Hightown Lane

Design & Access Statement
February 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Outlines the intention of the project and the process of the application it aims to support.

SITE BACKGROUND

Explores the location of the site and its existing conditions.

DESIGN

Documents the process of design and the proposed planning drawings.

SUMMARY

Conclusion summarising the whole process.

02 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been produced by Millson Group; Millson Group are a multidisciplinary team providing services of Architecture, Masterplanning and Development Coordination.

The development proposal involves the design of one detached self-build property on Hightown Lane, Holmfirth.

The production of this statement has been informed and is compliant with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's (CABE) Design and Access Statements: How to Write, Read and Use Them, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Building for Life Assessment 12 (BfLA12), NPPF and PPG.







Site

03 Site Location

The proposed development is located on a previously developed gap site off Hightown Lane in an established residential area of Holmfirth. The land, formerly occupied by a demolished outbuilding, has since reverted to unmanaged woodland. The site lies within the Holmfirth Conservation Area and directly adjoins the Green Belt, which extends across the garden area.

Hightown Lane connects to Town Hall Street, Wood Lane, and Huddersfield Road (A6024), providing direct local access into Holmfirth and the surrounding road network. Regional connections are supported by proximity to the M1 via Junction 39 (Denby Dale), offering wider access toward Leeds, Sheffield, and national routes. Although urban in its immediate setting, the site sits close to the characteristic South Pennine landscapes that surround Holmfirth, reflecting a transition between built form and open countryside.



Fig 3.1 Aerial of Site (Google).



Fig 3.2 Location Plan (Millson Group). [DO NOT SCALE]

04 Character & Conservation

Holmfirth's Conservation Area is recognised for its distinctive historic character, shaped by its topography, industrial heritage, and the strong architectural identity of the Holme Valley. Although Holmfirth is a designated conservation area within Kirklees, the council currently has no formal Conservation Area Appraisal in place for it, as noted in the list of conservation areas published by Kirklees Council. As a result, community-led groups such as the Holmfirth Conservation Group have assumed a proactive role in developing appraisals to support the preservation and enhancement of the town's built environment. Their work reflects concerns raised by Historic England, who identified Holmfirth as a conservation area "at risk" due to gradual erosion of historic character.

Kirklees Council's broader conservation position aligns with national guidance, where areas must be designated, appraised, and actively managed to ensure the protection of their special architectural and historic interest. Historic England emphasises that local authorities are responsible for formulating proposals that preserve and enhance conservation areas, supported by management plans and ongoing review. The council's intent therefore centres on safeguarding heritage value while guiding new development to reinforce, rather than dilute, local townscape character.

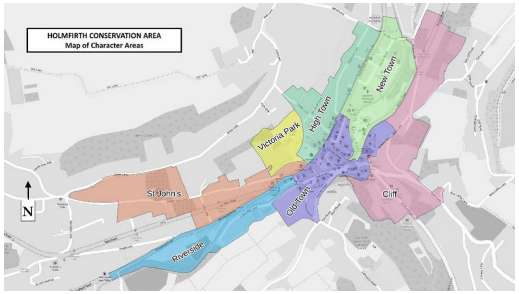


Fig 4.1 Holmfirth Conservation Areas (Holme Valley Parish Valley).

Architectural Character - Holmfirth's built environment reflects a layering of architectural periods, including mid - to late -18th-century buildings, Georgian and early Victorian development, and a significant amount of mid - to late - Victorian expansion. These periods contribute to the area's strong vernacular character, buildings have been constructed from locally quarried stone, with stone slate roofs, vertically proportioned window openings, and modest but robust detailing - features that visually define the conservation area. Later 19th and early 20th-century buildings continued these material traditions, ensuring a strong continuity in the streetscape.

Our Proposal - Our project site sits within the Hightown character area of the conservation area, which is identified in the appraisal materials as one of the key historic zones contributing to the wider townscape - our design aims to reinforce and respond directly to this context.

The development adopts proportions, massing, and rhythms that reflect the surrounding historic built form, while still providing a high-quality contemporary intervention. Careful attention has been paid to frontage alignment, roofscape, and boundary treatments to ensure the new property fits sensitively within the existing grain - aligning with the broader community-led conservation objectives highlighted by the Holmfirth Conservation Group's work.

