

1.1 Development briefs are planning policy documents which indicate development and design principles for individual sites. They expand upon the framework provided by the policies of the District Local Plan.¹ A consultation draft version is produced first to gauge public opinion and the document may then be revised and adopted by the Council as "supplementary planning guidance". East Northamptonshire Council's overall approach to development briefs is contained in a guide to their preparation and use, which was adopted as supplementary guidance on 19 June 1996.²

1.2 General design guidance³ is currently being prepared by the Council, in order to inform a design led approach to new development. This will go through the same public consultation process and will also eventually be adopted as supplementary planning guidance. Policy documents of this nature provide guidance on the form of development expected by the Council, both generally and on specific sites.

Why prepare a development brief?

1.3 Briefs establish the conceptual and practical framework for development and will be used by the Council when negotiating with developers, in the lead up to the submission of detailed planning applications. They are not intended to be prescriptive and the Council will not rule out innovative and creative design solutions which vary from the brief, so long as they embody the general and design aims.

1.4 The preparation of briefs setting out site requirements and the context of new development will enable other agencies and companies to plan their services accordingly. In addition, briefs will ensure continuity where site ownership changes, or where several developers are involved in different phases of development.

1.5 In the preparation of development briefs, the Council's aims are to:

- a) ensure a high standard of development on the District's primary development sites;
- b) assist with the implementation of Local Plan proposals and policies;
- c) promote and further the Council's role in achieving development which is both high quality and sustainable.

1.6 More specifically, briefs will aim to:

- a) provide a conceptual framework for site development;
- b) achieve comprehensive and co-ordinated implementation of local plan policies and standards on a site specific basis;
- c) encourage a partnership approach between organisations, in terms of the development of both individual and groups of sites;
- d) provide a basis for negotiation and consultation, on site requirements and potential;
- e) provide a catalyst for more localised and detailed planning than is achievable within the District Local Plan.

1.7 Proposals for the site must be set within the context of adjoining land uses and designations. Comprehensive examination of the various issues within a development brief will enable identification of a way forward, particularly in terms of design guidance.

- 2.1 The Local Plan identifies 1.9 hectares of land for housing development within the brief area (proposal KC1). The written justification for this proposal also highlights the long term potential of further land to the east of the allocated site. The western part (about one third) of the brief area is currently owned by East Northamptonshire Council. East Midlands Housing Association own a small area upon which they are developing 15 housing units for rent (*planning application reference EN/97/00429/FUL*). The remainder of the brief area is in private ownership.
- 2.2 The brief area extends to 9.3 hectares and is located to the north west of King's Cliffe, adjacent to the existing cul-de-sac "Fineshade Close". (*See Plan 1*) Wood Road forms the southern boundary and Wood Lane the western boundary. Willow Lane forms the eastern boundary and the northern boundary includes the disused railway line.
- 2.3 The land rises in a north westerly direction from the 51 metre contour at Wood Road to the 69.5 metre contour at the railway cutting.
- 2.4 Vegetation in the area is mainly rough grassland, with the southern part given over to pasture. There are mature hedgerows along the boundaries with Willow Lane, Wood Lane and the former railway line. The western and eastern fields are also divided by a mature hedgerow. The boundary between the Important Open Land and the large eastern field is marked by a more gappy hedgerow of less visual interest and conservation value. The western boundary of the Important Open Land, adjoining 35 Wood Road, is predominantly a tall conifer hedge although there is a gap next to the eastern elevation of that property.

Design Context

- 2.5 The site is located to the north of the designated King's Cliffe Conservation Area. King's Cliffe itself is situated within the Rockingham Forest.

