

2016



[LAND AT DUCHY COURT DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT BRIEF]

Design Principles and Guidance to inform a Reserved Matters Application

Introduction

Securing high quality housing is a key priority in support of Barrow Borough Council's growing economic development and diversification ambitions.

Achieving higher standards of design is vital if the Borough's enviable environmental quality is to be developed sustainably and in meeting the long term needs, expectations and aspirations of its communities in making the Borough the preferred choice for inward investment.

Achieving this goal will require the public and private sectors to work closely together and share objectives that recognise the economic and commercial value of good design.

The purpose of this Brief is twofold. Firstly, it is to promote the Duchy Court site as a high quality location for housing, setting out the characteristics of the site and the surrounding area and secondly, to provide guidance on the how the Council wishes to see the site developed.



Good design remains 'indivisible' from good planning and is the most visible indicator of investment and regeneration. (NPPF, p.56, 2012)

The Council considers that an 'approved' design and finish quality delivered on the ground is as important to secure as any other infrastructure requirement.

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Introduction

The purpose of this Development Brief is to help inform and guide the production of a responsive, comprehensive, and deliverable housing scheme that will deliver a sustainable form of development on the Duchy Court site.

The Brief sets out the design context for the site and its surroundings and design guidance set out in the in the form of performance criteria that submitted planning applications will need to demonstrate they can meet.

In the event of competing bids being received a supplementary note will be issued setting out details of the Design Panel that will meet to consider presentations of schemes based on how well they meet the requirements of the brief.

The Council aims to realise a high quality bespoke housing scheme on this site in what is an attractive area of the town close to public transport networks, a range of schools, sixth form college and neighbourhood supermarkets.

Developer Brief

The brief for the developer is to produce a comprehensive scheme for full planning permission for the entire site that follows the principles, parameters and performance criteria set out in this Brief along with relevant national and local planning policy and current best practice documents in particular 'Manual for Streets'.

Vision

The Council's Vision for the site is of an identifiable group of buildings 'clustered' as part of a mature semi-rural landscape that retains the essential character of the existing site and its surroundings. Building designs are expected to reflect the arrangement and appearance of the varied types of traditional farm buildings typically found in 'farmsteads' within and beyond the settlement edge.

Achieving this Vision will stem from designers focusing genuinely on the characteristics of the site in developing a scheme that shows how setting, layout, building arrangement, access and landscaping have been considered together as part of a single integrated approach to design. It follows that the use of standard layouts and house types would be unlikely to be able to meet this objective.

The Council considers that this approach will become increasingly more important in managing the settlement edge as the Borough's settlements continue to expand not just in terms of minimising the impact of development on landscape character, but in making sure that existing communities retain a degree of visual and physical access to different types of open green space in their local area.

Concept Options

The Council has identified two broad development options for the site that are considered to be complementary with the vision:

Option 1

- A market housing scheme based around the concept of a 'planned farmstead' based on a geometric arrangement of a variety of building forms and ancillary structures that adopt the characteristics of traditional farm buildings as converted.
- Attached garage buildings incorporating both closed and open bays combining that link with walls and post and rail fencing to define the perimeter of the development and to create sub-character area and enclosure within the site.
- Access provided by a 'shared surface' approach defined by building arrangement, landscaping and boundary treatments creating a legible and varied sense of place within the development.

Option 2

- Two or three blocks of residential extra care and private flat accommodation of no more than 2 ^{1/2} storeys with private residential care being the predominant use. Development blocks are to be 'Pavilion' style and set within well-sited and proportioned landscaping taking into account of the elevation of the site so that the group sits within the landscape and does not dominate it given its elevation. The building design and approach

to landscaping will need to follow the theme set out in Option 1 above.

