

## **DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

### **Proposed Residential Development (Five Dwellings) at Birch House, Spinnerbottom, Birch Vale.**

1. This revised Design & Access Statement accompanies a resubmitted outline planning application, with matters relating to vehicular access not reserved, submitted on behalf of Mr & Mrs T B Lawton to redevelop an existing employment site at Birch House, Birch Vale. The application documents and indicative layout shown on drawing JC/G41A/4 shows that it is intended that the site should be redeveloped by the erection of five detached houses. This Statement is prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 3 of Circular 01/2006 issued by the Department for Communities & Local Government and the CABI Guidance 'Design & Access Statements : How to Write, Read and Use Them'.

2. The physical context for the redevelopment of the site is its location adjacent to existing predominantly residential development at Spinnerbottom, Birch Vale. The application site occupies an elevated position above dwellings on the north eastern side of the highway. The accompanying Planning Statement describes the nature of the existing established use of the site and the nature, layout and size of the existing buildings. The redevelopment area, is approximately 0.49 hectares and includes the proposed means of vehicular access. The site boundaries are clearly defined and comprise open areas, mainly occupied by existing buildings, within an area that contains many trees that are the subject of a Tree Preservation

Order. Before the land was developed for its existing use, it was the location of Birch House and a group of service dwellings.

3. The impact of the proposed development on its surroundings is assessed below. Insofar as the applicant is aware, there are no alternative planning intentions with regard to the land. Accordingly, in preparing the application, both the recently published National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant policies of the Development Plan for the area have been taken into account. Although the Government has indicated that it intends to abolish the regional planning framework, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8 of March 2009) proposes that most new housing developments should preferably be carried out on previously-developed land within the main urban areas and serviced settlements. The applicant has, however, taken carefully into account the policies contained within the High Peak Borough Local Plan as set out in the Planning Statement and the emerging new policies set out in the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Joint Core Strategy – Draft Plan that has recently been the subject of public consultation.

4. In preparing the proposals, consideration has been given, amongst other things, to the following:

(a) The location of the site lying within the North West Derbyshire Greenbelt, within the countryside fringe but very closely associated with existing development at Birch Vale.

- (b) The amenity of the neighbouring properties, which should be protected.
- (c) The acceptability of the siting of the proposed dwellings and their means of access to and from the public highway, including the requirement for the access of vehicles and pedestrians, including disabled persons, to be safe and convenient for users of all abilities.
- (d) The necessity to provide adequate private gardens and amenity spaces.
- (e) The establishment of acceptable standards of privacy and visual amenity for both new occupiers and the residents of nearby properties.
- (f) The provision of parking facilities, manoeuvring and access arrangements within the proposed development in accordance with the Council's standards.
- (g) The key consideration to have due regard to the significant number of trees within the site that are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order and any impact on trees outside the area of the Order in order to implement an improvement to highway visibility standards in the critical direction.

5. The design seeks, in particular, to avoid overlooking of the rear gardens of the dwellings to the north eastern side of Spinnerbottom. The massing of the proposed dwellings, their height to eaves and ridge and the materials of construction will be

approximate to that of existing nearby dwellings. These intentions clearly meet policies contained within the High Peak Local Plan. Accordingly, in formulating this proposal for the redevelopment of a non-conforming use, care has been taken to reflect fully the nature, proximity and scale of development in the immediate vicinity in accordance with the requirements of the Development Plan for the area, particularly the High Peak Borough Local Plan.

6. Vehicular access will be taken by means of the existing driveway from Spinnerbottom. This has reasonable exit visibility to Spinnerbank. In recommending that the Secretary of State for the Environment should refuse planning permission during consideration of the previous application in 1991, the Inspector concluded (paragraph 35 of his report) that ‘...the proposals would be unlikely to increase the amount of traffic on it (Spinnerbank). I do not consider that they would result in unacceptable risk to other road users. In any event, the amount of traffic which uses this route is relatively light and the parking restrictions which apply on it seem effectively to prevent serious congestion occurring’. He went on to say in the following paragraph that ‘I conclude, therefore, on the second consideration that the site, including its access, would be suitable for type and scale of development proposed, subject to a minor improvement of visibility at the access which could be achieved by condition.’ This land to which a minor improvement relates is within the applicant’s control.

7. Whilst the existing driveway rises from Spinnerbottom through the tree-lined entrance to the site, the approach to all dwellings will be by means of an easily negotiable, suitably

surfaced slope that will render it useable for a person confined to a wheelchair. External paths surrounding the proposed dwellings, and leading to and from the proposed access and parking areas to each, will have a surface width of at least 1.5 metres. Entrance door thresholds to the dwellings will be level but, if a threshold is unavoidable, its height will not exceed 15mm. Any upstand higher than 15mm will have a chamfered or rounded edge. Internally, the ground floor of the proposed dwellings will be designed to ease horizontal movement by a person confined to a wheelchair. The surface of all external paths will be firm, durable and slip resistant. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development meets the requirements set out in Local Plan policies H11, TR1, and TR5.

8. Insofar as the siting and design of the five dwellings are concerned, however, it is considered that these should be only fixed subsequent to the grant of a decision in principle, at the reserved matter stage. However, a contextual evaluation of the proposed development has comprised an existing walkover study of the site and its immediate surrounding to determine local vernacular, materials, land use patterns and any other architectural and land-based features that should be referenced within the proposal in order to ensure compliance with the policies of the Development Plan. There is no single vernacular style prevalent in the immediate area surrounding the application site, although most adjacent development alongside Spinnerbottom is of mid to late Victorian origin. The dominant nature of existing land uses is residential, as referred to above.