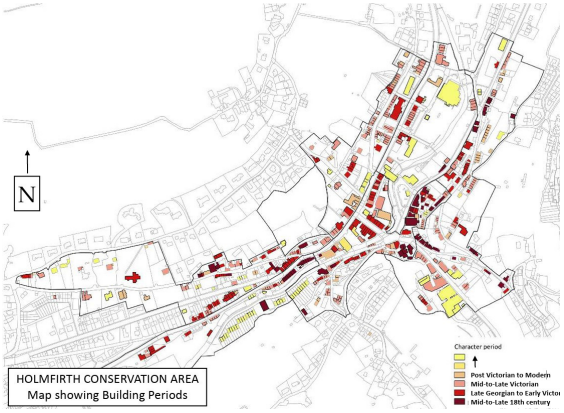


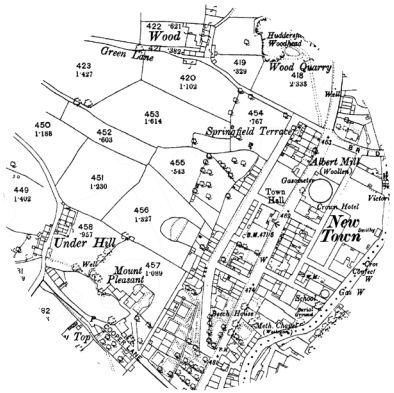
Fig 4.2 Holmfirth Conservation Area Appraisal (Holmfirth Conservation Group).



05 Site History

The historical maps of Holmfirth illustrate the gradual evolution of the area, showing how the site and its surrounding streets have developed over more than a century between 1890-2015.

1890s



Maps from the 1890s show terraced properties lining the main road, with the wider area characterised by sparse development.

1900s



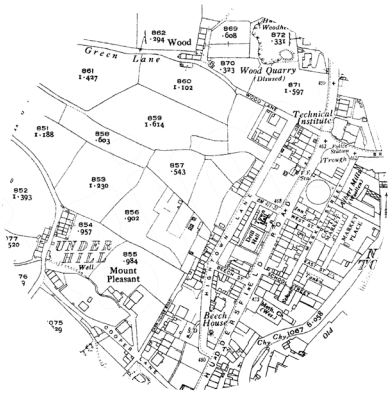


1900 est.

1926

By the early 1900s, there was little noticeable increase in development, and the outbuilding on the site remained present. An image from circa 1900 shows an allotment building on the land. Adjacent is a 1926 aerial image of the site a few decades later.

1930s



Between the 1900s & 1930s, Centenary Street was renamed Hightown Lane, though the surrounding pattern of development remained relatively consistent.

1960s



Mapping from the 1960s indicates there was a rise in residential properties along Hightown Lane, with part of the site identified as being used for car parking.

2005



By 2005, the historic outbuilding had been demolished, marking a notable change to the site's footprint.

2015



Between 2005 and 2015, mapping shows little to no further change to the site or its immediate surroundings.

06 Local Vernacular

The site sits within a long-established residential area where surrounding homes display a mix of façade treatments, though locally sourced stone and brick are the predominant traditional construction materials in the region. Typical examples of this are as follows:

01 Adjacent detached and semi-detached properties on Hightown Lane, built from local stone with traditional features such as chimneys, bay windows, dormers and stone heads/cills/banding.

02 Terraced properties on Hightown Lane, also built from local stone with traditional features such as chimneys, bay windows, dormers and stone heads/cills.

03 Raised terraced properties on Huddersfield Road, also built from local stone with traditional features such as chimneys and stone heads/cills.

04 Detached homes on Summervale, built from stone with traditional chimneys, garages, and stone heads/cills/surrounds.



Fig 6.1-4 Local Properties (Google).



Fig 4.5 Site Aerial (Google).

07 Existing Site

The site sits off Hightown Lane and is defined by a steep rise in levels from the roadside, suiting a gradually stepped property similar to the elevated semi-detached properties nearby. The lower area consists of an informal grass and earth surface that has been compacted through occasional vehicle use, with no formal hardstanding or boundary treatment.

