



Design Justification Statement

(In response to minutes of mtg. dated 02.05.2024)

Langley Lane, Birch

May 2024

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This Design Justification Statement (DJS) is prepared in support of Eccleston Homes' proposals for their site at Langley Lane, Birch, which extends to 1.3ha.

The subject site has the benefit of full planning permission (ref. no.: 18/00869) for the erection of 23 dwellings. That permission has been implemented by way of an approved start on site. The principle, scale, location and form of development for residential use has therefore already been established.

Birch Village is a small village located 2 miles northwest of Middleton in Greater Manchester. The application site is a field situated on Langley Lane, outside and to the east of the Birch Village Conservation Area. Langley Lane borders the site to the north, with existing houses to the west, and dwellings and curtilage to the east. The site is bordered by Whittle Brook to the south, with the recently constructed Edgar Wood Academy School beyond.

The Birch Village Conservation Area bears a strong association with the notable local architect Edgar Wood, a proponent of the Arts & Crafts movement. The architectural style which developed from Arts and Crafts has at its heart five main principles: clarity of form or structure, variety of materials, asymmetry, traditional construction and craftsmanship.

Buildings were constructed within the local vernacular – that is, using local materials and traditions.



APPROVED SITE LAYOUT

Eccleston Homes seek permission, by way of an application under S73 of the Town and Country planning Act 1990, to vary conditions 2, 13 and 23 attached to 18/00869 through the approval of a revised site layout, materials and house types.

This DJS considers those matters only. Matters of principle relating to topography, flood risk and noise were all addressed during the determination of 18/00869 and are unchanged and not to be reconsidered as part of Eccleston's proposals.

Eccleston Homes proposals retain the approved (and now implemented) point of access.

The purpose of this document is to provide design justification for Eccleston Homes' proposed revised scheme assessed against the characteristics of the surrounding area, the already approved scheme (18/00869) and the comments received from the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officers.

Further to a meeting with Officers of Rochdale MBC on 25th April 2024 and in response to the agreed actions at that meeting, this DJS will now consider the following:

- Layout
- Character Areas
- Housetypes
- Materials



PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

LAYOUT

As illustrated in the overlay image opposite and tabled at the recent meeting, and with reference to the layout on the previous page of this DJS, the proposed layout has been further amended, following discussion with Officers, to comply with the approved layout. Consequently, the proposals would not result in harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties.

In making the changes, the proposed scheme will similarly create a responsive development that compliments the local character of the area and responds sensitively to the surrounding landscape context.

The layout provides a coherent framework that identifies and takes advantage of key views and vistas and addresses them with landmark structures aiding legibility and way-finding through the development.

Primary frontages are particularly prominent and critical to the impact and appearance of the development and the public realm. Strong frontage is prioritised along open spaces and nodal points to ensure that these prominent spaces have a building frontage which helps create a distinctive quality and character.

Key spaces remain linked by a clear hierarchy of routes and the approved intersections remain, to increase the legibility of development. Building and layout design, planting and views are utilised to form visual focal points and create legible routes. Focal buildings are located at the termination of outlooks, development entrances, or to frame views. The inclusion of homes with increased scale or distinctive architecture adds variety and interest to the appearance of the development, provides points of focus within the street scene and helps people find their way around the site.

The layout capitalises on views south from within the site towards the brook and retains existing mature vegetation around the perimeter of the site, providing natural buffers as part of the development response to site-specific characteristics and to protect the amenities of both neighbouring residents and future occupiers.

Eccleston Homes' Plots 7 and 16, at the centre of the site, propose a slight variation to the approved layout through the provision of dual aspect properties, which provide an improved design solution to that already approved. This central focus point, whilst still screening views towards the southern end of the site and punctuating views from Langley Lane with a landmark structure, now provides an improved central focus to the proposed development whilst also better addressing the main estate road.

The 2½ storey properties in the approved scheme have been replaced by detached properties (plots 17 to 20).



