

HE1 Comments – Referring to HE1 Specifically

HE1 – General		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL008; BL049; BL0071; BL078; BL124iii; BL124v; BL149; BL149; BL166; BL169	I don't think the character of the site will be maintained by building blocks of flats on it, regardless of price; In winter the flats will be very visible from Blackwell Lane (2) will be overbearing	(2) Look at lower level high density schemes that would sit well within the setting not above it
BL008	Developers who build for the retirement market would not be interested in the location due to lack of services and it would be easy for the Council to say that they could not get buyers for the retirement market so the apartments will have to be sold to regular developers.	
BL009	Disgusted at the Council's plans for housing on the historic Blackwell Grange Parkland.	
BL009	Could you tell me the total number of houses / apartments proposed?	
BL009	Totally opposed to flats as they are normally built to rent out.	
BL015	Too many existing apartments in town that are vacant so no need for more`	Should be returned to being a Hotel and Golf Course
BL0093	Will not be demand for the Assisted living units.	
BL044	Concerns about higher density than originally proposed.	The area should be left clear
BL012	Previous experience of living in a flat at Scholars Park and had persistent problems with Anti-Social behaviour (noise, littering etc.) particularly from one flat used for 'holiday let'.	
BL031	Flats should not be visible above the trees on Blackwell Lane	
BL054	Perceived back tracking by the council on the 'top-end executive' offer. Flats and apartments for the elderly are seen as a sop. Would occupancy be conditioned?	
BL0048	What sort of boundary, if any, will be included between the proposed development and existing properties / gardens?	
BL071	There are no blocks of flats or three storey homes on the lane to set a precedent.	
BL071	The hotel has applied to lease the land in a historical walled garden which used for overflow parking on extended terms (possibly 99 years) with the intention of demolishing the only fitness centre in the area and used by many elderly and young residents. Making the hotel less attractive for reservations or future possible leasing as it will have no facilities or sufficient parking for customers and people attending functions.	

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BL071	If the intention is to improve the area for the elderly, independent living should be the way forward rather than the money making for profit ideas of assisted living. Where the only motive is for private companies to make profit for themselves rather than help the character and health of the surrounding area.	
BL073; BL078	Reduce the value of my property.	
BL073	Reason for purchasing family home was to live in a quiet, semi-rural location, with an extremely attractive outlook in an area of natural beauty adjacent to golf club and countryside. This was reflected in the purchase price of our house.	
BL156	Houses proposed at the top of Blackwell Lane appear to be acceptable, although access is not clearly defined.	
BL158	Object to 3 storey apartments because of requirements to increase public services such as drainage and water supply.	
BL160	Dismayed to see the plans increase the dwelling numbers. Has there been any market analysis undertaken to justify the increase? While there is a growing and ageing population it is not feasible to assume that there is a realistic demand for older people wanting to move from their homes. Typically older people only move in response to a crisis (health decline, etc.) there are not pre-emptive decision makers in terms of housing future and there is no mention that these dwellings would be assisted living / warden controlled.	
BL160	It is reasonable to conclude that the more you build, the less 'executive' or desirable the location becomes and thus the price of the new housing and those around it.	
BL160	Despite consultation and objections raised, it appears a done deal in balancing the Council's books. Can the Council Clarify the expected build rate of dwellings? It is unfair to expect residents to endure building site noise, dirt and disruption over a number of years as was intimated in the first round of council's responses.	
BL160	Will play little part in attracting business to the area.	
BL160	Should be reduction in dwellings (but optimal situation would be no dwellings)	
BL162	Scoring system used to select the parklands for development is flawed.	
BL162	Proposed sites inappropriate as the majority of them in areas of historic significance where no development should be pursued, and have been hugely enlarged in the second consultation to include apartment blocks and roads through the parkland as well as possible large breaches in the listed perimeter wall.	