Land has been significantly fly tipped over the years and become overgrown and an eyesore to the locality.

Two low quality trees were removed following approval from the planning authority due to their positioning in the conservation area.

Vegetation becomes progressively denser moving up slope, with a mix of shrubs, brambles, and semi-mature trees enclosing the plot.

Overall, the site's steep terrain, mixed vegetation, and informal lower surface establish clear conditions that shape a design response centred on working with the levels rather than altering them, ensuring the new dwelling fits naturally into its setting.



Fig 7.1-2 Site Photos (MillSon Group).

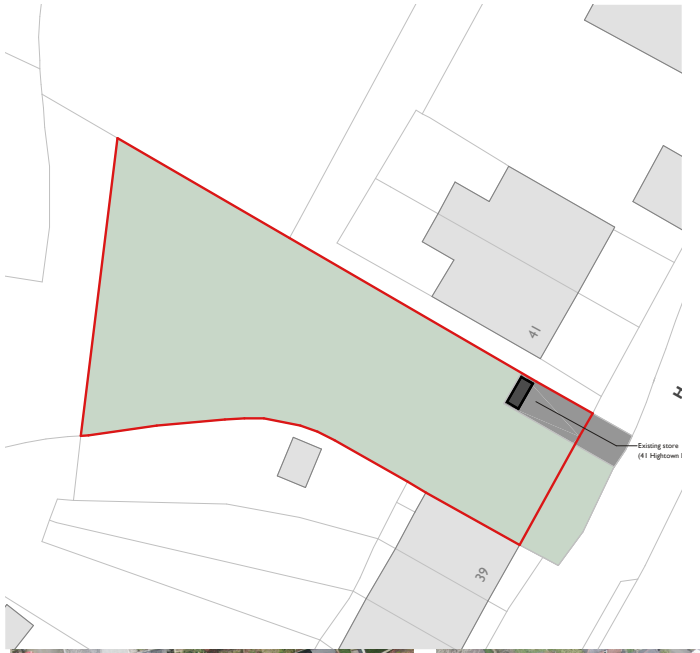




Fig 7.3 Existing Site Plan (Millson Group). [DO NOT SCALE]

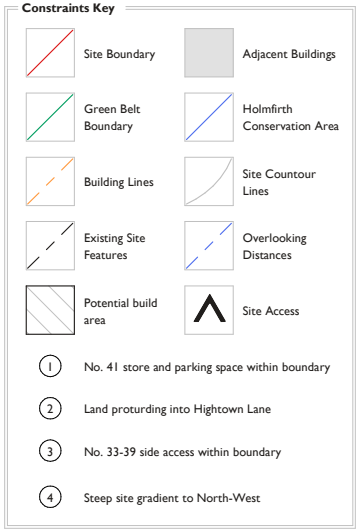




08 Site Opportunities & Constraints

The site offered immediate constraints from first visit, most notably the steep gradient to the back of the plot, totalling almost 10m from the road pavement to the North-Western boundary. Other constraints visible from first glance were the proximity to properties along Hightown Lane and the sheer level difference between the adjacent ridge heights - which represented a 6m difference and a design challenge.

The proposal would have to be designed along the pushed back building line that aligns with No.41 as this was the same site level as the development site, and also make sure that the buildable area fell between this line and the green belt boundary. Other constraints that would have to be factored into any new scheme were existing the access route to the rear gardens of No.33-39 and also a store that had been occupied by No.41 for a number of years. The site also falls within the Holmfirth Conservation Area and therefore requires a higher quality threshold for design and materiality to uphold the heritage of the local urban grain.



