

**Saunders  
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Architects**

New Residential Development, Old House Road, Balsham

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## **Design Development Brief**

Endurance Estates Land Promotion

Job Number; 1712

Date; March 2019

**Design Development Brief**

for

**New Residential Development**

at

**Old House Road, Balsham, Cambridgeshire**

on behalf of

**Endurance Estates Land Promotion**

QA

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Format of Document

This Design Development Brief has been prepared on behalf of Endurance Estates Land Promotion, (EELP) to support a Call for Sites submission for the New Residential Development, Old House Road, Balsham and should be read alongside the drawings that accompany this site promotion document.

This Design Development Brief has been prepared by:

#### **Saunders Boston Architects**

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*Aerial view of Balsham with the location of the site highlighted in red*

### 1.2 The Site

The submission site is located to the east of the centre of Balsham to the south of Old House Road. The site sits on the eastern edge of the Development Framework boundary. The site is bound to the north and west by residential development and to the south and east by pasture greenfield land. The site is pasture land that falls gradually from north to south bordered by hedgerows, trees and a ditch.

Access will be taken from Old House Road to the north of the site, along a track between two residential properties. The surrounding houses are single or two storey residential properties. Adjacent residential properties include a mix of scales, including bungalows, semi-detached dwellings with a mixture of styles.

### 1.3 Scope of Development Brief

This call for sites submission identifies the parcel of land in Balsham as a suitable plot for residential development. The land is vacant which allows for flexibility to the design layout, is close to the village amenities and would provide an attractive and sensitive continuation of the existing leafy residential area to the east of Balsham.

The site is greenfield pasture land, which at this stage would suggest it is unlikely that any major services run underneath. No overhead power/telecom cables are visible.

The scope of the development would maintain and enhance community life in the village, would be sensitive to the landscape setting and create high quality residential and landscape design.

