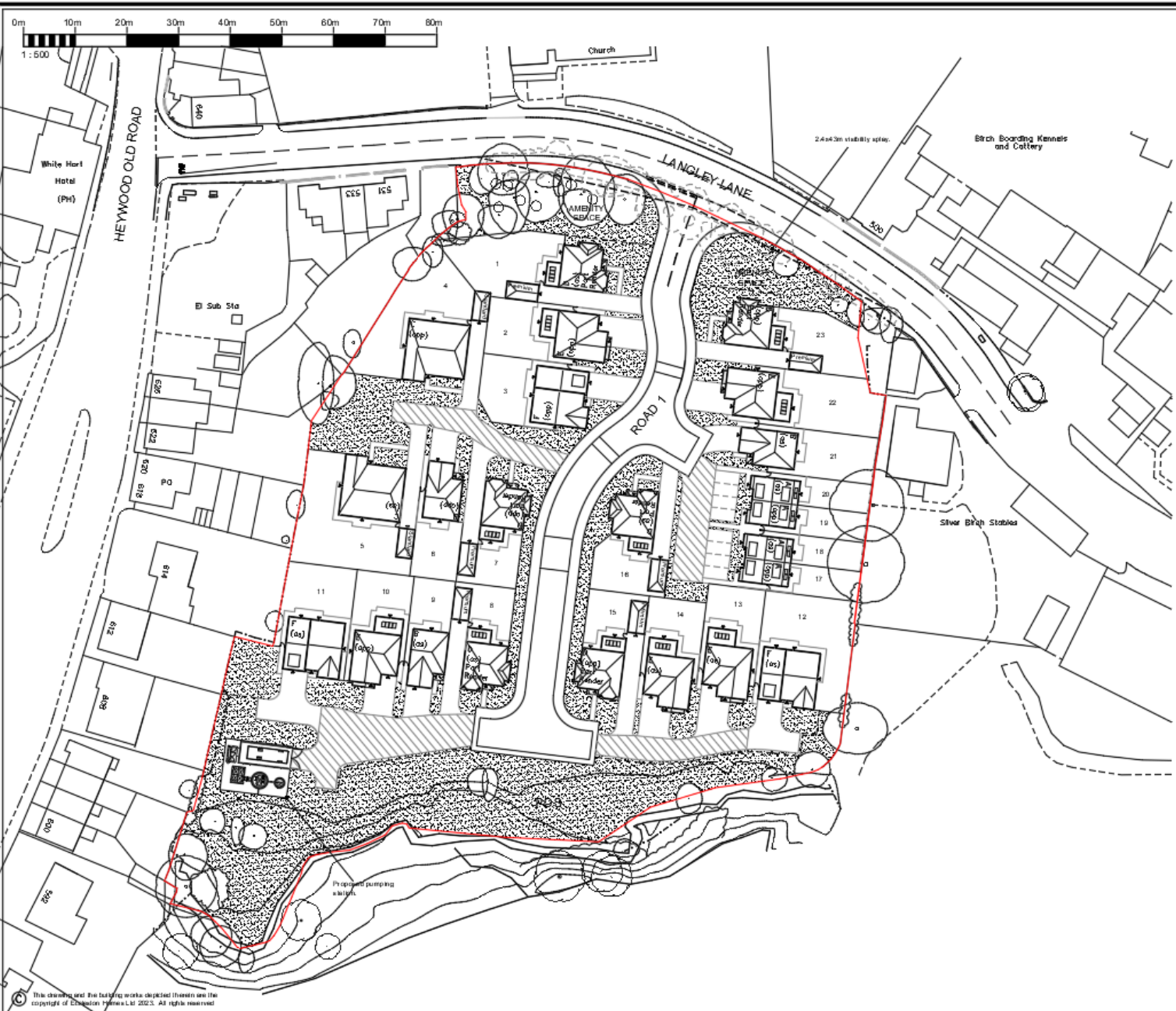
The layout allows for:

- 1.The potential for an outward looking layout to the southern boundary which respects the site's location, character, surrounding townscape and existing residents amenity;
- 2.The site is well served by public transport and located on the edge of an established sustainable settlement;
- 3.Rochdale needs sites to accommodate large quality family homes to retain its workforce, deliver its economic aspirations and retain/attract a balanced population;
- 4.Rochdale Council's housing land supply relies on windfall sites;
- 5.Residents and visitors to navigate their way around the development intuitively via the hierarchy of roads and spaces;
- 6.Shared surface spaces within the development to create a varied and interesting public realm and slow traffic speeds;
- 7.Passive solar gain to be maximised, through the orientation of the layout and offer improved solar gain and daylight; and
- 8.A sustainably located development to benefit from its location within the district of Birch.
- 9.Provision for pedestrian/cycleway connectivity to the surrounding area.

