



BfL Assessment

WAKEFIELD ROAD | MAPPLEWELL | BARNSELEY

September 2013

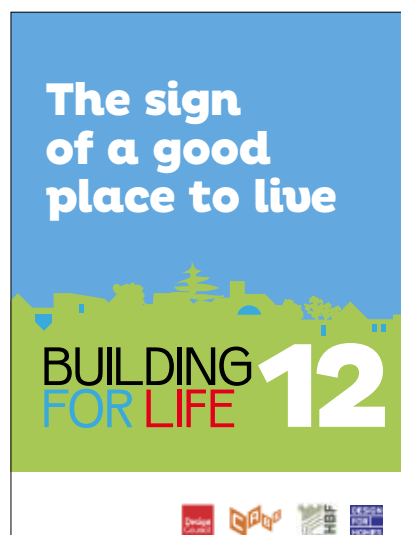
- architectural design
- town planning
- landscape architecture



John R Paley Associates

Building for Life promotes design excellence and celebrates best practice in the house-building industry.

As developers, we are fully aware of good design practices and we are committed to ensuring the development is in accordance with the new Building for Life document (Building for Life 12) in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.



An initial assessment has been undertaken on the proposals developed to date and the findings are provided below: -

The following objectives will therefore be employed: -

Integrating into the neighbourhood

1 Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones; whilst also respecting existing buildings and land uses along the boundaries of the development site?

2 Facilities and services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?

3 Public transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

4 Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

Creating a place

5 Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

6 Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?



7 Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?



8 Easy to find your way around

Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?



Street & Home

9 Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?



10 Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?



11 Public and private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?



12 External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?



The proposal is in Outline, and as such there is insufficient detail to confirm the exact details of the development, however, with the amount and quality of information submitted in the form of the illustrative masterplan, and Design and Access Statement combined with the amount of public consultation so far, the site has the potential to achieve 12 greens and be awarded the “Built for Life” quality kitemark.

Under the new assessment system the LPA is encouraged to work with the developer to achieve as many green lights as possible, and to avoid any reds.

These proposals will avoid any red lights and are fully capable of being further refined to deliver positively against all the new Building for Life test.

1. Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones; whilst also respecting existing buildings and land uses along the boundaries of the development site?

We recommend:

- Thinking about where connections can and should be made; and about how best the new development can integrate into the existing neighbourhood rather than creating an inward looking cul-de-sac development.
- Remembering that people who live within a new development and people who live nearby may want to walk through the development to get somewhere else, so carefully consider how a development can contribute towards creating a more walkable neighbourhood.
- Thinking carefully before blocking or redirecting existing routes, particularly where these are well used.
- Creating connections that are attractive, well lit, direct, easy to navigate, well overlooked and safe.
- Ensuring that all streets and pedestrian/cycle only routes pass in front of people's homes, rather than to the rear of them.

The development provides for a new primary vehicular access onto Wakefield Road (A61). This vehicular connection point has been carefully designed and connects internally to a series of primary, secondary, and tertiary movement corridors.

On the illustrative masterplan there are additional pedestrian and cycle only connections within and from the development to its surroundings ensuring a well-connected development area. These key routes are clear direct and connect the key spaces within and around the site.

The orientation and layout of the proposed streets on the illustrative masterplan establish clear and direct connections across the site and to existing communities. The proposals also respond to the sites topography and landscape features.

2. Facilities and services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?

We recommend:

- Planning development so that everyday facilities and services are located within a short walk of people's homes. The layout of a development and the quality of connections it provides can make a significant impact on walking distances and people's travel choices.
- Providing access to facilities through the provision of safe, convenient and direct paths or cycle routes. Consider whether there are any barriers to pedestrian/cycle access (for example, busy roads with a lack of crossing points) and how these barriers can be removed or lessened.
- Locating new facilities (if provided) where the greatest number of existing and new residents can access them easily, recognising that this may be at the edge of a new development or on a through route; but consider whether existing facilities can be enhanced before proposing new ones.
- Where new local centres are provided, design these as vibrant places with smaller shops combined with residential accommodation above rather than for example, a single storey, single use supermarket building. Work to integrate these facilities into the fabric of the wider development to avoid creating an isolated retail park type environment dominated by car parking and highways infrastructure.
- Creating new places within a development where people can meet each other such as public spaces, community buildings, cafes and restaurants. Aim to get these delivered as early as possible. Think carefully about how spaces could be used and design them with flexibility in mind, considering where more active (and noisier) spaces should be located so as to avoid creating potential for conflict between users and adjacent residents.