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Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
	<p>Officer comments</p> <p>The site is part of the setting of the Grade II* Listed Building, however this does not mean that no change or even no harmful change can take place. Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework allows for less than substantial harm, providing there are public benefits.</p> <p>The proposed development is sufficiently far away from existing houses (twice the adopted separation distance) and separated by a public highway and a substantial belt of mature trees such that there will be no overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing or loss of privacy.</p> <p>The current proposals are for luxury apartments aimed at the retirement market. We cannot make decisions on what may or may not happen in the future. If circumstances change and an application is submitted to vary the planning conditions, then the variation will have to be considered at that time taking into account all relevant planning matters.</p> <p>On He1, 5 top-end executive houses are proposed and about 48 luxury apartments suitable for older people.</p> <p>The apartments are intended for sale not built to rent.</p> <p>There is a shortage of accommodation for sale suitable for older people.</p> <p>There are other powers to deal with anti-social behaviour, noise and littering. These problems are not generally associated with apartments occupied by older people.</p> <p>At two and a half storeys, roughly the height of the existing houses on Blackwell Lane, the proposed apartments would be below the height of the tree belt along Blackwell Lane.</p> <p>The planning permission would have an age restricted occupancy condition.</p> <p>Boundary treatments will be addressed in the Planning and Design Guidance. However, the general aim will be to keep the open appearance and, where boundaries are necessary for security or privacy, to reflect the boundaries in the parkland for example, hedges, shrubs and wrought iron fencing.</p> <p>While the existing built environment helps to set the context, just because there are no apartments along Blackwell Lane that is not a planning reason for refusal.</p> <p>Until a planning application is submitted, the intentions of the Hotel operators are pure speculation. However, the Council is keen for investment to go into Hotel improvements.</p> <p>There are different models of assisted living from independent living with care services brought in as required (similar to visits from the District Nurse) to residential homes for the elderly. In this case, the proposals are for the former.</p>	

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	<p>Loss of value of a home is not a planning matter. However, research undertaken by London School of Economics found that prices of existing houses sometimes fell while construction was going on but once the developments were completed, the local areas generally moved with the market. Researchers could find no evidence of longer-term negative impacts.</p> <p>If development goes ahead, Blackwell will remain as a quiet suburb. Impact on a person's view is not a planning matter.</p> <p>Northumbrian Water is the organisation responsible for the sewerage system and water supply. NW has raised no problems with providing these services.</p> <p>In terms of the need for accommodation for older people, Darlington has an aging population and the Council's Supported Housing Strategy Appendix 2 calculates that by 2025 there will be a requirement for an additional 163 Extra Care for sale units and an additional 981 Sheltered for sale units for people aged over 75. These figures do not include the needs of people below the age of 75. The clear message is there is a shortage of choice for people who want to purchase specialist elderly accommodation.</p> <p>There is a balance between the amount of development and the continued attractiveness of the parkland setting. However, the proposed development will be high quality, high specification, in a very attractive parkland setting, in a desirable residential suburb. It is reasonable to assume that the prices of the new dwellings will be higher than those of existing dwellings – although, that is not a planning matter.</p> <p>The build rate will be determined by the market.</p> <p>The scoring system used was revisited and, although there is disagreement over some of the results, there was one factual error which has since been rectified. However, this has not altered the overall conclusions that Blackwell is the most sustainable and appropriate location for top-end executive housing.</p> <p>There are no roads proposed through the parkland, only footpaths, and no large breaches proposed in the listed perimeter wall.</p>	

HE1 – Master plan		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL012	Inclusion of apartments would be detrimental to the vision for 'high end executive housing' and will put off some 'high end' purchasers.	
BL012	Majority of flats would be buy to let investments which would be a marked departure from the largely owner occupied properties in the area. Leading to a greater turnover of residents and loss of community feel.	
BL057; BL073; BL109ii	Object to apartments. BL109ii - due to impact on setting of listed building. Provision for extra care in HE2 should be sufficient. Object to development of houses, and three storey flats	Prefer original proposal for executive houses

