

WILLOWGARTH

LANDSCAPE IMPACT STATEMENT

Issue 1 | May 2013

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As required by the Special Planning Document the design of the Masterplan will have to consider:

- Character
- Streets
- Landscape design
- Walls and fences
- Existing trees and hedgerows and other features of ecological value
- Public rights of way

3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The site's landscape structure, ecology and topography have presented some of the important opportunities and constraints to Willowgarth's design and consequently form a framework within which it will be developed. Willowgarth's design employs best practice by working with the site's natural resources and landscape character rather than against it. By ensuring that the existing trees and landscaping are retained in the main and enhanced to protect views from the Addley Bottom Valley and the brow of the hill at Brierley to the north, Willowgarth's Master Plan has inherently determined which areas are suitable for development, which can be integrated into the development's green infrastructure and which should be left unchanged. One of the first steps of the Master Plan's evolution was the preparation of a Constraints and Opportunities Plan, which helped to inform the following strategies to ensure that the setting and impacts had a positive impact on the environment:

- Ensure that the development seeks to minimise its impact on the environment
- Ensure that the site's green infrastructure is robust, legible and contributes positively to the landscape's character
- Conserve important wildlife habitats and create new habitats to compliment and extend the biodiversity of the site
- Use native species local to the area

4 EXISTING LANDSCAPE STRUCTURE:

The landscape to the east of the application site is typified by the slope down to the bottom of the valley, with woodland and hedgerow planting marking field boundaries. There are no areas with a landscape designation of national or regional importance covering the site. The site itself comprises of an engineered plateau on which the main school buildings and playing fields have been sited. There are however, significant level differences across the site, with falls of approximately 2 metres from north to south and 5 metres from east to west. Even though the development will inevitably result in a change to the landscape character of the area, by taking the opportunity to draw back the extent of the site towards the settlement, the design ensures that Willowgarth is well related to Grimethorpe with the well-landscaped northern edge of the site addressing the adjacent countryside, rather than turning their back. Willowgarth possesses a well-defined structure of trees to the boundary of the application site and although the tree survey identifies that these are of a limited value in terms of the type and quality of the specimens they will be retained where possible or replaced and landscape boundaries to the edge of the site can be enhanced through further planting.

The site's topography plays an important role in defining its character, with the application site occupying a plateau within the surrounding area. The Willowgarth Master Plan works with the landscape character of the site. The strong pattern of existing woodland belts and hedgerow planting are incorporated into the development, acting as a basis for the site's Green appearance. Where appropriate, hedgerows will be extended, with gaps filled in and additional hedgerow trees planted where these are currently limited.

The boundary to the north is a significant interface between the proposed development site and the Green Belt beyond.

The layout of the site's access network will respect the topography of the site and new dwellings can be orientated to take advantage of the good views afforded by the site's topography over the neighbouring valley.

5 ACCESS NETWORKS

The main access to the site for vehicles will be from the existing Brierley Road access. For pedestrians access into the site is either from Brierley Road or Windmill Avenue with additional footpath links to open countryside and the network of footpaths to the east. There is possibility of connections with the existing playing fields to the North subject to satisfying the requirements of Secured by Design. The Masterplan provides an indicative layout of the hierarchy and arrangement of streets within the development, with the final layout being determined in the details of the full planning permission. In principle the development seeks to achieve the following:

- Maximise connectivity and safe access to the existing areas of Grimethorpe.
- Utilise a local street pattern that forms a basis for the development blocks, which in turn creates a well-connected, functional layout of routes and desire lines.
- Design a street pattern which reflects local morphology and placemaking character
- Provide a choice of integrated routes for all, with an emphasis placed on encouraging more sustainable movement patterns. A clear, easy to use network of streets and footpaths connecting to proposed community facilities along logical, direct desire lines.
- Promote accessibility for the whole community, bearing in mind the needs of parents with young children and those with impaired mobility.
- Encourage the control of vehicle speeds and movement by urban design, exploring local examples such as restricted forward visibility, narrow street width, frequent connections, changes in direction and tight junction radii.

The access routes through the site should be overlooked by dwellings and will have a verdant character created by street tree planting.