The site is well situated to access local services as shown on the plan opposite. The local centre of Mapplewell is within 400 metres, which equates to a 5-6-minute walk. There is a range of local services including a Co-Op supermarket, restaurant, pub. There are local schools, the nearest being within 400 metres with others within 800 metres.

There has been consultation with the LPA and community consultation regarding the proposals and this feedback has been incorporated, within the proposals.

3. Public transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

We recommend:

- Maximising the number of homes on sites that are close to good, high frequency public transport routes, but ensure that this does not compromise the wider design qualities of the scheme and its relationship with its surroundings.
- Carefully considering the layout and orientation of routes to provide as many people as possible with the quickest, safest, attractive and most convenient possible routes between homes and public transport.
- Considering how the layout of the development can maximise the number of homes within a short walk from their nearest bus, tram or train stop where new public transport routes are planned to pass through the development. Locate public transport stops in well used places, ensuring that they are accessible for all, well overlooked and lit.
- Considering how the development can contribute towards encouraging more sustainable travel choices, for example by establishing a residents car club, providing electric car charging points, creating live/work units or homes that include space for a home office.
- Exploring opportunities to reduce car miles through supporting new or existing park and ride schemes or supporting the concept of transit orientated developments (where higher density and/or mixed use development is centred on train or tram stations).

There are a range of measures proposed to encourage a modal shift towards public transport. The illustrative masterplan shows a number of lateral connections from the proposed development to the existing public transport corridor along Blacker Road and to Mapplewell centre to provide clear, safe and direct access to the existing services and this is supported by a package of measures contained within the submitted Travel Plan.

The proposals seek to support existing services along Blacker Road, although the illustrative masterplan has been designed so that the central primary route through the site could accommodate public transport in the future if required. The scheme is located in a sustainable location with a full range of facilities close to the site. There are several bus stops within a 400m walk of the site offering a range of connecting services to the wider area. The site is within a short cycling distance to the town centre and there will be cycle storage provision provided to each new home.

4. Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

We recommend:

- Demonstrating how the scheme's housing mix is justified with regard to planning policy, the local context and viability.
- Aiming for a housing mix that will create a broad-based community.
- Considering how to incorporate a range of property sizes and types, avoiding creating too many larger or too many smaller homes from being grouped together.
- Providing starter homes and homes for the elderly or downsizing households. People who are retired can help enliven a place during the working day. Providing for downsizing households can also help to rebalance the housing market and may help reduce the need for affordable housing contributions over time.
- Designing homes and streets to be tenure-blind, so that it is not easy to differentiate between homes that are private and those that are shared ownership or rented.

The illustrative masterplan provides for a full range of housing types and tenures, including affordable homes. A full range of building typologies is also proposed ranging from 1 to 5 bedrooms, and from small apartments, through terraced and semi-detached homes up to detached properties. Affordable homes are dispersed across the site and will be visually indistinguishable from the open market homes.

Although the proposals are submitted in outline, it is intended that the size, type, tenure and range of housing will not only reflect the location but also local housing demand. The development proposals seek to provide 25% affordable housing.

5. Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

We recommend:

- Identifying whether there are any architectural, landscape or other features that give a place a distinctive sense of character as a starting point for design. It may be possible to adapt elevations of standard house types to complement local character. Distinctiveness can also be delivered through new designs that respond to local characteristics in a contemporary way
- Exploring what could be done to start to give a place a locally inspired identity if an area lacks a distinctive character or where there is no overarching character. Landscaping traditions are often fundamental to character, especially boundary treatments.
- Introducing building styles, details and landscaping features that can be easily expressed to someone visiting the development for the first time. Where an area has a strong and positive local identity, consider using this as a cue to reinforce the place's overall character .