HE1 – Master plan		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL109ii	Any housing here should be <6dw/ha and in the style of the Georgian building. Gardens should be designed to flow into the parkland to retain visual openness.	As comments
BL125ii; BL156	Apartments/flats out of character with the area.	
BL166; BL169	Apartments would be better placed in areas which could use a facelift. Other areas could benefit from new apartments, affordable dwellings and rejuvenated business properties.	Remove plans for apartments
BL174	Support the idea of apartments around the hotel compared to many large detached houses - Big is not always better.	
<p>Officer comments Provided the apartments are high quality, luxury apartments there is no reason to suppose they will put off high end purchasers. The planning permission could be conditioned to include an age restriction to the over 55s which should reduce turnover rates. The impact on the setting of the Listed Building is an important consideration and any scheme will be agreed with Historic England. The design and massing of the apartments would be agreed with Historic England.</p>		

HE1 - Heritage		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL043; BL162	Status of the Grade 2* listed perimeter wall is under threat.	Blackwell Lane wall should be retained
BL044	Concerns over additional loss of parkland. The parkland is an asset of the town. High density housing and apartments will destroy this heritage.	The parkland should be conserved
BL0096; BL0097; BL108i; BL159; BL162	The site is a sensitive area and should be retained as historic parkland. If any development takes place we will have lost the opportunity to save this parkland for future generations.	

HE1 - Heritage		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL090	Concern regarding the likely adverse impact on the Grade II* Heritage asset, particularly DBC's response to Archaeo Environment's 2012 report and DBC's subsequent discussions with Historic England regarding the significance of the site, including the application made by a local resident for the site to be protected as a national heritage asset and the potential for an access to go through the site's historic boundary walls	Further consideration should be given to the impact of building on the Historic Parkland. Council should remove HE1 and undertake works to improve the area (drainage and tree planting). Pedestrian access to Mill Lane should be restored. No vehicular access between Grangeside and the Spinney. Land should be transferred to a Community Land Trust with an endowed fund to create an income for maintenance. Existing building (green keeper's compound) could become low density mews development.
BL1081ii; BL1081iii; BL159	No justification for changing the site's current designation as park land - refers to Archaeo-Environmental Report. HE1 will have the greatest impact on the setting of Blackwell Grange. Building on other areas of park land would not encroach as much.	Site should remain as parkland
BL109ii	The site adds to the setting of the Grade II* listed building: tree lined boundary, fence, ridge and furrow and open space. Any housing here would be too close to the building	Remove plans for housing in this area.

HE1 - Heritage		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL162	Have searched the Council's website in an effort to find documentation detailing the reasons behind the decision to set aside the expert recommendations and to propose development plots within the historic parklands and have only found a short reference to this in the Top End Executive Housing Sites Assessment Para 3.9. The wording of the para gives the impression that the AE recommendations have been followed, but in fact as the maps on the following page clearly show, they have not. Para 3.9 says ;the report says there is scope to accommodate some residential development within the grounds provided key features are conserved or enhanced and there is adequate public benefit to compensate for any harmful effect on the heritage assets. As a result of the findings of the study one of the three sites at Blackwell Grange was reduced in area and divided into two, resulting in four sites being proposed in the Preferred options DPD'. This is not in my view a fair summary of the report which makes quite clear that the only areas where there is scope to accommodate residential development are in Zone 1 and Zone 2 on the map on page 3 of that document.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>The proposed development has no impact on the boundary walls. The preferred access uses the existing rear access to the Hotel.</p> <p>We have received advice from Historic England who allow for some harm to the settings of Listed Buildings, providing there is enhancement or public benefits, which in this case will involve restoration of the former parkland, enhancement of wildlife habitats and opening up the remaining parkland to the public. The impacts of the apartments upon the listed building will be assessed and will be guided by advice from Historic England. Historic England will also advise on any future planning applications for development on the site.</p> <p>The Statement of Significance (produced by Archaeo-Environment for the Council) has not been disregarded, but Historic England has provided us with different advice about the development potential of the site. It is not uncommon for professionals to have different opinions on subjective matters, based on interpretation of legislation and policy.</p> <p>Historic England has considered the application to have the park and gardens added to the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England and have decided not to add the grounds of Blackwell Grange to the Register.</p>		