Design progression

The extent and shape of the site as well as the various constraints and opportunities that it presents have guided the layout which responds to the character of the landscape and local context, the site constraints and to the opportunities presented by the existing features.

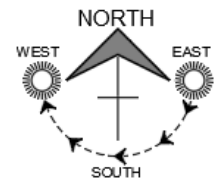




SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

TYPE A	3 BED BEM HOUSE	063sqft	4	2652sqft
TYPE B	4 BED DETACHED HOUSE	115sqft	3	3450sqft
TYPE C	3 BED BUNGALOW	129sqft	2	2580sqft
TYPE D	4 BED DETACHED HOUSE	140sqft	6	8400sqft
TYPE E	4 BED DETACHED HOUSE	150sqft	5	7500sqft
TYPE F	4 BED DETACHED HOUSE	174sqft	3	5220sqft
TOTAL			23	31773sqft

GROUND SITE AREA: 3.28 Acres
 POSAMENITY SPACE & PUMPING STATION: 0.74 Acres
 NETT SITE AREA: 2.54 Acres
 GROUND DENSITY: 7.01 Units/Acre
 NETT DENSITY: 9.04 Units/Acre
 TOTAL FOOTAGE: 31773 Sqft
 GROUND FOOTAGE: 0687 Sqft/Acre
 NETT FOOTAGE: 12500 Sqft/Acre



D	LAYOUT UPDATED TO LA COMMENTS	JSM	13.11.23
C	LAYOUT COMPLETED	JSM	01.08.23
D	BUNGALOWS UPDATED & GARAGES ADDED	JSM	28.06.23
A	NEW AMENITY SPACE & LAYOUT UPDATED	JSM	13.08.23

REV	DESCRIPTION	INT.	DATE
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PROJECT
 LANGLEY LANE,
 BIRCH

DRAWING TITLE
 PLANNING LAYOUT

JOB NUMBER	038	REV	
DRAWING NUMBER	102	D	
DRAWN	JSM	23.04.23	SCALE
CHECKED	-	-	1:500

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8. Scale (Height & Massing)

The proposals includes 23 no. 3 & 4 bedroom properties at a density to respect the character of the local area.

As noted previously the sites surroundings and wider area include a great variety of built scale and form, a product of various phases and types of development over the long history of development in the Rochdale area.

The proposals are designed to create a variety of attractive and interesting focal points, vistas and street scene.

The height and massing of the 1, 2 and 2.5 storey new dwellings will soften the appearance of the site from all aspects, particularly when compared to the form, height and massing of the existing buildings.

The overall mix of scale and form will integrate with and complement the diversity of the local surroundings.



Existing properties
within the vicinity of
the site

9. Landscape (Public Realm)

Strategy

The landscape proposals will be carefully designed to complement the existing environment including detailed measures to promote nature conservation, protecting and enhancing the aesthetics and ecology of the site.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been carried out by ERAP in May 2018 and in February 2022. The assessment comprised a desk study and biological records search, as well as a site walkover survey in order to map habitat types. The survey was extended to assess the potential for protected species to use the site. The assessment provides baseline data as to current site conditions and where appropriate allows recommendations to be made in respect of further potential work in order to satisfy current wildlife legislation.

The approximately 1.3 hectare site comprises one field of improved grassland bounded by stock-proof and garden fencing with remnant hedgerows on the eastern and western boundaries. The northern boundary is defined by a belt of planted broadleaf trees with a hedgerow running parallel to Langley Lane. A stream corridor / tributary of Whittle Brook is located outside of the southern site boundary. There is no risk of an adverse effect on statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation as a result of the proposals.