- Varying the density, built form and appearance or style of development to help create areas with different character within larger developments. Using a range of features will help to create town- and cityscape elements that can give a place a sense of identity and will help people find their way around. Subtle detailing can help reinforce the character of areas and in doing so, provide a level of richness and delight.
- Working with the local planning and highway authority to investigate whether local or otherwise different materials can be used in place of standard highways surface materials and traffic furniture. Be creative and adventurous by exploring the potential to innovate, develop new ideas and build with new materials.

A Design and Access Statement containing guiding principles for the detailed design has been submitted in support of the illustrative masterplan to ensure the delivery of a distinctive high quality development.

6 . Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), trees and plants, wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate?

We recommend:

- Being a considerate neighbour. Have regard to the height, layout, building line and form of existing development at the boundaries of the development site. Frame views of existing landmarks and create new ones by exploiting features such as existing mature trees to create memorable spaces. Orientate homes so that as many residents as possible can see these features from within their homes . Carefully consider views into the development and how best these can be designed.
- Assessing the potential of any older buildings or structures for conversion. Retained buildings can become instant focal points within a development. Where possible, avoid transporting building waste and spoil off site by exploring opportunities to recycling building materials within the development .
- Working with contours of the land rather than against them, exploring how built form and detailed housing design can creatively respond to the topographical character; thinking carefully about the roofscape. Explore how a holistic approach can be taken to the design of sustainable urban drainage by exploiting the topography and geology .
- Exploring opportunities to protect, enhance and create wildlife habitats. Be creative in landscape design by creating wildflower meadows rather than closely mown grassland and, where provided, creating rich habitats within balancing lagoons and swales.
- Considering the potential to benefit from solar gain through building orientation and design where this can be achieved without compromising both urban design or creating issues associated with over heating . Finally have regard to any particularities of local micro-climates and its impact.

The development proposals have included a detailed site analysis, the results of which have been incorporated into the illustrative masterplan. The importance of the site with respect to its position on the edge of the existing settlement and its position in the wider landscape has influenced the distribution of dwellings and POS of the development area.

The existing landscape features have, in the whole been retained and incorporated into the development and recognised as positive elements to inform and shape the structure of the proposals.

There are no existing buildings on site that could be retained.

7. Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?

We recommend:

- Creating streets that are principally defined by the position of buildings rather than the route of the carriageway.
- Designing building that turn corners well, so that both elevations seen from the street have windows to them, rather than offering blank walls to the street . Consider using windows that wrap around corners to maximise surveillance and bring generous amounts of natural light into people's homes.
- Using a pattern of road types to create a hierarchy of streets and consider their enclosure, keeping to the well proportioned height to width ratios relative to the type of street.

	Minimum	Maximum
Minor streets, e.g. mews	1: 1.15	1:1
Typical streets	1: 3	1: 1.5
Squares	1: 6	1: 4

Source: Manual for Streets (2007) p.54

- Respecting basic design principles when designing layouts. For example, forming strong perimeter blocks .
- Orientating front doors to face the street rather than being tucked around the back or sides of buildings.

The application is in outline, and as such the detailed elements of the proposed streets are addressed within the submitted Design and Access Statement, which identifies and provides guidance on all aspects of creating a successful street, including how buildings should positively address the street and public realm.

8. Easy to find your way around

Is the development designed to make it easy to find your way around?

We recommend:

- Making it easy for people to create a mental map of the place by incorporating features that people will notice and remember. Create a network of well defined streets and spaces with clear routes, local landmarks and marker features. For larger developments it may be necessary to create distinct character areas. Marker features, such as corner buildings and public spaces combined with smaller scale details such as colour, variety and materials will further enhance legibility.
- Providing views through to existing or new landmarks and local destinations, such as parks, woodlands or tall structures help people understand where they are in relation to other places and find their way around.
- Making it easy for all people to get around including those with visual or mobility impairments.
- Identifying important viewpoints within a development, such as views towards the end of a street. Make sure these viewpoints are identified and well considered. Anticipate other, more subtle viewpoints, for example a turn or curve in the street and how best these can be best addressed.