6 MASTER PLAN FRAMEWORK

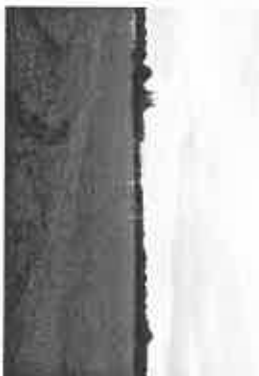
One of the basic tenets of the Master Plan's design approach has been to respect the site's natural environment. It conserves and enhances existing assets including the open space to the north by providing a softer edge to the built up part of the site. This has been enhanced by the proposed buffer to the north boundary. The mix of dwelling types will promote a diverse development, contributing to a dynamic and coherent townscape and a viable community. The Willowgarth Master Plan establishes a planning and design framework to:



Views from Addey Bottoms

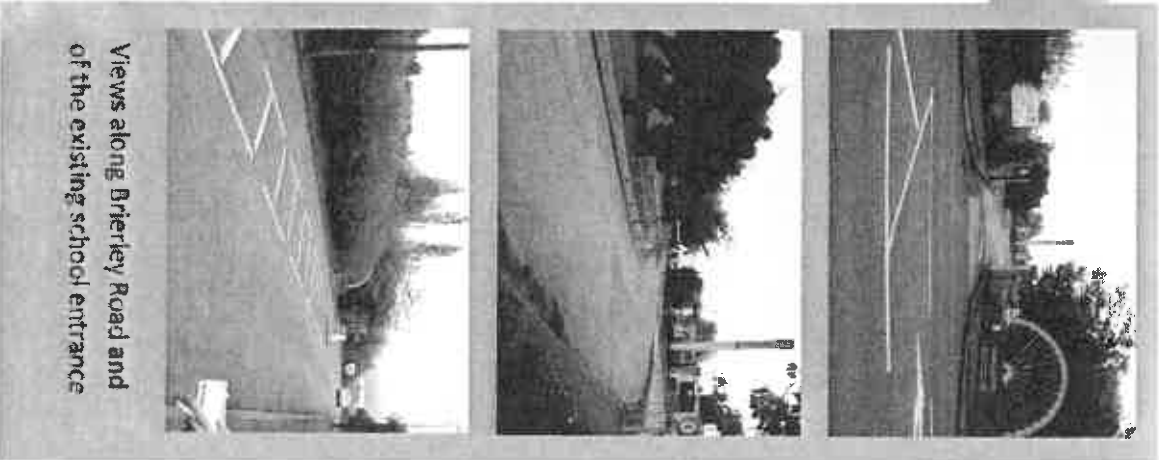


Views to the north and Brierley





Views of residential development to the south



Views along Brierley Road and of the existing school entrance

- Adopt a place-making approach to the design, with a legible hierarchy of well-connected streets and spaces
- Provide a connected network of open spaces that enhances landscape character

The draft Masterplan indicates c.100 dwellings set primarily within the previously developed foot print of the site.. It will provide a variety of house types to meet the needs of a range of families and individuals. The proposed density of 22 dwellings per hectare is low but reflects the location of the site within the Green Belt and the initial approach to retain as many of the trees within the site as possible. It is also important that the redevelopment has a positive impact on the openness of the green belt by reducing the overall impact of the development. Although the masterplan proposal will not result in a lower built footprint, if the height of the existing buildings is factored into the equation, then there is a significant reduction in the volume of built form benefiting the overall visual amenity. The existing volume of built form is approximately 79,849 cubic metres and this will be reduced to approximately 55,420 cubic metres.

The low rise nature of the dwellings, being limited to no more than 2.5 storeys also represents a reduction on the scale of the existing buildings and will support the case for the exceptional circumstances for development in this sensitive location. Therefore, Willowgarth will have a density profile, which underpins the aims of relating density to context and the need to create a socially mixed development, which caters for varied family circumstances.

The layout takes into account the position of existing landscape buffers and the importance of providing a visual continuation of the existing settlement through the site so as to avoid isolating the development from the wider landscape of Grimethorpe.

The key guiding principles for the Masterplan are outlined below:

