

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**Housing Development at
Ward Green, Worsborough**

**On behalf of
Harron Homes**

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CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Harron Homes in support of a Full Planning Application for a residential development on a site at the former Ward Green Primary School, Worsborough.
- 1.2 Downes Illingsworth Partnership Ltd is a Chartered Architects practice specialising in residential developments and have undertaken and delivered hundreds of successful projects over 25 years in conjunction with national house builders and local developers alike. We are familiar with the site and wider context and with the aspirations of the local authority together with those of the client and purchaser whilst acknowledging and respecting the existing residents in the locality.
- 1.3 This statement should be read in conjunction with the proposed drawings and other documentation submitted with this application.
- 1.4 This statement will examine the existing site and its surroundings, consider how this development will fit within the context and explain the design philosophies and urban design principles.
- 1.5 In support of the text, photographs and drawings are included throughout the statement to illustrate the site and surroundings and the design approach.

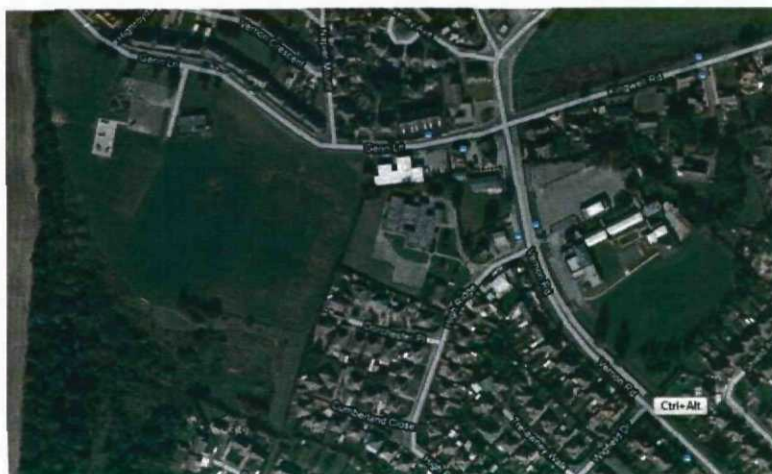
2.0 Appraisal & Approach

2.1 The Site and Context

- 2.2 The following Location Plan and aerial photograph illustrate the proposed site within the context of the immediate surroundings and wider area.



Location Plan



Aerial Photograph

- 2.3 The site lies on the western edge of Ward Green, Worsborough, a suburb approximately 2km south of Barnsley town centre and is within an area that is predominantly residential in nature.
- 2.4 The site's use is now redundant, previously a primary school until its recent closure. The school buildings and caretakers dwelling are still in place on the site, as are a number of trees and bushes. An existing combined sewer also currently crosses the site.
- 2.5 The site has a gross site area of 0.71 hectares with a 60m wide frontage onto High Ridge, which is where the existing access enters the site.
- 2.6 The site is an irregular shape and generally slopes up from south to north, from a level of around 110.5m AOD to 115m AOD. Within the site level plateaus and embankments have been created to suit the former use.
- 2.7 The site is surrounded by a mixture of uses, including existing residential properties, generally single and two storey, a church, retail development and playing fields.
- 2.8 The northern boundary is formed by a high retaining wall with a retail unit adjoining the site at a higher level. Existing bushes interspersed with trees of varying species and value also follow this boundary. The eastern boundary is formed by an existing hedgerow with the large open grounds of an existing church beyond. There is also an existing two storey dwelling on the north-eastern boundary, adjacent the site entrance, with a gable window at first floor level. The south eastern boundary is formed by the existing highway, High Ridge, beyond which are detached single storey properties facing the site. The southern boundary is defined by screen walls and panel fencing with single storey dwellings beyond at Dorchester Place. The western boundary is formed by an existing hedgerow with a public footpath and open field beyond, which is used for formal play.

2.9 The following photographs illustrate the site and its immediate context;



Site access & caretakers house



Site access & house to north of site



No.8 High Ridge – adjoining site to the south



View along High Ridge



Other existing dwellings in the vicinity of the site at Vernon Road & Genn Lane





Southern boundary with existing bungalows beyond



Northern boundary wall & retail unit beyond



View north from within site



View toward site, looking east from adjacent field and footpath showing western boundary hedge



2.10 The densities of the existing dwellings in the vicinity of the site vary, ranging from approximately 15 to 20 dwellings per hectare for the existing detached bungalows to the south and east at Dorchester Place and High Ridge, increasing to around 30

dwellings per hectare for the semi-detached properties along Vernon Road and Genn Lane.