- Creating a logical hierarchy of streets. A tree lined avenue through a development can be an easy and effective way to help people find their way around.

The illustrative Masterplan shows a legible network of movement corridors connecting the range of uses proposed. The detailing of these routes is addressed in the Design and Access Statement.

9. Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?

We recommend:

- Creating streets for people where vehicle speeds are designed not to exceed 20 mph. Work with the Highways Authority to create developments where buildings and detailed street design is used to tame vehicle speeds. Sharp or blind corners force drivers to slow when driving around them while buildings that are closer together also make drivers proceed more cautiously.
- Thinking about how streets can be designed as social and play spaces, where the pedestrians and cyclists come first, rather than simply as routes for cars and vehicles to pass through.
- Using the best quality hard landscaping scheme that is viable without cluttering the streets and public spaces.
- Designing homes that offer good natural surveillance opportunities; carefully considering the impact of internal arrangement on the safety and vitality of the street. Consider maximising the amount of glazing to ground floor, street facing rooms to enhance surveillance opportunities creating a stronger relationship between the home and the street.
- Creating homes that offer something to the street, thinking carefully about detail, craftsmanship and build quality. Afford particular attention to the space between the pavement and front doors. A thoughtful and well designed entrance area and front door scheme will enhance the kerb appeal of homes whilst also contributing towards creating a visually interesting street. Carefully consider changes in level, the interface between different materials, quality finishing and the discreet placement of utility boxes.

Whilst the application is in outline, the illustrative Masterplan and accompanying Design and Access Statement describe an internal street network designed with a pedestrian priority in accordance with the guidance contained within Manual for streets. The streets are to be formed through the placement of buildings, and the streets will be well defined and contained by the built form, appropriate boundary treatments and landscaping. There will be notable and recognisable buildings at key positions throughout the site, and through the careful design of the street in terms of its width, materials and alignment there is a clear street hierarchy within and across the site.

10. Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

We recommend:

- Anticipating car parking demand taking into account the location, availability and frequency of public transport together with local car ownership trends. Provide parking space for visitors.
- Designing streets to accommodate on street parking but allow for plenty of trees and planting to balance the visual impact of parked cars and reinforce the spatial enclosure of the street. On street parking has the potential to be both space efficient and can also help to create a vibrant street, where neighbours have more opportunity to see and meet other people.
- Designing out opportunities for anti-social parking. Very regular and formal parking treatments have the potential to reduce anti-social parking. People are less prone to parking in places where they should not be parking and where street design clearly defines other uses, such as pavements or landscape features.
- Making sure people can see their car from their home or can park it somewhere they know it will be safe. Where possible avoid rear parking courts .
- Using a range of parking solutions appropriate to the context and the types of housing proposed. Where parking is positioned to the front of the property, ensure that at least an equal amount of the frontage is allocated to an enclosed, landscaped front garden as it is for parking to reduce vehicle domination. Where rows of narrow terraces are proposed, consider positioning parking within the street scene, for example a central reservation of herringbone parking . For higher density schemes, underground parking with a landscaped deck above can work well.

The application is in outline, and as such the detailed elements are addressed within the submitted Design and Access Statement and subsequent reserved matters applications. There is a range of car parking solutions proposed across the scheme, from on-plot parking through to the use of small parking courts, and through wider carriageways, an allowance for on street visitor parking. All of the parking locations are to be designed to be secure, overlooked and in relative close proximity to the homes they serve.

11. Public and private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to have appropriate access and be able to be well managed and safe in use?

