

Design & Access Statement

Development at:
Land south of South Side,
Steeple Aston,
Oxon

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5.0 Summary & Conclusions

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of the accompanying full planning application for the proposed residential development at Land south of South Side, Steeple Aston.

The proposed development will consist of the erection of 10 residential dwellings (use Class C3) with access off South Side, including a new pedestrian footway, parking and garaging, landscaping and all enabling and ancillary works.

1.2 Role & Purpose

This statement focuses on the relationship of the proposal to the existing settlement pattern, the local character of the site and the sites constraints and opportunities.

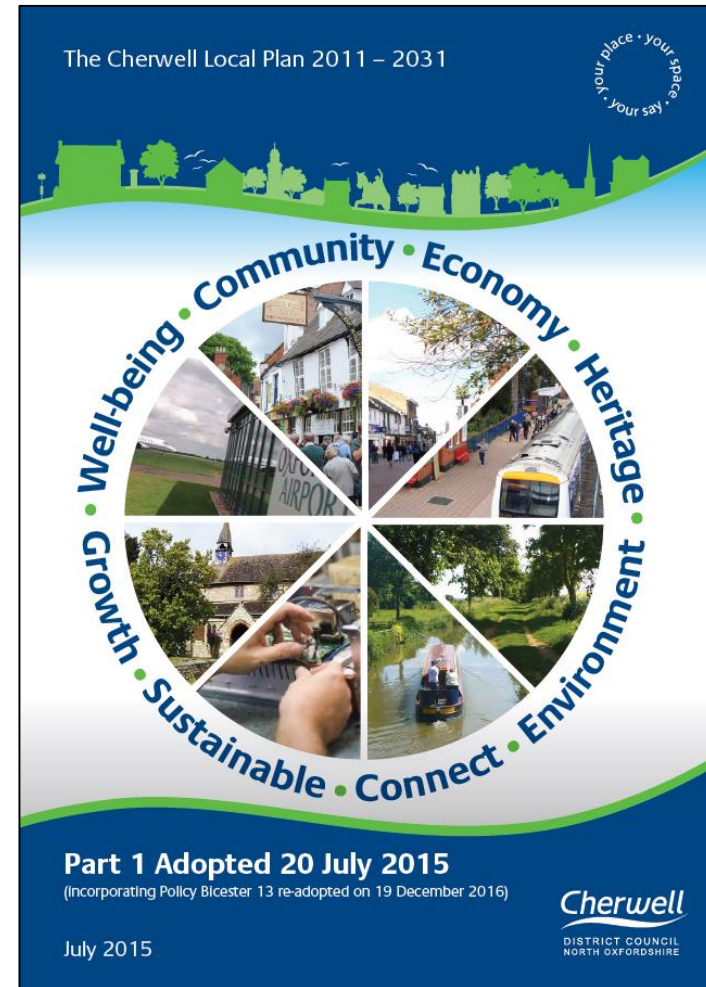
It demonstrates that the proposals are well-designed, policy compliant and appropriate for the its location and context.

2.0 Assessment

2.1 Wider Context

The following section refers to the planning context of the site. This is intended to provide a brief overview of the site's situation in terms of local and national planning policy, with a specific focus on the site's sustainability for development and how the design principles have been formed.

The application site lies within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council. As the local planning authority, it is Cherwell District Council's development plan and policies and guides that the application proposal will be assessed against.



2.0 Assessment

2.2 Planning Context

2.2.1 Local Policy Context

The development plan for the Cherwell District currently comprises the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) adopted 2016.

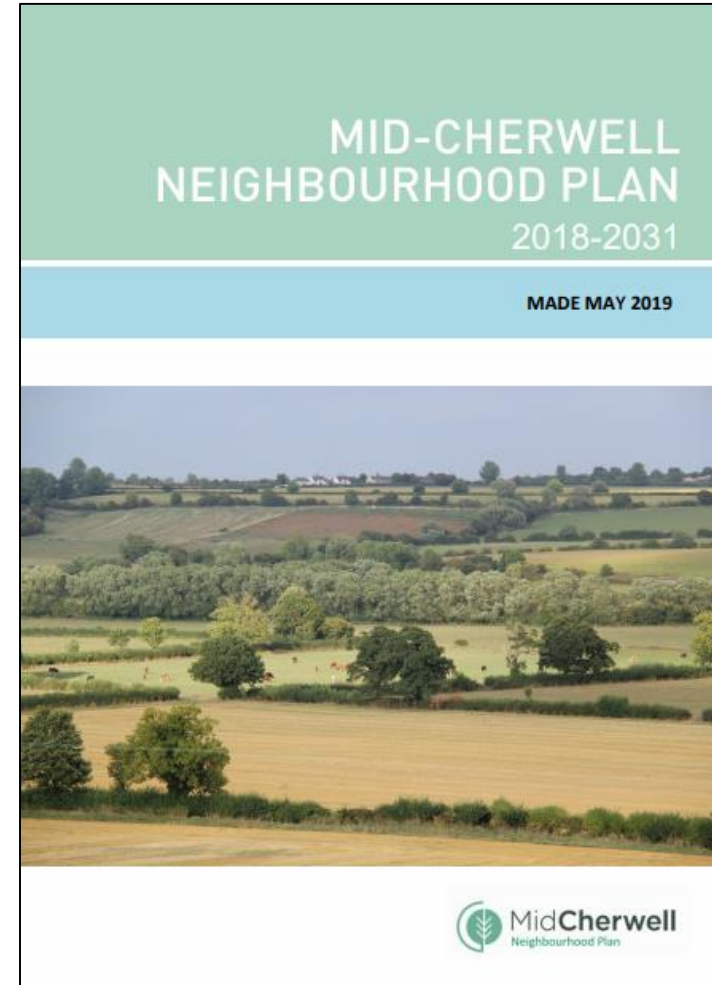
The Council is currently in the process of partially reviewing the existing Local Plan Part 1 in light of Oxford City's unmet housing need. The Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in March 2018, with Hearing sessions conducted in February 2019. In response to the Hearings, the Council has prepared a schedule of main modifications to the Plan, currently subject to consultation. Given its current status, the Plan is not currently a material consideration in the determination of this application.