None of the habitats within the site are of significant interest in terms of their plant species composition; no rare or uncommon plant species are present. None of the habitats present are representative of semi-natural habitat. The plant communities present are typical of the geographical area and agriculturally managed conditions present.

The three hedgerows on the site boundaries are Priority Habitat but do not qualify as 'important' in accordance with *The Hedgerows Regulations 1997* wildlife and landscape criteria. It is recommended and entirely feasible to retain and protect the hedgerows and / or where removal is unavoidable, compensatory native planting is feasible and proposed.

It is necessary to remove sections of the narrow belt of planted trees at the northern site boundary to create a site access and associated visibility splay. To compensate for the unavoidable loss of trees, the planting of native trees and shrubs shall be carried out.

The stream corridor will be protected by the demarcation of an appropriate undeveloped buffer and associated habitat enhancement and management for biodiversity.

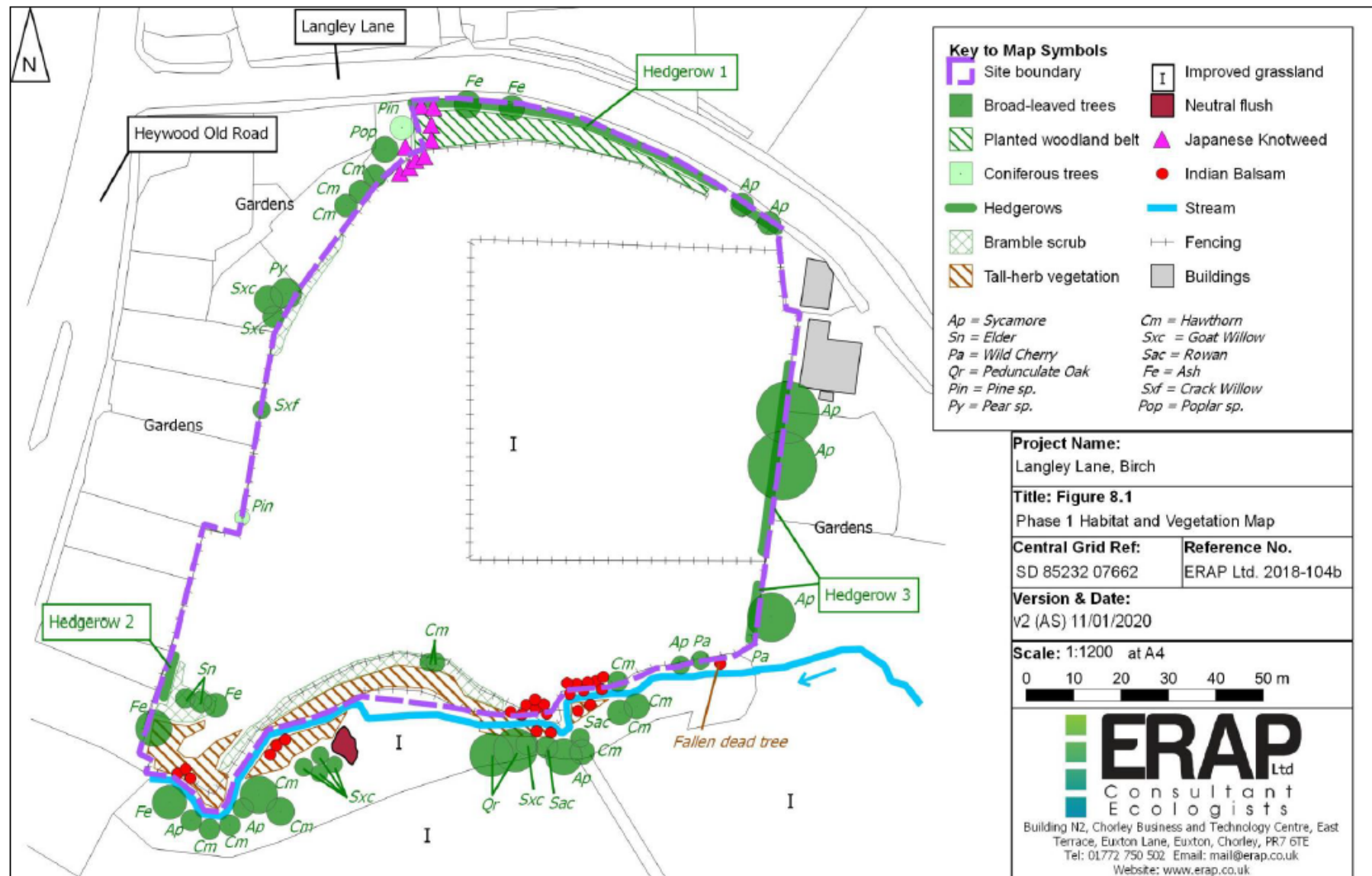
Invasive plant species (Indian Balsam and Japanese Knotweed) listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) namely are present. It is an offence to cause the spread of these species in the wild; control and management of these species will be undertaken.

