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PRICE DINSDALE ASSOCIATES LTD
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

DESIGN STATEMENT

For

CONSTRUCTION OF SIX DWELLINGS

At

THE PUNCHBOWL, MANCHESTER ROAD, BUXTON

April 2011

Provision of Six Additional Dwellings at The Punchbowl, Manchester Road, Buxton

Supporting Design Statement – April 2011

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A Assessment

A1 Physical Context

Manchester Road is a main arterial route into Buxton from the west, connecting the town with Whaley Bridge, and the Manchester-bound A6, via Goyt valley, whose attractive reservoirs, moorland and woodland scenery are extremely popular with tourists and other visitors to the Peak District. From the head of Goyt Valley, a mile and a half outside the town boundary, the road falls several hundred feet in a gentle and fairly continuous descent that carries on past the Application site, which is to the north side of the road just within the 30 mph speed restriction.

In order to persuade drivers to observe the speed limit, an additional, 50 mph speed restriction zone has recently been established about a half mile further out of the town, encouraging sequential deceleration.

The site is located on the north side of Manchester Road, approximately a mile from Buxton town centre, and comprises the highway frontage of a large park home development (The Punchbowl) which has been in existence for over fifty years. The park home development is run and maintained to an exceptionally high standard by the present Applicants, who have owned it since its inception. However, the units adjacent to the road frontage have reached the end of their economic life and have had to be demolished on safety grounds. Rather than repopulate the site with up to a dozen park homes, the Applicants believe that a smaller number of traditionally built dwellings facing directly on to Manchester Road, would contribute more to the street scene and be more acceptable to adjoining occupiers.

Removal of the park homes also enabled the site owners to gain access to the land immediately adjacent to the highway boundary that had, over the years, become overgrown and neglected, and a dumping place for domestic appliances and other waste. All of this has now been cleared.

Apart from the entrance to the Park Home development, Manchester Road is characterised by large terraced and detached traditional stone-built dwellings under slate roofs, generally over one hundred years old. Some are built well back on wooded plots, while others, particularly opposite the Application site, are built right up to the back of footpath. There are many significant mature deciduous trees, most of which are subject to preservation orders.

The properties flanking Manchester Road from the speed restriction right into the town centre are of a fairly high standard, and commensurate value, and the road has been a favoured residential location for over a hundred years.

A2 Social

Manchester Road is one of the principal approach roads from the west into the town of Buxton and, as such, has been a favoured residential location for at least a hundred years.

Apart from the Punchbowl park home site, and the Cavendish Hospital, a few hundred metres closer to the town centre, Manchester Road is almost exclusively populated with residential premises, the majority of which are large, traditional Edwardian and Victorian structures, some of which have been subdivided into apartments. These premises generally stand in generously proportioned plots featuring mature deciduous tree and shrub planting, although, opposite the Application site, dwellings are built up to back of footpath.

As a residential location, Manchester Road is convenient for, and close to, the main town centre retail outlets. The site is served by local public transport, although residents are unlikely to walk into town, especially if carrying goods back with them, due to the unremitting incline from the town to the Application site.

The park home site (The Punchbowl) has been in existence for at least fifity years. A combination of exceptionally good management and maintenance, together with established long-term residencies, has resulted in pride of ownership and a high quality environment right across the site. However, the age of the units immediately adjacent to the highway frontage having necessitated their replacement, the site owners understandably decided that traditional, stone-built permanent dwellings would be more appropriate to the street scene in Manchester Road.

It is to the credit of the site owners that they have not chosen simply to 'sell out' by seeking residential Consent for permanent dwellings over the entire Punchbowl site, as the existing park home stock makes a valuable and ongoing contribution to Buxton's overall housing needs.

As predicted by Local Plan Policies, demand for new housing in Buxton continues to remain strong. The Application site represents an opportunity to provide a small number of high quality family houses in a desirable residential area, by upgrading the use of a previously developed infill location.