The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan includes the village of Steeple Aston and passed referendum on 21st March 2019. The Plan has since been 'made' and is part of the development plan for the area.

2.2.2 The National Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) is the principal planning document for England and sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to apply.

The NPPF puts emphasis back on sustainability, stating '*there are three dimensions to sustainable development: Economic, Social and environmental.*'



2.0 Assessment

2.3 Site Context

Steeple Aston is located centrally along the western edge of Cherwell District, approx. 7.2 miles north west of Bicester and 4 miles south of Deddington.

South Side runs through the southern end of the village on an east-west alignment, connecting to the A4260 to the west which runs to Deddington to the north and Kidlington to the south.

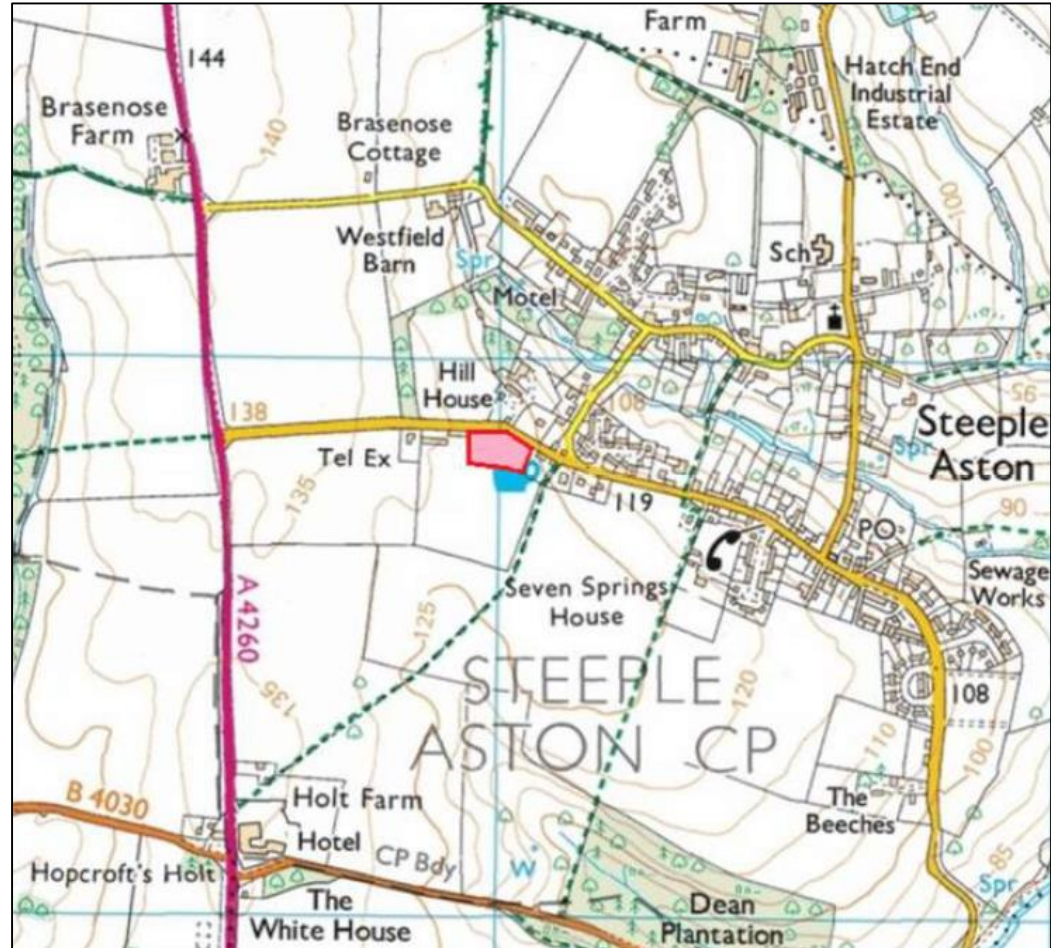
South Side runs through the south of the village connecting the village to the A4260 which connects Banbury to Oxford. Paines Hill/ Firs Lane runs through the village on a north south axis leading to Middle Aston to the north.

2.4 Site Location & Surroundings

The application site is located at the south western edge of the village, on the southern end of South Side Road.

