

Proposed Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised following Scrutiny Cttee on 12 September 2017

BLACKWELL GRANGE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Sites He1, He1a, He2 and He3

1st September 2017

Note that following the public consultations, comments have been received and officers have taken comments on board and where appropriate made recommendations to change the documents as detailed in the Scrutiny Report dated 12th September 2017. Subject to Scrutiny agreeing to the changes, this Planning and Development Brief would be reported to Cabinet for approval

Note that the Planning and Development Brief provides a framework for consideration within which proposals for development might achieve a planning permission

PURPOSE OF THE BRIEF

1. This planning and development brief seeks to guide the proposed development of housing on the site of the former Blackwell Golf Club, known as sites He1, He1 a, He2 and He3 . The site contains the Listed Blackwell Grange Hotel and associated historic assets and is in itself an historic landscape with an intrinsic significance. The Council is seeking to guide and promote a form of development that balances the potential harm caused by development against the public benefit of both the provision of additional housing in the Borough to meet future needs, and the securing of a sustainable future for the historic buildings and parkland. A number of development opportunities as shown He1, He1a and He 3 on the Landscape and Restoration plan, attached at **Appendix 1** have been identified that may be released in phases, providing distinct housing offers, alongside a comprehensive historic landscape restoration plan for the parkland. The Council is considering the development of these sites and the restoration of the landscape as a whole and these are referred to in this brief as the 'site'.
2. The brief provides Supplementary Planning Guidance in the context of paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework and supplementary to the adopted Development Plan Core Strategy with regard to the provision of housing and the protection of built and natural assets, namely Blackwell Grange and its historic garden.

WHO HAS PREPARED THE BRIEF

3. This brief has been prepared by Darlington Borough Council to accompany the sales particulars for the proposed development sites to provide certainty to developers, the local community and key stakeholders about the intentions for the site and the key opportunities and constraints.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

4. This planning and development brief has been developed following significant public engagement in mid-2015 where the views of residents were taken into consideration. In addition to this the Council has actively worked in partnership with Historic England, Highways England and Natural England to ensure that it complies with national policy and guidance.

PLANNING POLICY AND HOUSING OBJECTIVES

5. In planning policy terms, the key considerations for any future development are the impacts on the:-
 - (a) Heritage assets (Listed Building/s and their parkland 'setting');

- (b) Protected trees;
- (c) Protected wildlife;
- (d) Green Wedge and open space;
- (e) Assets of archaeological interest.

National Planning Policy Framework

6. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, 12 core planning principles and guidance on how sustainable development should be delivered across a number of cross-cutting themes. Whilst the NPPF should be read as a whole, the following paragraphs will have particular relevance to this site's development. They will be key to determining any future planning application on the site and should be taken into account when developing a plan for the site.
7. Section 12 of the NPPF, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, provides important national policy regarding development and heritage assets. It states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (paragraph 128). The applicant would need to demonstrate the impact of any proposals in relation to the heritage assets.
8. Furthermore, Paragraph 131 sets out that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the following factors, which would therefore need to be addressed when planning the site:-
 - (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
9. Paragraph 133 states that 'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss'. This is likely to be a significant consideration when planning development on this site.
10. In terms of the natural environment, NPPF paragraph 109 advises that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:-
 - (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;

- (b) recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- (c) minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- (d) preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
- (e) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

11. Point (c) above will be particularly relevant to proposals for development within the site in terms of minimising the impacts and providing net gains in biodiversity.

Local Planning Policy

12. The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan for the Borough for the period 2016-2036; however the local planning policy position is largely set out in the saved policies of the Local Plan (1997) and the Core Strategy (2010). Following the withdrawal of the Making and Growing Places Development Plan Document, which would have allocated the sites required to deliver the Core Strategy, the Council prepared an Interim Planning Position Statement (IPPS) which sets out its local interpretation of the NPPF.

