

BFHL 12 ASSESSMENT

DARTON LANE, DARTON

DECEMBER 2023



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Building for a Healthy Life is the latest edition of Building for Life 12. Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) updates England’s widely used design tool for creating places that are better for people and nature. The original 12 point structure and underlying principles within Building for Life 12 are at the heart of BHL.



INTEGRATING NEIGHBOURHOODS



1. NATURAL CONNECTIONS

Create places that are well integrated into the site and their wider natural and built surroundings. Avoid creating isolated and disconnected places that are not easy places to move through and around.

The proposal includes a well considered movement hierarchy that connects to existing streets, footpaths and cycle routes at various locations. Several connections to Darton Lane ensure the development is well connected and accessible. The site has restrictive topography, shape, and alignment however all homes and spaces are connected and integrated.

A large area of open space to the west and an existing well-used track to the south have been important considerations throughout the design process. Open space to the west of the site houses is a natural and pleasant feature.

The retention of southern planting and trees ensures a soft edge to the proposal that protects natural connections to the wider area. Established tree belts, foraging areas, and habitats are retained and the site remains an important part of established biodiversity.



2. WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Short trips of up to three miles can be easily made on foot or bicycle if the right infrastructure is in place, helping to improve public health and air quality whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions.

The design solution demonstrates simple and accessible connections from every home to an established network of highways, footpaths and cycle routes. Darton Lane has two bus stops that are immediately accessible from the new development, one running in each direction.

There are a large number of local services within a short distance including public transport links and primary school. Darton has a Village Hall, local supermarket, and train station. The village is closely linked with Mapplewell, Staincross, and Kexbrough - each have local services and facilities that support a sustainable lifestyle.

The application site is within a short distance of Barnsley, a large town that has a large number of services typical of a town of its size including food, retail, medical, leisure, and education facilities.



3. FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Places that offer social, leisure and recreational opportunities a short walk or cycle from their homes.

The sustainability and suitability of the site for residential development has been established by existing permissions and local policy. In this respect the proposal realises the intentions of previous work to deliver a place with opportunities to connect with social, leisure, and recreational facilities.

Darton Lane has strategic importance to the local community. The route connects to the wider area and is supported by several bus services. Darton Train Station can be access via Darton Lane and is circa 0.5 miles to the west.

There is a well used walking route along a dismantled railway that runs parallel to the proposal. New and existing residents can easily access this space via an improved connection at the centre of the development.

Social, leisure and recreational opportunities in the immediate area include Longfields Community Green Space & Trail, Mapplewell Park, Darton Park (and Skate Park), and several sports clubs.



4. HOMES FOR EVERYONE

A range of homes that meet local community needs.

A range of housing needs have been identified and realised in the design proposals. Affordable homes have been located around the site and are indistinguishable by tenure alone.

The mix of home includes 46 new dwellings;

- 20 no. 4 bed dwellings;
- 16 no. 3 bed dwellings;
- 6 no.2 bed dwellings; and
- 4 no. 1 bed dwellings.

This includes 9 no. affordable dwellings in compliance with Local Policy Guidance.

The intention for every home is to minimise energy use and maximise efficiency through a ‘fabric first’ approach to design and construction and a well researched selection of materials. The result will be to minimise carbon emissions over the extent of each building’s life.

Dwellings are designed for long-term living and provide both storage space and amenity space whilst having the potential to adapt as circumstances change through the course of ownership. The value of space in the home and its benefits for health and well being are realised. Where provided, private amenity spaces are protected by robust boundaries and landscaping and add value to each home.

DISTINCTIVE PLACES



5. MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT’S THERE

Understand and respond

The design exploits the opportunities that arise from existing landscape and topography by acknowledging the rural edge, existing trees, and hedgerow boundaries. Priority is given to enhancing these assets and uses new landscaping, SUDS, and planting to compliment them. Together, the new and existing open spaces combine to create a series of diverse habitats for the benefit of flora and fauna.

