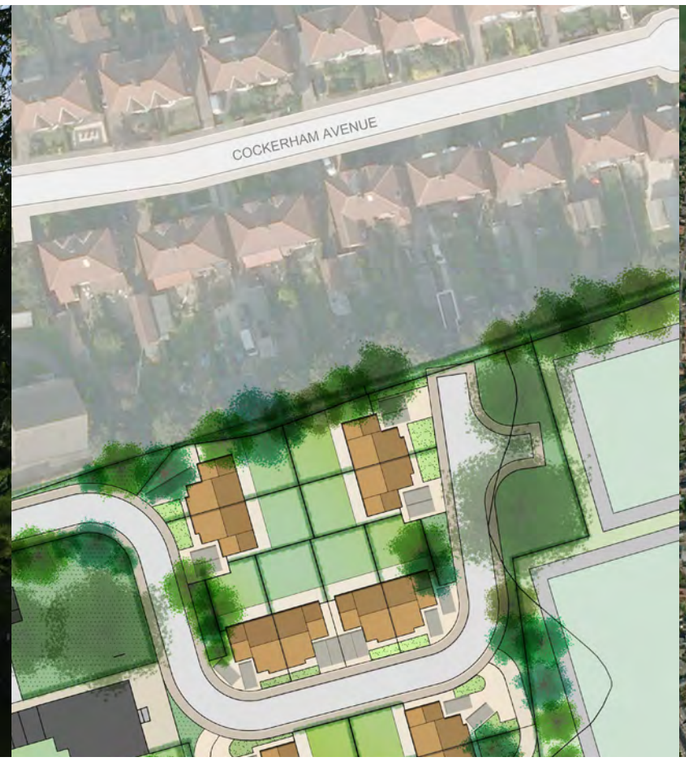
Barnsley College Housing Development Sites

Belle Vue Site

Design, Access and Sustainability Statement

June 2014



CAPITA

Barnsley College
Together We Achieve

Contents

3. Introduction
4. Site Assessment & Context
5. Constraints & Access
6. Design Approach & Principles
7. Architectural Response; Layout
8. Architectural Response; Housing style
9. Public Consultation
10. Sustainability
11. Landscape Design
12. Summary

Introduction

Capita have been commissioned by Barnsley College to develop outline planning proposals for housing developments across two sites within the College's ownership. Both sites are located to the north of Barnsley Town Centre.

The overarching objective is to obtain outline planning consent in order to market the sites to potential buyers. There are a number of key constraints across each of the sites including playing pitch reprovision and being sited near to a conservation area. Capita are also commissioned to obtain full-planning consent for the conversion of Belle Vue House (within the conservation area) into 5no. Executive Apartments. A similar scheme was previously approved by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, however the approval has since expired. Client aspirations include the approved schemes reaching Planning Committee on 2nd September 2014.

This Design and Access Statement sets out our approach, development and conclusions to support our Hybrid planning application for the site at Belle Vue. Since our submission of the Pre-Application Planning Advice application which was issued to the planners in January 2014, the sites have been subject to a number of surveys that were requested by local Planning Officer Steve Kirkham. Pre-Application advice from the planners and detailed discussions with Helen Cattle (representative of Sport England) have informed our proposals for the lower Belle Vue site which is to incorporate an executive housing scheme as well as two mini football pitches to satisfy the pitch reprovision requirement from another site (Carrington Avenue) under development as part of the overall project. The lower Belle Vue site will be presented as an Outline application alongside a Full planning application for Belle Vue House.

Site Assessment & Context

Diagram 1; The Belle Vue site defined by red line boundary. Diagram shows extent of conservation area and main transport routes

Barnsley in Context

Barnsley is a town in South Yorkshire, situated 11.8 miles north of Sheffield, 17 miles to the south of Leeds and 14.5 miles west of Doncaster. The town is surrounded by several smaller settlements which together form the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley which has a population of approximately 230,000. Barnsley is notable as a former industrial town, centered on coal mining and glass working although few functions remain in the town to this day.

Barnsley's Built Environment

Barnsley Town Hall is the seat of local government in the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley. It bears more than a passing resemblance to the Parliament Buildings of Northern Ireland, Stormont, and, like Stormont, its façade is sculpted in Portland stone.

Since the abolition of the County Council, only a small number of council departments are based in the town hall, most of the offices having been distributed around the town centre. In 2006 the Council are building new offices on Westgate to the West of the Town Hall to accommodate 700 staff. There are plans to convert part of the town hall into a museum and community heritage facility. The project is known as Experience Barnsley.