In terms of amenities, the site lies approximately one mile from the nearest two primary schools, and from the town's principal secondary schools. It is approximately half a mile to the town centre retail areas, and to the Pavilion Gardens and nearest churches. Local healthcare facilities are also readily accessible.

The scale of the proposed development is such that it is not expected to have any marked social, or economic effect on the town as a whole or on the immediately surrounding area, save having a positive effect on the value of residential properties on Manchester Road facing the Application site.

PARKING.

Due to the topography of Buxton, and due to the prevailing weather, reliance on private transport is inevitable in the Peak District in general, and in the town of Buxton in particular, unless one lives in the relatively small part of the town that is at a similar altitude to the centre. Parking provision in the retail and business centre of Buxton has been in serious under-provision for several years, a situation worsened by the arrival of the University of Derby to the Devonshire Campus, and by restrictions on street parking imposed by the County Council. As yet, nothing positive has been implemented or programmed by the Borough or County Councils to satisfy demand, which will be exacerbated should the redevelopment of The Crescent proceed without any planned additional dedicated parking provision, despite this being in contravention of the terms of its Planning Consent.

Regardless of these difficulties, the private car remains the only viable solution to many, be it for transport to work, for shopping, delivering children to schools etc. Therefore, the proposed development must make provision for private car parking, although Adopted Plan policy suggests that a location near to a town centre, and served by public transport, can lead to the acceptance of considerably reduced provision.

A3 Economic

In terms of the function of the town itself, a small residential development such as is proposed, has no marked effect. However, the size and quality of dwellings proposed, and their location, will encourage occupancy by family groups whose presence and disposable income will help to support existing retail outlets and encourage further diversity of retail, leisure and other offerings, as well as promoting growth and development of the educational and healthcare sectors.

The Application site is too small for commercial or industrial development, and, due to restrictions on the area available for parking, would be equally unsuited to retail or leisure uses. The area currently enjoys easy access to all local amenities within a short distance, and so continuation of the current residential use is entirely appropriate and sustainable.

There are no negative economic effects within the local community resulting from the proposed development. There is a net gain in value of the town's residential real estate by the substitution of 'permanent' stone built dwellings for the previous temporary prefabricated park homes.

A4 Local Plan Policy Context

The following (saved) policies within the Adopted Local Plan appear to be directly relevant to the current Application:-

GD.4	Character, Form & Design
GD.5	Amenity
GD.6	Landscaping
H.1	Principles of Housing Provision
H.5	Housing within Built up Areas
H.12	Public Local Open Space
TR.1	Transport Implications of New Development
TR.5	Access, Parking & Design

GD.4 Character, Form & Design

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDED THAT:
IT.....WILL BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA, AND THERE WILL NOT BE UNDUE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE VISUAL QUALITIES OF THE LOCALITY OR THE WIDER LANDSCAPE

Policy GD.4 requires that the design of new development be sympathetic in scale, use of materials, built form etc., to the traditional building forms of the locality. The principle, style, detailing and proportion of the proposed dwellings have already been the subject of pre-Application discussions with Planning Officers, and modifications have been agreed as a result, including re-orientating the dwellings to produce a more traditional street scene than had been originally proposed. Officers have agreed that the site is entirely suited to the proposed development, subject principally to the amelioration of highway access concerns expressed by DCC Highways Department. Officers have agreed the orientation of dwellings and their positioning with regard to existing dwellings. The Applicants therefore believe that this current proposal demonstrates compliance with the principles of Adopted Local Plan Policy GD.4.

GD.5 Amenity

Policy GD.5 takes a wide view of the constituents of amenity, including
"- **OVERLOOKING;**
- **LOSS OF DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT;**
- **OVERBEARING EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT;**
- **AIR, WATER, NOISE, LIGHT AND OTHER POLLUTION;**
- **RISK FROM HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND PROCESSES;**
- **TRAFFIC SAFETY AND GENERATION."**

The principal purpose of Policy GD.5 is to protect residential amenity – the "quiet enjoyment" of one's home.