Development parcels are shaped to ensure long distance views in and out of the site with an emphasis on creating frontages that look out over surrounding landscape and open spaces.

A large open space to the west is an attractive space characterised by the retention and enhancement of existing planting with a connecting footpath that facilitates movement to the west of the site.

A SUDS basin uses the topography of the site to create a functional drainage system with functional, aesthetic, and environmental benefits.



6. A MEMORABLE CHARACTER

Create places that are memorable

The immediate area is characterised by prominent detached homes, punctuated by terraces and semi-detached homes. This has been reflected in the wider established residential area and continues into the proposed design solution.

The proposed development comprises:

- Tree-lined streets, pleasant open spaces and outward facing development.
- Identifiable character that is informed by development in the vicinity.
- Landscaping and boundary treatments the add interest to the streetscenes to reinforce and enhance character;
- A complementary palette of materials to reflect those in the surrounding area
- High quality landscaped spaces with a variety of surfaces and planting create a significant and characterful edge to the proposal.

Finishes reflect the characteristics and features of recent technologies and construction methods alongside the established housing stock in the area. Individual house types have conventional features to deliver recognisable and desirable buildings that fit the vernacular. They also point to traditional homes that meet the needs of new residents and reflect current styles.

The proposal is well suited to provide high quality and identifiable homes with accommodation that suit contemporary lifestyles contribute towards health and well-being.



7 . WELL DEFINED STREETS AND SPACES

Create a network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and/or structural landscaping, taking care to ensure that front doors and the principal façades of buildings face streets and public spaces

Public and private spaces within the proposals are clearly defined with perimeter blocks creating a strong sense of enclosure and space. The arrangement and orientation of buildings ensure public spaces are safe and encourage informal surveillance of the public realm.

The use of dual fronted house types will ensure that buildings turn street corners well and natural surveillance is promoted.

Inclusive access within the layout will provide for ease of movement by all social groupings and will meet the standards for disabled access for such items as steps, ramps, door widths, etc. The approach to the dwelling, the area of land within the curtilage of the property from the boundary of the plot up to the building itself, will have accessible paths and drives.

Several development parcels are somewhat fragmented as a result of topography and the shape of the site. A number of disconnected private drives are used to serve several homes. Some homes have rear gardens that face on to Darton Lane in some instances. “Amber” has been given to reflect this arrangement although robust boundary treatments and landscaping mitigate the lack of active frontage onto the existing highway.



8. EASY TO FIND YOUR WAY AROUND

Use legible features to help people find their way around a place

The movement framework is restricted by the shape of the site and has a linear nature however, distinguishing characteristics articulate attractive routes and aid wayfinding. The street pattern is simple and logically composed to promote pedestrian priority.

The existing main road serves access to the site at multiple points serving individual private drives as well as leading to a more traditional road network of roads with separate footways, block paved shared areas and into private drives.

The new development is designed to facilitate safe and convenient movement by pedestrians including people with limited mobility, elderly people and people with young children. The proposal provides and enhances safe and convenient walking routes including connections to nearby retail, transport, schools and other public buildings.

The proposal delivers a permeable movement network that ensures all developed area are accessible on foot. Existing access points to the wider settlement are emphasised and well connected. The proposal seeks to limit car use by taking account of existing non-vehicle routes and reinforcing connection to established services and development beyond the site boundary. This includes connection to an existing Public Right of Way along the southern boundary.

“Amber” has been given in response to this question to reflect that development parcels are somewhat fragmented as a result of topography and the shape of the site. A number of disconnected private drives are used to serve several homes.

STREETS FOR ALL



9. HEALTHY STREETS

Streets are different to roads. Streets are places where the need to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles is balanced alongside the need for people to move along and cross streets with ease. Activity in the street is an essential part of a successful public realm.