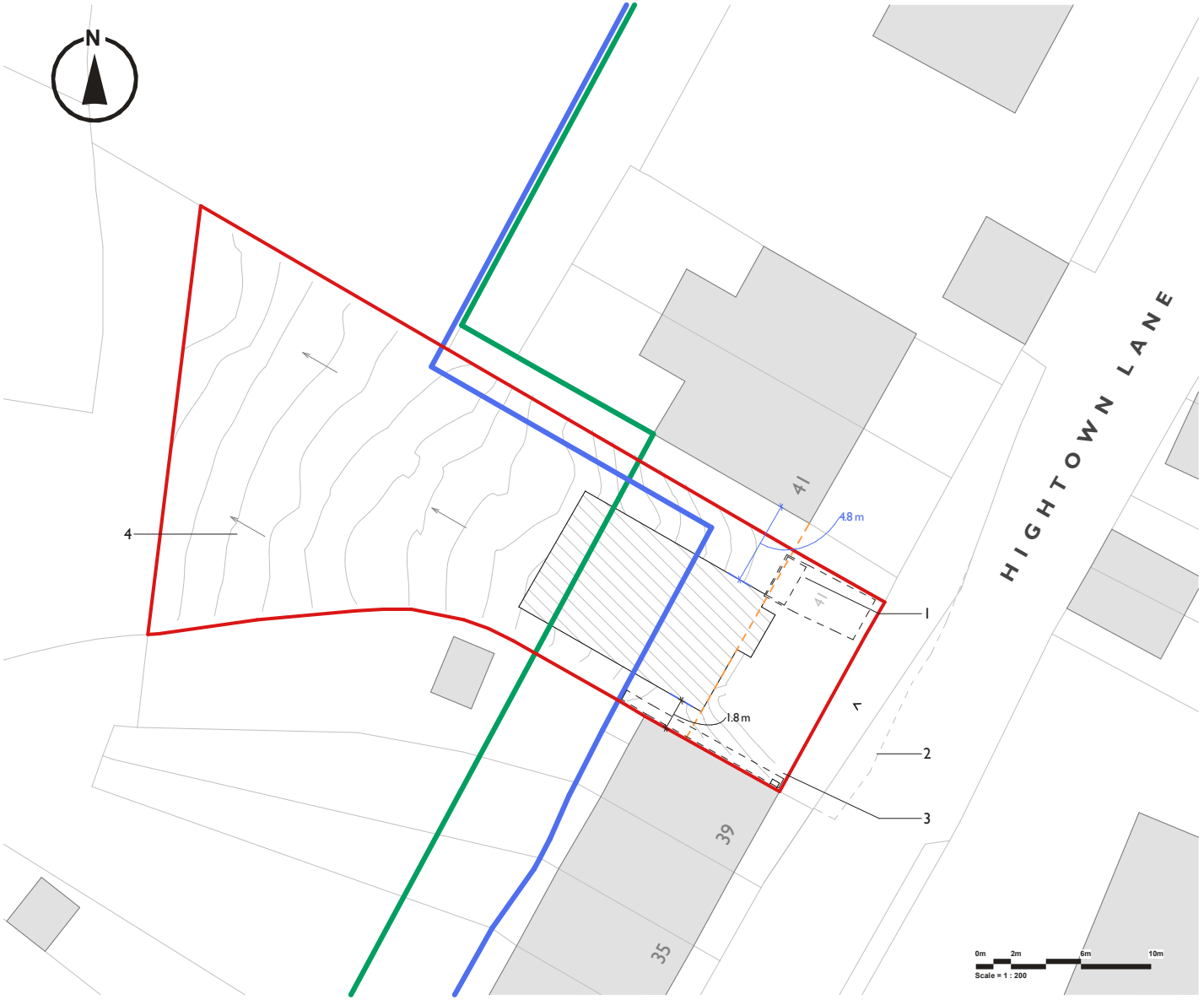


Fig 8.1 Opportunities Plan (Millson Group). [DO NOT SCALE]

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09 Design Process

A key objective of the design process was to sensitively infill the gap in properties by aligning with existing building lines and building scales.

Once the scale and position was decided, the main design iterations that took place were the elevational style choices - this was highly important as the site sits within the Holmfirth Conservation area so the principal elevation for the home had to meet the required quality and detail level that is seen in the surrounding area.

It was also pivotal to create a facade that maintained the character and rhythm of the immediately adjacent properties on Hightown Lane.

Heritage Unlimted have provided support to ensure the design sensitively reflects the character of the conservation area and positively contributes through high quality. Their supporting reports forms part of the application seeking approval.