We recommend:

- Clearly defining private and public spaces with clear vertical markers, such as railings, walling or robust planting. Where there is a modest building set back (less than 1m), a simple change in surface materials may suffice. Select species that will form a strong and effective boundary, such as hedge forming shrubs rather than low growing specimens or exotic or ornamental plants. Ensure sufficient budget provision is allocated to ensure a high quality boundary scheme is delivered.
- Creating spaces that are well overlooked by neighbouring properties. Check that there is plenty of opportunity for residents to see streets and spaces from within their homes. Provide opportunities for direct and oblique views up and down the street, considering the use of bay, oriel and corner windows where appropriate. Designing balconies can further increase opportunities for natural surveillance.
- Thinking about what types of spaces are created and where they should be located. Consider how spaces can be designed to be multi-functional, serving as wide an age group as possible and how they could contribute towards enhancing biodiversity . Where open spaces are provided, think about where people might want to walk and what routes they might want to take and plan paths accordingly

providing lighting if required. Consider the sun path and shadowing throughout the day and which areas will be in light rather than shade. Areas more likely to benefit from sunshine are often the most popular places for people to gather.

- Exploring whether local communities would wish to see new facilities created or existing ones upgraded. Think how play can be approached in a holistic manner, for example by distributing play equipment or playable spaces and features across an entire open space.
- Providing a management and maintenance plan to include a sustainable way to fund public or shared communal open spaces.

The application is in outline, and as such the detailed elements are addressed within the submitted Design and Access Statement and subsequent reserved matters applications includes principles that define the public realm within the scheme. High levels of natural surveillance are to be provided through the primary aspects of the new homes, with pedestrian routes being straight and through designing out areas which are out of sight. The public spaces and areas of open space have been positioned to enable high levels of natural surveillance from surrounding homes.

All public realm will be maintained by a management company or Local Authority adoption.

Planting should be monitored for a period of 5 years following completion. Any failed plants should be replaced during the following planting season.

- **Planted areas should be maintained weed free**
- **Litter to be removed from all public realm areas**
- **Tree staking and ties to be checked and adjusted as necessary and removed within 5 years of planting**
- **Underground guying to be used for semi mature trees**

For the Private realm, these areas will be the responsible of the property owner. However, all planting should be monitored for a period of 5 years following completion. Restrictive covenants will be applied to plots with strategic trees, hedges and shrub planting to ensure the planting is retained and maintained in a uniform way.

In terms of ensuring a clear definition between the public and private realm, appropriate boundary treatments will be required.

12. External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling, as well as vehicles and cycles?

We recommend:

- Providing convenient, dedicated bin and recycling storage where bins and crates can be stored out of sight. Check with the local authority to determine exactly what space is required and minimize the distance between storage areas and collection points. Where terraced housing is proposed, consider providing integral stores to the front of the property (such as within an enclosed section of a recessed porch) or by providing secure ginnels between properties that provide direct access to the rear of properties .
- Designing garages large enough to fit a modern family sized car and allow the driver to get out of the car easily. Where local authorities have requirements for garage sizes, design these into your scheme from the outset. If garages do not meet local requirements, do not count these as a parking space.
- Considering whether garages should be counted as a parking space. If garages are to be counted as a parking space, ensure that sufficient alternative storage space is provided for items commonly stored in garages. Consider extending the length of the garage to accommodate storage needs or allowing occupants to use the roof space for extra storage .

- Anticipating the realistic external storage requirements of individual house holds. Residents will usually need a secure place to store cycles and garden equipment. A storage room could be designed to the rear of the property (either attached or detached from the home), reviving the idea of a traditional outhouse. More creative solutions may be needed to satisfy the cycle storage requirements of higher density, apartment accommodation.
- Thinking carefully about the size and shape of outside amenity space. It is a good idea to ensure that rear gardens are at least equal to the ground floor footprint of the dwelling. Triangular shaped gardens rarely offer a practical, usable space . Allow residents the opportunity to access their garden without having to walk through their home.

The application is in outline, and as such the detailed elements are addressed within the submitted Design and Access Statement and subsequent reserved matters applications and should include a range of storage solutions for cars, cycles, and bins/recycling. The majority of homes should have generous gardens where additional secure cycle storage will be located (where garages are not provided) and bins can be kept.