9. Nevertheless, the scale and character of the proposed development will be designed to reflect, insofar as reasonably practical, the character, form and design of existing developments in the vicinity in order to meet the requirement of Local Plan policy GD4. Materials to be used will match those used in the vicinity to meet the requirements of policy BC1. External walls will, it is anticipated, be constructed predominantly from natural stone, punctuated by simple fenestration and other openings, using plain fascias and soffits. The roof form will generally be a simple gable structure, similar to that of adjacent houses. Eaves and ridge heights will also be designed to be similar.

10. It is considered that each dwelling shown on the indicative layout can be provided with a private garden of a size that is well in excess of a reasonable minimum norm in respect of private amenity space. This will afford ample opportunity to provide space for the outdoor drying of washing, the creation of patios and sitting out areas and planted gardens.

11. It is recognised that paragraphs 93 – 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework continue to require that new developments should address climate change issues, setting out the way in which the proposed development will seek to reduce the impact of it on climate change. Whilst, to a considerable degree, many of the initiatives that will be appropriate relate to matters that will be governed by the Building Regulations, the new dwellings will be constructed to the highest energy saving standards to ensure that thermal insulation minimises power consumption. Consideration will be given to the use of photovoltaics, although this will need to be carefully planned to ensure that the detailed design of the

dwellings to be erected on the site incorporates new technology in a manner that is visually acceptable. Consideration will be given in the design of the new dwellings to the use of non-carbon heat generation throughout the development.

12. The applicant is committed to carbon reduction measures. Accordingly, it is intended that the new development will utilise all realistic opportunities for the installation of double glazing solar water heating panels, photovoltaic cells and bio-fuels. Other initiatives such as the installation of low-energy, power saving lighting and appliances, appropriately ventilated roof insulation and the utilisation of efficient boilers will be considered at the “reserved matters” stage. The applicant recognises that the current objective, in accordance with the Government’s “Code for Sustainable Homes” is to achieve Level 3 of the Code and the development will seek to comply with this objective.

13. Insofar as is practicable, dwellings within the site will be orientated to take maximum advantage of energy saving initiatives such as the use of photovoltaic cells. Private spaces within gardens will be designed and laid out, at “reserved matters” stage, to ensure that areas within gardens provide suitable shade and shadow.

14. Insofar, therefore, as undertakings can be given with regard to the impact on climate change at the outline planning application stage, it is considered that this application will fulfil the criteria set out by the Government in the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. The proposed site layout will provide an environment that will accord with the character of the area whilst providing quality homes. Surface water from the development will be discharged using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. For example, all roof water will drain to either water butts or underground receptacles so that grey water can be stored and re-used, for example, in garden watering and washing down of external areas.

16. Sustainable waste management can be secured by ensuring that the development complies with the Council's standards in respect of minimising waste, the maximisation of recycling and the collection of reusable materials, in common with existing arrangements in the area.

17. The site lies close to local bus stops from where excellent public transport links radiate out, providing opportunities to access employment locations, for example, without recourse to the use of a private motorcar. Likewise, the excellent network of walking, cycling and horse riding routes in the area mean that facilities that are immediately available can be used for a wide range of family purposes. Both the accessibility to public transport and a range of local walking and cycling routes will, it is considered, seek to offer a choice in the mode of transport, rather than mere reliance on the private motor vehicle.

18. The Proposed Development does not lie within a Flood Risk Zone so that no Flood Risk Assessment is necessary. Foul drains to the new dwellings will discharge into the public sewer in Spinnerbottom.

19. As the area to be developed forms the active part of an existing employment site, it is regarded as being of low ecological value. Accordingly, whilst an Ecological Appraisal is not submitted, a Protected Species Survey has been prepared by a Licensed Bat Consultant, Mr Phil Richardson. A copy of his report is attached with the application documents.

20. A Tree Survey Report, prepared by David Bradley CMLI, is, however, attached. It is reiterated that the proposals pay due regard to the protected trees and that it is intended that a Tree Management Plan be developed as part and parcel of the proposals. Following discussions with the Council's Tree Officer, Monica Gillespie, drawings RL/JC/DHB/BHBV/01 & 02 have been prepared by Mr Bradley on which the opportunity to create passing places on the driveway has been identified in a manner that ensures that the integrity of the protected trees is not inhibited. Furthermore, the drawing shows the manner in which highway visibility can be improved in a manner that requires only the removal of one diseased tree. New supplementary landscaping will be provided at this point and throughout the site generally.

21. Insofar as is known to the applicant, the site contains no archaeological remains. Likewise, with the exception of existing services, there are not known to be any underlying services, cable or drains that cannot be re-used nor relocated as part of a successful site development. Also, insofar as is known to the applicant, the site is not contaminated in any way. No other forms of polluting materials are known to be present in the immediate area.

22. The proposed development will not result in any increase in the local noise climate. Whilst noise emissions from residential developments of this size and nature are generally very low, there will be significant advantages in the closure and removal of the existing plant. Not only does the plant potentially provide a high noise output but its servicing requires constant comings and goings of vehicles. Strict measures will, however, be implemented to control noise, vibration and dust during the construction process. The development should not lead to any significant change to local lighting levels although there may be marginal advantages removal of existing external lighting around the plant.

23. In summary, this development relates to a site where there is a significant advantage in providing a modestly proportioned new residential development, that has been reduced in scale, in replacement of a non-conforming, potentially very intrusive employment use. The five new dwellings will be located in a sustainable position adjacent to the built framework of Birch Vale/Thornsett. For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the proposal accords with the policies set out in the recently-published National Planning Policy Framework and with the provisions of the Development Plan for the area, particularly the policies identified above within the High Peak Borough Local Plan. If, however, during the Council's consideration of this Design & Access Statement, any further elaboration of the details contained within it are necessary, please contact me at the address below.

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