

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Shires Lane, Embsay

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

for
Chatsworth Settlement Trustees
Bolton Abbey

June 2015

Job No. 4653

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INTRODUCTION

REPORT PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to explain the conceptual design and thinking behind the access arrangements of the proposals in support of an outline planning application for a residential development. The application is on behalf of the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees (CST) for a site on Shires Lane in the village of Embsay, located in the Craven district of North Yorkshire.

REPORT STRUCTURE

The initial chapter of this report has been written by CST and provides the context and case for the scheme. The design chapter has been written by Pearce Bottomley Architects and contains the Design & Access Statement.

This report addresses the following:

- Context (provided by CST)
- Methodology
- Design Statement including Use, Amount, Layout, Scale, Landscape and Appearance
- Access Statement
- Conclusion

REPORT AUTHORS

This report was produced on 3rd June 2015 in support of an outline planning application for a residential development on Shires Lane, Embsay to Craven District Council.

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On behalf of: Chatsworth Settlement Trustees

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CONTEXT

THE APPLICANT

The Chatsworth Settlement Trustees (CST) is a business which owns and manages land on behalf of the Cavendish Family. It derives income from rents and admission charges to some of its assets (e.g. Chatsworth House, Bolton Priory). It owns the application site and other parcels of land in Craven, and indeed gifted land to Embsay Cricket Club in both 1983 and 1992.

CST therefore takes a responsible approach to architectural/environmental conservation and community development, but also has to be able to fund such activities accordingly.

SITE CONTEXT

The application site is located on the south side of the settlement of Embsay at the junction of Shires Lane and Low Lane which, respectively, form the north and east boundary of the site. To the west the site has a boundary with a sports field defined by a dry stone wall.

To the south are open fields and some 250 metres further to the south is the Embsay Steam Railway line and the Skipton Rock Quarry which is prominent in views from the site. The western half of the south boundary is defined by a stone wall and tree belt. The eastern half of the south boundary is undefined.

The site is relatively flat with a slight gradient rising from south west to north east. There is a distinguishing mound on the east boundary. Green Bottom Beck runs across the site by way of a culvert from the north eastern corner to the southern boundary, and is known to cause localised flooding/drainage issues.

There are no significant off-site constraints. There is sufficient infrastructure capacity in the vicinity to support the application proposals.

DESIGN PROCESS

Liaison with Craven District Council (CDC) and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) has been integral to the design of the proposal and the submission of supporting information.

Pre-application meetings were held with CDC's planning officer on 23rd February 2015 and with affordable housing officers on the 9th April 2015. These meetings established no fundamental objections to the principle of development provided that a well-designed scheme with an acceptable component of affordable housing was prepared and localised traffic, flooding, ecological, arboricultural and landscape issues were assessed.

CDC stressed the importance of: good design (i.e. the need for the proposal to retain a rural character to fit with the surrounding area); the acceptability of a proposal with two points of access; and the need for improved pedestrian access to the village centre. These views were confirmed in subsequent telephone conversations and a letter from CDC dated 6th March 2015 providing its pre-application advice.

As such, CST revised its preliminary design proposal and decided against submitting a planning application until it had addressed all of CDC's points and could present a development proposal which takes a sympathetic approach to the predominantly rural character of the area for example by reinstatement of the beck across the site.

Pre-application discussions were also held with NYCC as the local highways authority. These established no fundamental objections to the principle of development but did identify a need to provide sufficient visibility splays for traffic leaving the site. This requirement has been built into the scheme design.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

This is an outline planning application for residential development in which all matters are reserved other than the principle of development and the proposed access. The indicative layout for the site is for a scheme of 39 dwellings served off two separate access points. Each access serves a cluster of 18-20 dwellings.

The existing dry stone walls along Shires Lane and Low Lane are retained except where it is necessary to create the two access points. Between and around the new junctions on Shires Lane the wall will have to be moved back from the highway edge to create the visibility splays required for highway safety. The existing access at the east end of the Shire Lane frontage will be closed and infilled with a drystone wall.

The scheme design responds positively to the advice put forward by the Council by adopting an organic layout that controls the dominance of the car and creates clusters of development with stepped frontages; varied rooflines; and variety and interest in private spaces.