- 2.6 Much of the recent development within the District has tended to comprise layouts of standard house types, slavishly designed to accommodate the car, which has generally been to the detriment of the quality of the environment and the amenity of the residents. Such developments have failed to take account of their immediate context and consequently have led to the gradual erosion of local character.
- 2.7 Development should take account of the location of the site adjacent to the historic village centre and should generally reflect the character of the Rockingham Forest. In design terms, development should take its lead from the variety and irregularity found within the established village core; in particular the spatial enclosure, the relationship of buildings to each other and to the public realm, the homogeneity which has resulted through the use of a limited palette of materials and the simplicity of the local vernacular. In advocating such an approach the Council does not intend to be over prescriptive, or promote a faithful reproduction of the Conservation Area.
- 2.8 The principles which have created the interest and variety within the townscape of the historic core should be applied to any development to avoid a standardised car dominated housing layout.
- 2.9 The existing developments adjacent to the site do little to respect local character. It is not acceptable to use the existence of this form of development to justify more of the same.

Existing Character

- 2.10 A thorough analysis of the character of the historic core should be undertaken by any potential developer, in order to gain an understanding of the context in which the development is to be sited. The following paragraphs contain initial guidance.

- 2.11 Buildings within the Conservation Area frequently form a continuous frontage along the street and tend to either front directly onto the back edge of the pavement or are slightly set back at the rear of stone walls. Houses which are set back from the street often form an important element of street design. Overall, characteristic traditional layouts create a strong sense of spatial enclosure, which should be reflected in any new development.
- 2.12 The buildings have been constructed over many years, resulting in variations of scale, architectural details, storeys, ridge and eaves heights. Artificially recreating traditional scenes is not being suggested; it is accepted that it is difficult to achieve naturally in a development which may take place over a limited time period.
- 2.13 It is however, essential to incorporate variety and a sense of spatial enclosure, if any proposed scheme is to successfully reflect local character and to appear as a natural extension of the settlement, particularly given the topography of the site.
- Policy Context*
- 2.14 The East Northamptonshire District Local Plan was adopted on 4 November 1996. Together with the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan (currently under review), this forms the policy framework for decision making. Local Plan policies which are particularly relevant to this site are:
- GEN3 which states the circumstances in which planning obligations and conditions will be used to provide infrastructure, services and amenities made necessary by development
 - EN5 which promotes the retention of natural features, such as trees and hedgerows, which will enhance the development
 - EN9 which protects the special interest of County Wildlife Sites
 - EN20 which protects Important Open Land from development which adversely affects its character
- H4 which requires a variety of dwelling types and styles
 - H11 which outlines the criteria for development in Limited Development Villages
 - H20 which requires a high standard of design, layout, density, servicing, landscaping and screening
 - RL3 which stipulates recreational open space standards
 - RL4 which requires the provision of children's play areas
 - TR5 which requires routes and facilities for cyclists and pedestrians
 - KC1 which identifies a site for residential development in King's Cliffe
- 2.15 Further details of the requirements for recreational open space are included in a guide published by the Council⁴.
- 2.16 The adopted Local Plan provides for anticipated development needs up to 2006, within the context of the currently approved Structure Plan. Policy H11 acknowledges that there is scope for general in-filling, redevelopment and the conversion of non-residential buildings to housing. Additionally, land is identified for 50 new dwellings in King's Cliffe, (site KC1) to be provided before 2006. The extent of further long term potential is not specifically identified.
- 2.17 The replacement Structure Plan (placed on deposit April 1999) makes provision for development up to 2016; again, the development strategy is one of overall restraint in the rural areas. The Local Plan will need to be reviewed and rolled forward to cover this extended time period and take account of revised Government and Structure Plan policy.
- 2.18 King's Cliffe is one of the larger villages in the north of the District, with a relatively good service and employment base. It is therefore likely to be one of the more sustainable rural locations for additional development in the longer term.