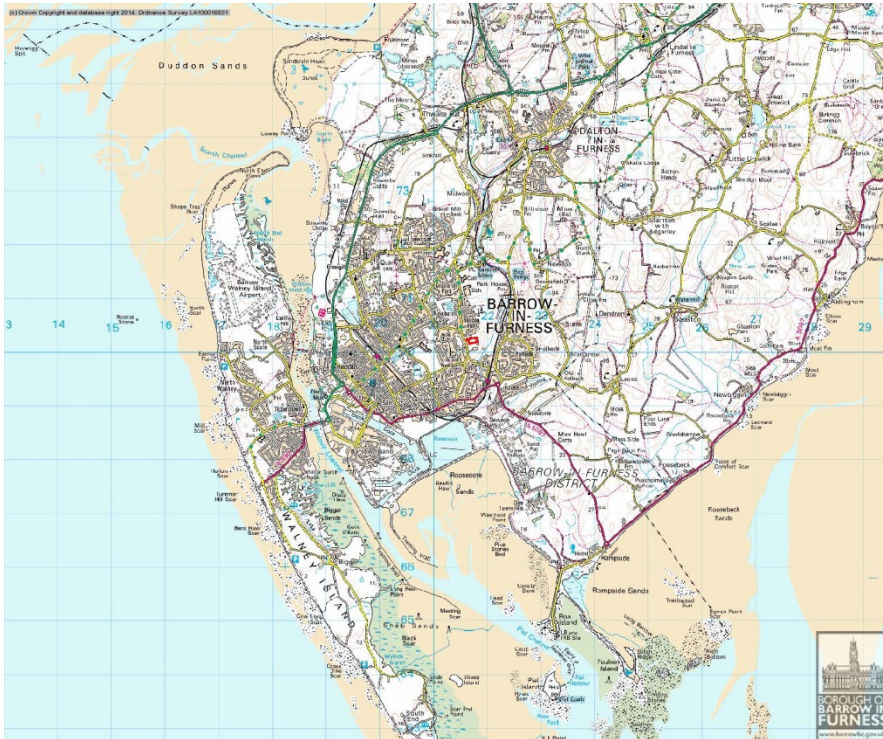
Whilst the Outline Planning approval is for 30 units approval consent for that number will only be forthcoming if it can be demonstrated that it can be achieved in full accordance with the brief without resulting in a cramped or uniform form of developed or one that is dominated by its access layout.

It is expected that the site would support a range of 3 to 5 bedroom market houses with on curtilage parking located behind the building line.

The second development option is for two or three link-detached blocks to provide Extra-Care type accommodation subject to utilising the same design principles and criteria as for the market housing option in making sure that such a scheme is complementary with the Council's vision.

The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014, highlighted that the residential profile of Barrow Borough's population continues to age with an estimated 4% increase in people over 65 in the period up to 2021. A total of 23.4% of older people surveyed were actively considering buying or renting sheltered or extra care accommodation suggesting that this would be a viable alternative to market housing.

Site Location Plans



Borough Site Location

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Ordnance Survey LA100016831



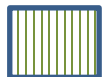
Barrow Site Location

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LA100016831



The Site

Existing Green Wedge



Planning Status

The site, wholly owned by Barrow Borough Council and previously allocated for housing in the Barrow Local Plan 1996-2006 was subsequently deleted as part of the Council's Housing Chapter Review. An Outline planning application for a proposed hospice (13/2005/0984) was approved with conditions, but was not implemented.

Background

The site was subsequently reconsidered as part of the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in 2014 which again highlighted the potential of the site for housing. An Outline Planning Permission submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the Council's Estates Service was granted conditional approval for 30 dwellings with all matters reserved prompting the issue of this Brief.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

The emerging Barrow Borough Local Plan now seeks to develop the Council's existing Saved Green Wedge policy into a broader Strategy for Green Infrastructure across the Borough. Instead of being an approach to protect a number of key sites it has been expanded to incorporate Green Infrastructure as both a framework for site development and as guidance to ensure developments are well designed and are capable of integrating sensitively with their surroundings in support of landscape character, amenity and biodiversity.

The Development Framework Concept Plan on page 14 utilises the 'Green Corridor' and 'Green Link' classifications to highlight those parts of the site that will be important in defining development character, locating infrastructure and in retaining and enhancing the site's linkages with surrounding open spaces and the wider countryside.

The Site

The 1.5 hectare Duchy Court site forms an elevated part of Barrow's settlement edge characterised by a convex slope that falls east to west. The site is semi-rural in character previously being used as an arable smallholding for growing animal feed. The site is now overgrown with scrub grassland along with the remnant foundations of the original cluster of buildings on site, including a dwelling, now demolished.

The Site contains two areas of mature trees and supporting shrub planting that will need to be retained for their amenity and biodiversity value as a mature focal element upon which to base a landscaping scheme.

The site is defined to the west by the rear boundaries and building line formed by 1930's semi-detached properties fronting onto Flass Lane. These properties are approximately seven metres below the highest point on the site hence the use of the Green Corridor as an amenity buffer.

The northern side of the site abuts the Council owned allotment site separated by a mature mixed hedgerow. The Allotment site to the north along with land at the Bridgegate smallholding to the east are part of the Mill Beck Valley Green Wedge designated in Policy D4 of the Saved Barrow Local Plan 1996 – 2006 a designation proposed to be retained in the emerging Local Plan. Opposite the site to the south is the Abbey Meadow Nursing Home set back within its semi-formal grassed landscape.