HE1 - Trees		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL031; BL043' BL020i	Concern over loss of trees.	Blackwell Lane trees should be retained
BL108v; BL159	Concern that accesses on Blackwell Lane would result in detrimental effect on protected woodland.	The site should remain as parkland
Officer comments		

The number of trees to be felled will be kept to an absolute minimum and remaining trees, including their root systems, will be protected during construction.

HE1 - Wildlife		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL044	Concerns over additional loss of habitat.	The area should be left clear
BL158; BL020i	The proposed development can only be detrimental to wildlife (newts and bats) - strongly objects on these grounds. Report by Natural England should have been available during the consultation period.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>The proposals to create new wildlife habitats and increase public access will provide opportunities to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural environment and bring benefits for the local community through access to and contact with nature.</p> <p>There is no report by Natural England, only the consultation response which has been published since the end of the consultation period.</p>		

HE1 - Access		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL017; BL038	Object to access 2; Disagree with access 2 - a crossroad or mini roundabout opposite Hartford Road would be safer.	
BL109ii	Support for Council's preferred access using the existing road to the rear of the hotel to protect wall, trees and fence.	
BL015; BL031; BL042;	Number of flats that might be accessed from Blackwell Lane will result in too much traffic using the entrance at Blackwell Lane.	BL031- Access should be via the hotel access only. BL042 - Flats should not be concentrated in one area where high volume of vehicles will turn into one entrance (Blackwell Lane). The number of flats should be spread out with access from Carmel Road also.
BL014	Blackwell Lane Access very poor. Narrow and poor visibility with parked cars.	
BL052	Concerns with access 4 which is opposite their property regarding existing levels of Traffic on Blackwell Lane.	Move access 4 or at least provide no access through to Grange Road.

HE1 - Access		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL0049	Entry points of Carmel Road South will cause further congestion on already busy road that is a narrow entry point to the town. May mean that alteration to the nearby large roundabout would have to occur plus possible detrimental widening of Carmel Road South.	Entry via Blackwell Lane onto Blackwell Grange Site. Entry via the old Golf Club onto Blackwell Village site
BL108; BL159	Accesses 2 and 3 would compromise highway safety on Blackwell Lane.	Land should remain as parkland
BL158	Any access will destroy valuable protected trees and the historic wall.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>The existing access point to the rear of the hotel is the preferred option.</p> <p>Any proposed access point into the site would comply with current design guidance including adequate visibility splays for the speed of the road and be positioned accordingly.</p>		

HE1 – Highways		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL008; BL073	I use the local area roads in car and on bicycle, and pavements on foot and am very aware of the traffic flows at all times of day and night. Am well placed to provide DBC an insight into how the proposed development will affect the residents in the immediate vicinity. The updated proposal will place pressure on the existing highways infrastructure.	
BL008	Bridge Road is a totally inadequate conduit between the A1 and A66 and any increase in traffic levels on this road is sheer stupidity. There are regular traffic incidents at the junction with Blackwell and as a cyclist; I will not use it for fear of my life.	
BL008; BL071; BL0093; BL160	Traffic build up around the Blands Corner roundabout is a common occurrence at all times of the day. Have seen a number of scary incidents in car and on bike here, often involving larger trucks. Development of any kind around this point and more traffic moving out from Blackwell Lane onto Carmel Road will add to traffic build up.	