OVERLAY OF APPROVED AND PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

CHARACTER AREAS AND APPEARANCE

Following discussion with Officers and to better reflect the approved scheme and surrounding properties, Eccleston Homes now propose three distinct character areas, comprising a Rural Area, a Transition Area and an Arts and Crafts Area.

As per the approved scheme, each Area is individual including built form principles, set-backs, landscape treatments, architectural detailing as well as colour and use of materials.

Rural Area (Plots 1 to 3 and 20 to 23)

The proposed Rural Area fronting Langley Lane, reflects that included within the approved scheme, presenting a farmstead type development of properties, simple in form and detail. Associated parking to the rear of plots 20 to 23 is provided to ensure that vehicles do not dominate the street scene at the entrance to the site.

Transitional Area (Plots 4 to 7 and 16 to 19)

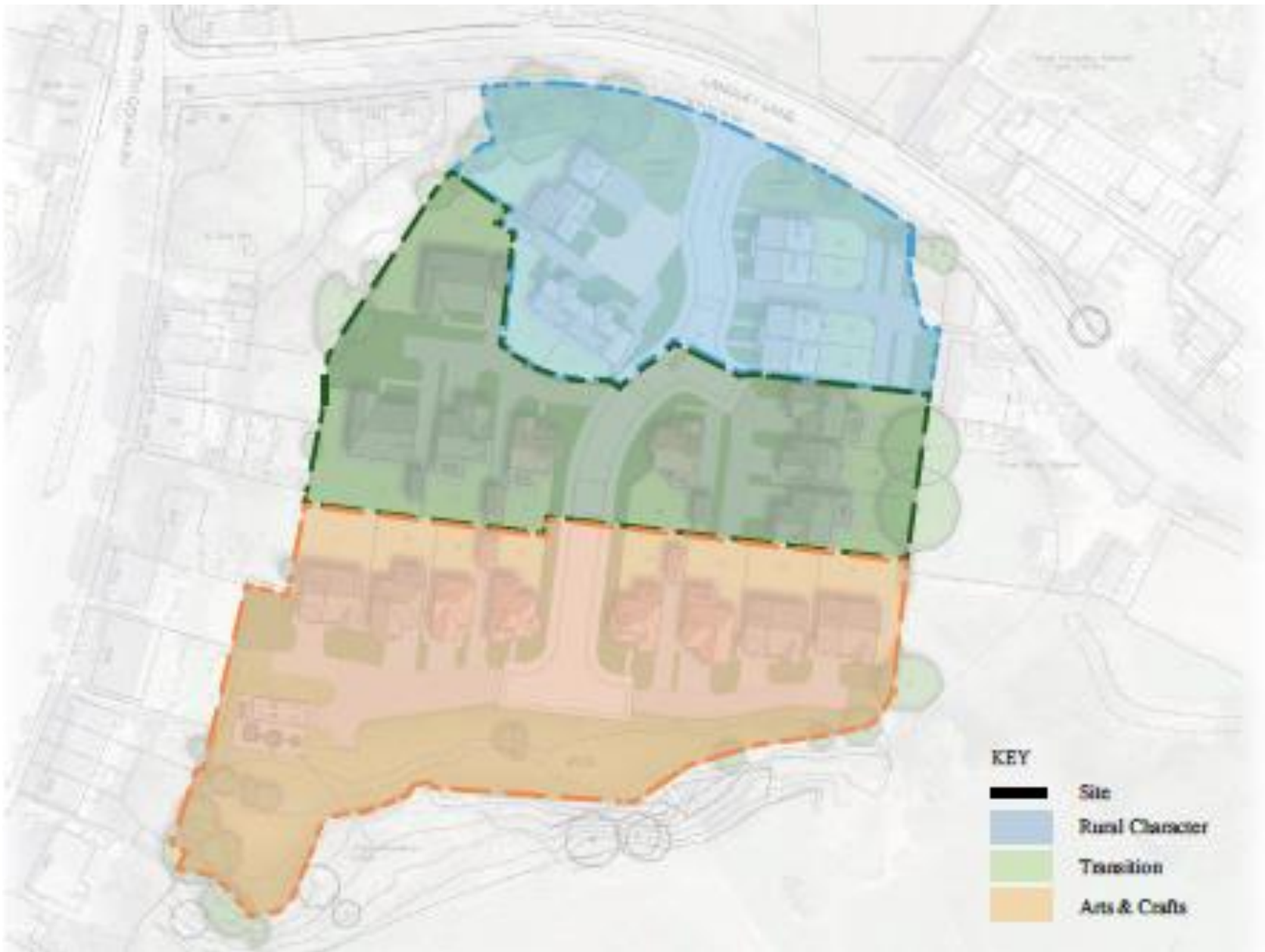
The Transitional Area in the central part of the site aims to link the Rural and Arts & Crafts areas, taking cues from both, consisting of detached houses and bungalows, incorporating wide frontages, varied rooflines and gable features to reflect the approved scheme and yet create its own strong character. In particular, plots 7 and 16 provide a revised approach, presenting more active elevations when entering and passing through the site when compared to the approved scheme. The building line includes slight recesses or protrusions in order to add interest and rhythm through the street scene. The use of brick and introduction of elements of render takes elements from the Rural Area and, whilst passing through the site, hints at elements to be viewed in the Arts & Crafts Area.