Access

- 3.1 The Highway Authority has stated support for a single point of access, from Wood Road, to serve the entire brief area. The community view is that vehicular access should be provided from Wood Road, Willow Lane and Wood Lane; with the Fineshade Close access only in place as a temporary measure.
- 3.2 Vehicular access from Willow Lane would require its upgrading to adoptable standard and provision would need to be made to ensure no conflict arises with users of the school.
- 3.3 In the light of the above, the Council has investigated direct access from Wood Lane but has not been able to pursue this option. The Council's position is therefore that vehicular access to the brief area and the Housing Association land should eventually be from a main point of access on Wood Road and a secondary point of access from Willow Lane. The Council will seek the eventual closure of the link between the existing Fineshade Close and the development land.

Important Open Land

- 3.4 The Important Open Land has been designated using the criteria listed in policy EN20 of the Local Plan. Development will not be permitted on the designated area if it adversely affects its open character. The agricultural building and yard on Wood Road currently detract from the visual attractiveness of the designated area.

Nature Conservation

- 3.5 King's Cliffe Meadows, in the north western part of the brief area, is a designated County Wildlife Site covered by policy EN9 of the local plan. The site requires appropriate management to safeguard and enhance its conservation interest. Unimproved limestone grassland is now comparatively rare in Northamptonshire, with less than 40 hectares remaining of wildlife value.

- 3.6 The Council's Landscape and Nature Conservation Strategy (adopted April 1996) states that the Council will "explore opportunities to designate important areas of grassland in which it has an interest as Local Nature Reserves." These are sites managed for the benefit of nature conservation, with public access for recreation and educational study. Whilst the term County Wildlife Site describes an area's current importance, the declaration of a Local Nature Reserve has more to do with the area's potential.
- 3.7 The former railway line to the north is also a designated County Wildlife Site. This provides a range of habitats and is part of a continuous habitat corridor which crosses the north of East Northamptonshire District. (*See Appendix 1 for the county wildlife site record cards*). The Willow Walk Pocket Park covers the area along the old railway line from Willow Lane to Kingsmead.
- 3.8 Adders are present throughout the brief area. The Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan⁵ lists Adders as a "Local Priority Species". Officers from the Wildlife Trust for Northamptonshire have made recommendations about the protection and management measures which may be necessary. Conflict between users of the site and Adders will need to be minimised through effective management.

Public Rights of Way

- 3.9 There are no rights of way within the brief area but Wood Lane is a Byway (NE21), linking the village with the countryside to the north. Willow Walk is a footpath (but not presently a right of way on the Definitive Map) running through the Pocket Park, from Willow Lane to Kingsmead.

Safeguarding Views and Impact on the Landscape

- 3.10 Views into the site are affected by the landform, which will increase the impact of built development on the landscape. The gradient rises through the Important Open Land to a plateau which then slopes upwards to the northern boundary. Although there are no long distance views from village approach roads, there are views into the site from Wood Road and from public rights of way on the southern side of the Willow Brook valley.
- 3.11 It is important to consider the landform in order to avoid making a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area; in particular by ensuring that development is not unduly prominent.
- 3.12 The mature hedgerows comprise a variety of indigenous species and are in excess of two metres high. The amount of vegetation and height of these hedgerows contribute to an overall green appearance to the brief area; from surrounding viewpoints it is difficult to see past them into the open parts of the site. It is important to retain this green "framework" to the site, to mitigate the impact of built development.
- 3.13 Views from within the site towards the Conservation Area should be incorporated in detailed development proposals. This will provide a visual link between new development and the historic core of the village. Consideration should also be given to the future use of the agricultural building and yard, which currently detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

Drainage and Utilities

- 3.14 Potential developers will need to approach the utility companies to investigate the level of improvements or additional infrastructure which is required. As part of consultation on the draft brief, utility suppliers and the Environment Agency have outlined some specific requirements.