Fig 8.1 Initial Site Sketch (Millson Group). [DO NOT SCALE]



Fig 8.2 Elevational Iterations (Millson Group)

10 Site Layout

The vision for the site is to create a high-quality residential dwelling that responds sensitively to the challenging topography while integrating seamlessly with the established character of Hightown Lane. Owing to the steeply rising site levels, the new home is arranged across three stepped levels, ensuring the building sits naturally within the landscape and mirrors the terraced form of surrounding development.

At street level, a garage fronts directly onto Hightown Lane, maintaining the existing building line set by the raised semi-detached properties adjacent and reinforcing the established rhythm of the streetscape.

The principal entrance is positioned above street level, accessed via a carefully designed front stair from the pavement. This leads to a ground-floor arrangement focused around the main living spaces. A bay window to the living room frames elevated views across Holmfirth, making the most of the site's outlook, while to the rear a large contemporary kitchen and living space opens onto the garden, providing generous family-focused accommodation and strong connections to external amenity space.

The proposed layout has been developed with consideration for historic and existing patterns of occupation within the site boundary. Portions of land that have been used informally by neighbouring properties - for parking, storage, and access to rear gardens—have been acknowledged within the design strategy to ensure that the development proceeds respectfully and with an understanding of the established spatial relationships on and around the site.

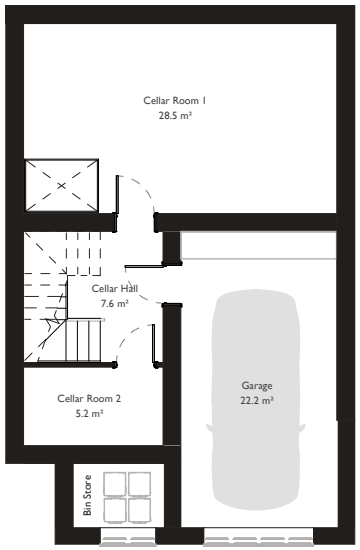


Fig 10 Proposed Site Plan (Millson Group). [DO NOT SCALE]

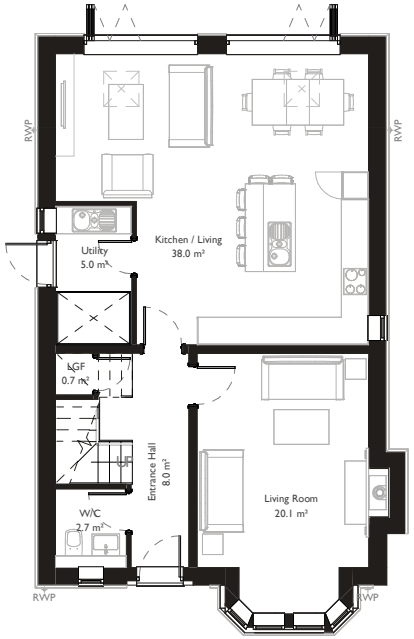
This layout aims to deliver a sensitively designed home that not only responds to its physical constraints but also enhances the immediate setting and contributes positively to the character of Hightown Lane.

11 Plans

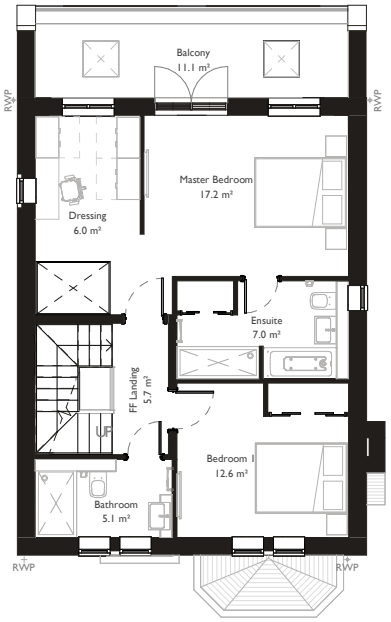
The internal layout has been developed to provide spacious living spaces within a modest overall building footprint, to ensure both functionality and comfort for modern living. The layout comfortably adheres to Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).