With a careful choice of species and planting strategy, the proposals will create aesthetic and ecological enhancements to the site whilst preserving the local character and distinctiveness. The landscape layout to be submitted as part of the planning application will consider the scheme in relation to ecological and landscaping issues and includes full details of the hard and soft landscaping and enclosure proposals.

Recommendations in Relation to Site Layout :

- To conserve the wildlife corridor function of the stream corridor and it is essential that a 5 metre wide (minimum) undeveloped buffer is retained between the top of the bank of the stream channel and any built development;
- Maximise the retention of hedgerows and the belt of planted trees. Where retention is not feasible then compensatory planting of an equal or great length must be provided elsewhere at the site;
- Retain the off-site dead stump (now fallen) as dead wood habitat for colonisation by invertebrates and fungi;
- Use of native trees and shrubs;
- Appropriate and sensitive use of lighting to avoid impacts on crepuscular wildlife;
- Arrangement of contiguous rear gardens at the new properties to maximise the value of greenspace created by gardens;
- Plot boundary fencing to be raised 0.10 to 0.15 metres (m) above ground (or 0.15 m by 0.15 m sections to be cut out at the base of the fence panel) to provide opportunities for the passage of wildlife (i.e. hedgehog) between gardens and between the site and the wider area;
- Alignment of new properties to face areas of retained habitats and the stream corridor (rather than properties backing on to these areas) to minimise the likelihood of potentially harmful operations such as rear garden extensions and fly-tipping of invasive and non-native plant species; and
- Maximise the incorporation of opportunities for use by nesting birds and roosting bats at the site as part of good design and to achieve a net gain for biodiversity in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

Figure 8.1: Phase 1 Habitat and Vegetation Map



10. Appearance (Architecture)

Design and Access Statement

The traditional form, proportions, design and details of the proposals combined with the sympathetic choice of materials responds to the spirit of the local area rather than directly replicating the surroundings, particularly since much of the local architecture is widely varied.

This approach will ensure that the scheme is appropriate for the location, integrating with the surroundings at the same time as providing a distinctive vibrant development with a sense of place, giving a positive contribution to the local area.

As noted previously the height and massing of the proposals directly reflects the local character with 1, 2 & 2.5 storey properties of domestic scale and proportions in simple detached forms.

The proposals include a range of dwelling types, all contributing to the character and variety of the site and wider local area and replicate the Arts & Crafts theme which is evident in the area.

As with the local architecture, a great variety of external materials are used in the local area, however facing brickwork and pitched tiled roof dominate. Consequently the architectural palette of materials has been carefully selected following an analysis of the Rochdale area, for their durability, sustainability and aesthetic qualities. Colour, texture and detailing will be used to enliven the built form and streetscene.

The form of the dwellings, the architecture and the subtle choice of locally sympathetic materials, will soften the appearance of the development.



Typical local architecture



Proposed elevations





Junction of Langley Lane and Heywood Old Road and bus stop

Western view from the proposed access



Eastern view from the proposed access

Existing access



11. Access

Design and Access Statement

There is one existing access point into the site off Langley Lane.

Langley Lane has a road width of 7.2 metres, with two footways approximately 1.5 metres either side. Heywood Old Road has a varying carriageway width between 11.5 and 26.5 metres, with two footways roughly 2 metres either side, street parking (width 2.8 metres) and a central concrete verge.

Pedestrian and Cyclists Access and Movement

The existing pedestrian infrastructure located in the vicinity of the site enables safe movement between the development site and the local area Middleton which is located a 10 minute cycle to the south east of the site.