Note: The Site falls within an area of 'archaeological potential'. An evaluation of the site will be required to include a Watching Brief.

The site is also a natural watershed and as such will need to be designed to drain to a separate attenuation system eventually leading to a watercourse. The drainage feature will need to be designed as an integral part of the site's landscaping and building layout as a design opportunity not a constraint so that it contributes positively to the appearance of the site and to its biodiversity. Only foul sewage will be disposed into the main sewer system.

Services

The site is well located in terms of local facilities and services many of which are within easy walking distance:

Doctor's Surgery	within 1400 metres
Infant Schools	within 750 metres
Junior Schools	within 750 metres
Supermarkets	within 550 metres
Post Office	within 550 metres
Nursery	within 600 metres

The site is accessible locally by public transport with a Bus Stop within 350 metres to the north west of the site on Flass Lane and Roose Station within 700 metres.

Utilities

Utility connections for water, gas, electricity and telecoms are available adjacent within Duchy Court adjacent to the site.

Access & Accessibility

The site will be accessed from the existing turning head constructed on Duchy Court, which has been previously adopted by the Highway Authority; and assessed as being suitable for this scale of development.

A key objective of the design is the achievement of a defined cluster of buildings around a level shared surface environment. Achieving this 'off carriageway' appearance on entering the site will need traffic speeds to be reduced to a low speed that would lend itself to deliver a pedestrian focus to the scheme that is not dominated by vehicles either moving or parked. The suggested vehicle speed reduction are expected to be achieved by shared surface, aggregate and or blockwork surface texture and no markings. The use of post and rail gateways and buildings forming corners to reduce speeds will be encouraged.

Within the shared surface area the layout will need to be defined by a combination of low 'pen' walls and the inactive sides of ancillary garage buildings to keep the relationship of built form varied and interesting at a human scale.

Services will need to follow scheme design not dictate it with runs and spurs located under blockwork channels within the hard surfaced areas with connections taken through the Green Corridor landscape.

Lighting schemes have significant potential to urbanise the settlement edge. It is expected that the route between Duchy Court and the development will adopt a low level bollard mounted white light scheme which continues into the development supplemented by wall-mounted

lighting on ancillary and occupied buildings are key changes in direction through the layout.

Recycling and waste storage will need to be centrally located close to a turning head to avoid excessive reversing.

The access road and internal layout will be constructed to adoptable wearing course standard prior to the first beneficial occupation of the site.

Footpaths and Cycleways

There is a good network of footpaths and cycleways in close proximity to the site, reinforcing connections with these will be important particularly towards Mill Beck Valley and the Furness Abbey to Flass Lane Greenway.

Photo Viewpoint Plan



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Ordnance Survey LA100016831

(Images overleaf)

Site Images



Design Approach

The Brief aims to help guide scheme designers by highlighting the objectives and criteria that the Council expects to see addressed. The Brief does not dictate precisely how this is to be achieved but provides the Vision as an appropriate concept that will lead to a development that looks like it should be there and not something alien or imposed, achieving this will be down to the creativity of the designer.

The following sections provide guidance as to the characteristics that a submitted scheme design will be expected to demonstrate if it is to be in accord with the objectives of the Brief:

Design Approach

1. How has the vision and the chosen concept option been interpreted and translated into the scheme across the design scales from site surroundings, arrangement and composition to detail and finish?
2. How is design quality to be guaranteed through the construction process such that an approved scheme can be fully implemented on site without subsequent variations?

Principles

The following principles provide the general approach relevant to achieving the vision. Schemes will need to demonstrate:

1. An identifiable sense of place from beyond the site and on entering and moving through the development.

2. A series of relevant sub-character areas that coordinate and explain the form, arrangement and appearance of buildings within a landscaped setting.
3. A layout where movement and ownership has been defined within a hierarchy of public to private spaces including those used for access.
4. An approach to shared surfaces that focuses emphasis on the pedestrian and the users of space instead of the needs of the driver and car.
5. A distinctive range of building types and curtilages that support the theme set out in the Vision and that provide a useable amount and configuration of private amenity space.
6. Buildings capable of providing flexible 'lifetime' use with adequate provision of internal storage for the intended number of occupants with external storage and service cabinets located conveniently yet unobtrusively without undermining a secure front building line.
7. How a range of passive and active sustainable development technologies have informed the layout and building design in an intrinsic way and not as a 'bolted on' afterthought.
8. How utilities will be located in ways that avoid disruption to surface quality and movement.

9. A layout that features active frontages and indirect overlooking of all areas of the scheme in creating a high degree of personal, property and community safety.