2.11 The existing dwelling types are generally single and two storey in height, with an occasional 3 storey block, and tend to be red brick with slate or brown profiled tile roofs. There are the occasional buff brick or part rendered property and the roofs are a mixture of hipped and gable with bargeboards. The window styles vary but most tend to be white.

2.12 Considerations & Strategy

2.13 The house types have been specifically designed to be robust, individual properties but with a consistent theme throughout in respect of materials and detailing. As such the development will be cohesive and 'gel together' as a place.

2.14 Ensuring all spaces have active frontages is very important in the creation of robust and interesting streets and consequently safe places to inhabit. 'Dual aspect' properties are to be utilised in order to provide frontage development throughout the scheme and ensure that all parts of the development are well overlooked, aiding natural surveillance.

2.15 Landscaping is also a very important factor in the success of a development and early consideration has been given to this. Hard and Soft landscape has a vital role in creating personalised and defensible space, in beautifying the streets and encouraging the use of the outdoors. Good quality materials and substantial planting is proposed throughout the development.

2.16 All properties are two storeys in height with due consideration given to the surrounding properties in terms of heights and separation distances.

3.0 Consultations and Design Development

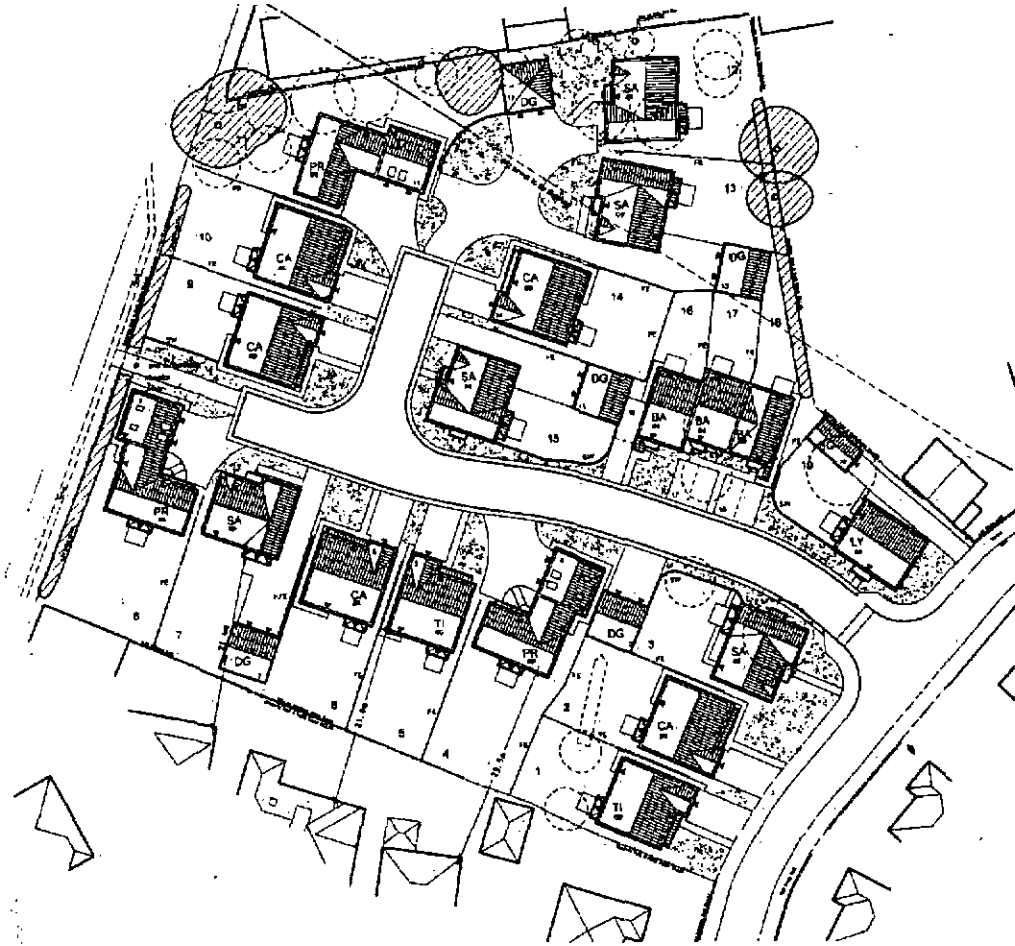
- 3.1 A number a sketch ideas have been investigated over recent months and the sketch proposal below was submitted to the local authority for consideration as a formal pre-application enquiry.