- 3.15 A low pressure gas main runs along Wood Road, Wood Lane, Fineshade Close and part of Willow Lane.
- 3.16 East Midlands Electricity point out the need to underground the existing high voltage overhead line and provide one or two new substations with low voltage cables. The pole mounted transformer near Wood Road should be removed and supplies transferred to the substation(s). This will be safer and more visually acceptable. The company need to purchase a small area of land for a substation and indicate that the legal process for doing this usually takes six to nine months.
- 3.17 Anglian Water indicate that water supplies for development can be taken from the existing 180mm main in Wood Road.
- 3.18 There is no capacity in the existing foul sewers and a new sewer will be required along Wood Road, to the junction with King's Forest. The existing sewers need to be enlarged as far as the Sewage Treatment Works.
- 3.19 There are no public surface water sewers and no capacity in the riparian watercourses. A new off-site surface water sewer is therefore required, which will drain into the Willow Brook (with Environment Agency consent).
- 3.20 Both the terminal pumping station and treatment works need an increase in capacity to accommodate the additional flows.
- 3.21 The infrastructure works referred to in the paragraphs above will need to be funded by the developer(s) of the brief area. Constraints and opportunities are illustrated on Plan 2.

Vision

*A RURAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
LOOKING TOWARD THE
CONSERVATION AREA. A GREEN
APPROACH INCORPORATING
RECREATION FACILITIES, WITH A
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE ON THE
DOORSTEP.*

General Aims

- To promote a comprehensive approach to land use within the brief area.
- To resolve the vehicular access difficulties presented by current proposals and ensure long term access, circulation and traffic management improvements.
- To establish phasing proposals and ensure the orderly development of the site.
- To safeguard and enhance the interest of the existing and potential County Wildlife Sites.
- To make positive and productive use of the area designated as Important Open Land.
- To take a positive approach to meeting short and long term needs in King's Cliffe.

Design Aims

- To ensure that any new development on the site is appropriate to its rural location and reflects the unique character of the village and its historic centre.
- To achieve a development in which the visual impact of the car is minimised and one which encourages pedestrian use.
- To create a quality street scene which draws its design principles from those which determine the character of the historic centre of King's Cliffe.
- To create a visually attractive approach to the site which is well related to existing development in the historic core.

5.1 Development of the 15 affordable rented homes north of Fineshade Close, has now commenced. The local community, through its representatives, has indicated broad support for the principle of development in the wider brief area. This support is based on the premise that the development overall will constitute a sensitive, well designed neighbourhood which is well related in form and character to the existing settlement.

5.2 The remainder of the site will be developed in a manner which takes account of the immediate need for affordable housing; resolves the vehicular access problems for the remainder of KC1 and further land; and allows a design approach which respects the physical characteristics of the site.

Form of Development and Phasing

5.3 Initially, development will take the form of a green, with houses arranged around an informal park (comprising the remainder of the Important Open Land). Houses will front onto the open area to create both visual interest from Wood Road and security surveillance over the children's play space. (See Plan 3)

5.4 Development will then branch out into village streets to east and west. An element of the recreational open space will need to be completed before an agreed number of units are occupied (this will be defined through a planning agreement). The secondary access to Willow Lane and the northern part of the development, comprising village streets to east and west of a small public open space, will follow development of the southern area.

Definition of a Northern Boundary to Development

5.5 A buffer will be provided between housing development and the designated wildlife sites (King's Cliffe Meadow and the former railway line) in order to mitigate any impact on their nature conservation interest.

5.6 A northern boundary to residential development has therefore been defined, which broadly follows the 66 metre contour. It allows for a housing layout which respects the physical nature of the site and enables the siting of dwellings in a manner which adds interest to the street scene.

Access

5.7 Details of the Highway Authority's technical advice can be provided to potential developers. The planning and design objectives for the development are largely dependent upon creating permeability of movement throughout the area, particularly by pedestrians and cyclists. It is important to avoid the creation of a long cul-de-sac arrangement without a choice of routes for movement into, out of and around the site. This form of development is inappropriate in relation to the characteristic street pattern of the main part of the village.

5.8 Vehicular access will therefore be provided from both Wood Road and Willow Lane, with the new extension to Fineshade Close being stopped up once access from the east is obtained. A stretch of approximately 80 metres along Willow Lane will require upgrading to adoptable standard, to create the secondary access.