HE1 – Highways		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL160	Major concerns remain (safety and noise) in terms of revised 'preferred access points' in development. Proposed access points four and five are located on or just before / after bends on Blackwell Lane which, when taking into account the current speed and level of traffic on the road (as a cut through from Grange Road especially in the peak times / school run) is of great concern (and seemingly poor planning). I missed any mention of any proposed traffic calming measures though a greater number of dwellings on all sites will mean greater traffic onto Blackwell Lane. If this goes ahead, an access point with a roundabout at the junction of Hartford Road and Blackwell Lane seems more appropriate.	Removal of proposed access points four and five as they are located on or just before / after bends on Blackwell Lane which, when taking into account the current speed and level of traffic on the road (as a cut through from Grange Road especially in peak times / school run) is of great concern. Addition of access point onto Grange Road - the largest access point to the hotel. Inclusion of traffic calming measures.
BL008	Darlington's long suffering football team are about to make a return to the area which will put extra pressure on the roads round about. Whenever an event occurs at the rugby club that its car park cannot cope with its user's park all along Grange Road down to Blands Corner roundabout. There are often near hits with people getting in and out of car and cars pulling into and out of parking spaces. If you add extra development you are asking for trouble along Blackwell Meadows if traffic handling measures are not introduced.	
BL008	As a cyclist, the quality of the road surface on Grange Road, especially on the way into town, is atrocious and extra traffic will only make it worse.	
BL008	Dangerous pinch point at junction of Blackwell Lane and Grange Road, traffic builds up and turning left or right at this point is always a risk - regular incidents here. Police figures are not accurate as some incidents go unreported. Increase in road users will increase risk and it is only a matter of time before something serious happens. A lot of road users on Grange Road do not adhere to speed limits.	
BL015; BL034; BL044; BL101	Concerns relating to traffic congestion.	The area should be left clear
BL015	Speed bumps needed on Blackwell Lane.	
BL052	If connected through it could be used as a cut through to Grange Road.	Move access 4 or at least provide no access through to Grange

HE1 – Highways		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
		Road.
BL0096; BL0097	Would increase traffic flow and that in turn would result in parking issues, additional noise and cause stress to residents.	
BL071	Flats are aimed at couples who will have a car each, meaning cars into three figures just for them.	
BL071	We will need extensive traffic lights, pelican crossings and traffic calming measures to secure residents and child safety.	
BL071	The flats should be moved closer to the entrance on Grange Road where you have good safe access to high density living such as flats.	
BL149	Blackwell Lane already a rat-run known to the police. Additional development will make this worse.	
BL156	Flats will have a greater density than other types of housing and therefore a greater increase in traffic on Blackwell Lane	
BL158	Object to 3 storey apartments due to highway safety being compromised due to traffic generation and inadequate capacity. Car parking and pedestrians and cyclists will also have significant issues	
BL160	There is poor public transport and social infrastructure on all proposed sites. Blackwell Lane is not a bus route, there are no doctor surgeries, pharmacies, and cafes - the types of services older and typically less mobile people will want to use. I also fail to see how the targeted demographic for these apartments will walk across the parkland, past the hotel, etc. to get to a bus stop. It is not feasible to assume that this demographic will either own or be able to drive a car. The site is just as unfeasible as the Council believed Stressholme to be for development.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>A Transport Assessment is currently being produced in consultation with Highways England that will demonstrate the impact of the proposals on the local and strategic highway and this will help to inform the density of building on site. As part of the assessment accident statistics are reviewed and taken into consideration. This will also include a Travel plan that will assess the needs of non-motorised users. Bridge Road and the A66 is owned and maintained by Highways England. There are proposals to improve Bland's Corner roundabout which Highways England are reviewing. Off-site highway improvements to mitigate the development traffic would be highlighted, if required, within the Transport Assessment.</p>		