13. The Interim Planning Position Statement identifies the site as an opportunity to deliver high-end executive housing to meet a regional and local need for this type of housing to attract and retain business leaders and senior managers in the private sector, with a consequential boost to the economy. Through the development of the site it is the ambition of the Council to create a community asset in the form of the remaining historic parkland, formalising the current public access and providing both a sustainable future for the site and complement the activities of Blackwell Grange Hotel.

14. All these local policy documents are available online and will have relevance to the development of this site; however the following Core Strategy policies are of particular note.

- (a) Policy CS2, in place to ensure high quality, safe, sustainable and inclusive design is promoted in all new development
- (b) Policy CS3 which promotes renewable energy, including on site provision of decentralised and renewable / low carbon sources of energy
- (c) Policy CS14 which protects and enhances the distinctive character of the Borough's built, historic, natural and environmental townscapes, landscapes and strong sense of place. It highlights the importance of the tree canopy skyline of the south west area and the green wedge at Blackwell/Skerne Park as important characteristics of the town. Development proposals should, therefore, maintain the integrity of the green wedge and the tree canopy skyline.

- (d) Policy CS15 protects and enhances biodiversity and geodiversity by requiring the conservation, restoration and enhancement the condition of sites and areas identified as having high biodiversity and geodiversity value and ensuring that new development would not result in any net loss of existing biodiversity value by protecting and enhancing the priority habitats, biodiversity features and the geological network through the design of new development, including public and private spaces and landscaping. It also seeks to protect and enhance healthy ancient woodland, mature trees, street trees, hedgerows and community forestry. New development should, therefore, minimise its impact on the protected trees and hedgerows and make a contribution to enhancing or improving the biodiversity of the study area and the priority habitats. The Council has a tree survey which provides arboriculture information and advice about the quality, retention and protection of the existing trees. A copy of this report will be provided on request. .
- (e) Policy CS17 includes the Blackwell/Skerne Park green wedge as part of the green infrastructure network and states that 'The loss of any part of the green infrastructure network will only be considered in exceptional circumstances for the provision of essential infrastructure or where it has been demonstrated that the site no longer has any value to the community in terms of access and usage, is not required to perform an alternative green infrastructure function, is not required to meet a shortfall in the provision of that open space type or another open space type, and an alternative equivalent or better space in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility, biodiversity, flood storage, attractiveness and functionality is available'.

SITE CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

Heritage and Archaeology

- 15. The site, formerly Blackwell Golf Course and the Blackwell Grange Hotel was in part the remains of the historic parkland associated with the Grade II * Blackwell Grange. The Golf Course was created around the time that the Hotel was established, making use of the extensive grounds that were associated with the house. In the late twentieth century a number of housing developments were built on the grounds, eroding the original space, landscaping and boundary treatments. Two neighbouring golf courses were rationalised, with the former operator, Blackwell Grange Golf Club, relocating to the formerly Council owned Stressholme course, leaving the site vacant. The Council have commissioned two Statements of Significance, one for the hotel and one for the parkland to guide and inform development, change and restoration plans. These are available on request.
- 16. The Statement of Significance for Blackwell Grange concludes that:-
 - (a) The curtilage extending as far as the former Mill Lane to the south and includes all the parkland to the north, east and west, on account of the historic ownership and development of the site;
 - (b) The setting extends further south to include the triangle of parkland between the roundabout at the A67 (Carmel Road South) / A167 (Grange Road) junction and the former Mill Lane;

- (c) Parking on the frontage of the Hotel should be restricted to protect the appearance of this elevation;
- (d) The surrounding landscape of the historic parkland should be managed to reveal views of the Hotel that unfold as it is approached and reflect the historic access points; and
- (e) Overall the parkland setting should be better managed and enhanced.