5.9 The primary access road will need to be designed to take account of the proximity of 35 Wood Road. Its layout and design should enhance the setting of the Conservation Area. The road will need to be designed to minimise gradients and a feature such as a small island could be used to deflect and slow traffic. Street lighting at the Wood Road junction and along the main access road should be kept to a minimum to avoid creating an urban feel to the new development.

5.10 The scale of development proposed means that off-site highway works may be required along Wood Road in order to slow traffic. These should be considered in the context of the existing speed reduction measures in place along Wood Road, and the scope for rationalisation and improved design.

5.11 Whilst the Highway Authority require two footways along the initial stretch of the primary access road, the western one should be set back behind a verge incorporating some tree planting, to mitigate the urbanising effect that the access road design would otherwise have on the area. This can be accommodated within the buffer area adjacent to 35 Wood Road.

Road Layout

5.12 The hierarchy of roads within the site will generally accord with the framework laid down by the Highway Authority. Technical highway standards set minimal widths for roads and footways but there is some flexibility in terms of creating spaces and features through widening these elements, particularly the footways.

5.13 Village streets should create a new neighbourhood, in line with the concepts shown on Plan 3. Roads should follow the contours, with footpath and cycle links forming short cuts between the vehicular routes. The inclusion of appropriately designed courts, reflecting the character of traditional courtyards and set to the rear of the frontage buildings, will add variety to the layout. The use of a standardised layout of cul-de-sacs served from a single feeder road will not be acceptable.

5.14 A change in road priorities will be necessary at the top of the entrance road, to slow traffic speeds. Traffic calming and speed reductions within the development should be achieved through changes of priority, positioning of buildings and landscaping to restrict forward visibility. Different road treatments and junction arrangements can also be used to reduce vehicle speeds and create a safer and more attractive environment for the pedestrian. Equally, the use of golden gravel for footpaths and a sensitive kerbing material will minimise the urban feel of the development overall.

5.15 The road layout should reflect the variety and interest that is inherent in more traditional street patterns. The relationship of the buildings to each other and to the public realm should be used imaginatively to create spatial enclosure.

5.16 The distinction between the public highway and the private domain should comprise a definite boundary, which may be formed by the building frontages, walling or hedging. Variations in footway widths will be encouraged and should be determined by the position of the buildings and boundary treatment. The current practice of providing indistinct open plan areas of soft landscaping will not be acceptable.

Car Parking

5.17 The development should not be designed as a car orientated environment in which parking provision dominates the street scene and house frontages. Layouts in which car parking provision is largely located on the plot frontages will not be acceptable.

5.18 Parking provision for individual plots will be located either to the rear or side of properties, accessed from spaces between buildings, through carriage arches or from back lanes or courts.

5.19 The development should comprise a variety of parking solutions. The aim will be to reduce the visual impact of the car within any development.

5.20 Garages should be secondary to the main building. The number of house types with integral garages should be limited; where used the design should ensure the garage opening does not dominate the front elevation.

Pedestrian and Cycle Provision

5.21 Policy TR5 in the local plan requires routes and facilities for pedestrians and cycles to be provided in all developments of one hectare or greater. Any new development should attempt to encourage pedestrian use and to avoid a layout which encourages or necessitates the use of the car. It is essential therefore that the scheme offers the pedestrian a choice of visually interesting and safe routes, providing short cuts wherever possible.

5.22 Provision for both pedestrians and cycles should normally be made within the highway, in order for routes to be overlooked by dwellings. Direct links should be incorporated to the western and eastern boundaries; this will enable easy access to the public right of way, the wildlife site and the school. Measures will be incorporated which prohibit vehicle use.

5.23 Informal paths should be created within the area of public open space. Arrangements to enable safe crossing of Wood Road should also be incorporated in the design of any scheme.

