

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, NORTHGATE, CLECKHEATON

Introduction

The site for this proposal forms part of a much larger one that has been in the ownership of Tesco for a number of years. Tesco had intended to build a new supermarket to replace their existing store. Having cleared the existing buildings (Northgate and Serpentine Mills) and closed an existing road serving them (Walker Street) in readiness their business plan altered and they have now agreed to sell the whole site to McCarthy and Stone Retirement Living who intend to redevelop it with their partners, Darrington Health Care and Futurelease Limited (in conjunction with Leeds Federated Housing Association (LFHA)) with new build retirement apartments, a care home and affordable housing respectively. The whole site is immediately next to the existing retail and commercial centre of Cleckheaton. Futurelease and LFHA are proposing 7no. affordable townhouses with associated carparking to be owned or rented with funding via grant assistance from the Homes & Communities Agency. The entire scheme has been introduced at a public consultation and there has also been a planning preapplication.

Context

The affordable housing element of the scheme occupies a site area of approx 0.34 acres and fronts onto Northgate. Historic records indicate that there were once buildings, probably associated with Northgate Mill, occupying the southern part of the site. Existing shops front onto Northgate from its junction with Serpentine Road to the southern boundary of the site. These buildings are 2 storey in scale with natural slate roofs and walls built of natural coursed stone containing windows with stone heads, cills and mullions. To the north of the site fronting Northgate is a Joinery workshop and yard. The workshop is 2 storey in scale clad in vertical timber cladding above a stone plinth. Beyond that is George Street which has terraced housing running on both sides. The houses are 2 storey in scale, built in natural coursed stone with cut heads and cills and slate roofs. At the top end of the street the eaves lines remain horizontal but at varying levels as each pair of houses deals with the slope of the street. To the east of the site on the opposite side of Northgate is a new store which was very recently built for Netto Supermarkets. Its appearance presents as single storey scale facing Northgate with walls comprising white render interspersed with masonry piers and a steel sheeted roof above a long continuous eaves line.

Design

All of the 7no.townhouses required by LFHA are to be 2 bedroom 4 person units of 72m² gross internal area designed as a terrace in keeping with the grain of other housing nearby. They are arranged obliquely to Northgate to create a modelled and varying frontage whilst at the same time all the houses are similar to one another. In addition by setting the terrace obliquely the angle between the proposed Darrington care home to the rear and the affordable units is increased to mitigate direct overlooking. It also orientates the rear gardens and principal living spaces of the houses to be able to face slightly south of west to catch the afternoon sun. Northgate slopes gently down towards the north and the proposed terrace reflects this in its stepped roofline.

The grouping of 2 -3 -2 houses accommodates the ground level changes to enable level footway access to each house from Northgate. This stepping on plan and elevation is further emphasised by a change in main body walling material from buff multi brickwork to white acrylic render in the central element of 3 dwellings to create contrast and add to the articulation of the group.

The terrace ends short of the northern boundary of the site to allow for the formation of a private carparking court to serve the development. The resulting gap creates a buffer between the proposed terrace gable and the adjacent Joinery workshop thereby mitigating the possibility of disturbance to the housing due to the proximity of the light industrial use.

The site for the affordable housing is relatively low lying compared to the adjacent care home. The front doors of the terrace will front onto Northgate which sets the floor levels of the units. All the houses are to have useable, relatively level and private rear gardens. As can be seen on the accompanying planning drawing NE-2106-AC-03-021 there are varying embankments and retaining walls needed along the western boundary to the care home to reduce the gradients within the affordable housing site to an acceptable extent. As there will be a 2m high closeboarded timber fence on the boundary good levels of privacy will result without undue loss of sky view from the ground floor rooms of the houses. The embankments also give the opportunity to introduce structured planting at the rear of the site.

Access

There are disused and redundant crossovers into the site along Northgate that will be infilled as part of a refurbishment of the existing public footway fronting the site including its widening to 2m in width. From there level access will be afforded to the front doors of all units in accordance with Approved Document M of the current Building Regulations.

Refuse collection points are located within 25m of gardens and the public highway to assist residents and refuse collection workers respectively. Communal pathways provide all houses with external access to their rear gardens. Timber fencing for plot division is to be 1.2m high where abutting the pathways to enable overlooking of them from the ground floor of the houses.

As has been mentioned earlier it is intended that the scheme is served by a private parking court containing 12 no. car spaces requiring a single vehicle access point along the Northgate frontage. This maximises the continued use of much needed on- street public carparking along Northgate. In addition it minimises the safety hazard of cars parking in front of or at the side of the proposed housing reversing into Northgate.

The site is in a highly sustainable town centre location with bus stops available as close by as Horncastle Street and with virtually level access on foot to the main shopping facilities along Northgate to the south.