## 2.0 SITE AND CONTEXT INFORMATION

### 2.1 Site Location

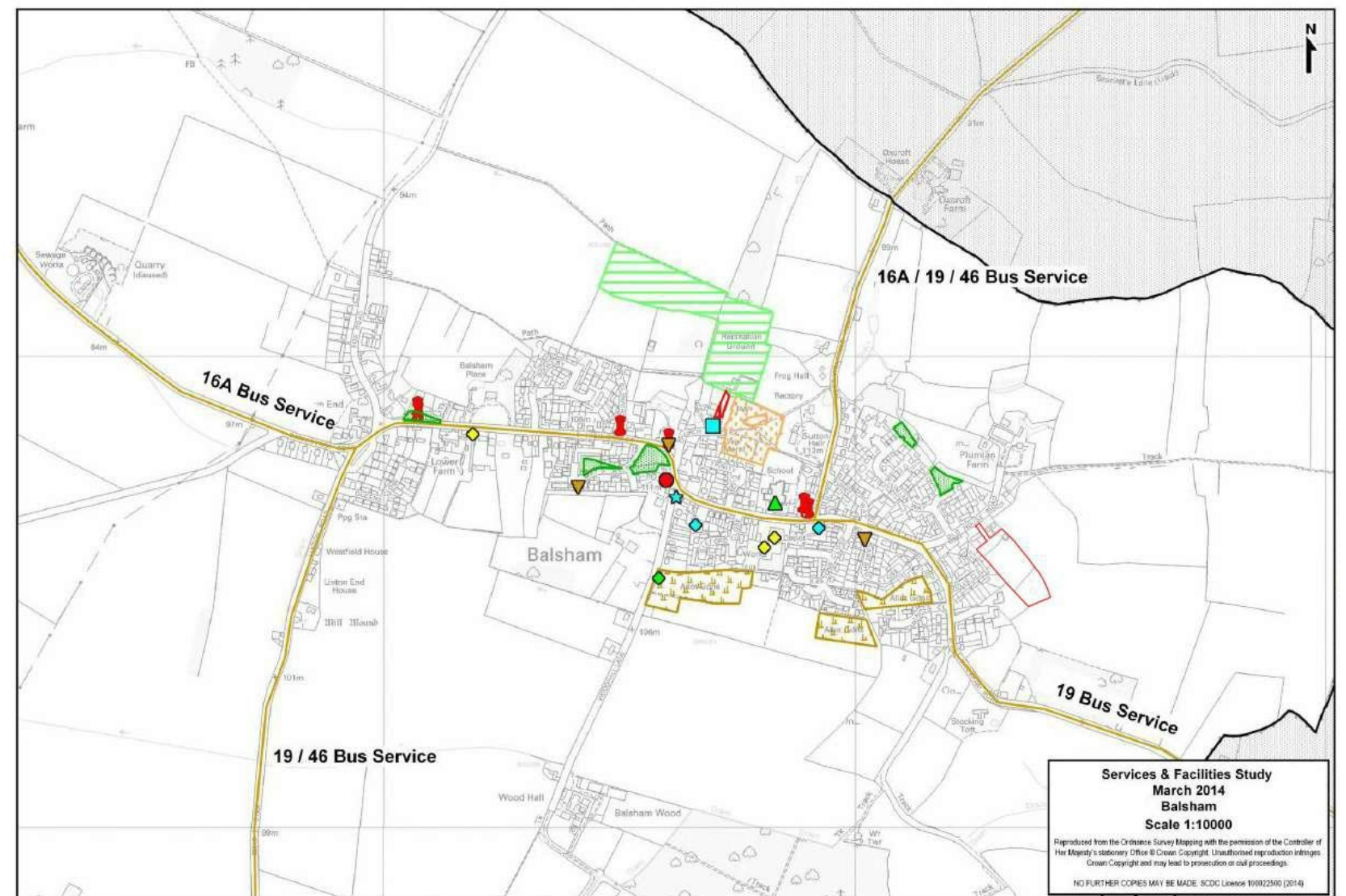
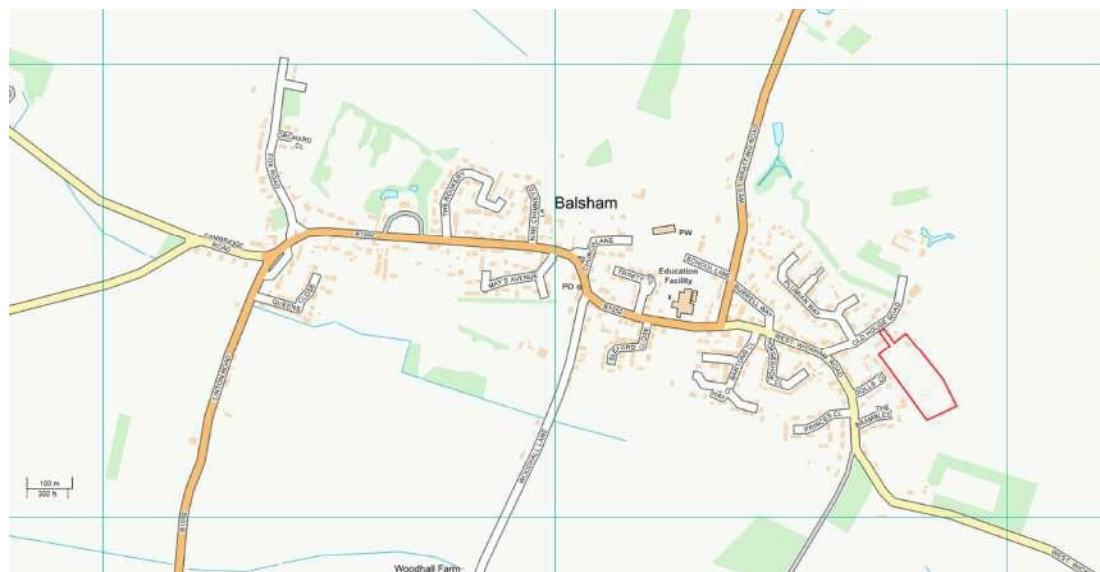
Please refer to the latest revision of SBA drawing 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-900, Existing Location Plan and 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-901, Existing Block Plan.