It should be noted that the layout shown is one way of addressing these comments and requirements. There will undoubtedly be other ways of doing so, which may be developed as the reserved matters proposals for the site are drawn up.

The application proposes that the problematic culvert relating to Green Bottom Beck is opened up and reinstated as a swale to help alleviate localised flooding incidents upstream of the site.

CST may seek to work up detailed designs and develop the site itself (with a view to retaining or selling it), or it may offer it for sale for others to work up detailed designs and build out the site.

PLANNING POLICY

Planning legislation requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, little weight can be attached to the saved policies of the Craven District Local Plan (CDLP) 1999, since the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 limits the weight to be attached to the policies of out-of-date Local Plans such as the CDLP and provides for NPPF policy to apply in such circumstances.

Moreover, the NPPF provides for planning permission for residential development in areas where a Council is failing to meet its 5 year housing supply. This issue is addressed in more detail in the Planning Statement submitted with this application.

The Craven Draft Local Plan identifies the site as suitable for housing development because it is well-related to existing services and recreational opportunities and has no flood risk or known highway safety issues.

The Planning Statement demonstrates how the proposal accords with the NPPF and emerging Local Plan policy, and will help address the district's housing supply shortage. It will also have no adverse impact on the area or buildings. As such, it comprises sustainable development and should be granted planning permission accordingly.

BENEFITS

The Planning Statement submitted with the application identifies the main benefits of the development proposal as:

- provision of a mix of residential dwellings that will widen the choice of housing in the locality and help to meet the Council's housing requirement
- provision of affordable housing for local residents
- development in keeping with the scale and amenity of the area, for example by the use of traditional materials
- the reinstatement of the beck to replace the existing culvert crossing the site to help alleviate localised flooding issues
- Supporting the viability of local services and community facilities
- Ecological benefits arising from the re-instatement of the beck and retention of the trees on the south-western corner of the site

METHODOLOGY

This Design & Access Statement has been produced in accordance with Article 4 of Statutory Instrument 2013/1238 which is known as the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013.

Guidance has also been sought from the UK Design Council and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) through their current and previous guidance documents and quality standards.

The structure of this Design & Access Statement complies with the recommendations outlined in the guidance documents. The Design Statement is divided into sections covering the Use, Amount, Layout, Scale, Landscape and Appearance of the proposals. The Access Statement covers the vehicular and pedestrian movements to and from the site along with any infrastructure alterations.

This statement intends to outline the key conceptual decisions made and how they affect the overall proposals. The report is summarised by the Conclusions section which picks out the key aspects of the proposals and benefits the development will deliver.

DESIGN STATEMENT

USE

The application site (outlined red) is currently a grass field with occasional agricultural use for grazing. The site has been identified in the Craven draft Local Plan 2014 as a potential site for housing development, and so the proposed application provides a suitable change of use to meet the housing needs of the local area with a proportion of affordable housing included. The proposed development will therefore be compatible with the village of Embsay and related highway and other infrastructure.



Fig 1. Aerial Photo of Embsay

The proposed layout indicates one possible option for developing the site. It shows a residential led land use similar in type to the village centre layout commonly found in the area. Embsay village centre (highlighted yellow) features a courtyard or square arrangement around an Elm tree with informal car parking surrounding the intersecting road junctions. A mixture of buildings surround the courtyard, with the majority providing for a residential use. These features and uses have been incorporated into the proposals for the Shires Lane site. Also incorporated are a new swale and an area for communal open space east of the swale with easy access through the development.

AMOUNT

The proposed site layout comprises 39 new dwellings arranged around two courtyards with a mixture of small and large dwellings, the proposal therefore provides for a variation in the density of the development. This organic layout is compatible with the appearance of the existing streets of Embsay which have developed over time with differing sizes and scales of buildings.

The proposed development layout resembles a rural farm complex and/or a cluster of buildings found on the edge of settlements. This layout limits the amount of development as the dwellings concerned need to have access to the communal courtyard areas and related parking.



Fig 2. 19th Century photo of Embsay village centre and the Elm Tree

The total site area is 1.25 hectares with around 0.25 hectares (20%) allocated for communal open space and around 0.5 hectares (40%) allocated for the communal courtyard areas. These generous proportions amount to a development proposal with significant communal space provision and an open rural feel. The amount of development has been controlled to allow views out of the site to be maintained and a sense of rural identity to prevail.