Scheme Design

The submitted scheme will need to demonstrate how it has responded to the following:

Context

1. How the semi-rural character of the surrounding area has been considered in the arrangement and design of buildings and boundary treatments?
2. How the scheme has taken the existing features on site to be retained into account in composing views in focusing and framing views and in creating a sense of place.
3. How the form and character of the existing 'grassland' can be achieved in a more sustainable and manageable form.

Layout, Form & Character

1. How the layout creates a logical series of spaces within the development that contribute to a sense of place whilst retaining visual access to the site's semi-rural aspect.

2. How the development would create sub-character within the development focused on grouping of buildings and enclosures, landscaping and drainage arrangements.
3. How the scheme would achieve a 'development within a landscape' and not just a landscaped development.
4. How the design would maximise solar gain whilst avoiding a heat island effect.
5. How the scheme integrates drainage as a positive streetscene feature with planting and storage features to intercept and retain water on-site.
6. How the layout uses buildings and enclosures to assimilate parked cars visually without them being dominant in the streetscene.
7. How natural surveillance balances with appropriate standards of privacy where distance alone is not enough to achieve it.

Building Design

Much of the character of the development will be based on how well the design of various building types work together in forming sub-character areas and in terms of how the development will be seen within the wider landscape.

- 8 A variety of house type designs will be needed to reflect their visual role within the group using symmetry and asymmetry with respect to openings to suggest formality and informality respectively.
9. Elevations will need to be modelled using relief and recessed elements into a series of compartments that articulate the scale of a building without creating contrived step breaks to highlight individual units.
10. Windows to be of a timber or composite manufacture in a natural wood or coloured painted finish for 'barn' type buildings with white painted timber for those buildings to feature a more 'domestic farmhouse' appearance.
11. Readily accessible cycle storage within garages to encourage reduced use of the private car.
12. Surfacing to be porous or drain sustainably to the drainage system within the Green Corridor.
13. All properties to have water butts with lids and taps fed from the main and or garage roof slopes.
14. Materials selected to be durable and locally distinctive in terms of colour, bond and texture relative to the visual order of the building within the vision.

Development Framework

The development framework overleaf illustrates an indicative layout that would accord with the objectives of the Brief .

Development Framework

Key

Site Boundary



Access



Suggested Frontage



Green Corridor

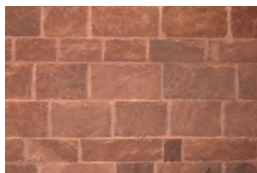


Green Link



Design Cues

The following images are compiled to be indicative of aspects of general character that the Council considers would be appropriate on the Duchy Court site.





Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework Context

Para 153 of the NPPF states that; 'Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery, and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.'

It is considered that the location and prominence of the site in relation to the Mill Beck Valley Green Wedge justifies the production of a development brief and in maintaining the semi-rural character of this part of Barrow's settlement edge justifies the level of design guidance provided.

The use of a development brief on this site is consistent with the NPPF's encouragement for positive and proactive planning in the delivery of sustainable development

Planning Application Process

Pre-application discussions will be an **essential part in developing a scheme prior to submission including with other key stakeholders**. The Council expects all issues to be resolved prior to the submission of any application. It is envisaged that a Development Team approach will be offered with direct support to the design team from development control, planning policy and building control teams, with input from Cumbria County Highways.

Quality Assurance

Achieving an approved quality on site is the fundamental purpose of the Brief. In exerting a degree of editorial control the Council intends to consider a range of planning mechanisms to ensure that the requirements of the Brief are met on the ground, using suitable conditions, including the following, and or legal agreements:

1. A development timetable setting out the staged programme of delivery.
2. The removal of Permitted Development Rights across the site to protect the development from unsympathetic private interventions.

Submission requirements

The following will be required as part of the planning application

- A Layout Plan at a recognised metric scale showing roof plans, boundary treatments, service runs, landscaping, recycling and waste management arrangements, access and parking.

- Plans and Elevation drawings at a recognised scale of each building type, including streetscene frontage elevations
- Cross sections showing drainage arrangements
- A materials board showing all facing and roofing materials including window frame sections.

The documents in the following list will be needed to accompany the application for full planning permission. Other statements may be required arising from information received from formal consultations:

- Design & Access Statement
- Land Contamination Report – Phase 1
- Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, (Option 2)
- Drainage Strategy including SUDs
- Habitat and Protected Species Survey
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Archaeological Assessment

Contacts

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Disclaimer

It is important to note that every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided. It remains the sole responsibility of the developer to demonstrate the acceptability and accuracy of proposals submitted to the local planning authority for planning permission.