17. The Statement of Significance for the Historic Parkland concludes that:-

- (a) Some areas of the historic parkland are not suitable for development and should be designated as a Historic Park and Garden (this is discussed later in this section);
- (b) The parkland future management needs to conserve and enhance the key features which either date from the earlier 18th century or to the 1802 remodelling as follows:-
 - (i) The fish pond which dates to the first landscaping between 1710 and 1790;
 - (ii) The field boundary which extends from the fishpond to the Grange;
 - (iii) The Pleasure Walks;
 - (iv) The tree clumps and mature isolated stands north of Mill Lane (site of);
 - (v) The brick wall boundary, stone gateposts and the 'sunken fences' and ha-ha; and
 - (vi) Retain/ replace views from the Grange/hotel south to Mill Lane and east towards Skerne Park.
- (c) Regarding the designation of the parkland as a Historic Park and Garden an application was made to Historic England in 2015 and a decision was announced on the 25th August. The decision not to include the parkland as Registered Park and Garden was in the light of the site not being nationally significant, although recognising the importance of this in the setting of Blackwell Grange Hotel.
- (d) Consultation with Historic England has informed the proposed development areas on the site which do extend into the area identified in the Statement of Significance as being unsuitable. The Council has considered these opposing views in making this proposal and in the light of the Historic England decision regarding designation is supporting some development balanced with the restoration of the remaining parkland, dealt with later in the brief.

Archaeology –The developer would need to undertake a desk top exercise to determine if there are any archaeology issues.

Habitats and Ecology

18. The site is a significant area of green space that is used by a variety of wildlife. There is a small great crested newt population, disconnected from the adjoining population on the former golf course to the west of Carmel Road South. This population is currently focussed on the former historic fish pond, now degraded from its original form. Elsewhere on the site there are areas of woodland and tree planting that provide roosts and corridors for bat activity. There are some areas of semi-improved grassland with some value in terms of ecology and biodiversity that could be enhanced through an improved management regime. Surveys have been undertaken by competent professionals and Natural England have been consulted in the development of this Brief.

Access and Connectivity

19. Currently Blackwell Grange Hotel is accessed for vehicular traffic from Grange Road to the south east and from Blackwell Lane, officially for deliveries, from the west. Pedestrian access to and from the Hotel is feasible via either access, with a pavement leading towards the Town Centre along Grange Road. There is no pavement on the south side of Blackwell lane. Other points of access exist from Carmel Road South. There are no public rights of way across the site.

Topography

20. A full topographic survey has been undertaken by consultants Billingham George Partners for the site which slopes from north to south with a number of defining features and ridges. This is available upon request.

Drainage and Flood Risk

21. The whole of the site is within Flood Zone 1 and there are very small areas within Flood Zone 2. There is evidence of localised ponding on the site which was also confirmed as part of the drainage strategy . Residents have confirmed through photographic evidence that flooding has occurred on the sites He3 and land near He1. Residents also advised that the former golf club put drains in He3 and at the time dug through a brick drain and tunnel. The former groundsman is being approached for any background information . The Statement of Significance for the historic parkland identifies a former watercourse and the possible location of the proposed serpentine lake, which may have been constructed and subsequently abandoned. Neither of these features forms part of the formal drainage of the parkland and it is anticipated the localised ponding other than that associated with the historic fishpond and low lying areas will be dealt with through the development of the site.

Ground Conditions

22. No invasive investigations have been undertaken and potential developers are advised to make their own assessment of potential for the site for development and the type of foundations that may be required.

23. A desk based assessment of the site has been undertaken and is available on the Council's website.

Landscape and Trees

24. A tree survey has been commissioned by the Council and undertaken by Elliot Consultancy Limited. This has identified a number of protected trees on the site and these are identified on the plan below. The report is available on the Council's website. A Health and Safety tree removal plan has been prepared that shows there are approx. 30 trees that need to be removed and will be replaced by new trees.
25. It is anticipated that most of the trees in Category C or above will be retained. Through planning an Arboriculture Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan will need to be submitted. In addition the report concludes that;
- (a) A number of poorer quality trees make a contribution to the wider group value and landscape character;
 - (b) Root protection areas need to be respected in terms of construction, disturbance and storage; and
 - (c) Areas identified for future planting should be afforded protection throughout the construction phases.
26. As outlined in the Statement of Significance summarised earlier, the landscape has an intrinsic historic value, however this has been eroded by the associated tree belts planted to define fairways.