Sketch Layout

- 3.2 A subsequent team meeting was held at the council offices to discuss the design and principles of the development. The council was represented by the planning officer, Steve Kirkham and urban designer Nick King.

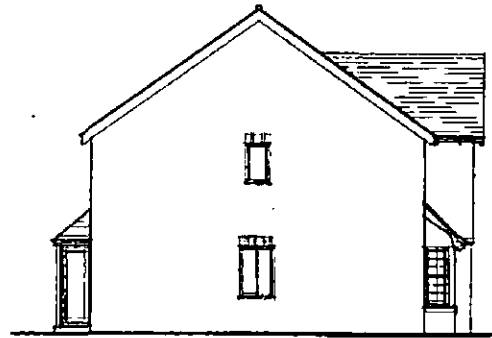
- 3.3 The scheme was generally well received and a few minor items were raised. The comments in Steve Kirkham's letter, dated 26th January 2011, were noted and an amended layout prepared, illustrated below.



- 3.4 Subsequent comments were made by the councils Senior Urban Design Officer on 15th February 2011. The points have been duly noted and appropriate amendments incorporated on the final submitted scheme and clarification on the points, as follows;
- The short, straight footpath link between plots 8 and 9 will be overlooked by windows from both properties (see facing elevations below).

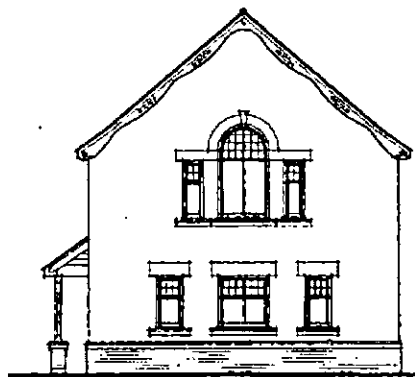


Portchester (plot 8)



Canterbury (plot 9)

- It is not considered necessary to introduce a bay window to the elevation facing High Ridge on plot 9 as the design has sufficient interest and detail on this elevation (see elevation below).



- Plots 3, 15 and 19 are dual aspect houses and so will give interest along the access road. Also, the screen walls to these plots have been moved back to allow for landscaping to soften their appearance.
- The gardens to plots 16 – 18 have been adjusted slightly to improve the gardens and are considered to be an appropriate and adequate size.
- The area of landscaping to the south of plot 12 garage will be conveyed to, and thus maintained by, plot 12.
- A high quality landscaping scheme is proposed and reference should be made to Popplewell Associates' details.

4.0 Proposals

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.2 The following text clarifies the specific detail of the submitted scheme and follows the *Design Component* format set out in the DCLG Circular 01/2006, that is, *use and amount, layout, scale, landscaping, appearance and access*:

4.2 Use and Amount

- 4.2.1 The gross site area extends to 0.71 hectares and it is intended to utilise the entire site as residential development.
- 4.2.2 The proposed development will provide a total of 19no units comprising 16no 4 and 5 bedroom detached houses, ranging from a modest 1206ft² integral garage unit up to a 1579ft² property with double garage, together with a small row of 3no 3 bedroom houses. There are six different house types being provided to suit a range of potential purchasers.
- 4.2.3 The overall density equates to 26.8 dwellings per hectare which fits well with the existing context, acting as a central 'mid-range transition' between the surrounding higher and lower density developments.
- 4.2.4 All properties will have a minimum of 2 allocated off road private parking spaces, which all relate well to the properties they serve. All parking is well overlooked and should not therefore give rise to problems over day to day usage or security.
- 4.2.5 All garages provide sufficient space for the car, cycles and other household paraphernalia ensuring each property has adequate secure and accessible storage space.