In this current proposal, pre-Application discussions with Officers have confirmed that the scheme meets required criteria in terms of 'overlooking', 'loss of daylight/ sunlight', and 'overbearing effects of development'.

There are no forms of pollution caused by, or exacerbated by, the development as proposed, and no risk from hazardous substances or processes.

Traffic generation from six dwellings is absolutely de minimis *in the context of the overall usage of Manchester Road and, in any event, is balanced off by the loss of the park homes previously on the site that have now been demolished.*

Therefore, it is submitted that the proposal complies with the aims and requirements of Policy GD.5.

GD.6 Landscaping

Although not in a Conservation Area, the mature landscaped setting of the traditional dwellings on Manchester Road has set a marker for future standards of development.

Accordingly, it is intended to replace the highway boundary wall along the site frontage (currently a drystone wall) with a dressed stone wall with ashlar capping, to replicate the predominant boundary treatment of the street as a whole.

Furthermore, as it is intended to retain the grouping of mature trees at the eastern end of the site, so additional trees will be planted to simulate the traditional setting of dwellings along the lower reaches of Manchester Road. To this end, it is suggested that Landscape be treated as a reserved matter, subject to later approval of a formal scheme, prior to commencement of work on site.

The above proposals will ensure compliance with Adopted Local Plan Policy GD.6.

H.1 Principles of Housing Provision

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GIVEN FOR NEW HOUSING, GIVING PRIORITY TO:

• THE REDEVELOPMENT OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND IN BUILT UP AREAS

Policy G.1 states that:-

Housing sites will be assessed for suitability by considering the following criteria:

- The availability of previously developed land
- Their location and accessibility in relation to jobs, shops and services
- The capacity of transport, utility and community infrastructure
- Their ability to build sustainable communities
- The physical and environmental constraints on the land

When weighed against all of the above criteria, the Application site achieves full compliance, as has already been acknowledged by Officers in pre-Application discussions.

H.5 Housing within Built up Areas

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE RENEWAL OF EXISTING OR RECENTLY EXPIRED PERMISSIONS, ON PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND WITHIN THE BUILT-UP AREA BOUNDARY, PROVIDED THAT:

• A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT WOULD NOT BE LOST, UNLESS ITS CONTINUED USE WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE; AND

• THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT UNDULY PREJUDICE THE CONTINUATION OF AN APPROPRIATE EXISTING OR PROPOSED ADJOINING LAND USE

The proposed development self-evidently meets the requirements of Policy No. H.5, in that no source of employment is affected by the scheme, nor is any existing or proposed land use prejudiced in any way.

H.12 Public Local Open Space

The proposed development does not, of itself, lead to the provision of any additional public open space. However, there is no significant net increase in population resulting therefrom, as the park homes formerly on the site have been demolished.

In terms of existing provision, the site lies only half a mile from The Park, with it's facilities for cricket, tennis and bowls, and only slightly further from the Pavilion Gardens, Buxton's chief public leisure space resource.

Accordingly, the aims and safeguards of Policy No. H.12 are already met in the context of this site, and no additional provision is required.

TR.1 Transport Implications of new Development

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED THAT IT SEEKS TO:

- **REDUCE THE NEED TO TRAVEL**
- **WIDEN TRANSPORT CHOICE FOR PEOPLE AND GOODS**
- **INTEGRATE TRANSPORT AND LAND USE**

Adopted Local Plan Policy TR.1 seeks to reduce dependence on private transport in order to access goods, services, and other amenities. In this context, the development site lies only a short distance from the retail centre of Buxton, in a well-established residential area, and is served by local and regional bus networks.