5.24 As part of the proposals for access and management of the County Wildlife Sites, Willow Walk should be extended westward along the disused railway line, to link into the local footpath network.

Nature Conservation Proposals

5.25 The northern half of the brief area requires management to enhance its nature conservation value. Development proposals already impinge upon the County Wildlife Site and it is vital that this remaining area is conserved. As referred to above, a northern limit to residential development has been established around the 66 metre contour.

Beyond this, the land will be protected from development and access provided for local people.

5.26 The Council owns the western part of this area and will declare it a Local Nature Reserve. The aim of such a declaration is to allow access by local people and encourage educational use of the site, while at the same time safeguarding its special interest. In order to secure its long term future, a management agreement will be entered into with the Wildlife Trust for Northamptonshire. The village community will be asked to suggest a name for the reserve.

5.27 The County Wildlife Sites will be managed for nature conservation and public access. A buffer zone has also been defined, in order that the habitat enjoyed by the Adders is not too restricted. The developer of the land adjoining the buffer zone will be expected to provide resources for conservation management. Ideally, the land should be leased to the Wildlife Trust, or a management agreement entered into, in order that the whole area can be comprehensively managed. The ultimate aim will be to extend the Local Nature Reserve to cover the whole area of conservation interest. One of the main objectives will be to manage the site for Adders.

5.28 A stock-proof post and wire boundary will be provided along the northern edge to development (see also "landscaping" below) This will enable sheep to be put to graze on the nature reserve; in order to encourage a diversity of plant species and return the site to limestone grassland in the long term. Prior to this it will be necessary to remove the Ragwort, which is hazardous to grazing stock. Additionally, the hedgerows will require management and some gapping up.

5.29 Kissing gates, designed for wheelchair and pushchair access will be provided at entrance points to the reserve, from Willow Lane (linking to Willow Walk) and from within the new housing development. Field gates will also be required, to obtain access with grazing stock. A picnic area will be provided at an accessible location and an interpretation panel and leaflet will be produced. If the proposal for a Millennium Wood north of the railway line proves successful, educational resources and interpretation for the two sites should be co-ordinated

Landscaping and Boundary Treatment

5.30 The majority of the existing boundary hedgerows will be retained, except where there is a need to provide for pedestrian and cycle access. The form of development proposed above will allow for the retention of individual and small groups of trees, within an overall landscaping scheme.

5.31 New planting on the site should comprise indigenous species and will be necessary in the following areas:

- a new hedgerow along the northern edge to development, as part of the stock-proof boundary
- tree and shrub planting west of the main access road, adjacent to 35 Wood Road
- a wide verge with tree planting to set back the footpath on the eastern side of the main access road
- to supplement any boundaries adjoining existing properties
- within the areas of public recreation space
- specimen planting within development to soften views in and across

5.32 The existing stone wall on the frontage to Wood Road will be retained, apart from the break necessary to form the vehicular access. A new stone wall to match the existing should be built leading into this entrance.

5.33 Boundaries to individual properties will comprise stone or brick walls, or hedges adjacent to the highway and between properties. Views into and across development sites should be carefully considered in relation to the boundary treatment around back gardens. Whilst post and rail or post and wire fences with associated hedgerow planting will be acceptable, the creation of regimented rows of close boarded and panelled fencing around back gardens will be resisted.

Recreation Proposals

5.34 Most of the recreational open space required as a result of housing development, will be provided within the area designated as Important Open Land. The aim is to retain its open character and secure its long term maintenance. The location of the open space adjacent to the housing will also enable a higher residential density to be achieved. This is consistent with the form of development envisaged below and the road layout proposals referred to above.

5.35 One Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) and two Local Areas for Play (LAP) will be required through application of the Council's adopted guidance. One of the LAPs is being provided as part of the Housing Association development. The other will be within a public square in the north of the brief area, directly overlooked by surrounding houses.

5.36 Areas for children's play need to be interspersed throughout the development to reduce travel distances. The activity zone of a LAP should be around 100m², surrounded by an informal buffer area.