Constraints

27. Other than the heritage, biodiversity, habitat and tree constraints described elsewhere in this brief the main issue is noise from the adjoining road network and Bland's Corner roundabout. It is not envisaged, however, that development will extend south of the existing former cattle byre adjacent to Carmel Road South and therefore the impact of noise is likely to be minimal.

Local Character

28. The site is to the south and east of the once autonomous settlement of Blackwell. The surrounding context is predominantly suburban in character with a few remaining former agricultural buildings subsumed by the expansion of Darlington. The area is predominantly residential in terms of use with some supporting retail and community buildings. Immediately adjacent to the site the houses are typically detached dating from the later twentieth century whilst the bulk of the surrounding area was constructed prior to this from the 1930's onwards. Detached, semi-detached houses and bungalows can all be found in the area in a variety of styles with a number of distinctive characteristics;
- (a) Materials are typically red brick, white or cream render and tiles with an occasional use of stone;

- (b) Houses typically are set back from the road with a front garden;
 - (c) Roofs are usually pitched with hips;
 - (d) Parking and driveways are typically to the side of properties with separate garages; and
 - (e) Boundaries adjoining the street are typically low brick walls.
 - (f) The Hotel itself is a landmark building in the context with traditional window proportions, a parapet roof often obscuring the roofline.
29. Buildings are often placed to be parallel to the contours with changes in level dealt with in the front garden depending on their relative position to the slope.

Services

30. The site is served by the full range of adjacent services and utilities. Surface water drainage is to be dealt with on site via a SUDS system or alternative attenuation and foul sewerage will be connected to the existing network. Detailed surveys and a drainage strategy have been undertaken by the Council and are available on the Council's website.

Highway Network

31. The site is served by the adjacent highway network and access to the site is dealt with later in this Brief . In terms of congestion and junction capacity Highways England have advised that the amount of development envisaged on the site will not have a significant detrimental impact on the network. A Transport Study Report dated August 2016 has been reviewed by the Council and signed off by Highways England and concludes that:-
- (a) The proposal will deliver a development that is integrated with the surrounding environment and accessible by alternative modes of travel to the private car; and
 - (b) The development impact on the surrounding road network is considered as acceptable, both operationally and in terms of highway safety.

32. The full report from Highways England is available on the Council's website.

LANDSCAPE

Restoration Plan

33. TGP Landscape Architects have been commissioned to develop a Historic Landscape Restoration Plan (HLRP) for the parkland. Based on the detailed historic analysis in the Statement of Significance and in consultation with Historic England who provided comments and suggested priorities on the emerging Plan, it has been developed to reveal the historic assets, restore the historic landscape as a public amenity and mitigate for the proposed development of some of the site for

housing, therefore delivering public benefit to outweigh harm to the significance of the heritage asset, in accordance with the NPPF paragraphs 133 set out above. The HLRP recommends the following measures:-

- (a) The screening of the unsympathetic extensions to Blackwell Grange;
- (b) The restoration of the lime avenue leading up to the front elevation;
- (c) Re-establishing Mill Lane as a pedestrian route;
- (d) Conserving and restoring boundaries including fences and ha ha's; The restoration of the former fish pond; and
- (e) Other measures to improve public access.

34. A copy of the HLRP is available on the Council's website.

Green Infrastructure

35. Alongside being a historic landscape the site is also a multi-functional green infrastructure asset proving a range of services and benefits to the town. Substantial tree cover and grasslands provide habitats for a number of species alongside the wet areas and ponds on the site. Informal access has been established over time, in particular since the departure of the golf club and as a significant green space and open land the site offers a high degree of amenity value. The proposed development of the site, is limited to less than 25% of the overall site area for the former Golf Club site and the remaining space, the parkland, is to be substantially improved.

Amenity

36. As an area of open land the contribution that the site makes to the gateway to Darlington from the south is significant. This green wedge, alongside that of the land to the east of Grange Road has a significant positive impact on the character and appearance of the road and the wider area. The main contribution is through the mature tree cover to the boundaries and within the site alongside the historic boundary treatments and gateways, some of which are in need of restoration.