It is situated in between existing built form. To the east is detached residential dwelling, with additional residential development located further along South Side. To the west is a vehicle workshop / MOT garage, and beyond is the telephone exchange site

On the northern end of South Side, immediately north of the application site, are residential properties along a private road. To the south, beyond the post and wire fence bounding the site are agricultural fields.



Plan showing site location in context of the village

2.0 Assessment

2.5 Physical Context

The application site comprises a rectangular-shaped field of scrubland with no current use. There is a small area of existing hardstanding located at the northern end of the site including sheds which are used for agricultural storage.

The site extends to approximately 0.93 ha, is largely level, and contains no notable physical features. Access to the site is currently provided via an agricultural field gate off South Side.

The site is fairly well screened from South Side, bound by a hedgerow and trees that form the site's northern boundary. The eastern and western site boundaries also comprise hedgerows, with the rear site boundary formed of a post and wire fence which sits behind a dense hedgerow.



Plan showing site location at western village edge

2.0 Assessment

2.6 Facilities & Services

Steeple Aston is classified as a service village (Category A settlement) in the adopted Local Plan 2031. Such settlements have more services and facilities than other villages in the District.

Facilities and services available in Steeple Aston include:

- A public house;
- Village shop;
- Post office;
- Primary school;
- Village hall; and
- A sports and recreation club and pitch.

The village also includes a church and regular bus services to nearby service centres such as Banbury and Oxford city centre.

Village shop and post office



Village Hall

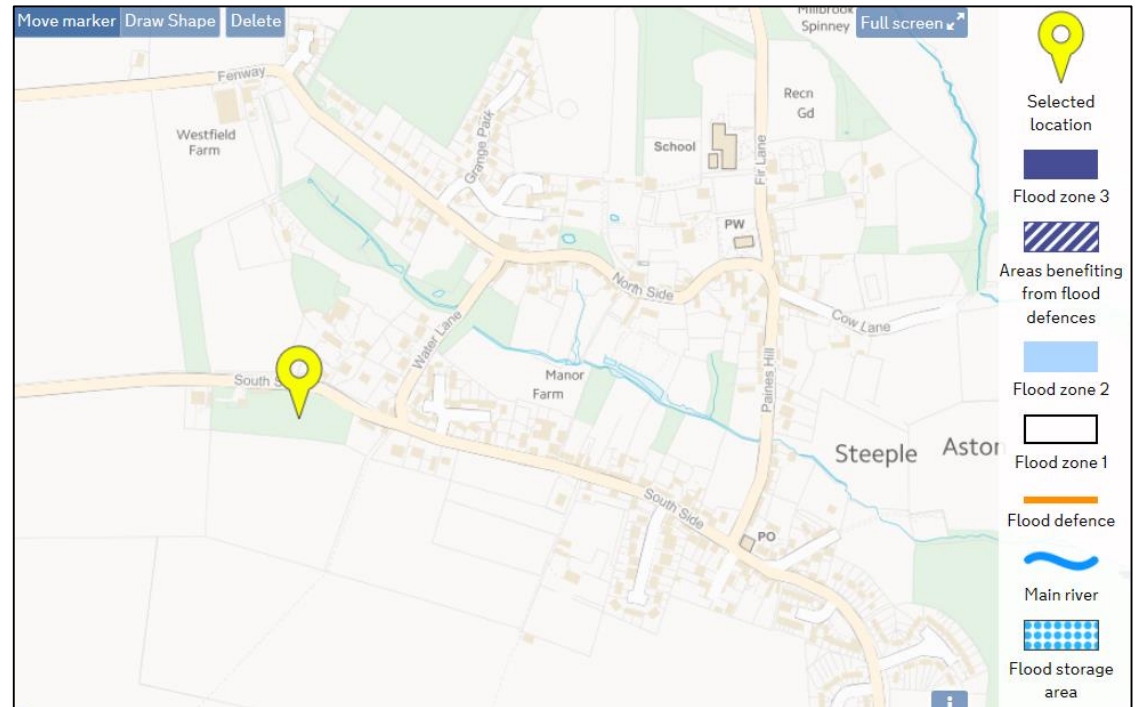
2.0 Assessment

2.7 Drainage & Flood Risk

The site is within Flood Risk Zone 1, the lowest risk category for flooding and has a 'very low' (less than a 1:1000 or 0.1%) risk of flooding from surface water runoff according to the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning and Floor Map for Surface Water Flooding. Accordingly, the site is not considered to be constrained by flooding.

The nearest surface water feature to the development is a shallow land drainage ditch north of the site which runs through the middle of the village. This ditch feature flows west to east and contains a series of shallow ponds. These features do not pose a flood risk to the site.

The nearest 'Ordinary' watercourse to the development is located 440m north of the site. The nearest 'main river' watercourse to the site is the River Cherwell approx. 2.5km to the east.



2.0 Assessment

2.8 Ecology

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site has been undertaken to identify any potential ecological constraints and opportunities at the site.

The appraisal has assessed that the majority of the site is considered to be of negligible or low ecological value given that the habitats and features supported are very common and of low botanical and fauna diversity. The hedgerows are of moderate ecological value and will be largely retained in the development proposals.

The report also confirms that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on statutory or non-statutory sites.

Bat surveys were conducted for the shed / agricultural structures in the north western part of the site. No evidence of bats were recorded.

In addition, reptile surveys were conducted for the grassland and no specimens were found during these surveys. It is therefore considered highly unlikely that reptiles are present on or using the site.

