“A Sustainable and Vibrant Development”

MORTIMER

SITE DESIGN BRIEF (MOR006)

MARCH 2017
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SITE DESIGN BRIEF
PROJECT NO. 2095

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF T A FISHER

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DATE:
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INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Site Design Brief sets out the parameters for development in accordance with the Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Policy SDB1. The policy requires a detailed design brief to be prepared by the developer and subject to discussion with the Parish Council and community prior to submission of a planning application.

1.2 The proposals outlined in this Site Design Brief present an opportunity to create a distinctive neighbourhood, to open up the site for public access and community use and deliver up to 110 new homes, including 40% affordable housing. This will assist in meeting the local housing needs as well as delivering social-economic benefits.

1.3 The development will be appropriately designed with close consideration to density, scale and appearance and will improve pedestrian movement and circulation in a high quality environment. The proposals will promote sustainable measures of transport and encourage walking and cycling.

1.4 The site was regarded as suitable for development within West Berkshire Council’s Housing Assessment 2013. It was identified by West Berkshire Council as having potential for 100 houses and recognised as being the preferred site for 110 units and an Infant School in the draft Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan.

1.5 There would be some loss of open countryside on the edge of the settlement and development would have some adverse effects upon the rural landscape setting to the settlement as perceived within views from the south (looking north).

1.6 In order to mitigate these effects, the steeper south / south-east facing slopes within the site should be planted with native woodland with more open areas positioned on the lower slopes abutting the watercourse.

1.7 The development should also be of a similar scale and form to that of the existing settlement with trees also forming part of the streetscape as well as public and private open spaces.

SITE ASSESSMENT

- Public footpath along eastern site boundary
- Access to The Street through the “Tower House and Fairwinds” site to the north
- Mature trees and hedgerows along the site boundaries
- Public sewer crossing the site with easement
- Sloping site with land falling away steeply to the south
- The site is surrounded by existing housing on three sides:
  1. To the west of the site the area is dominated by Victorian and Edwardian semi-detached homes and villas along St John’s Road reflecting the historic core of the village.
  2. To the north of the site, The Street is characterised by post war suburban development fronting onto Mortimer Fairground. St John’s Church is a key landmark at the junction of The Street and West End Road
  3. The Avenue to the East is a loop of low density semi-rural houses with varied materials and architectural treatment.
OUR VISION

A sustainable and well-connected development which will deliver 110 new homes and associated infrastructure to meet local needs.

A development which delivers a mix of open market and affordable housing, with a mix of dwelling types and sizes including bungalows, apartments, starter homes and family housing, and which each have sufficient parking to match demand.

A development which benefits the local community through the provision of land for a new Infant School and GP Surgery, together with a significant provision of over 3ha of public open space.
BUILDING FOR LIFE

1.8 The development will be visually attractive and integrate well into the surrounding area. It will be designed with regard to the Building for Life 12 principles.

1.9 Consideration of these principles will form the basis for the development proposals and has been integrated into the structure of this Site Design Brief.
**DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Positively responding to the features of the site**

The site has a strong existing landscape framework formed by the existing trees and hedgerows around the site boundary. This will be retained and enhanced. The village surrounds the site allowing it to be integrated into the neighbouring area with a public footpath running along the eastern boundary.

The southern part of the site slopes steeply which will be retained as a green arc of open space.

**A strong accessible green framework**

Pedestrian links will be created throughout the development which link into the existing footpath, and a new pedestrian cycle link will be created linking to the village centre, opening up the site and new areas of accessible open space.

A soft landscaped edge will be created to tie the development into the landscape.

**Integrating New Homes and Facilities into Mortimer**

The site will be accessed from The Street with development focussed in the north of the site. A new site for the school and doctors surgery will be the heart of the new development with strong connections to the village centre. Spaces for informal recreation on the doorstep of the new homes will be provided throughout the development.

**Creating Character**

The arrangement of buildings and spaces will aim to create a well-connected and safe neighbourhood. Landmark buildings at key points will act as way-markers to promote permeability and create a sense of place.

Views will be created from the development across the new southern open space, connecting the development to the wider landscape.
THE CONCEPT
USE AND AMOUNT

1.10 The application will be made in outline and will seek planning permission for a mixed-use development incorporating:

1. approximately 4.3ha of residential land designed to accommodate up to 110 new homes.

2. 1 ha of land set aside for enabling the provision of a three form entry (3FE) infant school and a new doctor’s surgery with shared drop-off / parking facility.

3. 3ha of accessible open space incorporating a leisure trail and space for a LEAP.