4.3 Layout

- 4.3.1 The philosophy of a robust, coherent urban form, where all of the properties generally follow their respective streets in a fairly consistent manner, is proposed. A number of

plots have been brought closer to the pavement in certain strategic locations with tighter separation distances and closer proximity to the highway, where they are used to create focal points, gateways or 'blind corners' you have to navigate around, such as plots 3 and 19 at the site entrance and plot 15 within the site.

4.3.2 These plots are also dual aspect properties to turn corners and avoid blank walls and to ensure 'active' frontages exist throughout the site creating a safe and naturally surveyed environment to all parts without exception.

4.3.3 The properties throughout the development all have a recognisable "defensible space" with a variety of hard and soft landscaping, some giving physical enclosure to the semi-private spaces.

4.3.4 Where possible the dwelling's private amenity spaces back onto other gardens or are screened from public areas by 1800 high walls or vertically boarded fences with rails inboard, to reduce climbing potential. Many of the peripheral boundaries are to existing rear gardens, which each have their own existing boundary treatment. Each plot will be assessed individually and additional screen fencing incorporated on the boundary, if required, to provide adequate screening and security.

4.3.5 With the exception of plot 17, all the properties have individual footpath accesses to their rear gardens giving direct control over their own private domain. This will aid security and, with easy individual access, also enable waste and recycling provisions to be located at the rear of the properties, out of sight from the street.

4.3.6 The majority of the properties are served directly from an adopted highway with two plots at the northern edge accessed off a small private driveway.

4.3.7 An existing public footpath route adjoins the western boundary of the site and it is proposed to create a footpath link, through the existing hedge from the site to the path, thus providing an accessible pedestrian route for the residents and wider community. An appropriate barrier will be provided to prevent unauthorised access and the link is

deliberately short and straight and well overlooked so that it meets 'designing out crime' recommendations.

4.4 Scale

4.4.1 The dwellings are all 2 storey in height with a variety of roof forms to create interest in the streetscene.

4.4.2 The domestic nature of the development means that the buildings relate well to the human scale and the proportions of the building to the street ensure a comfortable and desirable environment.

4.4.3 Indicative streetscenes, showing the general massing and scale of the proposed dwellings, can be seen below. The scale of the dwellings relates well to each other and respects the existing built form.



Streetscenes

4.4.4 Appropriate separation distances are proposed, generally exceeding minimum standards to the existing properties around the periphery. Certain areas within the site

have been designed to be deliberately tighter to create gateways, focal corners or a greater sense of enclosure without compromising amenity.

4.5 Landscaping

Context

4.5.1 The site is located towards the western edge of the settlement of Ward Green around 2 kilometres south of Barnsley town centre. It is bounded to the west by a substantial public playing field and to the north by a former petrol filling station (on Genn Lane) now used as a furniture shop and warehouse. To the east the site is bounded in part by the open grounds of Ward Green Baptist Church (on Vernon Road) and partly by the rear and side garden of a two storey modern brick dwelling. To the south the site is bounded by the rear gardens of dwellings on Dorchester Place and to the south east - alongside the site access road on to High Ridge lies the bungalow and garden belonging to the former school caretaker.

4.5.2 The site was formerly in use as a primary school and the school buildings, though empty, are still in place in the centre of the site. The remainder of the site comprises open grassed areas (primarily to the west and south of the school buildings) and vehicle / pedestrian circulation areas (to the east and north). The site falls from around 115 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) along the northern boundary to around 110.5m AOD on the southern boundary. The northern boundary however comprises a brick retaining wall and ground immediately to the north (i.e. that occupied by the furniture shop and warehouse) is substantially higher.

Existing Vegetation

4.5.3 A range of small tree species exists on site mostly - but not all - lying around the site perimeter and concentrated towards the northern part of the site.

4.5.4 Tree species include Alder, Silver Birch, Weeping Birch, Cherry, Field Maple, Norway Maple and Rowan together with two Sycamore and a single Weeping Beech. Shrubby species - located mostly within the tree line along the northern boundary - include Goat Willow and Hazel.

4.5.5 Hedges can be found along the eastern and western site boundaries - the predominant species here is Hawthorn though Cypress Elder and Cherry Laurel are found in the south east corner.

4.5.6 All the trees on site are young to middle aged - presumably all have been planted since the school was erected around 40-50 years ago. Health ranges from poor to good; the poorer quality trees tend to be those with multiple stems whereas the better specimens have single straight stems.