The report concludes that any potential adverse impacts from the proposed development upon specific protected species/habitats can be mitigated in line with relevant wildlife legislation and planning policy. With appropriate on-site mitigation and targeted enhancements, a positive change in the biodiversity could potentially be achieved.

Hard standing
near northern
boundary –
looking east



Grass and
scrubland – within
the site

3.0 Evaluation

3.1 Settlement Pattern

The settlement pattern of Steeple Aston is irregular, relatively dispersed and grid-shaped with development along the main routes through the village such as South Side and North Side / Fenway, and along the connecting link roads of Water Lane and Paines Hill.

The centre of the village is retained as green space comprising fields, a local watercourse, and extended rear gardens of properties fronting onto the 'grid'.

More recently, development in the form of cul-de-sacs have occurred at the edges of the village, notably at Grange Parkin and Nizewell Head.

Development of the site would continue the linear development along South Side, completing the gap between the telephone exchange site to the west and the existing residential dwellings to the east. Accordingly, the development would be consistent with the existing settlement pattern of the village.



Plan showing the settlement pattern of Steeple Aston (CRDG 2018*)

*Cherwell Residential Design Guide

3.0 Evaluation

3.2 Existing Development Forms & Features

There are a variety of building forms and features within the village resulting in an eclectic range of dwellings that provide interesting and unique street scenes.

The majority of the properties along South Side have wide-set detached forms and are built with stone facades. They are very basic in form, and may or may not include chimneys – although when present they are, on the whole, designed to be flush with the side elevations. Slate roofs are more commonly used on dwellings here, although there are some examples of the use of clay roof tiles.

At Shepherds Hill, towards the north western extent of the village, there are examples of long ranges of terraced units which front the road. These forms utilise gabled front elevations for the units at the edges of the terrace to break up the elongated roof line. Slate roofs and stone facades are predominantly the materials used.

Along Fenway, large detached houses are the majority, however each form differs to the next. Front gabled features, varied rooflines and heights, and a range of chimney styles, heights and positions are all utilised to create a diverse collection of homes. Stone is still the predominant material here, although there is a wider range of materials used such as red and buff brick, and render.

A fairly recent development at Coneygar Fields adds further variety of form to the village, including the plots closest to Fenway which show two link-detached units, one with a typical wide fronting elevation and other with a gabled front elevation.



Brunstone on South Side



Shepherds Hill



Fenway



Coneygar Fields

4.0 Design

4.1 Layout Plan

The description of development is as follows:

Erection of 10 no. two-storey residential dwellings with access off South Side, including a new pedestrian footway, parking and garaging, landscaping and all enabling and ancillary works.

The site layout has been designed to ensure that the proposed development does not extend beyond the existing built form along South Side by following a linear form of development. This frontage form accords with the existing linear pattern of development along the southern edge of South Side.

The development is effectively contained within the existing built form in this part of the village, with residential properties to the east and north, and the MOT garage and telephone exchange to the west.

The layout curves southwards slightly with the road at the eastern section of the site, following the curve of South Side as it proceeds eastwards into the village.

A single vehicular access from South Side serves the proposed dwellings, within units fronting onto the internal road which branches from the site access. Rear gardens extend southwards, contained by the landscape buffer at the southern edge of the site.



Proposed Site Layout

4.0 Design

4.2 Density

The density of the proposed scheme equates to 10.8 dwellings per hectare. Given the site's edge of village location, proximity to Steeple Aston Conservation Area and linear form of development which is consistent with the prevailing settlement pattern in this side of South Side, the proposed density is considered to be entirely appropriate.

Furthermore, reviewing the densities of existing development in the immediate vicinity, it is clear that the proposed scheme is in general accordance with these patterns, in particular further along South Side to the east of the application site; the private road opposite the site; and the row of development along Water Lane – all of which are located at the western village edge and adjoin or are located just within the conservation area.

The proposed development actually slightly exceeds the densities of the example areas shown (right), maximising the development potential of the site whilst not significantly ____ from the prevailing density patterns in this part of the village.

Application Site

South Side

- 5 dwellings

6.7 dwellings per hectare



Application Site



Close north of South Side

- 5 dwellings
4.4 dwellings per hectare

Water Lane

- 5 dwellings
7 dwellings per hectare

Existing density patterns in this part of the village

4.0 Design

4.3 Use & Amount

The proposed scheme is for 10 residential dwellings.

The proposed housing mix is shown in the table (right).

The proposed mix includes a greater proportion of 3 bedroom properties with a few 2 bedroom and 4 bedroom units, in line with the Parish Council's comments, and in accordance with Cherwell District Council's preferred mix in the latest available Oxfordshire SHMA (2014).

Within the SHMA, the recommended guideline mix for Cherwell is as follows:

- 1 bed units (6% of total mix);
- 2 bed units (23% of total mix);
- 3 bed units (46% of total mix: and
- 4+ bed units (25% of total mix).

The breakdown of the proposed mix is shown on the table (right). It is therefore evident that the proposed mix is in broad compliance with the recommended mix indicated within the 2014 SHMA.

4.4 Scale & Massing

The properties are two-storey high and comprise detached and semi-detached homes.