Balsham is a village approximately 9 miles south east of Cambridge set within open countryside outside of the Green Belt mainly consisting of pasture land. The A11 runs north / south to the west and the A1307 runs east / west to the south. The village is in the centre of a triangle formed by Cambridge, Newmarket and Haverhill, which provide the main centres of employment and shopping.

With a population of approximately 1600 the village has a range of local services including a primary school, grocery shops, post office, 2no pubs and a church. There are also some small industries in the village, and several crafts and trades are pursued from local homes.

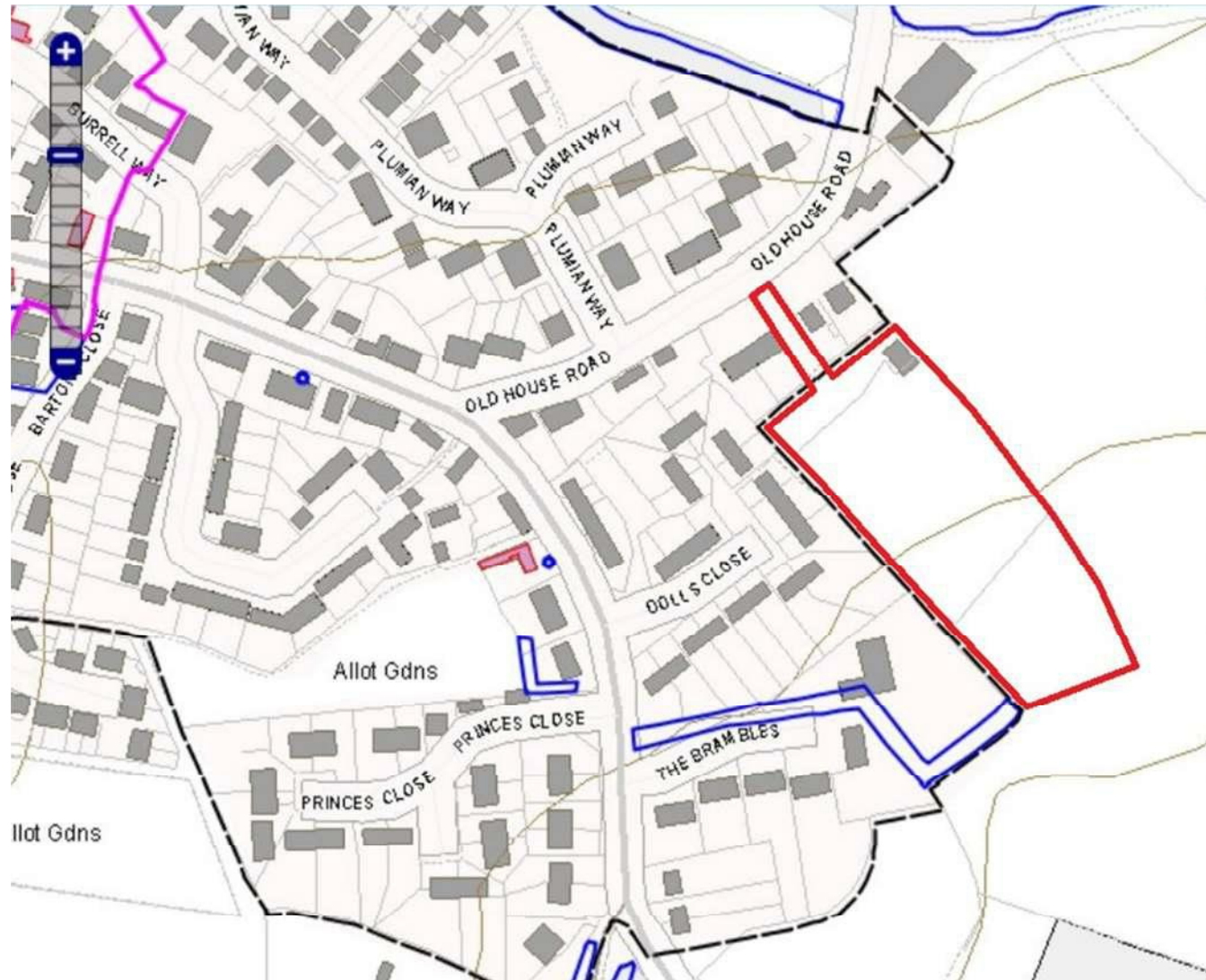
The village comprises predominately residential properties and dates back to the sixteenth century. It is set within gently undulating arable farmland that is characteristic of the area and is typical of the small scattered villages of the South East Claylands with its church tower visible from neighbouring villages. It has a strong linear form centred on the east / west axis of High Street and W Wickham Road. Winding lanes sprout along its length typically with dwellings close to or along the back edge of these routes.