LAYOUT

The initial design proposal presented at the pre-application stage featured a standard spine road layout with generous suburban house types positioned either side of the carriageway. The advice offered by the LPA at the pre-application meeting was to create clusters of development with stepped frontages and rooflines so as to repeat and enhance the visual character of the area. A design less dominated by cars and more resembling the old village centre and market square was therefore considered more appropriate than the initial design presented to the LPA.

As such, the final design proposals have been developed with the useful design advice from the pre-application discussion with the LPA. The proposal has been designed around two focal trees which echo the historic elm tree found outside the pub in Embsay. A courtyard arrangement then spreads out from these focal trees creating two clusters of development with shared surfaces to imply a communal use.

A combination of small cottages and larger houses arranged around the courtyards form the staggered frontages and stepped rooflines reducing the massing of the built form. The broken and staggered forms suit the site and its location on the edge of the village and the progression from urban to rural landscape.

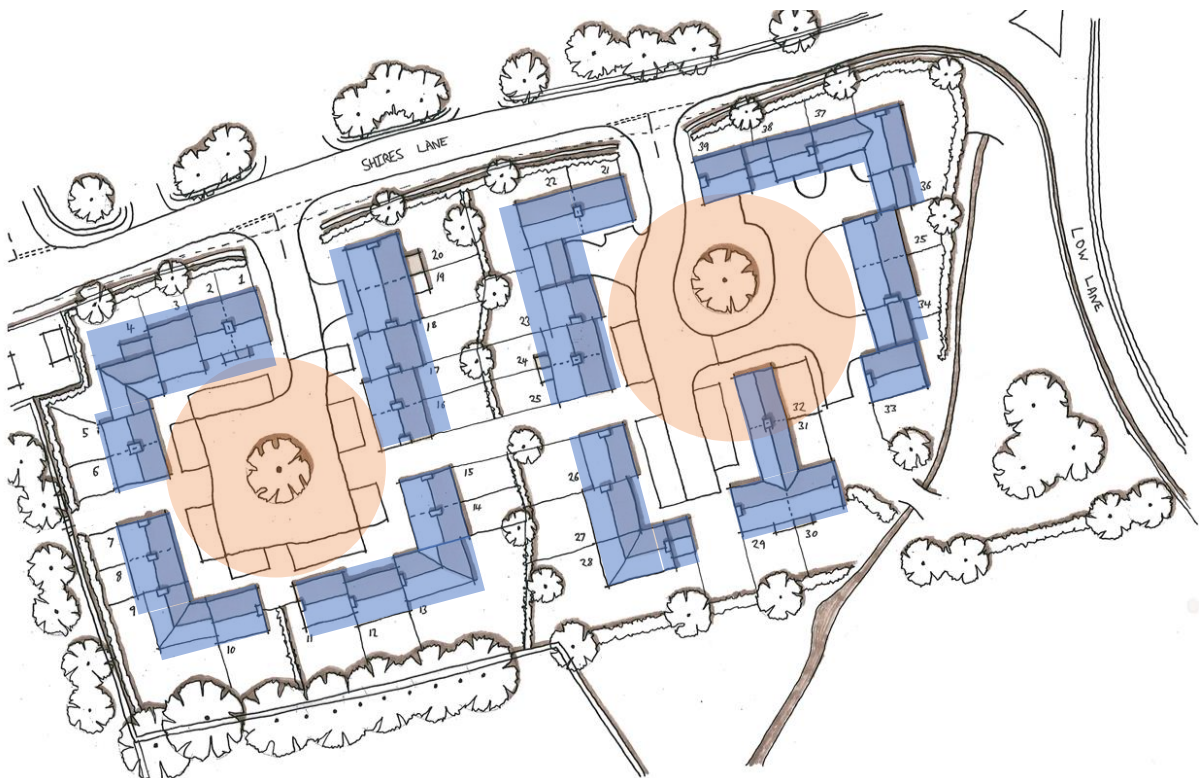


Fig 3. Layout Plan

SCALE

As a result of the pre-application consultation advice process, the scale of development has changed from typical suburban house sizes and plot layouts to clusters of development with a rural appearance. The existing development to the north side of Shires Lane is very much suburban in character with large houses occupying generous plots. The development proposal is smaller in scale with well-proportioned dwellings combining to create communal courtyard and intimate spaces.