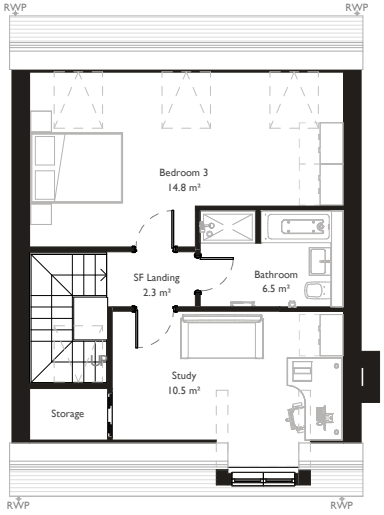
Lower Ground Floor Plan



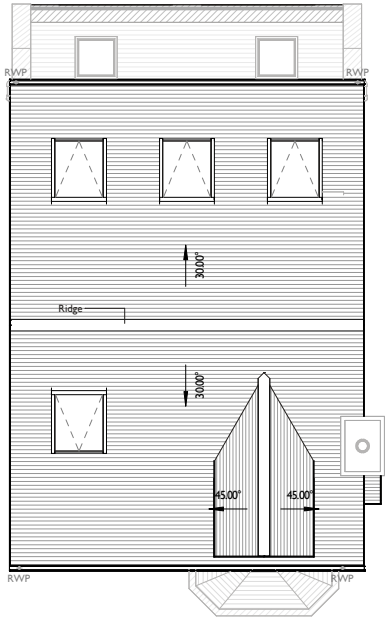
Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

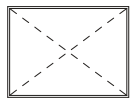


Roof Plan

Area Schedule

Lower Ground Floor	69 m²
Ground Floor	80 m²
First Floor	63 m²
Second Floor	41 m²
	253 m²

Overview Plan Key



Future-proofing - potential space allowed for future platform lift. Approx. 1.60m x 1.20m.

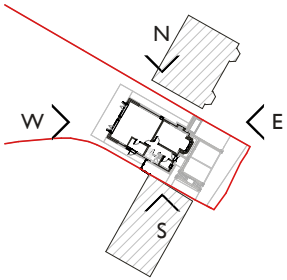
Fig 11.1-11.5 Overview Plans (Millson Group). [DO NOT SCALE]

12 Elevations

The elevations have been designed using an iterative design process, taking inspiration from local character within the Holmfirth Conservation area to inform design decisions and produce a building that fits into the urban grain from a character and style perspective.



Front Elevation



Site Key



Side Elevation



Rear Elevation



Side Elevation

Fig 12.1-12.4 Overview Elevations (Millson Group). [DO NOT SCALE]

13 Appearance & Materiality

The materiality of the property will be in-line with the Holmfirth Conservation area character, using a combination of local masonry, to fit into the urban grain. This will comprise of a reclaimed local stone block for the primary masonry and a smoother reconstituted stone for the buildings features. These will be in the form of heads, cills, plinths and a banding to the front elevation. The indicative material palette is as follows:

Facade

1 - Primary Masonry - Reclaimed Local Stonework
2 - Secondary Masonry - Reconstituted Stone
3 - Sash PVC-U Window Frames and external doors - Laurel Grey (RAL 120 70 05)
7 - Cast Iron Railing. Style/Colour TBC.

Roof

4 - Dark Grey Dormer Cladding to match Roof Colour. Precise texture/colour/ finish TBC.
5 - Natural Welsh Slate Roof Tile.
6 - Powder Coated Aluminium Rainwater Goods - Matte Black (RAL 9005).

Indicative Material Swatches



Fig 13.1 Indicative primary material textures for the development (Millson Group).



Fig 13.2 Front Elevations (Millson Group). [DO NOT SCALE]