The proposed layout demonstrates that the 10 units fit comfortably on the site, maximising the potential of the site whilst providing a good range and mix of properties in terms of size and scale.

Table showing proposed housing mix

UNIT TYPE	QUANTITY	% OF OVERALL MIX
2 Bed	2	20
3 Bed	5	50
4 Bed	3	30

4.0 Design

4.5 Urban Form

The proposed scheme is for 10 residential dwellings of detached and semi-detached properties. The scheme has been designed to reflect predominant characteristics of the village, namely two storey properties in a traditional design with fairly large rear gardens.

The units have been oriented to front the road to reflect the prevailing settlement pattern along the southern edge of South Side. Each property is proposed to be provided with generous private amenity space to the rear of the plots, with private amenity space to the front also. Extensive landscaping is also proposed both within the site and on its boundaries.

The proposed properties mimic common built forms found within the village favouring a large proportion of simple rectilinear forms, with a few more complex types with elongated gable ends – as locally evident in the existing dwellings immediate east of the application site.

4.6 External Appearance

The design and form of the proposed dwellings has taken inspiration from the existing buildings in the village. In particular, the proposed units have fairly basic simple forms and incorporate features such as chimneys, limited use of dormer windows, stone quoin detailing and window head blockwork detailing.

All dwellings will be designed to deliver a contextual response, exhibiting a high level of architectural quality.



Detached wide-fronted stone villa, similar to Brunstone on South Side



Example of attached dwellings with different front elevation forms – rectangular and gabled, as present at Shepherds Hill



Detached dwelling with protruding gabled feature, as seen along Fenway



Link detached dwellings of different front elevation forms, matching that found at Coneygar Fields.

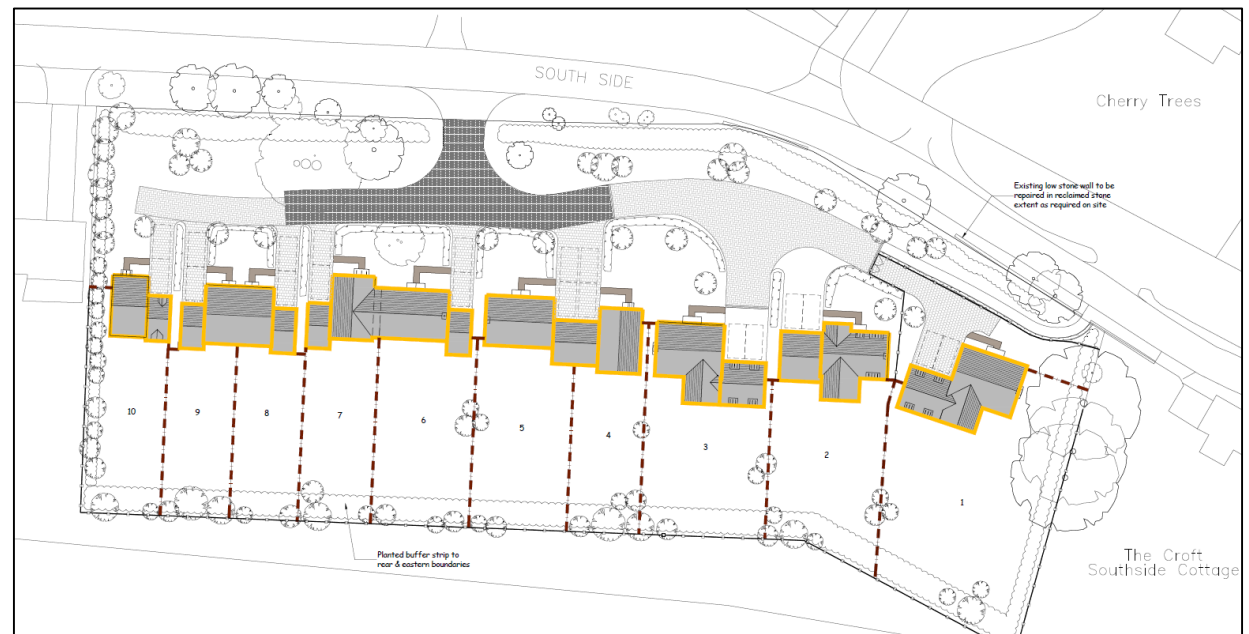
Example Elevations (as proposed)

4.0 Design

4.7 Materials Palette

Careful specification of external materials and details will be given to develop a scheme that harmonises with its rural setting. A considered palette will comprise of Cotswold stone and slate roofs to reflect the predominant materials found along South Side.

All materials have been specifically proposed to reflect the local vernacular and which respect the character of the area.