In recent years, Barnsley has undergone a period of change with several modern interventions including the multi-million pound developments at Barnsley College sites just outside the town centre.

Belle Vue setting

The Belle Vue site is situated to the north west of the town centre, connected by the A635 (Huddersfield Road) with regular transport links. The train station is situated in the centre of town and offers regular services to the north (Huddersfield) and to the South (Sheffield). The railway passes the site approximately 200m to the east.

Conservation Area

Belle Vue House and its grounds fall within the Huddersfield Road Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is an excellent example of a Victorian residential suburb. As a settlement, it developed during the late 1800's on former fields and land associated with Cockerham Hall, and has since remained largely unchanged. Properties within the Conservation Area tend to be residential and are detached, semi detached and terraced houses.

Material Palette

Many properties are built from sandstone (often blackened) with welsh slate roofs. The majority of properties comprise of two stories, but there are a number of large three storey dwellings. Architecturally, designs are of the Victorian classic style, with some Arts and Crafts inspired dwellings. A small amount of infill development has taken place, notably around Rosehill Court - but the Conservation Area remains relatively unaltered.

Constraints & Access

Diagram 2; The Belle Vue site and defined zones for development including site constraints and access routes

The site at Belle Vue offers a number of constraints, not least those relating to development in a conservation area and also where level changes across the site can be challenging. There are also a number of mature trees across the site that have been analysed as part of an arboricultural assessment of the area.

In January 2014, a Pre-Application was submitted to the Planning Office at Barnsley Council, and a number of meetings were held to help steer the project towards an application for outline planning permission. The design at Pre-Application stage was deemed to be overly dense across the site and as such advice was taken to focus on a proposal for larger scale quality housing that reflects the surroundings and conservation area. The design that has now evolved from such discussions post-Pre-Application advice, is that of twelve, 4 bedroom dwellings accessed from the existing point of access to the site from Cockerham Lane. Each property can offer large rear gardens and dual car parking in addition to a garage. Some of the trees across the site will need to be removed due to the formation of the development, however where possible, trees have been retained and there is new planting across the site to compensate for those lost, and to add to the character of the site.

Developing the site as proposed will inevitably improve congestion around the pinch point at the main vehicular access point on Cockerham Lane. There are presently 80-100 vehicles parking on site during college hours and as such the Highway consultants have agreed that the development poses no concerns. There is a clear distinction between pedestrian routes and vehicular routes into and adjacent to the site.

The site levels naturally distinguish areas of the site. At a higher level, Belle Vue House is situated in it’s grounds within the conservation zone. Imediately to the east there is a lower level which is currently being utilised as a car park. This site, as shown in Diagram 2 is the proposed site for executive style housing. The proposed is to create a cul de sac which benefits from a clear view of the east elevation of Belle Vue House. The lower part of the site to the far east is proposed to be new mini-pitches which sited in this location creates a connection to the sports facilities of the adjacent college. Vehicular access to the mini-pitches is proposed to be from Honeywell Lane and sufficient parking for players and spectators is proposed nearby. To accommodate the pitches on this site, the existing footpath which leads from Huddersfield Road into the campus is proposed to be redirected.

Image 1; Access to the Belle Vue site from Cockerham Lane

Image 2; View to the east from the Belle Vue site overlooking college sports campus

Image 3; Historic stone wall aligns the site to the south of Belle Vue, with adjacent pedestrian and cycle route leading from Huddersfield Road to the Sports Campus

Image 4; Access from site onto Cockerham Lane showing neighbouring 2 and 3 storey Victorian housing.

Design Approach & Principles

Image 5; Housing style in red brick in neighbouring Cockerham Avenue

Image 6; Typical Victorian style within the conservation area

Image 7; Typical Victorian style house with blackened sandstone coining detail

The design development after the Pre-App stage took into consideration the Planner's aspirations for the housing to be of quality rather than in quantity. As such the proposed development is for only 12 houses, all with large garden offerings and sufficient car parking. The layout of the proposed cul-de-sac takes into consideration some of the mature trees that are existing across the site and where possible these are to be preserved whether in open space or within the gardens of proposed dwellings. As the access remains to the north-west of the site from Cockerham Lane, the new cul-de-sac winds through the site and between housing so that minimum privacy distances between buildings can be achieved as well as a consideration for the presence of Belle Vue House, which although not Listed, offers the site a wonderfully preserved aspect of the early 19th century structure. Vehicular access to the housing is shared by the proposed Belle Vue House (apartments) car park.