The village houses a mixture of historic cottages and also a range of more modern and new housing. The village expanded in the 1960's with areas of fields / gardens situated between houses developed for building.



Services and Facilities Plan showing the site outlined in red

This development brief is accompanied by an Archaeology & Heritage Impact Assessment. The site is situated alongside the development framework and approximately 250m east of the conservation area. A grade II listed building is approximately 50 to the west of the site but not visible due to intermediate built form. A group TPO touches the most southern corner of the site. Proposals can come forward on the site without impacting on this TPO.



- ▼ **Tree Preservation Orders**
- Tree Preservation Order
- ▼ **Listed Buildings**
- List Buildings
- ▼ **Conservation Areas**
- Conservation Area
- ▼ **Development Frameworks**
- Development Framework

## 2.2 Site Analysis

Please refer to the latest revision of SBA drawing 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-900, Existing Location Plan, 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-901, Existing Block Plan.

The application site is approximately 2.9 acres / 1.2ha and is currently unused. The site had previously been used as a paddock for horses and the derelict stable block still remains.

The site boundary is loosely defined by the existing mature vegetation.



### Northern Boundary

To the north of the site are the rear elevations of the four properties that flank the access route. Walls and fences of varying height dictate the actual boundary line. Beyond these are further residential properties of Balsham,

### Eastern Boundary

To the east of the site is arable farmland separated by a mature hedgerow, a ditch and a fence. The farmland stretches to the neighbouring village, West Wrating, approximately 1.5km away.

### Southern Boundary

To the south of the site is arable farmland separated in part by mature trees, a ditch and a fence. Beyond the arable farmland is a small wooded area.

### Western Boundary

To the west of the site are the rear elevations of eight properties accessed from an adjacent cul-de-sac. A fence dictates the actual boundary line. Beyond these are further residential properties of Balsham,



*Aerial view looking north*



*Aerial view looking east*

## Site Character

The existing enclosed character of the site is defined by the mature hedgerows along the boundaries to the north east and south east. This is in contrast to the large open arable fields beyond. This provides a semi-rural character alongside the adjacent open fields. The adjacent residential properties are of limited prominence from within the site as they are generally set away from the site's boundaries.



Geology near Balsham

## Orientation:

Approximate width of the site is around 70m and minimum is 55m except the entrance. Approx length of the site is 171m and minimum is 162m. In contrast to the large areas of field beyond the east and south boundary, the form of the site is enclosed, which is defined by the hedgerows outlining the boundary of the rectangular shape of the site.

## 2.3 Site Access

There is an existing pedestrian and vehicle access to the north of the site from Old House Road. This entrance route cuts between two residential properties and is the only way to access the site.

## Roads - Vehicular Access:

The Old House Road connected with the entrance of the site starts from W Wickham Road and ends at the Old House. Due to the nature of Old House Road being a cul-de-sac/ dead end, Old House Road and therefore the site is only accessible by vehicle from one end, W Wickham Road. Therefore, when considering any further plans in regard to the site such as signs, it will only be necessary to consider vehicles entering from the left hand side as there will be no vehicles entering from the right.