As has been pointed out earlier in this Statement, there will still be reliance on private vehicles, firstly due to the adverse topography of the town, and secondly due to the adverse terrain and sparse population of the Peak District as a whole. This reliance is permanent, and will continue irrespective of national policies and initiatives, which fail entirely to acknowledge the circumstances of rural areas. However, due to the proximity of the Application site to the town centre, and dependent on the lifestyle choices of residents, it would be feasible to rely on the use of public transport augmented by taxis when required. This would effectively meet the aims of Policy No. TR.1.

TR.5 Access, Parking & Design

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDED THAT:

- **IT WILL MAKE SAFE AND APPROPRIATE PROVISION FOR ACCESS AND EGRESS BY PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS AND THE PRIVATE CAR.**
- **IT INCLUDES A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN AND LAYOUT HAVING REGARD TO THE PARKING, ACCESS, MANOEUVRING, SERVICING AND HIGHWAY GUIDELINES SET OUT IN APPENDIX 1 (PARKING STANDARDS), AND RELEVANT GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE AND GOOD PRACTICE, WHERE APPROPRIATE**

WHERE THE DEVELOPMENT IS EXPECTED TO GENERATE A HIGHER LEVEL OF CAR USE THAN CAN BE ACCOMODATED BY THE MAXIMIUM PARKING STANDARDS OR WILL SIGNIFICANTLY EXACERBATE EXISTING TRAFFIC PROBLEMS, THE APPLICANT SHOULD SUBMIT A TRAVEL PLAN TO REDUCE CAR DEPENDENCY.

WHERE APPROPRIATE, CONDITIONS WILL BE IMPOSED, AND/OR PLANNING OBLIGATIONS SOUGHT, TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PARKING, MANOEUVRING AND SERVICING SPACE WILL BE AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES.

Policy No. TR.5 seeks to ensure that adequate vehicle parking provision is made for the type and scale of development, whilst not encouraging over-use by over-provision.

A second goal requires that new development should be provided with safe access for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians, and for public service and emergency service vehicles as appropriate.

*Appendix 1 to the Adopted Local Plan indicates that, for dwellings of the capacities intended in the current proposal, a **maximum** of eighteen car parking spaces should be provided, although the Plan provides for complete discretion on the pert of the LPA to reduce or eliminate this requirement in the case of sites that are close to town centre and/ or well served by public transport options. The Applicants would submit that the level of provision indicated on the Application drawings (fifteen spaces comprising six garages, six driveway spaces and three off-highway visitor spaces) represents a fair compromise between householder aspiration and national policy.*

Within the development, provision is made to ensure that all vehicles may enter and leave Manchester Road in a forward direction. After discussion with DCC Highways Department, it has been accepted that the proposed position of the turn out on to Manchester Road effectively provides visibility zones that are acceptable to the County Highways Officer.

For the safety of pedestrians, a dedicated footpath links the existing footpath on Manchester Road with the shared access drive serving the six properties

comprising the proposed development. This footpath continues a safe distance into the development before termination in accordance with the relaxations permitted in the County Council's Design Guide for shared driveways.

As has already been pointed out, footpaths will be applied with dropped kerbs and with tactile finishes as appropriate to the needs of the mobility or visually impaired.

It is therefore submitted that the development as proposed is fully in accord with the requirements and goals of Policy No. TR.5.

B Application

B1 Use

In terms of land use, this is primarily determined by the existing strongly predominant residential character of the locality, and the existing residential use applying to the park home (Punchbowl) estate.

In addition, the site is physically too small to accommodate the level of car parking and goods vehicle movement generated by commercial, retail, or amenity development.

Evidence shows that the location is a popular and sustainable prime residential location over the long term, undisturbed by non-conforming uses.

Pre-Application discussions have confirmed Officer support for the above views.