SITE ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Historic Significance

37. A key determinant of the development potential of the site is related to the historic significance of the parkland, Blackwell Grange and associated curtilage buildings. As a general principle the identified assets, such as the Walled Garden, historic avenues (south drive, north avenue and original lime avenue) and ha ha walls, and other features must be retained and enhanced through the development of the site, in line with the landscape restoration plan. These assets are in the diagram below, alongside the key protected trees, which in themselves form part of the historic landscape, in part.

Plan showing Historic Assets



Protected Trees

38. There are a large number of protected trees on the site as identified in the tree survey. As a general principle, these should be retained and protected and their

group value recognised. For ease of reference the most important, Grade A, trees are identified on the diagram below. There is a non-Grade A willow tree on HE3 and it is desirable this tree remains, subject to developer layouts, if possible.

39. Plan showing the most important Grade A trees



Highways Access

40. There are a number of feasible highway accesses into the site in terms of highway safety. The identified accesses have been assessed and their impact on the significance of the heritage assets and protected trees has been analysed, leading to a preferred option alongside some feasible, but less desirous options. All of the preferred accesses have been assessed by the technical and consultant team working on the Brief and as such are feasible. The preferred highways access points are illustrated **at Appendix 2**.

Key Views

41. The commissioned Statements of Significance and the HLRP have identified a number of key views that must be protected and enhanced through the proposed development of the site to better reveal the landscape and Blackwell Grange whilst also connecting the parkland to the surrounding context of the town and surrounding countryside. Historic England has recently produced updated guidance on setting and views in Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3, which can be obtained from their website.
42. In particular the key views within the landscape that must be protected include:-
- (a) Views to the north of Blackwell Grange from the historic Mill Lane;
 - (b) Views from the walks and rides over the ha ha to the south;
 - (c) Revealed views of Blackwell Grange along the access from Grange Road; and
 - (d) Views both to and from the hill top to the north of Blackwell Grange.
43. In terms of views from Blackwell Grange the lime avenue affords views of the wider countryside beyond the parkland and as such this must be protected and enhanced. Overall the front and southern elevations of Blackwell Grange are the most important in terms of being revealed by the landscape with a need to screen the less sympathetic additions.

Landmarks and Features

44. The Statements of Significance have identified the key assets on the site and these must be preserved or enhanced through the development of the site either through either the HLRP or siting and location of development. The developable area has been chosen towards this end and the proposed density of development will allow the retention of important landscape features, such historic clumps of trees.

Public Transport

45. The site is currently served from Grange Road for public transport with bus stops and a regular service to and from the Town Centre.

Pedestrian and Cycle Movement

46. A number of options exist to achieve surfaced connections from east to west across the site and developers must demonstrate how this can be achieved, in tandem with other access and connectivity requirements identified in the brief. This lit and surfaced route must be suitable for both pedestrians and cyclists and may also provide an opportunity for enhanced access for disabled people to enjoy the landscape.

APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT RESPONSES

47. Within the identified developable areas, He1, He1a and He3, as shown on the Landscape & Restoration Plan there are a number of specific criteria required to ensure that the proposed housing is a good fit with the context, existing properties and the historic landscape. The Council is seeking a high quality design appropriate to the setting that seeks to minimise the urbanisation effects of development on the historic parkland and setting of the listed building.
48. TPG Landscape Architects Ltd has been working with Historic England who has commented on the emerging plan, to produce a plan to improve and restore the parkland and increase public access. In addition to improve the views of and from the Blackwell Grange Hotel. Their proposals are shown on the Landscape & Restoration Plan attached at **Appendix 1**

Siting

49. The developable areas have been identified through extensive analysis and consultation with Historic England and as such provide the limits to development. No development is to be proposed outside of these areas. Developers may, however use less land than that identified. The actual layout of the development is dealt with below.