4. A 20m landscape buffer comprising a mix of woodland and shrub planting.
The Gateway

- Marker buildings create a sense of arrival
- Medium density development reflecting the character of the Avenue
- Typically detached and semi-detached homes

Village Lanes

- Higher density development linking to the village core
- Focal space to provide social hub with the proposed facilities
- Apartment blocks, terraces and semi-detached homes

Woodland Views

- Sinuous lower density development utilising the topography of the site
- Typically detached or semi-detached homes
- Set within woodland with views to the open space and wider countryside
The proposal will include a wide variety of units, varying in dwelling types, size and tenure from 1 to 5 bedroom dwellings to meet local housing needs.

This mix has been designed to reflect policy and local housing need and will include a mix of bungalows, apartments and houses to provide for all age ranges and household sizes.

Affordable housing will be provided within the scheme at a proportion of 40% (i.e. 44 units) on site in the form of both affordable rented accommodation and shared ownership dwellings.

All affordable homes will be designed to be indistinguishable from open market housing in external appearance and specification of materials.

The indicative housing mix and tenure is set out in the adjacent table.

This mix is broadly consistent with the mix identified at Policy SDB3 of the Mortimer NDP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT TYPES</th>
<th>AFFORDABLE HOUSING</th>
<th>OPEN MARKET HOUSING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bed flat</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed flat</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUT

1.17 The masterplan to the right is for illustrative purposes only. The plan is based on the development framework and principles set out within this SDB and provides an indication of the grain and scale of the proposed new homes, school and surgery site and open space provision.
PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE

1. The layout and design should respect the character of the site and respond sensitively to its context
   - The layout should create a sense of place, complement the site’s inherent qualities and enhance the existing landscape and built heritage.
   - Character can be achieved through introducing unique residential groupings for each character area. Groupings will be discernible either as ‘clusters’ of buildings around a shared space, or configurations that address and define a particular space to their front.
   - Dwellings are to be configured in these identifiable residential groupings that define spaces of a certain character and function.

2. Connections and permeability will be integrated throughout the layout
   - Pedestrian and cycle routes should be interconnected.
   - Where vehicular routes reach a terminating space, pedestrian routes must continue beyond that space and connect to the nearest public route or space.

3. Continuity and enclosure
   - All frontages along streets and spaces should be designed to create clear definition through building form, linkage and positioning.
   - Buildings that relate to a common building line reinforce and define the street.
   - Public and private space should be clearly distinguished. Private spaces at the back of buildings should be enclosed for better privacy and security.

4. Routes and spaces will be addressed by active frontage
   - Routes and spaces should be overlooked by windows at ground and/or first floor levels.
   - Blank elevations largely devoid of windows should be avoided.
   - Public open spaces should be fronted by dwellings.
5. **Corners will be positively resolved and enclosure will be achieved**
   - All buildings located on identifiable corners (where two routes, two spaces, or a route and a space meet) should positively address both directions.
   - Building form should respond to defined corner locations through building massing being located on that corner.
   - L-shaped buildings/corner turning units should address defined corners.

6. **Privacy will be maintained**
   - Direct views from dwellings into dwellings will be avoided, either by separation or detailed design.
   - Appropriate design measures in higher density areas include use of opaque glazing or louvres, the angling or positioning of windows to avoid direct sight lines, and the use of full height screening to courtyards or terraces.

7. **Car parking will have minimal visual impact**
   - A variety of parking solutions must be utilised.
   - Adequate parking provision must be made to avoid parking on kerbs and open spaces.
   - All private parking spaces must be located within easy access of the dwellings they serve.
   - Parking should be overlooked by dwellings.

8. **Focal Points will be established**
   - Vistas should either end in a defined public open space or be terminated by a 'visual stop.'
   - Key buildings will define key corners and frame key views.
   - A 'visual stop' may be a carefully positioned marker or key building or a prominent landscape feature.
   - Vistas should not terminate in a view of a private driveway or garage door.
9. Create Order and Harmony without Uniformity

- Character areas will be integrated into the design to create distinctiveness.
- Handled and framed dwellings create a rich variety in street scene but with unity.

10. Responding to Topography

- Design to respond to the changes in topography;
- Building form to reflect changes in levels;
- Consistent stepping;
- Use innovative solutions to avoid significant retaining walls.

11. Transition in Scale

- A gradual change - from higher density terraces and apartment buildings to low density large detached plots appropriate to location and character.
- The transition in the solid to void ratio should reflect the change in scale.
- Sudden changes in scale and massing should be avoided.

12. Aspect and Orientation

- Layout should be optimised by providing south facing houses as much as possible;
- Site features and views will be maximised.
APPEARANCE

1.18 The development will respond to the best examples of local vernacular and distinctiveness that can be found within the area around Mortimer. This includes taking reference from good design examples within the vicinity of the site, including The Street, The Avenue and Victoria Road. The proposals will respond to the Mortimer Village Design Statement which provides a detailed local context for the consideration of development proposals within Mortimer.