Arts & Crafts Area (Plots 8 to 15)

As per the approved scheme, this area incorporates larger properties fronting onto the open space, including active frontages, whilst retaining and creating a more formal and more landscape dominated neighbourhood fringe. Homes in this location are larger detached properties, fronting onto the open space, creating a positive outlook, with more spacious plots to enable a more landscape dominated development fringe.

In a departure from the approved contemporary area, this area will include properties designed to reflect and compliment the Arts & Crafts local vernacular.

The revised approach the character areas is well considered, accommodating focal homes that play a positive urban design role in the built form acting as landmarks, emphasising important places and making a positive contribution to views into and around the site, presenting a design approach that respects the principles of the approved scheme and the surrounding area. The choice and texture of materials, architectural details, layout and form of the proposed development



PROPOSED CHARACTER AREAS

creates a coherent high-quality sense of place, with three distinct Areas that interact with each other whilst also linking the development to the architectural style of buildings in proximity to the site and contributing positively to the local area.

HOUSE TYPES

The revised house types have been re-designed and elevated to respond to the specific characteristics of the site and surrounding area.

Rural Area

House types to Plots 1 to 3 and 20 to 23 now reflect the scheme as approved, with simple changes proposed to materials.



Local Context Buildings

Approved (left) vs Proposed (right) Rural House Type

Transitional Area

The properties in this area are intended to create a seamless transition between the Rural and Arts & Crafts Areas, taking cues from both and yet creating a distinct area in itself.

Varied elevational treatment, materials and window and door design create interest, with statement properties at key view points.



Local Context Buildings

Approved (left) vs Proposed (right) Transitional House Type

Arts & Crafts Area

Drawing from the influence of the Arts & Crafts movement found in properties surrounding the site, rather than follow the approved scheme's modern approach, which referenced the new school to the south, Eccleston Homes' approach to this Area presents a modern take on Arts & Crafts principles, creating a clarity of form, using a variety of materials and asymmetry, whilst referencing traditional construction and craftsmanship.

The buildings reflect the local vernacular, using local materials and design cues.



Approved (left) vs Proposed (right) Contemporary House Type

Local Context Buildings

MATERIALS

The proposed palette of materials draws from the local vernacular, comprising a mix of brick types and render and roof finishes to add variation and interest.

The Rural Area properties are proposed to be finished in Old Lymm Blend brick, with slate roofing.

Both the Transitional and Contemporary (Arts & Crafts) Areas comprise a mix of Hartford Red Multi and Monarch Handmade textured brick to create distinct parts of the site, interspersed with render to produce a consistent design statement. Roof finishes are a mixture of dark grey and rustic red thin-leading-edge tiles. In order to meet the latest building regulations standards, windows are to comprise triple-glazed, Resurgence high-quality “timber look” UPVC windows to Rural and Transition Areas. The predominant material pallets for the area which have been used to inform the design proposals for the homes for this site; helping through the choice of materials the proposal better relate well to the surrounding areas.