Layout and Density

50. There are three distinct character areas within the proposed site that can support various types of development. To the north, site He1 is envisaged to accommodate around five detached dwellings set in their own gardens, in harmony with the predominant local character of the adjoining existing houses. The site in this area has a significant gradient and it is envisaged that this will have an impact on both the design of the houses and their relationship to the landscape and each other. The development must balance the need to achieve natural surveillance over any internal roads and paths as well as the historic landscape and pleasure walks. The relationship to adjacent housing and boundaries to these and to the Parkland will be important design consideration to protect residential privacy but also the integration into a parkland setting.
51. He1a and He2 to the rear of the hotel offers the opportunity for more connected forms that might include high quality houses, mews cottages or apartments recognising the relative seclusion of the sites and the need to accommodate landscape and parking that is complementary to the character of the Listed Building and existing landscape features, so as not to back onto Blackwell Lane and the

access road from the west.

52. Site He3 is again an opportunity for a range of detached dwellings set in their own grounds with significant private gardens. It is the Council's current intention to promote the development for an estimated 23 'executive homes' to provide for the need to provide attractive housing for business leaders and inward investors and as such it is the Council's aspiration that development would be in the range of 5 – 10 dwellings per hectare, For the He3 area, developers may want to develop less land than is available , thereby increasing the density on land to be developed .The Council would consider the higher density schemes if the design is appropriate to its setting .Within this area there may be scope for a small number of non-executive homes, although the inclusion of apartments is not permitted.
53. In the case of He1 and He3 the plot ratio is expected to be 25%, allowing for a low density and high quality landscaped approach to the site. So 25% would be the footprint of the dwelling house and the garden area would be approximately 75%.

Access and Highways

54. The preferred access points to the site have been selected to minimise any harm to the historic assets and trees on the site. Highways access drawings are shown at Appendix 2 .To the north the proposed access is in the location of a previous entry point to the site. The selected access points have been assessed for highway safely and deemed appropriate.
55. Within the site roads are to be designed to minimise the impact on the landscape. In the main roads can be designed as shared space with no formal pavements reflecting the low speeds envisaged for the development. In the case of Site He1 this is to be a private shared drive.
56. Careful highways design is needed for He3 to minimise harm, especially if it results in lighting and parking along the stretch of highway.
57. A range a materials for the highways may be appropriate ranging from the use of tarmac to sets and bonded gravel, with raised tables where pedestrians and cyclist may be crossing. Lighting is to be provided to adoptable standards with the columns and luminaires proposed being sympathetic with the historic context.