The siting of the mini-pitches on the lower Belle Vue site has evolved from discussions with Helen Cattle of Sport England regarding reproviding pitches which are to be lost as a consequence of development proposals at the nearby Carrington Avenue site. In principle, it was agreed that the area to the east of the Belle Vue site would be best suited to accommodate the pitches (an under 7/8's pitch, and an under 9/10's pitch) due to it's proximity to the College Sports Campus.

The approach to the design of housing for the site has been influenced by the existing material palette in the surrounding residential areas. Dwellings on the adjacent Cockerham Avenue are semi-detached, red brick houses and as such red brick is proposed for the 12 dwellings on the Belle Vue site. Another typical feature of Victorian buildings in the area is sandstone coining and so this is proposed to add detail to the proposed dwellings as well as to create an aesthetic connection to Belle Vue House, which is constructed of dressed stone. The roofing proposed for the new dwellings also reflects Belle Vue House which has a grey-coloured Welsh slate roof.

Image 8; Artistic impression of proposed housetype on Belle VUe site.

Image 9; Belle Vue House displays dressed stone and coining details.

Architectural Response; Proposed layout for the Belle Vue development

Diagram 3; Belle Vue proposed layout showing the segregation of the site into three areas but maintaining a connection across the site.

Throughout the design development, it became clear that the site at Belle Vue lends well to being split into three areas. The first area is the conservation area, the second area is the current car park that services Belle Vue House during college hours, which is proposed for housing, and the third is the field to the east boundary with the college campus.

Externally, the aesthetics of Belle Vue House and its grounds will remain relatively unchanged albeit for some minimal alterations to fenestrations imposed by the new internal layout.

The central area (area two) of the site offered the most scope for change and in response to Planning advice the proposal is to develop large, 4 bedroomed executive homes on the site. Although this area is outside the conservation boundary, the material palette of the proposed housing draws its inspiration directly from Belle Vue House and the properties within the local area. In order for the scheme to be accepted, units have been kept to a minimum and the development interacts well with the east facade of Belle Vue House, opening it up to a street-like arrangement which winds into a cul-de-sac to the North of the site. Houses then have an open aspect across the proposed playing pitches to the east of the site in area three. It is proposed that park-style fencing or wall mounted fencing be constructed as a division between the housing and the pitches.

There are small areas of open space across the site, mainly where trees have been retained and to the west and east of the housing development.

Image 10; Example of park style fencing to divide housing and mini-pitches, but maximising visual connections across the site.

Architectural Response; Proposed housing style for Belle Vue

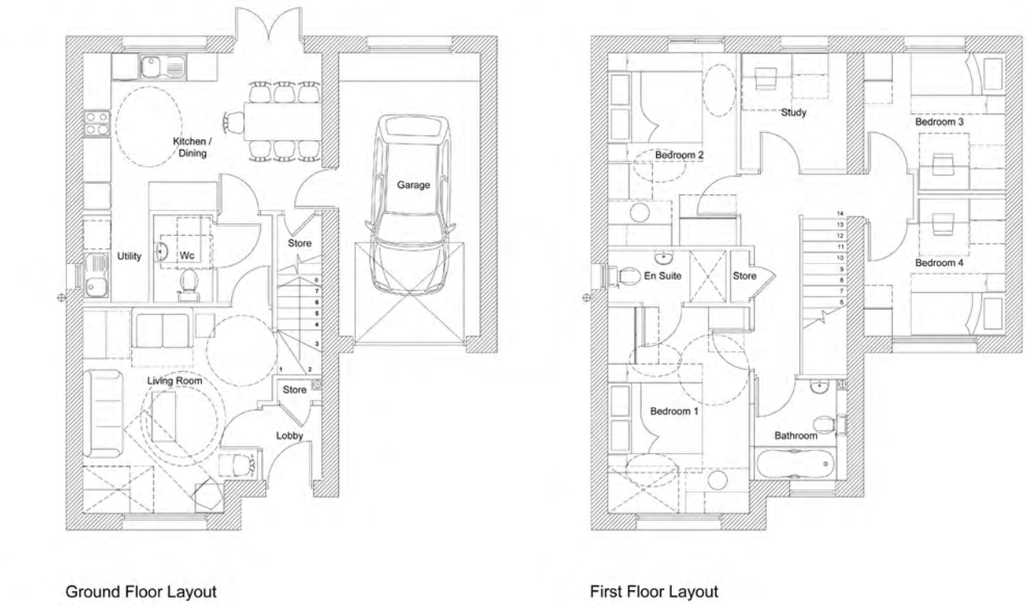
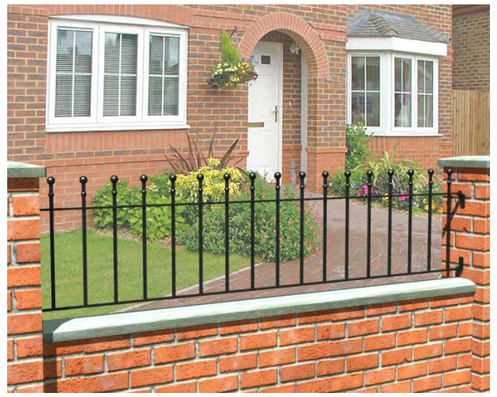