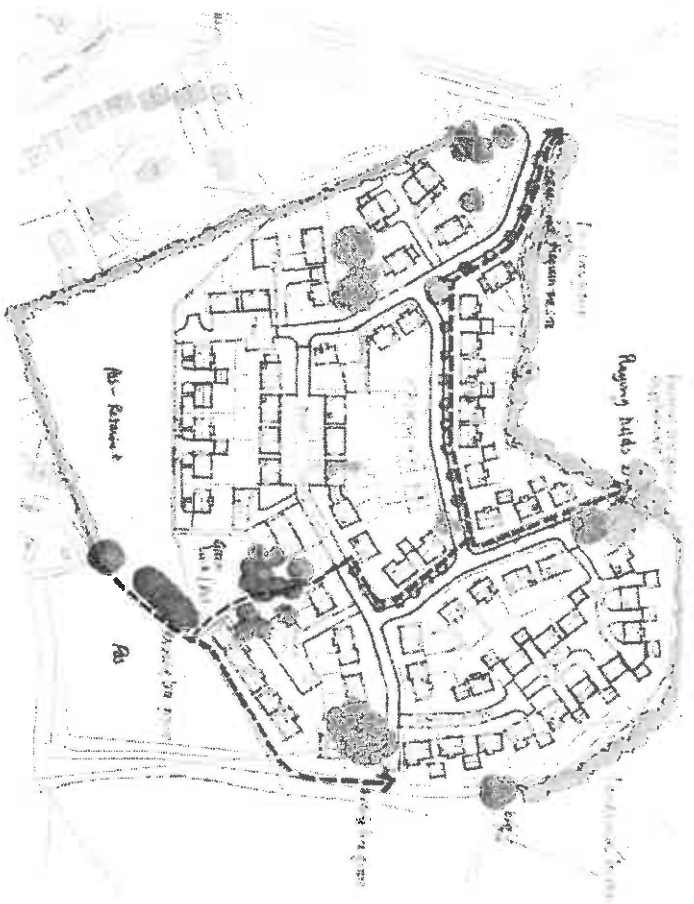
- Reflect the sensitive context of the site within the Green Belt, reducing the impact of the development proposal on the wider landscape, thereby improving the openness of the Green Belt
- Offer a form of development that reduces the height and impact of the built form on wider views of the site in comparison to the existing school buildings.
- Retain a maximum amount of the existing hedgerows, trees and planting as feasible and produce a layout that maximises the screening these features provide.
- Height and overall mass of buildings carefully considered to create well-defined spaces, diversity and balance.

The masterplan indicates the amount of development that can be accommodated on the site.

The internal network of roads and pathways should provide legibility within the site and good footpath links to the wider settlement and countryside to the east of the development. A green link has been indicated that forms route between the entrance from Brierley Roads, the playing fields to the north and the countryside to the south and west.

The heights of the dwellings will be restricted to 2.5 storey with 2 storey development along the perimeter of the site in order to protect the visual amenity of the site.

The masterplan enhances the landscape buffer to the north and east of the site, provides pockets of informal open space on site and where possible retains the existing trees and hedgerows. The layout plan at Reserved Matters stage will ensure that this principle is encapsulated in the final detailed design layout.



Sketch of hedgerows, proposed buffer and routes through the site

INTRODUCTION

NPS NE Limited have prepared a Masterplan for residential development at Grimethorpe on behalf of NPS Barnsley Ltd who are acting for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. This Landscape Impact Statement has been prepared to supplement the Design and Access Statement and other information submitted with the planning application. The proposal is for a high quality, sustainable development, as enshrined in the national planning guidance through PPS1.

The comprehensive contextual assessment and detailed design reflects the sensitive nature of the site.

1 MASTERPLAN VISION

The site provides attractive views over the neighbouring countryside, which supports the provision of a high quality and desirable development. The key aspirations of the project are to harness the strong links with the existing community and facilities, both in terms of the physical links in the form of footpaths, access routes and the proximity to the existing settlement.

The vision is based on provision of a sustainable, attractive development that facilitates improvements to the existing environment both within the site and the wider settlement. The residential development of the site will widen the choice of homes available in the area.

The design approach within this context is based on establishing an appropriate level and form of development that takes the opportunity to efficiently redevelop the site and improve its appearance on the edge of the settlement.