## Public Transport Access:

There is a local bus service running through the village operated by Stagecoach that terminates in Cambridge. It runs between Haverhill and Cambridge. The bus station 'West Wrattling Road' is 320m away from the site to the west.



## 2.4 Landscape

### Water Courses:

There are no water courses such as rivers or canals near the site. The site boundary, however, is decided by a ditch around the site.

### Ecology:

The nearest statutory designated site is Balsham Wood SSSI, located 620 m to the south. The woodland is located too far from the Site to be impacted directly by the proposed development. Balsham Wood is also a private woodland with no public access, meaning that potential indirect adverse impacts on the woodland's ground flora as a result of increased levels of public recreation from the development are unlikely to occur.

The Site was considered to offer low overall value to foraging and commuting bats in line with Collins (2016). A pond that occurs within 165 m to the north of the Site requires follow-up investigation to establish if it supports the protected amphibian great crested newt (GCN) given the proposed scale of development could theoretically result in adverse impacts on terrestrial GCN should they occur in the pond. No obvious field evidence of badger was present within the Site during the survey, and no suitable habitats were present for otter or water vole. The Site and its boundary habitats require a bat activity survey to establish their value to foraging and/or commuting bats. A reptile survey of the Site is recommended to confirm reptile presence/absence. The recommended survey period is April-June and September-October. The landscaping strategy will incorporate ecological mitigation and habitat creation where possible, leading to biodiversity enhancements.

### Arboriculture:

The site is surrounded by small trees, blackthorn, dense brambles and undergrowth. The minimum height of the trees is 5m and maximum is 18m. There are 2 trees at the entrance near the Old House Road. 7 trees over 10m and 3 trees less than 10m are located in north part of the site. On the other hand, there are no trees near the eastern, western boundary.



Site photograph

### **3.0 TECHNICAL INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 Archaeology & Heritage Assessment**

There would be no effect upon designated heritage assets and, should archaeology be present, it will have to some extent been adversely affected by ploughing.

Having regard to the baseline conditions, the proposed development accords with planning policy and there are no constraints to its allocation from a cultural heritage perspective.

#### **3.2 Landscape Assessment**

The site is situated within the South East Clay Hill. The site is located at the top of the western rising slope of the valley defined by Mill Road corridor roughly at 110-120m AOD. The site is mostly characterised by grassland with a few trees and hedgerows to the boundaries. The assessment makes reference to Policies CC/8, HQ/1 and NH/2 that have been referred to during design development.

#### **3.3 Arboricultural Impact Assessment**

The site has a total of sixteen individual trees, four groups of trees, five areas of trees and two hedges which have been surveyed. These were found to be of mixed condition and age providing a variety of amenity benefits. There are no TPO's or category A trees within or adjacent to the site.

All the willow trees along the south eastern boundary are of poor quality and will need to be removed.

#### **3.4 Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (Foul & Surface)**

The site naturally falls from the north west to the south east.

The proposed development will lead to an increase in impermeable area and as such will increase the volume and rate of surface water run-off from the site unless properly managed. The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be demonstrated which could include the use of soakaways, permeable paving and open / infiltration attenuation for the temporary storage of surface water run-off. Green field run-off rates will be maintained through a comprehensive surface water drainage strategy.

Sewer records show a foul water sewer located to the north of the site within the highway. Due to site levels foul water will require a pumped solution. The pumping station should be located on-site and will require a 15 metre cordon sanitaire from habitable dwellings and access suitable for a tanker. This has been accounted for to the current site layout.

#### **3.5 Transport Assessment**

A shared surface access of 5.5m wide with 0.5m service strips either side is achievable from Old House Road. 6m radii are achievable where the new access road meets Old House Road.

The access, including visibility splays can be provided wholly within the landowners land and the adopted highway.

#### 4.1 Outline Description

The proposal is for 23no. residential units with associated infrastructure, landscaping and Public Open Space that meets planning policy. The proposed dwellings are a mixture of detached and semi-detached 2-storey dwellings. This type and size is in keeping with other dwellings in Balsham and the surrounding area.