Diagram 4; Proposed house-type for Belle Vue Housing Development using material palette inspired by surrounding buildings. Accommodation over two storeys with integrated garage and spacious interior.

Image 11; Example of wall-mounted metal fencing for boundaries between properties



Appearance and Materials

The intention of this development is to take a sensitive approach to the context and surroundings. The design proposes to use a portion of materials seen in the surroundings including:

- Red Brick
- Sandstone coining
- Welsh slate roof (or similar)
- Timber window frames
- Some white render (optional)

Sandstone coining to certain edges of the facade adds detail and interest to the house type and reflects the material palette of Belle Vue House. Stone lintels and sills are also a feature of the windows and doors.

The house style developed for the Belle Vue site takes into consideration the guidance set out in the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide. At ground level it offers an entrance lobby, spacious living room and a kitchen/dining room which opens into the spacious rear gardens of properties. At first floor level there are four bedrooms and a study with spacious loft space. The scale and massing of the house type is respectful of the surrounding dwellings and the footprint of the buildings is arranged as such that it is appears as pleasant as a detached property as it is as semi-detached. There is scope to design fenestrations into the gable elevation if desired.

It is understood that affordable housing is not required to be provided at either the Belle Vue or Carrington Avenue sites.

Public Consultations

Image 12; Consultation presentation for Belle Vue

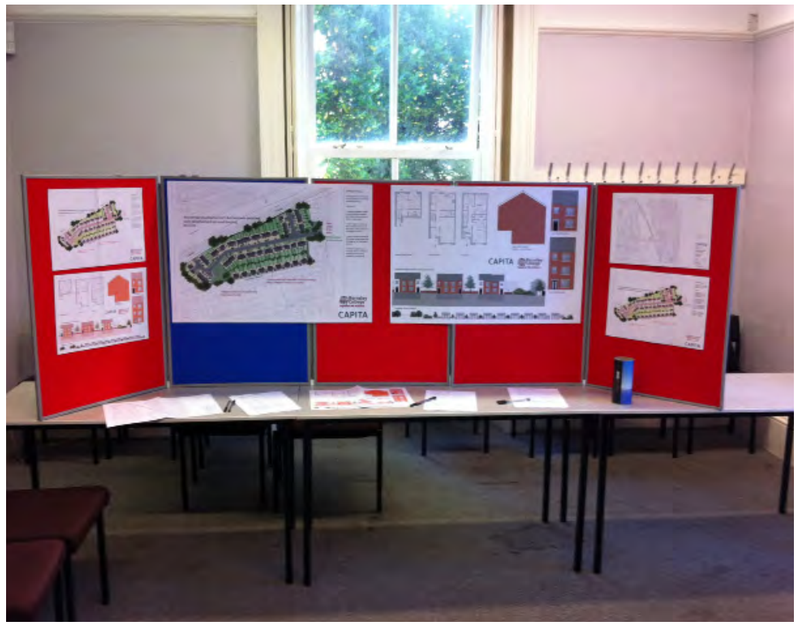


Image 13; Consultation presentation for Carrington Avenue

Capita, alongside representatives from the College, arranged and attended a Public Consultation which was held at Belle Vue House on 18th June 2014. 150 properties in the near vicinity were invited to attend the consultation, where indicitive proposals for the sites were displayed and the public were given the opportunity to ask questions and raise any queries.

In general, the proposals for the Belle Vue site were received very well by the residents and by all who attended. There were no objections to the scheme as proposed and it was seen as being an improvement, particularly in respect of traffic at the junction with Cockerham Lane.