Relationship to Landscape and Public Realm

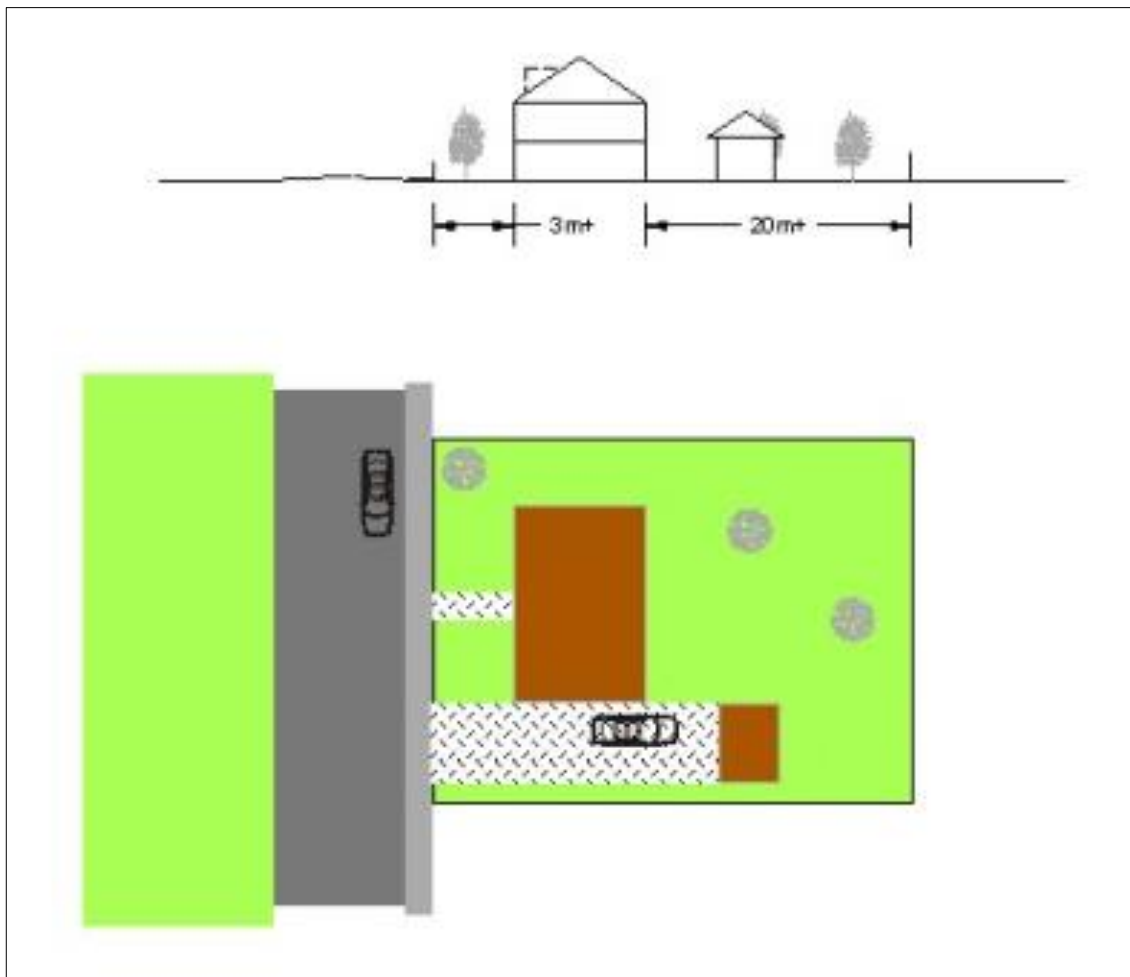
58. Proposed new development must provide natural surveillance over the existing and proposed landscape features and the internal roads. The spatial characteristic are dealt with below but as a general principle where new dwellings abut a landscape feature, public footpath, pleasure walk or road the front or side elevation must be presented and the boundary treatment allow visual permeability. Where a side elevation is presented to the public realm this should include windows.

Relationship to Existing Properties

59. In the case of sites He1 and He3 there is an interface with existing residential properties that must be dealt with sensitively. Where new dwellings are proposed

abutting existing ones the rear gardens of the proposed dwelling must face the rear gardens of existing ones. The boundary treatment to the rear must provide adequate levels of privacy for both the new and existing dwellings and the space between these must exceed the standards set out in the adopted Design of New Development SPD.

60. Indicative layout NTS



Connectivity

61. The proposed development must provide a 'safe route to school' that is both surfaced and lit connecting Blackwell Lane to Grange Road. A number of routes for this are possible delivered both through the proposed development and the Landscape & Restoration Plan. This provision will serve the dual purpose of providing access to the bus stops on Grange Road currently not connected to the proposed developments to the west.

Building Design, Character and Appearance

62. The Council is promoting a high quality development that minimises harm to the heritage assets on the site. This will be achieved by the new development being a good fit with the local area in terms of layout, materials, heights and roofline, relationship to the topography of the site and the means of landscaping and

boundary treatments. The adopted Distinctly Darlington Design of New Development SPD provides a wealth of advice in terms of general advice; in addition to this the Council requires any new development to comply with the following criteria.

(a) *Materials*

The local area features the use of a number of materials in common with many suburbs of this age. Brick where used is predominantly red in colour, stone is used sparingly for details and decoration and as a façade treatment and render in white, cream or grey is a common feature. Roofing materials are typically tile with the occasional use of slate. Where traditional building materials are employed they must be accurate in their methodology and design.