B2 Amount

The amount of accommodation being created by these proposals is as follows:

4 No. 4-Bedroom Semi-Detached House
2 No. 5-Bedroom Detached House

In terms of the overall impact on the Manchester Road residential area, this scale is extremely modest, especially when the loss of the previous park homes is factored in. The amount of development is dictated to some extent by the site area but more, in this particular instance, by the need to achieve a safe and workable vehicular access on to Manchester Road. One common access serving all of the dwellings ensures that, unlike a layout with individual driveways, all vehicles will enter and leave Manchester Road in a forward direction, which is a major safety consideration. The Applicants believe that they have, after discussion, satisfied County Highways Officers that visibility requirements are substantially met by the proposals when turning out on to Manchester Road.

A further factor influencing layout is the grouping of mature trees to the east of the access drive. As the only mature trees on the site, it was decided to keep this group, rather than to apply for a further dwelling on this location.

During pre-Application discussions, it was apparent that Officers had a strong preference for a layout with all properties 'facing' Manchester Road. This also has had an effect on the number of units proposed and on the overall amount of development.

B3 Layout

The proposed layout of this site has been influenced by several factors, outlined in the previous paragraph, that have collectively limited the number of units and the overall density of development.

Omission of a common access drive, removal of the eastern tree group, and reorientation of the dwellings would all have enabled a higher density to be achieved.

However, Officers' preferences for a 'traditional' appearance to the streetscape, with dwellings facing the highway, together with the retention of the common drive (the access point of which was driven by visibility requirements) dictated the form of the development.

As far as the elevations are concerned, these reflect the traditional features of the Edwardian houses of Buxton, but at a scale more in keeping with the modest size of their elevations.

B4 Scale

The scale of the development is determined by the need to obtain a balance with the volume and massing of the existing dwellings on the south side of Manchester Road, opposite the site frontage.

B5 Landscaping

Existing mature landscape features (the eastern boundary tree group) will not be affected by these proposals.

The *leylandii* hedge to the highway frontage will, however, be removed as inappropriate.

One of the main visual features of Buxton's traditional residential streets is the enclosure of plots by means of coursed gritstone boundary walls, with shaped ashlar cappings, to the highway frontage. These walls often also contain a beech hedge. It is the Applicants' intention to replace the present drystone boundary wall with a more formal gritstone wall, and to establish within the curtilage thereof, a beech hedge.

B6 Appearance

The proposals aim to enhance a disappointing highway frontage currently consisting of *leylandii* shrubs behind a drystone field wall.

Replacing the above will be a coursed gritstone boundary wall, with beech hedging above it, forming the frontage to substantial, traditionally detailed natural stone dwellings, served by a common access drive, the sweep of which is set off by a grassed area containing an attractive grouping of mature trees.

The design and appearance of the proposed dwellings has been altered since the previous Consent was issued in 2008. It is submitted that the present design more closely echoes the traditional form and detailing of Buxton properties, and is hence more appropriate for this prominent major road frontage and approach to the town.

B7 Renewable Energy

The Applicants are currently looking at the practicality of installing geo-thermal heating as original equipment in these new properties. Given current concerns over carbon emissions, a commitment to renewable energy integration from day one could translate into strong customer demand, as well as being seen to demonstrate an environmentally responsible position.

Rainwater harvesting for non-potable use, together with installation of photo-voltaic elements on the south-facing roof slopes (if economically viable and acceptable in Planning terms), may also be featured in these houses.

Increased energy efficiency together with lower CO_2 emissions will be sought in construction by the use of materials to "best practice" specifications.

B.8 Refuse

Provision will be made on site to ensure the ability to continue to comply with any and all initiatives as are from time to time introduced by the Local Authority in terms of space for the siting of bins and other receptacles for the purposes of facilitating differentiated waste collections.

B9 Conclusion – Compliance with Adopted Local Plan Policies & Guidance

It is believed that the current proposals comply in all material aspects with the relevant requirements of the relevant saved policies of the Adopted Local Plan and other guidance published by the LPA as referenced throughout this document.

PDA GROUP
April 2011