The scale of the development proposed is similar to that of the traditional village or hamlet with farm yards and clusters of buildings on the edge of a settlement. The mixture of differing rooflines and stepped frontages reduces the sense of scale as the development appears to be formed from multiple smaller elements which may have developed over time.

The introduction of landscaping and strategic planting also reduces the sense of scale by obscuring and softening the impact of development. Focal planting draws the attention of the viewer and enables the dwellings to seem subservient to the wider context of the site.



Fig 4. Precedent example of a housing development in West Burton, Wensleydale

LANDSCAPING

This section is to be read in conjunction with the Landscape and Visual Appraisal submitted with the outline planning application and produced by Gillespies Landscape Architects.

Following the pre-application advice the concept for the development proposal changed to focus on two focal trees to be positioned in the middle of an informal courtyard. These trees will be allowed to grow tall and wide with an ample root zone area and air space within the centre of the courtyards. The surrounding houses will have private gardens on the outer edges of the site with simple boundary treatments and new hedges and trees to soften the appearance of the development.

Pedestrian pathways within the site and along Shires Lane will be defined by new hedges and trees to reduce the impact of the development and encourage the transition from an urban to a rural landscape.



Fig 5. Landscape Plan

The two focal trees (purple) are located at the heart of the courtyards with communal shared surfaces surrounding them. Green corridors link the courtyards for pedestrian and cyclist access as well as linking the site to the wider village and countryside.

The existing trees along the west (blue) and south west (orange) boundaries of the site will be retained and can offer additional screening and protection for the new dwellings. The mature common ash tree (red) which is identified as have potential to accommodate a number of different species by the Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Access Ecology, will be retained.

Along Shires Lane the existing dry stone wall will be repositioned to accommodate the required visibility splays from the two new entrance points. The new area between the edge of the highway and the wall will be provided as a footpath along Shires Lane. A native hedgerow will be planted at the rear of the wall with trees at regular intervals to screen the development over time and continue the rural appearance.

Hedges and trees continue into the site and sub divide rear gardens of the two courtyard developments. Large trees and a woodland area will be planted on the raised communal open space area in the south east corner of the site.

A new swale will replace the old culvert through the site to form a landscape feature, alleviate drainage issues and promote wildlife habitat on the site. The swale will be less prone to blockage and easier to maintain, reducing the risk of upstream flooding to the existing properties on Moorland Close.

APPEARANCE

The proportions of the proposed development suggest a traditional appearance with conservation-style materials and layout would be most appropriate. The houses will be built using local materials to match the historic existing cottages. A mixture of stone and slate roofs will reinforce the random layout effect with staggered frontages and rooflines. Traditional detailing with stone window and door jambs and heads will further promote the rural appearance. Timber windows and doors will complete the rural appearance.

Individuality on each dwelling will be promoted to avoid the mass produced appearance of a standard development. Stone detailing and the subtle use of colour can be used to differentiate each dwelling from one another within the courtyard layout.



Fig 6. View South into the West Courtyard



Fig 7. View West along Shires Lane

ACCESS STATEMENT

This section is to be read in conjunction with the Transport Statement submitted with the outline planning application and produced by Arup Highway Engineers.

There are two proposed new access points onto Shires Lane (green), which feed into the separate courtyards. There will be no vehicular access between the two courtyards. The site is generally level with a slight gradient from the north to the south. Disabled access will be provided across the site with accessible gradients and shallow ramps throughout.

Pedestrian access (orange) will be extremely easy with multiple access points and the emphasis placed on easy and free movement throughout the site as would be expected from a traditional village settlement.

In particular a new footpath will be provided on the south side of Shires Lane in the space created by altering the existing dry stone wall for the access visibility splays. Pathways into and between the courtyards will merge the shared surface areas to create a large unobstructed communal area with excellent access to and from the development. A link to the cricket pitch to the west and the open space to the south east will allow pedestrians to enjoy the neighbouring surroundings with relatively free access.