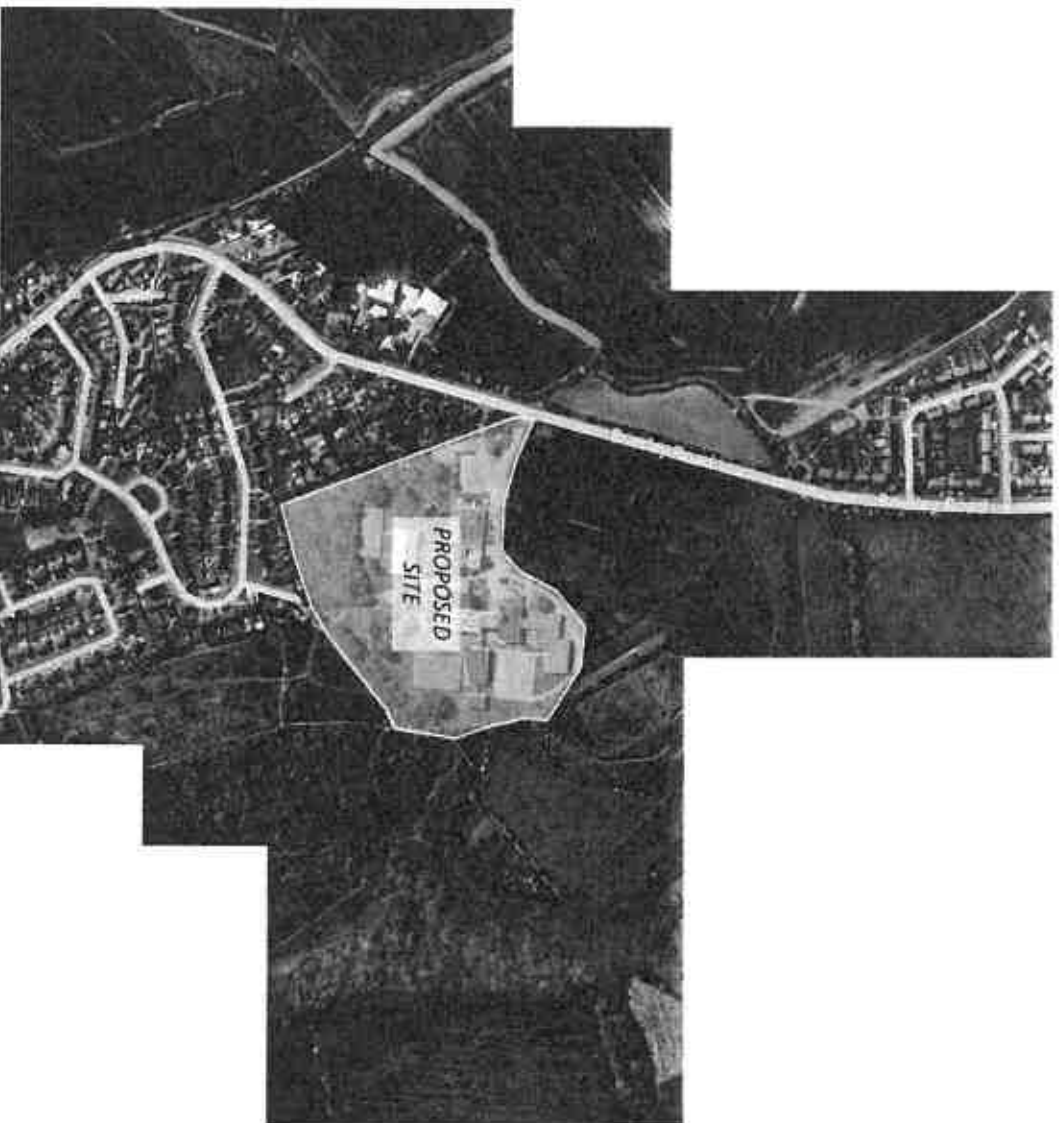
An important element of the vision is to reduce the impact of the existing development on the green belt by breaking down the bulk of development, providing further landscaping and removing alien features from the wider site in order to provide a clearer separation between the northern edge of Grimethorpe and the southern edge of neighbouring Brierley.

2 SITE LOCATION

Willowgarth is a part brownfield, part greenfield site of approximately 11.8 hectares located to the north of Grimethorpe and east of Brierley Road. The site comprises sports and open fields, hedgerows and trees and security fencing associated with the former school.

- To the north of the site is Brierley Meadows, which includes a stream, hedgerows and a woodland strip and beyond this is the settlement of Brierley.
- To the east of the site is a tributary valley of the River Dearne that flows through Addey Bottoms alongside which is a wooded footpath that leads through to the residential area.
- The site is located to the top of the valley side such that commanding views are offered eastwards across the valley.
- To the south of the site is the established housing area within Grimethorpe and to the west the site is bound by Brierley Road from which the only vehicular access to the site is taken.

Aerial View of Site:



Proposed Housing Development
Willowgarth High School
Grimethorpe

Appendix 1 - Proposed unit sizes

Type	No. of Units	Type	GIA sq.m	GIA sq.ft	Total sq.m	Total sq.ft
A	17	2b/4p	69.9	752	1188.3	12791
B	41	3b/5p	81.5	877	3341.5	35968
C	26	4b/6p	124.5	1340	3237	34843
D	8	4b/6p	131.5	1415	1052	11324
E	10	5b/7p	175	1884	1750	18837
Total	102				10568.8	113763

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Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Robin Parker		Architect	10-5-2013	

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Proposed Housing Development
Willowgarth High School
Grimethorpe