HE1 – Amenity and Open Space		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL002 BL017 BL039 BL009; BL035; BL073; BL104; BL124i; BL124ii; BL150;	3 storey apartments will ruin many people's views from their homes; Too high.	No apartments - bungalows, detached or semis would blend in with the area
BL020 BL020i; BL034; BL166; BL169	Concern regarding sudden addition of apartments to the plan. Should be located off Grange Road to minimise impact.	BL034- Apartments should be removed
BL020 BL20i; BL034	Concern regarding loss of green outlook and loss of natural space.	
BL042; BL071	Our bungalow on Draycote Crescent has benefit of being very quiet - concerned volume of traffic associated with the new flats will change this.	
BL043	Concern over height of flats.	Height of proposed flats behind Blackwell Lane should be 2 storey maximum
BL052	Green space in and around residential areas should be retained for the wellbeing of the people living in the area.	Lowest density housing possible should be provided.
BL0096; BL0097; BL009; BL093; BL101; BL108v; BL145; BL149; BL150; BL159	Residents would lose their privacy by being overlooked by any development; Loss of light; 43 Blackwell Lane - bought our property knowing we would have complete privacy, no support for any development that would have windows overlooking us.	
BL0096; BL0097	Development would result in more street lighting and that would increase more light pollution in the area.	
BL0048	Would like untidy dense uncontrolled undergrowth of gardens in Upsall Drive to be removed and kept at bay as part of any development.	
BL071	The flats between HE1 and HE2 should be moved further away from the lane and ideally be replaced with bungalows, as there is a shortage of them in the area.	
BL071	Flats often end up in the hands of buy to let landlords, and we will have letting signs all the way along the lane.	

HE1 – Amenity and Open Space		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)
BL090; BL0093; BL101; BL145; BL158	Concern regarding the effect on the character of the neighbourhood, visual impact, overlooking and loss of privacy - particularly with reference to the setting of the listed building (references correspondence with Historic England). Concerns regarding design and layout of new dwellings, specifically the greater density and proximity to existing properties. Considers the enjoyment of a view part of residential amenity. Overshadowing.	Further consideration should be given to the impact of building on the Historic Parkland and Blackwell Grange. Council should remove HE1 and undertake works to improve the area (drainage and tree planting). Land should be transferred to a Community Land Trust with an endowed fund to create an income for maintenance. Existing building (green keeper's compound) could become low density mews development.
BL101; BL158	Intrusion from odour, general disturbance and an enormous amount of noise nuisance.	No new housing
BL125ii	Proposed dwelling to the rear of 18 & 20 Upsall Drive is too close to existing properties - loss of privacy and overlooking.	Should be re-sited
BL158	Apartments/flats would be detrimental to existing residential amenity, overdevelopment of a wooded landscaped area and historically significant wall.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>Impact on a person's view is not a planning matter, though impact on an individual's amenity and the amenity of an area is. The residential amenity of existing and future residents would be considered as part of any development design and layout at the planning application stage. Detailed comments and suggestions regarding the development will be taken into account in the detailed design of any development, and residents will have the opportunity to engage in this through the planning application process.</p> <p>Although the proposal would involve loss of some open space, it retains the majority of it, and would result in improvements to the remainder of the open space as well as making it publically accessible for the enjoyment of future generations.</p> <p>The proposed development is sufficiently far away from existing houses (twice the adopted separation distance) such that there will be no overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing or loss of privacy.</p> <p>The land immediately adjacent to Blackwell Lane will be managed by a Trust who will ensure that fly posters and inappropriate letting signs would be removed.</p> <p>The high quality of the proposed development in this quiet setting will appeal to people who appreciate the quality environment. Why would they create problems of odour, general disturbance and noise?</p>		

HE1– Flooding and Drainage		
Summary of Comments	Change Proposed (if any)	Change Proposed (if any)
BL149	My house and that of my neighbour (on Upsall Drive) suffer from flooding whenever the ex-golf course land is saturated. Reducing land to absorb water will only increase risk and frequency of flooding.	Remove development from He1 and He2
<p>Officer comments This is not a constraint to development, as maintaining greenfield rates of surface water runoff would be conditioned through the planning process. There is also a strong probability that the residential development would actually resolve the drainage problems as this would affect the saleability of the new houses.</p>		