The street hierarchy is very clear, with distinguishing characteristics to aid with wayfinding. The street pattern is simple and logically laid out to promote a pedestrian first approach. There is considerable opportunity for every resident to utilise footpaths and other low-impact travel methods.

Built form and grain are well-considered to create positive and interesting streetscenes. Landscaping adds a different emphasis, softening the hard edges of development and helping integrate the built and natural spaces.

Dedicated footpath links have been proposed that link to local services and the wider settlement.



10. CYCLE AND CAR PARKING

Well-designed developments will make it more attractive for people to choose to walk or cycle for short trips helping to improve levels of physical activity, air quality, local congestion and the quality of the street scene. Well-designed streets will also provide sufficient and integrated car parking.

The quantity of parking development is designed to follow Local Authority Compliance. The proposed development comprises:

- Designated private parking for all homes.
- New streets that accommodate visitor parking at several locations.
- Private drives that include designated visitor parking space.
- A varied mix of front and side parking to reduce the impact of the parked car on the street scene.
- Landscape features, including street trees and boundary hedgerows, to soften the presence of the parked car.
- Appropriately sized rear gardens that allow residents to install sheds for cycle and other external equipment storage.



11. GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Creative surface water management such as rills, brooks and ponds enrich the public realm and help improve a sense of wellbeing and offer an interaction with nature. As the richest habitat for a range of flora and fauna, they are also a key play in achieving the net gain in biodiversity sought by the 2020 Environment Bill.

The provision of open space is generous and aligns with the previous work and approvals. The proposed development comprises;

- A net gain in biodiversity is achieved by a considered landscaping scheme and retention of important natural features.
- The proposal includes a new SUDs basin with functional, aesthetic, and environmental benefits.
- Tree lined pedestrian routes and boulevards with amenity grass land and tree planting.
- Mature trees are retained in key areas.
- New landscaping containing areas of structured planting, wildflowers, and bulbs.
- Where appropriate, within the more natural areas of the POS, damp areas will be created by the manipulation of levels to encourage a wider variety of species and habitat.

The retention and enhancement of existing trees and features has been a consideration throughout the design process and is reflected in the final proposal.

Informed by consultant and Local Authority guidance, trees, hedges and other natural features are incorporated into vibrant and active public spaces. There is clear opportunity to create habitats and ecologically important spaces for the benefit of flora and fauna whilst promoting activity and social interaction.

These natural features will be managed to ensure human interaction does not negatively impact on the natural growth and development of these important resources.



12. BACK OF PAVEMENT, FRONT OF HOME

Garden cities, towns and suburbs used hedges to define public and private spaces, helping to create characterful and biodiverse places. The space between the back of the pavement and the face of buildings has a significant impact on the quality of a place. Clear demarcations between public and private spaces can encourage people to personalise the front of their homes whilst also offering opportunities to integrate level changes, utility boxes and waste storage.

All properties have private external space, the extent of which varies depending on the size and location of the property. Front gardens are attractive and pleasant spaces. Each home has discernible and defined edge with space to include new planting and create personalised front gardens.

Front gardens located close to open space (or close to prominent junctions) are bound by metal railings that are reinforced by shrub or hedge planting.

A new footpath and new access points have required an existing stone wall to be removed. The proposal includes lengths of stone wall at prominent locations where space allows. Where this is not possible due to topography and security, the feature has been replaced by lengths of high quality estate railings and planting. The final design solution is a positive response to Darton Lane.

Access roads to properties have been designed to minimise the distance required to take the bins for collection, which will encourage residents to store bins within their gardens. Meter boxes are positioned at accessible locations to facilitate simple servicing. They are colour matched to the front doors of properties.

Rear gardens are appropriately sized to allow residents to install sheds for cycle and other external equipment storage.

An existing dry stone wall along Darton Lane has been reshaped and in some parts completely removed. “Amber has been awarded to reflect the change in character along Darton Lane although replacement boundary treatments are high quality.