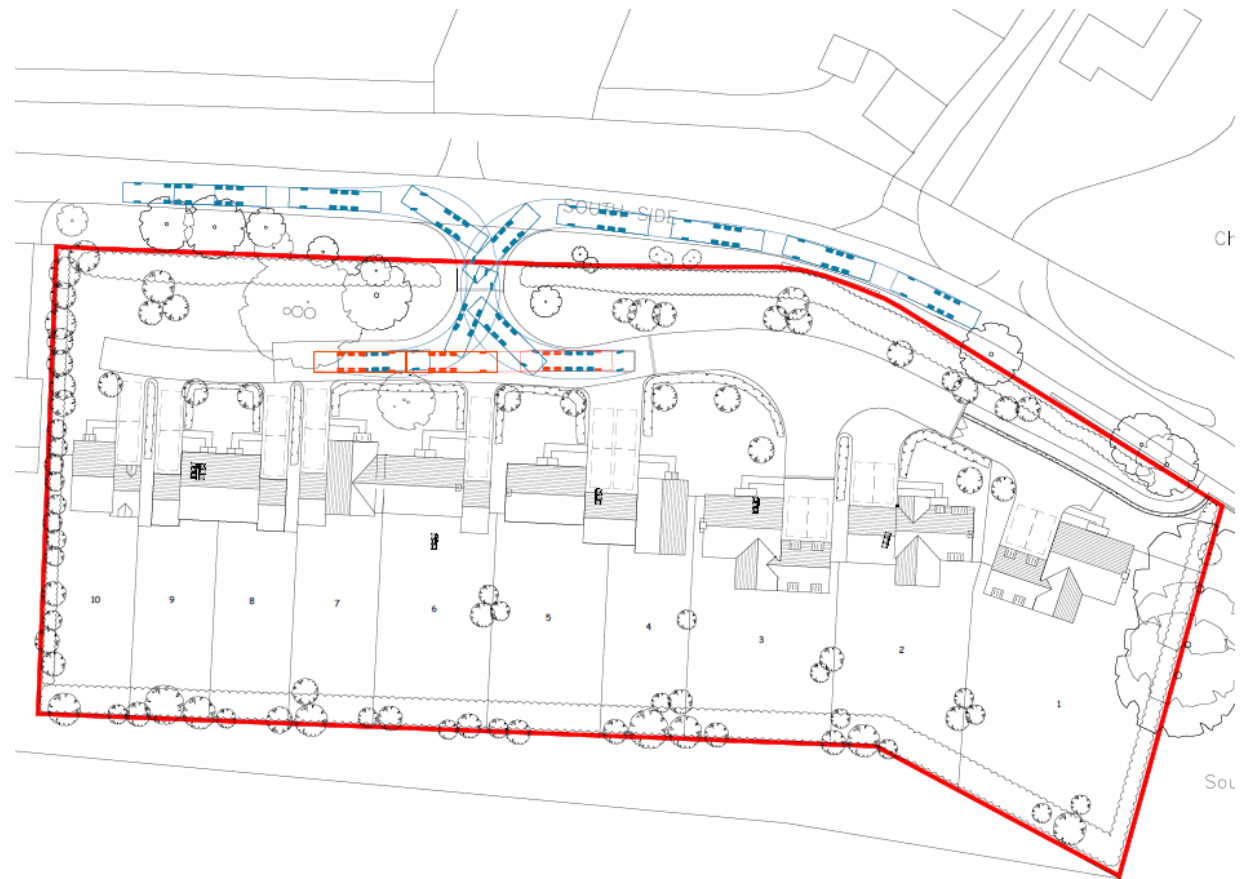
Proposed Materials Plan

4.0 Design

4.8 Access, Parking & Road Hierarchy

Vehicular access for the development is proposed to be taken directly from South Side via a simple priority T junction. Sufficient visibility splays are achievable in both directions of the site access / egress. Refuse collections will take place within the site, with the access road designed to allow a refuse vehicle to enter the site, turn and exit in forward gear.

Each property is to be provided with its own dedicated onsite parking within its curtilage. The proposed level of parking exceeds the County Council's adopted parking standards, with at least 3 spaces provided per dwelling, in the form of garages and driveway parking. In respect of these matters, the parking and access arrangements are considered to be acceptable and consistent with relevant policy.