An “as built” sample of all materials will be made available on site for inspection. In, summary, the proposed high-quality materials reflect the local vernacular, providing a suitable design solution for the site that respects the character of the area and positively evolves the approved scheme.



Local Vernacular Materials



Resurgence Windows Examples



Old Lymm Blend



Hartford Red Multi

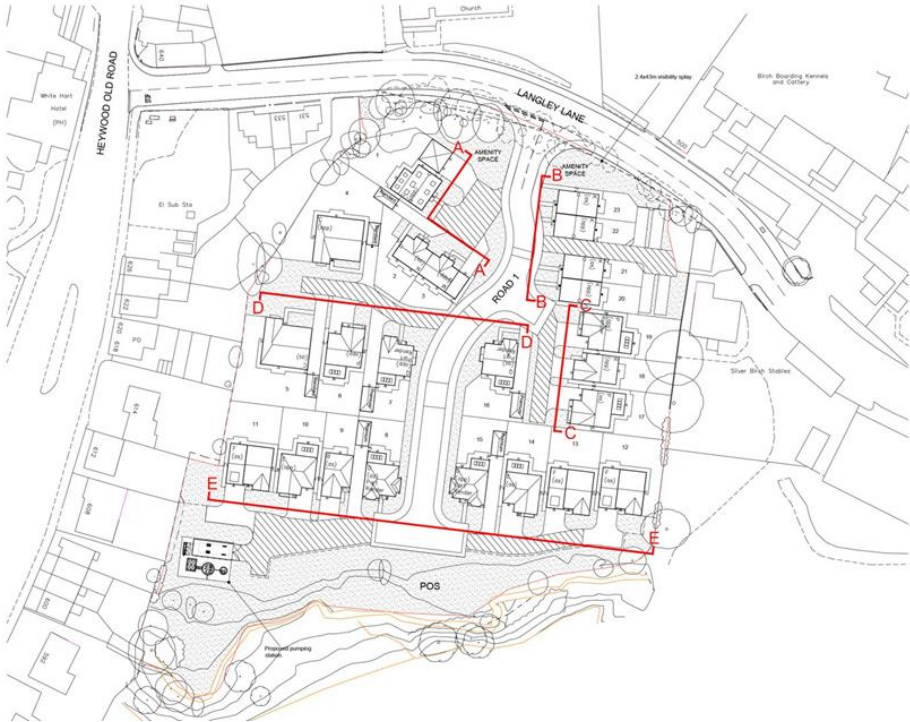


Monarch Handmade



Materials and Enclosures Plan

Proposed Streetscenes



CONCLUSION

Following discussions with Officers, the scheme has evolved through various iterations and now reflects a strong design rationale, evolving and yet sticking to the principles of the previously approved scheme.

The revised three-character area design approach to deliver 23 homes across of the site enables to the proposal respond to the varied context in a manner which will make a positive contribution to Birch whilst also delivering green infrastructure and supporting biodiversity.

In summary, the proposal for this planning application aims to create a new extension to the village that:

- Responds positively to the adjacent historic context of the Birch conservation areal.
- Positively responds to the existing landscape character of the site, integrating the existing brook, mature and young planting towards the perimeter of the site and enhancing the ecological value of the site
- Provides a mix and variety of house types and sizes to meet the needs of a wide range of potential residents included much needed large family homes.
- Sensitively responds to the views into the site from Langley Lane.
- Provides an appropriate low-density scheme that reflects the surrounding village fabric

It is considered that the public benefits of the proposal, including the provision of higher value market homes to meet an identified need, affordable homes via off-site provision and the resultant positive contribution to the housing supply outweigh the identified less than substantial harm to the conservation area.



View into Site from Langley Lane