The layout of the proposed development was informed by the shape of the site, the opportunities and constraints analysis and planning policy with the objective to form a sustainable community forming part of Balsham.

The layout of the proposed dwellings has been designed to enable the 23 plots to fit comfortably with space for gardens, parking, landscaping and pedestrian and vehicular routes.

There is a central pedestrian friendly approach through the proposed development, from which dwellings are positioned and arranged to form a cul-de-sac close, these all have a shared surface in front of the units and reflect the streets within the village.

The key aims of the design are as follows:

- To ensure the development does not have an adverse effect on the landscaping setting of Balsham
- To create a development that provides variety and interest within a coherent design, providing a sense of place and response to the surrounding area in terms of scale and nature, while enhancing the character.
- To achieve a legible development, with defined enclosed spaces with good interrelationships between buildings and routes within the development as well as the wider surrounding area.

#### 4.2 Amount

Please refer to the latest revision of SBA drawing 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-500, Proposed Site Plan and SBA schedule 1712-Accommodation Schedule.

Based on a site area of 1.2 hectares this provides a density of 28 dwellings / hectare which is considered to be an appropriate village density.

In accordance with Policy H/8, Housing Density, of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Planning Policies, the new development will make best use of the site by achieving a net density of approximately 30 dwellings per hectare.

#### 4.3 Housing Mix

Please refer to the latest revision of SBA drawing 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-500, Proposed Site Plan.

A total of 23 dwellings including 10no affordable and 13no market sale dwellings are proposed on the site in the following mix:

In accordance with Policy H/9, Housing Mix, of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, the new development will contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability, to meet local needs.

In accordance with Policy H/10, Affordable Housing, of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, the new development will provide 40% affordable housing.

#### 4.4 Site Opportunities & Constraints

Please refer to the latest revision of SBA drawing 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-902, Proposed Site Opportunities & Constraints.



Opportunities and Constraints Plan

#### 4.5 Development of Concept Plan

The evolution of the concept plan began with establishing a strong identity to the development to give the impression it has organically grown as part of Balsham and sits comfortably within the landscape.

The proposed development is formed around a shared surface with a central square reflecting the layouts of local farmsteads. The proposal is for a rural density scheme providing a leafy development with high quality landscaping that will sit comfortably within the existing setting.

All the plots have deep gardens to create a buffer between the development and the mature hedgerows and trees allowing the existing landscape features to be retained.

#### 5.0 LAYOUT

##### 5.1 Access

Please refer to the latest revision of SBA drawing 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-500, Proposed Site Plan.

The north western boundary of the site, Old House Road, provides the only opportunity for direct access to an adopted highway. The vehicular access will be built to adoptable standards as will the road layout throughout the site and has been designed to allow all possible users to easily access the site. The new access is intended to be suitable for adoption by the Highways Authority; however this is subject to detailed consultation with the County Highways Development Engineer.

Pedestrian access will be provided via the shared surface alongside the new vehicular access point on Old House Road. The shared surface will continue through the site to create a safe and continuous pedestrian route to all dwellings.

All highways and hard landscaping will be designed in accordance with statutory requirements to ensure appropriate warning of hazards (tactile paving) and appropriate gradients to any slopes.

Paving on site will provide direct access from the adopted surface to all front doors for the residents. All front access doors to the houses will incorporate level threshold details to aid the passage of wheelchairs and buggies. All rear access doors to ADP M4(2) compliant properties will incorporate level threshold details. Rear access shall be restricted by a side gate.

##### 5.2 Car & Cycle Parking

Please refer to the latest revision of SBA drawing 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-500, Proposed Site Plan.

In accordance with Policy TI/3, Parking Provision, of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, the new development will provide 2no car parking spaces per house plus 6no visitor car parking spaces (0.25 spaces per dwelling) located evenly throughout the site. All houses have on plot parking and all parking spaces are well overlooked.

Secure and covered cycle storage has been provided to each house in the form of a garden shed.