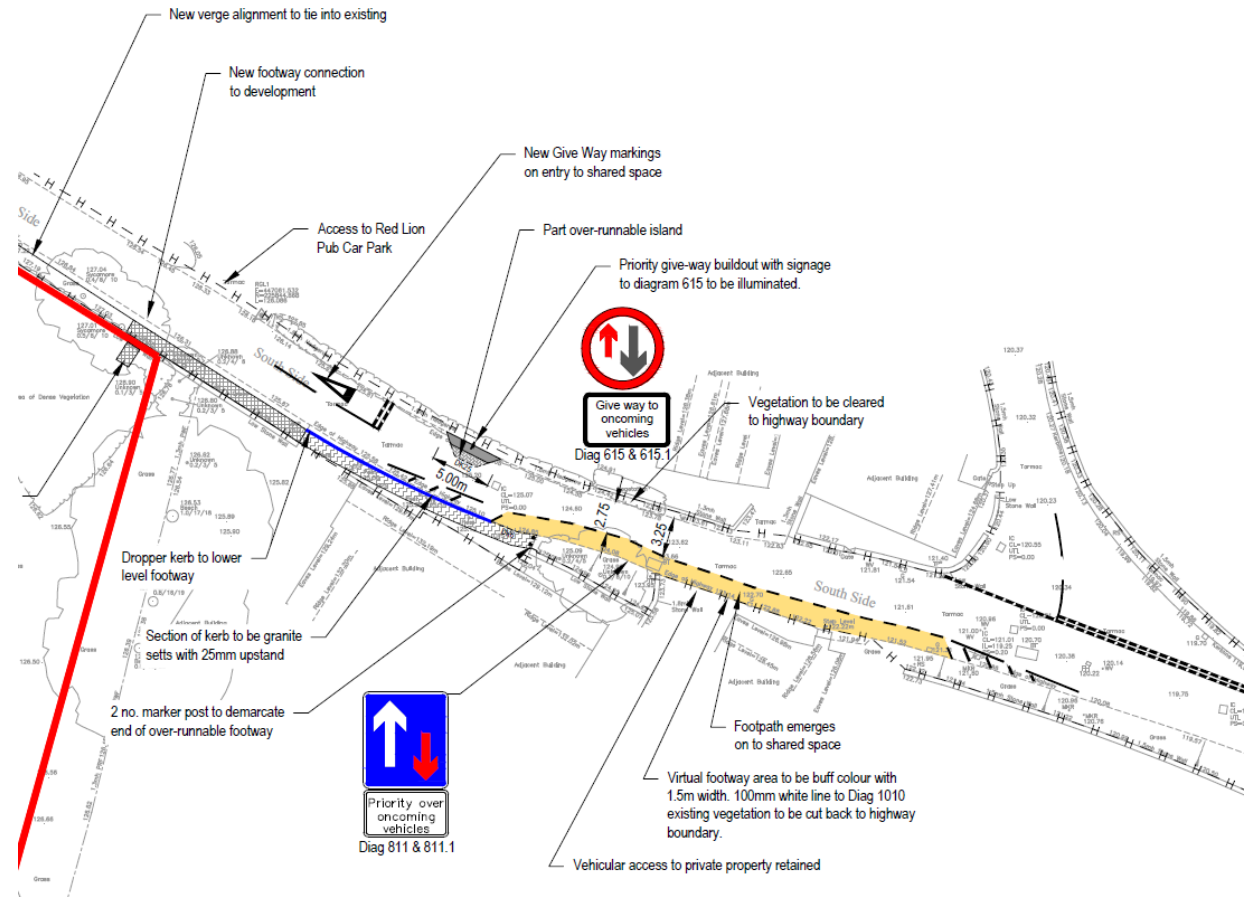
4.0 Design

4.9 Pedestrian Access & Movement

A new pedestrian footway is proposed along South Side which would enable safe pedestrian access from the development to the rest of the village to the east. The proposal comprises a new 1.2m footway along the highway verge, starting from the front of plot 1 which then becomes a 1.5m 'virtual footway' in buff colour with white lines between the footway and rest of the highway.

A new priority give-way built out is proposed along South Side which would give priority to vehicles leaving the village. Appropriate signage is proposed in both directions and at either end of the application site to inform drivers of the system.

A number of scenarios have been prepared and tracked using swept path analysis to demonstrate that the proposed interventions / improvements will provide a safe pedestrian route from the application site to the rest of the village to the east, whilst not making the current situation worse than existing in terms of vehicles passing.



Plan showing proposed pedestrian infrastructure along South Side

4.0 Design

4.10 Drainage Strategy

Following review of the site geology, as well as evidence from infiltration tests, infiltration as a method of disposing surface water run off is considered to be feasible.

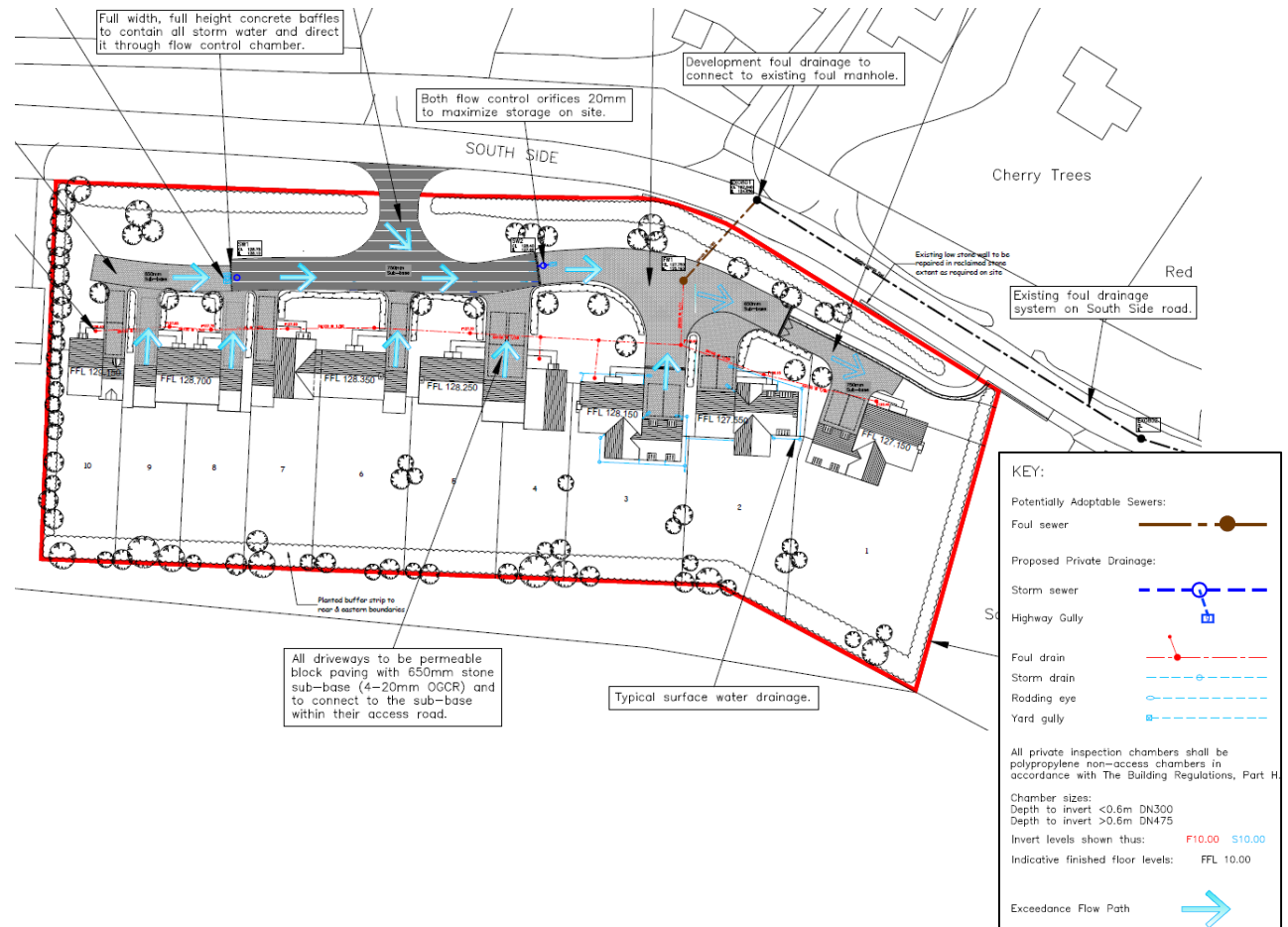
This SUDS technique enable storm water to managed within the site rather than discharging offsite into a watercourse or sewer network. This method improves the quality of the storm water runoff whilst maintain the existing natural drainage regime and the pre-development rates of runoff and volumes.