Residents who were less enthusiastic about the loss of football pitches at the nearby Carrington site were generally pleased to see the re-provision of mini-pitches for public use at Belle Vue. Residents on Cockerham Avenue raised queries regarding the maintenance of boundary trees which, if the development goes ahead, would form boundaries between rear gardens of existing properties and new properties at Belle Vue. It was suggested that the Local Authority currently maintain the trees and shrubs across the site.

Proposals to adapt Belle Vue House to create five executive apartments were well received by local residents who felt that this would be a better use for the building which is currently used by the college as classroom and office space. It was noted and that residents felt that collectively, the development of new housing and the conversion of Belle Vue House would be an improvement.

Sustainability

The Belle Vue housing scheme is proposed for location in the central area of the site upon previously developed (car park) land. The site is close to main transport links to the town centre of Barnsley and to some key retail and community facilities. The proposed new housing will help to sustain such local businesses through improved local expenditure.

Sustainability is of great importance during the design development and all measures will be taken to adhere to all relevant planning requirements to reduce the environmental impact of the proposed development and to achieve Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. As such the design and layout has been informed by a wider sustainable approach. As stated in the Code for Sustainable Homes, the design considers that the development is to score highly in terms of energy performance and as such the layout and materials are designed to improve building performance levels. Where possible, means of installing renewable energy systems into housing are considered throughout the design development. Principles from the Lifetime Homes standard are incorporated to ensure that the new homes are adaptable and accessible to a wide range of occupants.

The development incorporates areas of quality public open space. The layout of the pitches to the far east of the site is designed around mature trees in the area. There is a large area of open space upon entry to the site from Cockerham Lane and smaller areas are sporadically positioned across the street scape in areas where where trees have been retained. The development emphasises a strong connection between areas, with Belle Vue House clearly in sight from the mini-pitches. The development forms pleasant spaces that will contribute towards improved health and well-being. Where it has been possible, the proposed development is designed so to reduce crime.

Consideration will be given to adopting Secured by Design principles as follows:

- The development of the cul-de-sac road layout means there is only one point of access and egress to the development for vehicles. This inevitably provides security for prospective residents by minimising through traffic.
- The dwellings are sited to overlook open spaces and so natural surveillance provides a feeling of security.
- Proposed soft landscaping can be carefully considered to deter criminal activity; for example specification of low level spiky bushes against back garden fences that adjoin public open space or highway.

Landscape Design

Image 14; Proposal showing landscape design

Image 15; Typical bicycle stands

Due to some of the constraints of the site, Landscape design is introduced where appropriate and existing trees across the site set out the desired character sought after in the conservation area. There is a small quantity of trees that will be lost to accommodate the proposed development. However, further trees will be introduced to the site which will compensate for any loss of vegetation and will create a more suitable planting environment which further boosts the character of the site.

Pedestrian access is available throughout the site with a winding path which leads from Cockerham Lane through the development to the mini-pitches. Footpaths are proposed to reflect those within the surrounding streets and are designed in line with the Local Authorities standard to become adopted highways. The existing footpath to the south of the site is proposed to be re-routed to allow for the provision of a larger mini-pitch as requested by Sport England.

Soft landscaping is proposed to align house boundaries and planting along the frontage of the houses softens their impact on the surrounding public open spaces. Low boundary walls or wall mounted railing are a consideration for creating definition to the front garden spaces.

Each household has two car parking spaces in addition to a garage. Due to constraints of the site, front gardens are much smaller that at the rear, but effort has been made to ensure there is an area of private garden space to the front and/or side of each proposed dwelling.

Where access to the mini-pitches comes from Honeywell Lane, an area of car parking is proposed for users of the pitches. The car park is proposed to be situated close to the pitches and to the main pedestrian / cycle route through from Huddersfield Road. The provision of four covered Sheffield stands is included in the design for cycle parking.

Summary

The Belle Vue housing scheme is a development that ultimately will aesthetically improve the area and celebrate the existing character of the site as well as respond to the shortage of executive homes in the local area. The layout of the development has been carefully considered and developed throughout the design process to ensure the area is a desirable place to live. The house type proposed is of a high quality, meeting South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide standards, in addition to blending suitably into the surrounding context through the chosen material palette and retention of mature trees across the site. There will be an improvement in relation to traffic flow into and in passing the site due to the change of use of Belle Vue House into executive apartments. In summary, with careful consideration of all of the Pre-Application advice offered by the Local Planning Authority, the scheme has evolved into a pleasant development which has been received well by nearby residents .

CAPITA

Barnsley College
Together We Achieve