Public Transport Access

The site benefits from being located in close proximity to bus stops which provide services that are ideally placed to cater for the needs of the new residents.

The most accessible bus stop to the site is located on Heywood Old Road which is approximately 180 metres (2 minute walk) from the existing site access. There are also further bus stops located further along Windermere Road approximately 1,220 metres from the site, around 15 minutes' walk.

The access strategy has been designed to ensure the proposals do not have an adverse impact on the safety of the surrounding highway network.

The vehicular access to the residential development within the site will be via Langley Lane. A priority-controlled T-junction will be created, which will have sufficient visibility splays. A footway will connect with the existing footways along Langley Lane which will ensure easy pedestrian access to the numerous services and facilities in the local area for future occupiers.

The access will result in the removal of some trees from the narrow belt along the northern boundary, but as confirmed in the Tree Survey, these trees are not high value. Furthermore, the Ecological Survey confirms that they are not worthy of retention in ecological terms. The proposed development will incorporate the planting of native tree species throughout the site.

12. Detailed Design Considerations

12.1 Crime

Public health, safety and security have been important considerations in the design process particularly in relation to crime.

Crime and disorder and the fear of crime are major factors that can undermine quality of life and community cohesion.

Vacant sites can become a magnet for crime and vandalism putting a strain on local emergency services and causing concern for local residents. The redevelopment of the site will in its self eliminate many of these potential or perceived problems.

The design of the layout and the orientation of the dwellings in particular have been guided by the fundamental principles of both Secure By Design and the universal international guidance provided by CPTED. In particular the overall design process has considered the reduction of vulnerability to crime under three headings; design layout / spatial relationships, management / maintenance and target hardening.

Given the location and context of the site in North Manchester where crime rates are generally around the national average, the greatest risk of crime in relation to the new dwellings comes from theft from, or attacks on, motor vehicles and domestic burglary.

The design of a well supervised secure public realm is fundamental to the reduction of crime, the layout has been carefully arranged and orientated to supervise the street / public realm and create a clear and secure distinction between private and public areas. Each dwelling is also provided with private secure rear garden space.

Individual residents have control and management of their own property and defensible space, however the dwellings are arranged and orientated to create a collective management and interdependence in the supervision and control of the public realm and communal spaces, including the highway. In particular the car parking for the dwellings is provided within curtilage at the front / side of dwellings. This is the most secure location as all residents can supervise each others vehicles, the private car parking spaces are highly visible to all residents within the public realm, and all of the dwellings also have secure garage parking.

Particular points of vulnerability have been identified and target hardening features have been introduced to address these issues. The perimeter boundaries of the site, aside from the highway frontages will be secured by new timber fencing. Side / rear boundaries of the individual dwellings are secured by fencing and gates. The public realm includes proposals for lighting. Each of the dwellings is provided with electrical wiring to allow the easy installation of a suitable burglar alarm.

12.2 Energy and Sustainability

Sustainability is about carrying out your activities in a way that balances social, environmental and economic interests so as not to disadvantage future generations. Producing new development whilst considering the environmental, social and economic impacts is good sustainable design and construction.

Energy use, efficiency and sustainability have been an important consideration in the design process from the location of the site, the layout of the development and the detailed design and specification of the individual dwellings.

All of the proposed dwellings will be constructed to comply with the latest Building Regulations and material standards which include requirements to effectively insulate new dwellings, reduce energy consumption and address climate change in many ways, for example the installation of low energy lighting.

The use of high performance insulating materials and compliance to the latest Building Regulations and standards means that the dwellings will be inherently efficient reducing energy consumption throughout the life of the development.

The site is in a sustainable location, well located in relation to housing, jobs, services and infrastructure. It is within walking / cycling distance of a range of local services and facilities, with the wider area easily accessible by public transport links.

In addition, all of the detached dwellings are provided with a garage which can be used as secure cycle storage, encouraging the use of sustainable transport solutions.

Sustainable drainage solutions have been considered. The drainage authority have identified a surface water drainage connection point, however the flow rate of water discharged will be restricted. This will be achieved by the design of surface water storage facilities that will store excessive amounts of rain water during a rain storm then slowly release the water into the system over a period of time, thus avoiding any potential for flooding or overloading the local drainage network.