5.37 The LEAP is an unsupervised play area equipped for children of early school age, with an activity zone of around 400m² and a substantial buffer zone. It will be provided within the main area of public open space and will be overlooked by adjoining properties and pedestrian routes.

5.38 The remaining open space will be given over to casual youth/adult use. The gradient unfortunately makes this area unsuitable for formal ball games. Instead, an informal park will be created, which incorporates footpaths, benches, multi-purpose games equipment for older children, landscape features and a meeting place for older children and adults. The developer will remove the redundant agricultural building and yard and the area will be incorporated within the public open space.

Individual Buildings

5.39 Policy H4 of the Local Plan requires that a variety of dwelling types should be provided on sites of more than ten units. Accordingly, the development will comprise a balanced range of terraced, semi-detached and detached units, with variation in the number of bedrooms. Any further social housing needs which are identified through the Council's housing needs assessment will be accommodated within the brief area and will need to be integral to the overall housing development, rather than in separate blocks.

5.40 Building frontages should not be set to a uniform building line, but should be positioned to create visual interest and variety in the street scene.

5.41 The development should comprise buildings of contemporary design, which reflect the form, scale, materials and architectural details of the local vernacular. The following guidelines should be taken into account in any attempt to reflect local character.

- The principle *building material* traditionally used in King's Cliffe is *random coursed limestone*. Where *brick* is used, the type should be consistent throughout the scheme.
- The *roofing materials* are traditionally *Collyweston stone slate, thatch, blue slate and hand made clay pantiles*. The use of Collyweston stone slate and thatch has dictated the *steep roof pitches* of the local vernacular.

- Buildings generally comprise a *plan* of 6-7metres depth, with *frontages* of approximately 10 metres. Additional *floor space* is accommodated in the form of *rear projecting wings* forming an "L" or "T" shaped plan form.
- The buildings have relatively *simple elevations* with *limited window openings*, traditionally the windows are *small in proportion to the stonework*. Detailing tends to be relatively simple, excessive ornamentation in the form of string courses and barge boards should be avoided.
- The use of *dormers* is common in roof spaces, dimensions however are kept to a minimum, in order that the dormer does not dominate the roof.
- Variety in the roof-scape is achieved through *varying ridge and eaves heights* and the use of *chimney stacks*.

5.42 Materials should be utilised consistently within groups of buildings, rather than being used on an individual basis on standard house "types" scattered throughout the development.

5.43 A feature of traditional houses in the area is the incorporation of outbuildings and space to accommodate employment uses. Any designs which incorporate such space for working from home will be welcomed.

5.44 A large building with an imposing facade could be situated at the first internal road junction, overlooking the public open space. This will help to frame views into the housing area.

Implementation

- 6.1 The Council has several roles in implementation of this scheme - as a landowner, as an enabler of the social housing scheme and as the planning authority dealing with development proposals.
- 6.2 The establishment of a Local Nature Reserve will require a small amount of capital expenditure. Items such as fencing, hedgerows, picnic tables, kissing gates and an interpretation panel will need to be provided within the first two years. The Council, in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust for Northamptonshire, will apply for a Countryside Stewardship grant (under a scheme run by the Ministry of Agriculture). Grant can be paid toward capital works, annual management and improvements to public access.
- 6.3 The Trust may also seek Landfill Tax support toward restoring and managing the buffer area as limestone grassland. The Wildlife Trust normally prepare a management plan for any site where it has a management agreement. A long term aim will be to extend the Local Nature Reserve to include the disused railway line and buffer area. This would require the Council to acquire a legal interest in the land; whether through purchase, leasehold or a management agreement.
- 6.4 A planning obligation will be sought from the developer of the adjacent land in order to dedicate the buffer area to nature conservation. Planning obligations can be used to “offset the loss of or impact on a resource present on a site or nearby” and “to protect or reduce harm to protected sites or species, acknowledged to be of importance”. (Circular 1/97)
The developer will provide a stock proof boundary along the northern edge to development, with kissing gate access to the land. These works should be completed before any housing units are occupied.