#### 5.3 Waste Strategy

Each house will be provided with 3no 240litre wheelie bins allocated for gardening waste, dry recycling and non-recycling waste. Adequate space has been allowed for bin storage in the rear garden of the houses.

The waste collection vehicle will enter via Old House Road in forward gear and utilise the on-site turning head and then leave the site in forward gear.

#### 5.4 Building Scale & Arrangement

Please refer to the latest revision of SBA drawing 1712-SBA-XX-XX-DR-A-500, Proposed Site Plan.

The proposed development will look to redefine the eastern edge of the village with enhanced trees and hedgerow planting contributing to the landscape setting and providing a transition to the surrounding countryside.

The proposal will provide a family orientated development of 1-2 storey dwellings. The dwellings will be mostly semi-detached, with some detached houses. The new housing will be laid out along a linear form broken by a semi-formal square and open space that also helps soften the village edge. The open space replicates the typical small village greens that are a feature of the local area.

This linear form has been developed to reflect the characteristics of the village and also inform the public open space as an irregular village green shape. The public open space will also act as an additional buffer to the adjacent countryside.

All houses will be arranged to face onto the shared surface, creating an active street frontage and ensuring the pedestrian route through the site is well overlooked.

Shared surfaces will be used to create a low speed environment with a domestic scale that encourages ownership and helps create its own sense of place.

The proposed dwellings will be located close to or along the back edge of the new lane to reflect village characteristics.

In accordance with the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Planning Policies, the new development will provide:

- Affordable housing
- Appropriate access from the highway network that does not compromise safety
- Car parking, with provision kept to a minimum
- Safe and secure cycle parking
- Outdoor play space
- Safe and convenient access for all to public buildings and spaces, and to public transport, including those with limited mobility or those with other impairment such as of sight or hearing
- Screened storage and collection of refuse, including recyclable materials
- A design and layout that minimises opportunities for crime;



Proposed Site Plan

## 5.5 Public Open Space

Please refer to the latest revision of SBA schedule 1712-Accommodation Schedule.

In accordance with Policy SC/7, Outdoor Playing Space and Informal Open Space, of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, the scheme will comply with policy providing in excess of the required area.

The open space requirement is found in two sections. Section 1 fronts the semi-formal central square and provides a natural extension to this space. Section 2 is located further into the site and provides a more secluded environment. Both spaces will enjoy views to the east through the existing hedgerow and across the adjacent fields.

In addition, the two open spaces will enhance the views from the east back towards the site by breaking up the built form and omitting the need for a hard boundary treatment.

## 6.0 APPEARANCE

### 6.1 Form

The proposed dwellings will respond to the form of the existing vernacular by reflecting the traditional building styles within Balsham. In particular, each house type will be developed with a mixture of high pitched roofs and gable ends that closely front onto the new lane.

All integral garages will be set back from the front line of the property to reduce their prominence. A series of cat slides and varied overhangs will also contribute to reducing the scale and mass of the built form.

Materials will be used to help define the forms and alter the perceived proportions as desired. Contemporary elements, including larger openings, will be included in order to maximise the sites rural potential with contemporary living styles.

By creating a gable end to the majority of the dwellings the scale and mass of the building forms is reduced, resulting in a domestic scale environment. A varied street scene is created with its own sense of place linked by this consistent language of gable end form. Below is an aerial view of the proposed development that reflects the desired varied street scene.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

We have sought to design within the relevant policies to create a high-quality addition to the village of Balsham, which will provide attractive and well-designed traditional and affordable homes.

The design of the development seeks to echo the streetscapes of Balsham with properties located close to the back edge of the public space, concise forms, repeating elements, low extending roofs and a mix of local materials offering further visual interest.

It is our view that the scheme successfully creates an environment that has its own unique sense of place, but also feels familiar to its surrounds.

The development provides a mixed tenure development in line with SCDC's housing need and provides a mix of house types reflecting the wider village. The development will add to the existing thriving community within Balsham.

There are no technical reasons why this site should not be allocated for residential development.