The proposals incorporate many sustainable features, often fine points of detail, for example, any white goods (washing machines, dishwashers and fridge / freezers) fitted in the dwellings will be A rated for energy efficiency and water consumption.

12.3 Lifetime Homes

The Lifetime Homes standard was developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Lifetime Homes Group in 1991. The standard is now promoted by the Foundation for Lifetime Homes and Neighbourhoods, established in 2010, which comprises Age UK, the Town & Country Planning Association (TCPA) and Habinteg. The administration and technical support for Lifetime Homes is provided by Habinteg, who took on this responsibility for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The proposed house types will be able to meet the criterion of the following 16 point checklist:

- 1.Parking (width or widening capability)
- 2.Approach to dwelling from parking (distance, gradients and widths)
- 3.Approach to all entrances
- 4.Entrances
- 5.Communal stairs and lifts
- 6.Internal doorways and hallways
- 7.Circulation space
- 8.Entrance level living space
- 9.Potential for entrance level bed space
- 10.Entrance level WC and shower drainage
- 11.WC and bathroom walls
- 12.Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwellings
- 13.Potential for fitting of hoists and bedroom / bathroom relationship
- 14.Bathrooms
- 15.Glazing and window handle
- 16.Location of service controls

13. Planning Policy Context

The Planning Policy Context for Design and Access

Well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It enhances positive qualities and improves negative ones. This is a common message that runs through planning policy and guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') emphasises the importance of good design.

Paragraph 126 of the Framework states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. It creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

National Design Guide

The National Design Guide, published in October 2019, illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It states that well designed places are:

- Based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design; Integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them;
- Influenced by and influence their context positively; and
- Responsive to local history, culture and heritage.

The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics. These are:

1.	Context	6.	Public Spaces
2.	Identity	7.	Uses
3.	Built Form	8.	Homes & Buildings
4.	Movement	9.	Resources
5.	Nature	10.	Lifespan

A well-designed place is unlikely to be achieved by focusing only on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings. It comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| • The layout (or masterplan); | • Landscape; |
| • The form and scale of buildings; | • Materials; and |
| • Their appearance; | • Their detailing. |

All developments are made up of these components put together in a particular way. The choices made in the design process contribute towards achieving the ten characteristics and shape the character of a place.

Design and Access Statement

The quality of the development and the new environment that is created resonates with the location of the site whilst also integrating natural features that are important to the character of the wider area and to the wildlife on the site and beyond its boundaries.

14. Conclusion

The site is located in the village of Birch. The scheme has been designed to incorporate features from the surrounding buildings whilst providing a contrast between old and new streetscape. The application proposals have evolved to address site constraints, the character and appearance of the area and minimises the impact on the surrounding context. The proposals include 23 dwellings in a range of sizes, styles and designs providing choice and diversity to new and existing residents. At a density to respect the character of the local area, the proposals represent an appropriate opportunity to redevelop this site. The site has the benefit of Planning Approval – 18/00869/FUL which has deemed the site acceptable for residential development. The development is in a sustainable location and used high quality design and sustainable principles, and is therefore delivering the most efficient use of this site. The development will also improve the openness and accessibility of the site and surrounding area. The scale and appearance of the new development along with the associated landscaping will present a much more positive aspect to the surrounding area. All of this will enhance the social and physical environment of the site and wider community.

It is considered that the proposal would result in significant social, economic and environmental public benefits comprising of:

Social benefits:

- An affordable housing contribution can be secured via S106 Agreement to meet an identified shortfall;
- Provision of needed higher value homes to retain the higher earning socio-economic group within the borough;

Economic benefits:

- Employment opportunities during construction. The site is deliverable with the applicant planning to commence the development within 12 months and complete the development within 2 years;
- Provision of market housing dwellings to contribute towards 5 year housing supply;
- Uplift for local businesses as a result of new residents;

Environmental benefits:

- Biodiversity net gain is achievable on site and can be secured by condition and the submission of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.

The proposals are of high quality design which positively contributes to the local environment and respects the character and appearance of the area. The scheme complies with design policy at national, regional and local levels and is therefore considered to be acceptable.