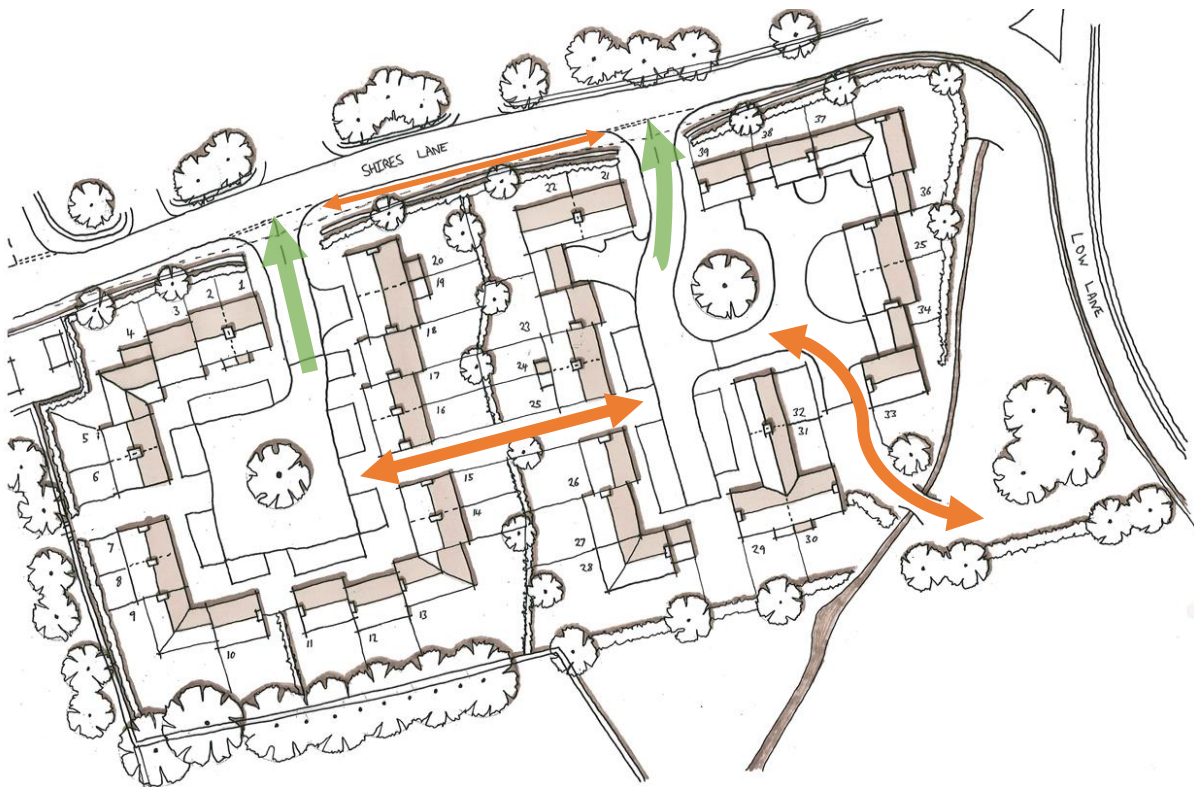


Fig 8. Access Plan

CONCLUSION

The main conclusions of this report are as follows;

- Use** - The site has been identified and allocated as a potential site for residential development in the Craven draft Local Plan 2014.
- Amount** - The proposed development is proportionate to the site area and the wider village of Embsay while providing ample communal open space.
- Layout** - Layout developed through the pre-app process with LPA guidance.
 - The twin courtyard layout provides a rural appearance.
 - A mixture of small and larger dwellings and staggering the layout reduce the perceived mass of the development.
- Scale** - The scale of the dwellings resemble others found in the village farmyards on the edge of the settlement creating clusters of development.
- Landscape** - The focal trees echo the Embsay Elm and draw the rural environment into the development.
 - A swale will alleviate the risk of flooding upstream for existing dwellings.
- Appearance** - Traditional features and local materials will root the development in the rural landscape.
- Access** - Two vehicle access points feed into the separate communal courtyards.
 - The repositioned dry stone wall allows a footpath to be provided along the south side of Shires Lane.
 - The shallow gradient of the site allows fully disabled access throughout.

It is considered therefore that the scheme will provide a high level of amenity for local residents, as well as a rural feel in terms of access and design.