- 6.5 The developer will be advised to transfer the land to the Wildlife Trust or enter into a long term management agreement, to ensure the maintenance of the area.
- 6.6 Commuted sums will also be payable for maintenance of the recreational open space; the adopted highway and any planting within the highway. As the Parish Council does not have the manpower resources to maintain the open space, the District Council will need to oversee the arrangements, with works carried out by its grounds maintenance contractors.
- 6.7 Planning conditions will be utilised to require the direct provision of play equipment. Conditions, or obligations if appropriate, will also be used to cover matters such as the provision of acceptable materials and landscaping; the retention of existing hedgerows; the timing of play equipment provision; the establishment of the informal park and controls over phasing.

Monitoring

- 6.8 The implementation of this Brief will be monitored through the analysis of detailed proposals against the overall aims and principles of development contained herein. The brief is not intended to be prescriptive but should be used as guidance by developers, when formulating detailed proposals. A cohesive and sensitive design is particularly sought, with a commensurate improvement in the quality of new development above that experienced in recent decades.

Reviewing the Brief

- 6.9 The Council will need to review this brief within the context of any Local Plan review. At this stage, any progress with implementation of a scheme will be assessed against a consideration of the needs and aspirations of the local community in King's Cliffe.

Publicity Arrangements

- 7.1 A draft brief was approved by the Council for consultation purposes, on 29 July 1998. Copies of the document were sent to the Parish Council, utility companies, highway authority, Environment Agency, conservation and other interest groups and the landowners. Further copies and a permanent exhibition of the proposals were also available at the village Post Office. The doctor's surgery (in Wansford) also had copies displayed for public inspection.
- 7.2 Four responses were received from individuals (plus a petition with 57 signatures stating the need for a playing field within the development). Comments were also made by the Parish Council, the Wildlife Trust for Northamptonshire, the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), Environment Agency, the Ramblers' Association, Highway Authority, Wood Lane Saw Mills Ltd, utility companies and the prospective developers.
- 7.3 Objections from the Parish Council, Wood Lane Saw Mills Ltd and local residents largely concerned the issue of access from Fineshade Close. Two respondents questioned the need for more development in the village. Other matters raised were drainage; traffic impact on Wood Road; the need for play equipment for children of all ages; the lack of local jobs; a request for natural stone to be specified; and the need for increased tree planting in and around the development.
- 7.4 Broad support was forthcoming from the Parish Council (with the reservations stated above), the Wildlife Trust, Ramblers and CPRE. The utility companies and Environment Agency do not foresee any infrastructure difficulties that cannot be overcome through developer funding.

- 7.5 The Highway Authority view is that, excluding the social housing scheme, the entire development area should be served from one point of access, off Wood Road. The Parish Council responded to this with the view that there should be a second access to Willow Lane and that if possible a link with Wood Lane, with closure of the extension to Fineshade Close.

Changes Resulting from Consultation

- 7.6 Vehicular access is now also proposed from Willow Lane, to reflect a more traditional street layout and aid permeability. The possible need for measures to slow and manage traffic on Wood Road is now highlighted. There is a new proposal to extend Willow Walk further west.
- 7.7 The housing area has been extended south, partly to enable a more outward looking development and partly to achieve an improved relationship and increased quality of public use for the main area of Important Open Land. The redevelopment of the agricultural building and yard has been replaced with a proposal to extend the public open space.
- 7.8 Clearer design guidance and a concept plan have been included in order to identify the form of development promoted by the brief. In order to make the building of the main access viable in physical and financial terms, the suggested phasing of development is from south to north; rather than west to east. Although this moves outside the boundary of the Local Plan allocation, it is felt that in the long term the approach will achieve a better layout and design, with an improved relationship to the existing village.