Summary

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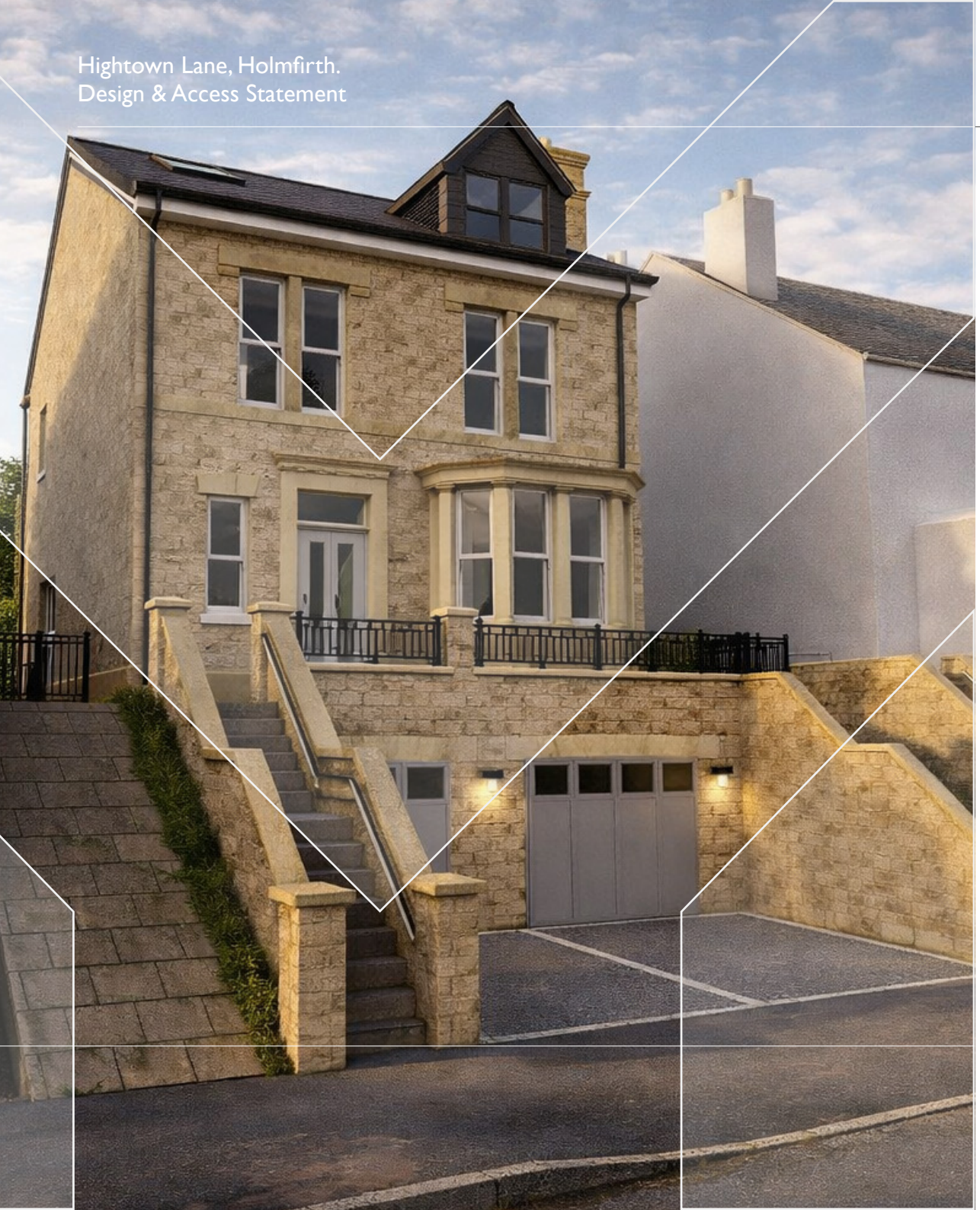

14 Summary

In summary, Millson Group believe that:

- Opportunities and constraints have been identified and addressed throughout the design proposal in an appropriate manner adhering the relevant local and national design guidance.
- The development infill site offers an opportunity to provide a contemporary new self-build home without over-development.
- Materials are reflective of the local vernacular and the style of property that has been proposed is of the required character and quality level of the surrounding conservation area properties - showing our commitment to high-quality housing.
- The layout has been well considered in terms of design, maximising the potential for spacious bedrooms and living spaces within a modest building footprint.

On the basis of the above; and that the accompanying supporting documents demonstrates that the proposals have considered with the highest regards the quality of the design, the appropriateness of the site location and the positive nature of the development on the local community, we would respectfully request that the proposals are supported by Kirklees Council, and that they consider that planning permission should be granted for the development.

15 Contact Details

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