Environmental Conditions

4.5.7 The site is relatively exposed to the west. Some of the trees - especially along the western boundary have distorted crowns which may have resulted from their response to strong prevailing winds. The trees within the centre of the site have better balanced crowns, although those along the northern boundary have somewhat restricted crowns to the north due to their proximity to the retaining wall.

4.5.8 It can be expected that the gently sloping site will give good ground water conditions throughout.

Landscape Philosophy

4.5.9 To mitigate the proposed development from existing dwellings within close proximity of the site, various areas within the site are to be planted to screen potential views.

4.5.10 Planting is proposed along main access roads into the site. This will comprise avenue tree planting, shrubs and climbers along both sides of the road and so will provide screening of the new dwellings from offsite locations.

4.5.11 Ornamental tree and shrub planting shall be included throughout the proposed housing area to provide visual definition to the new dwellings from within the site. This will minimise their impact on views from the surrounding properties. Climbers are also proposed along any large stretch of boundary wall within the site. Visually

this will break up the surface area of the wall and introduce more green features within the development.

4.5.12 Elsewhere within the site the planting scheme has been designed to reinforce the architectural character areas by providing shrub beds along most of the boundaries of front gardens where these abut roads and footpaths. The plant species selected for these areas will be both attractive and functional in their use defining the private domain of the houses. Through careful maintenance these shrub beds will only improve with time providing a vibrant and colourful landscape for both the home owners and pedestrians within the site.

4.5.13 Semi mature shrubs are also proposed within beds at key locations (e.g. at the site entrance) to provide a mature appearance immediately after planting. Strategic planting incorporating specimen shrubs will also be used to help navigate pedestrians through the site without encroaching on private land.

4.5.14 Tree species have been selected to augment the shrub planting and also provide a distinctive appearance to the different parts of the site.

4.6 Appearance

4.6.1 The house types have been carefully designed with traditional proportions and simple yet effective detailing that will not date and robust materials that will ensure the longevity and sustainability of the dwellings. The individual types, having unique design elements but a cohesive theme, exist throughout to ensure that the site masses together as a whole.

4.6.2 The correct choice of materials is an important factor in a successful development and it is proposed to utilise a good quality, simple palette in order to fit within the surrounding context whilst also creating its own identity. The following materials are proposed for the walls and roofs;

- Walls: A range of red and light brown brickwork.
Generally, voussior brick heads and artstone cills.
- Roofs: A combination of brown profiled tile and grey flat tile.

4.6.3 The distribution of materials will be carefully planned, creating intimate groups within the site.

4.6.4 The dwelling frontages are to be defined with shrub beds and the rear, private curtilage boundaries formed in brickwork walls, where they adjoin the highway, and close boarded timber fences elsewhere. The perimeter boundaries are generally well defined with fencing, walls and hedgerows and these will be retained and enhanced if required.

4.7 Access and Accessibility

4.7.1 The existing vehicular access point into the site from High Ridge will be repositioned more centrally along the site frontage, and will lead you into a new informal accessway, 5.5m wide with 600mm verges, which will serve 19no units. Three of the new properties along the site frontage will be accessed directly off High Ridge with individual driveways.

4.7.2 Accessible, in-curtilage parking is to be provided to all properties. Sufficient access around and into the properties will be possible whilst a car is parked and generous garages will also enable vehicles to utilise them in an effective manner and thus reduce the potential for on-street parking.

4.7.3 Level thresholds will be incorporated into the dwellings to aid accessibility and the dwellings are designed with generous spaces that can be put to a number of uses with scope for adaptability and extension to suit the individual user's requirements and potential changing needs.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The proposals that form the basis of this application have been developed over many months in response to the neighbourhood, site constraints and current urban design thinking.
- 5.2 The existing housing in the vicinity of the site varies in density, character and style. This development will offer a variety of high quality homes to suit a range of purchasers and occupants. It will complement the existing housing stock in the area and respect the surroundings whilst meeting appropriate density standards in a carefully considered format.
- 5.3 The design approach follows sound urban design principles and will result in a robust new development well rooted in its surroundings; it will deliver a safe, attractive and sustainable environment that people will be proud of and want to respect and inhabit for many years to come.