1.19 The development will avoid pastiche and embrace modern interpretations of the local character and respecting the rural vision of Mortimer using established materials, textures and colours. The detailed design will demonstrate that Local Character is a strong design theme throughout.
DENSITY AND SCALE

1.20 Lower density development will be focussed to the south east of the proposed development area and higher density development will be focussed closer to the village centre within the north west of the site around the proposed school and surgery site.

1.21 The massing and building heights within Mortimer and the surrounding area vary from 1 storey to 2 storeys with occasional 2.5 storey dwellings with rooms in the roof. There is some 3 storey development along West End Road and Victoria Road. An assortment of building heights and massing will create variety in the streetscene and will be reflected in the proposed development with a mix of bungalows, houses and apartments.
ACCESS AND PARKING

1.22 Vehicular access into the site will be from the Street, via the approved “Tower House and Fairwinds” site, via a new priority junction, as shown below. The access road will be comprised of a 5.5m carriageway width and 2m footway, preserving the existing public right of way.

STREET HIERARCHY

1.23 Streets will be designed as places with a distinct and clear hierarchy of streets to create legibility through the development ensuring places are easy to navigate through and around. Inclusive design will be promoted in the design with streets able to accommodate a range of users, create visual interest and amenity, and encourage social interaction.

1.24 Streets will be designed to inhibit speed through the design of the road layout and materials with a maximum design speed of 20mph.

1.25 The use of unnecessary street furniture will be limited to reduce clutter and reflect the character of Mortimer.
PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE CONNECTIONS

1.26 The development will be integrated into the local community through the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes. A separate pedestrian and cycle access will be delivered to provide direct, safe and convenient access to the village community facilities to encourage walking, cycling and social interaction from the development to the village centre. The existing Public Right of Way (ProW) will be maintained providing access to the wider countryside. It will be integrated into the site through new landscape connections.

PARKING

1.27 Careful consideration has been given to the design of parking within the site. The design approach has been informed by best practice, including the guidance set out in “Manual for Street” (2007) and (2010) and English Partnerships “Car Parking, What Works Where” (2006). It has been designed to comply with local parking standards, as set out in Policy P1 Residential Parking for New Development of the West Berkshire Council November 2015 Proposed Submission Housing Site Allocations DPD.

1.28 These parking standards are set in the adjacent table.

1.29 A range of Parking Typologies will be used across the site designed to balance parking requirements with creating an attractive and inviting neighbourhood that is not dominated by cars.

- Parking design and layout should be provided in line with Manual for Streets. In particular car parking should be located close to the main access to the dwellings, and should be overlooked by habitable rooms.
- Garages must be large enough to be useable – internal dimensions of 6m x 3m with adequate sized doors (2.0m high x 2.3m wide) to enable modern cars and 4x4s to enter and set back from the street frontage.

WEST BERKSHIRE STANDARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT TYPES</th>
<th>MINIMUM CAR PARKING STANDARDS</th>
<th>MINIMUM CYCLE PARKING STANDARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bed flat</td>
<td>1 car</td>
<td>1 cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed flat</td>
<td>2 cars</td>
<td>2 cycles</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 bed house</td>
<td>10 cars</td>
<td>10 cycles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNIT TYPES

- 1 bed flat
- 2 bed flat
- 2 bed house
- 3 bed house
- 4 bed house
- 5 bed house
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

1.30 The landscape strategy has been designed to retain and enhance the existing landscape features of the site formed by the existing trees and hedgerows around the site boundary. The southern part of the site slopes steeply which will be retained to provide at least 3 hectares of publicly accessible landscaped open space. This area will incorporate a soft landscaped edge of planting and shall be laid out as an informal recreation and play space.

1.31 The provision of a landscape buffer to the Eastern boundary of the site is to be provided to shield the existing dwellings from the development but still allow open vistas to the further views.

1.32 The detailed landscape design will use appropriate native trees and hedging.

DRAINAGE

1.33 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be designed into the site to manage runoff holistically by mimicking natural drainage patterns achieving a sustainable drainage solution by balancing water quality, water quantity, amenity and biodiversity.

1.34 The management of all storm water flows up to a 1 in 100 year storm event + 30% (for climate change) will be accommodated within the site through the use of different drainage techniques.

OPEN SPACE AND PLAY STRATEGY

1.35 Play provision will be integrated into the whole of the development through the provision of over 3ha of public open space with outdoor play trail and leisure route and the incorporation of a LEAP (Local Area of Equipped Play) if required.

1.36 Small LAP (Local Area of Play) are provided within the residential areas as areas of informal doorstop play for young children.

1.37 A central aim of the development proposals will be the creation of publicly accessible open space with footpaths linking to the wider countryside and into the existing network of green spaces within Mortimer.

1.38 The retained public footpath and the proposed pedestrian and cycle routes into and through the site will form a circular route though the development, connecting the proposed open space with Mortimer Fairground open space to the north of the site.