The required materials palette for this site is a combination of predominantly brick and tile constructed and detailed traditionally. Other materials may be used, however use of timber cladding and large areas of render is not considered appropriate.

(b) *Height*

In common with the general guidance of the adopted Design SPD, new development should not exceed two and a half storeys in height, with a maximum height of 6.3m to the eaves and a ridge height of no more than 10m. This can be relaxed to three storeys to the rear of Blackwell Grange, which is itself over three floors. A range of house types are permitted to include bungalows.

(c) *Roofline*

The predominant roofline must present the eaves to the road with the possibility of penetrating gables extending to no more than a third of the front elevation. Parapets are permitted and may offer the opportunity to accommodate solar panels and green roofs in an unobtrusive manner.

(d) *Details and Openings*

Windows are to be traditionally proportioned, i.e. taller than they are wide, and detailed in accordance with the construction method. This may be relaxed on rear elevations, however large areas of unsupported brickwork without an appropriate detail is not acceptable. Entrances should be expressed and celebrated through the use of detailing, canopies, inset or a porch. Porches or canopies must be flat roofed and this also applies to bay windows.

The use of UPVC windows is discouraged.

(e) *Landscaping and Boundaries*

Front boundaries are to be included in all proposals. These should be in the form of a low wall, with or without railings. Hedges may be incorporated alongside other landscaping to the front. To the rear the use of fences is

permitted. Boundaries between properties may be fences, however at the front these must not be presented to the public realm. Estate railings to define boundary /interface between new residential curtilage and parkland such as to the rear gardens of Grangeside?

(f) *Existing and Proposed Trees*

Existing trees to be protected throughout construction and incorporated into the gardens. New tree planting must complement the character of the landscape identified in the Statement of Significance and support the ambitions of the Landscape & Restoration Plan.

(g) *Garages and Parking*

Where garages are being provided these must be provided to the side of the new housing with parking not dominating the frontage. Wherever possible parking should be accommodated to the side or to the rear, with a minimum of two covered spaces as a part of the overall requirement.

(h) *Rainwater Goods*

Rainwater goods should be graphite or black in colour and in the case of a traditional detailed building be in a historically accurate style.

(i) *Aerials, Dishes and Photovoltaic Panels*

Satellite dishes and aerials should be accommodated in unobtrusive locations. Photovoltaic panels are acceptable but should be designed to complement the roofline and not be an intrusive element in the overall design.

Sustainability

63. The Council is keen to see an exemplar development on site that embodies as many sustainable design features as possible. Developments that exceed requirements over and above the current building regulations in terms of thermal performance, energy use and resource efficiency will be supported, subject to the design criteria outlined above in terms of character and appearance.

Drainage and SUDs

64. Surface water drainage is to be dealt with via a SUDS system accommodated on site. This system must contribute to the wider drainage strategy of the site and provide the opportunity for wetland habitats to be created.

Management

65. The historic landscape is to be maintained in the long term via a local levy. This will be charged to the owners of the new housing. Developers must submit a costed maintenance plan with a clear mechanism of the collection and management of the levy that will ensure that the parkland is protected in the long term.

PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

66. The adopted Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the Council's approach to securing developer contributions to mitigate the impact of new development on local infrastructure or to meet the specific needs of a scheme. Prospective developers must consider this SPD and its requirements when establishing their schemes.
67. It is anticipated that a development of the type described in the brief would result in contributions and/or onsite provision being sought for cycling and walking facilities, public transport, renewable energy and open space, as well as arrangements for employment, skills and training contributions during the construction phase. These would be subject to phasing through the development's build out phase and meeting administration, monitoring and legal costs involved in any Section 106 Agreements.
68. The Council would usually require that 20% of the proposed development would be affordable housing. However, as the site is intended for predominantly top-end executive houses, mews cottages and/or apartments, this is likely to be an exceptional circumstance where on-site provision will not be required. In lieu of this, the Council will consider a financial contribution to affordable housing provision elsewhere in the Borough.

NEXT STEPS

69. Subject to Cabinet approval, adopt the brief and develop sale particulars