It is proposed that all surface water runoff from roofs and hardstanding areas is discharged via permeable block paving.

All infiltration SUDS will be designed to manage the 1 in 100 year storm event, plus an allowance of 40% for climate change.

The proposed surface water drainage strategy offers a sustainable, safe and robust system which will afford complete flood risk protection to residents within the site and to existing properties within Steeple Aston.

Foul water discharge will drain via gravity to an existing public sewer system located within South Side road.



Proposed Drainage Strategy

4.0 Design

4.11 Landscape Strategy

A comprehensive landscaping scheme is proposed across the site to help assimilate the proposed development into the wider landscape.

This includes retention of the majority of existing trees, hedgerows and vegetation, where possible; reinforcement of existing tree and hedgerow structures; and new planting across the site including a new planted landscape buffer to wrap around the rear boundary of the site. A copy of the landscape plan is shown (right).

In addition, a number of photomontage visualisation images have been produced to show how the proposed scheme will appear when built out, from various viewpoints. These images are helpful in that they demonstrate, at a worst case scenario (during the winter months and during the first planting season) the proposed development will have a limited impact on the character and appearance of the rural nature of the area, and on the conservation area. Where buildings will be visible, the proposed materials palette of local stone and slate roofs will assist the development in blending in with the existing village context.



Landscape Planting Plan

4.0 Design



Existing view of the application site, as seen from South Side to the west



View of the application site when the development has been built, as seen from South Side to the west

4.0 Design



Existing view of the application site, as seen from the PROW to the south



View of the application site when the development has been built, as seen from the PROW to the south

4.0 Design

4.12 Sustainability

The NPPF puts emphasis back on sustainability, stating: 'There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.' The proposed development has strived to incorporate these three elements in its production.

Social:

The scheme offers new housing opportunities within a village location. The proposed mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes is in accordance with the preferred SHMA mix for Cherwell District and reflects discussions with the Parish Council. It also facilitates a new pedestrian footway from the site along South Side to the rest of the village.

Environmental:

The proposed development has been sensitively designed to ensure it assimilates into the surrounding landscape and character of the area. It is considered that the proposed development can be successfully integrated into this location and therefore meets the requirements of both national and local planning policy.

The scheme provides biodiversity enhancements and proposes the inclusion of renewable infrastructure in the form of electric vehicle cabling to be utilised when required.

Economic:

Development of the proposed scheme will support the vitality and viability of local facilities and services through local population increase and will create construction jobs in the short term.

5.0 Summary & Conclusions

The scheme has been designed with careful reference and respect for the existing village context, but with a clear appreciation and knowledge of contemporary requirements.

Key factors that have been taken into consideration which have informed and influenced the form and scale of the development include:

- Local housing;
- Diverse range of buildings in the area exhibiting traditional architectural styles and forms;
- Linear development form along South Side;
- Prevalent external build materials in the village;
- The context of the site, its topography, existing boundary treatments, hedgerows and trees;
- Off-street, on-plot parking for all dwellings.

In summary the proposals seek to deliver additional, housing stock to the local area that is sympathetic in design and density and sited in a sustainable location.

The design responds sensitively and appropriately to the immediate and wider contexts through a thoughtful and considered architectural proposal.

The proposed scheme will deliver a well-designed, high quality housing development that is attractive, logical and will cater to local housing needs. It is our belief that the scheme is in accordance with all relevant national and local planning policies.